
Open Skies: Canada/Hungary Overflight

1.0 Introduction

In September 1989, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney announced that Canada would host the first international conference with the purpose of negotiating an Open Skies regime. The conference on Open Skies was scheduled to begin in Ottawa on 12 February 1990, and was opened by foreign ministers from 23 nations of NATO and WTO. In preparation for this conference, Canada and Hungary conceived the idea of a trial overflight of Hungary.

This first Canadian-Hungarian Open Skies flight took place on 6 January 1990. A Canadian Forces CC130 Hercules transport aircraft flew a large figure eight pattern over Hungary covering a number of Hungarian and Soviet military facilities. It was agreed, by both sides, that a reciprocal flight would occur, in Canada, when there would be significant progress in the negotiations.

A second conference, hosted by the Hungarian government, was held in Budapest from 23 April to 10 May 1990.

Although a number of fundamental principles were agreed at these conferences, substantial differences persisted in certain areas and the pace of negotiations slowed considerably.