

"These steps would include: to give each other a complete blueprint of our military establishments, from beginning to end, from one end of our countries to the other; lay out the establishments and provide the blueprints to each other. Next, to provide within our countries facilities for aerial photography to the other country -- we to provide you the facilities within our country, ample facilities for aerial reconnaissance, where you can make all the pictures you choose and take them to your own country to study, you to provide exactly the same facilities for us"

As Mr. Eisenhower later recorded in his memoirs, the Soviet side assessed the proposal to be "nothing more than a bald espionage plot against the USSR". It was clear, that the Soviet Union's suspicions, which are well documented in the annals of United Nations Arms Limitation and Disarmament negotiations, precluded the use of intrusive methods of verification. The Open Skies concept continued a tortuous round of negotiations through the late 1950s; but to no avail. The shooting down of a US reconnaissance aircraft over the Soviet Union on 1 May 1960 and the advent of an effective space based reconnaissance capability on both sides hastened its demise. In the latter event, the ability to gain information without the use of intrusive means, satisfied the national security requirements of the Superpowers. It also made overhead reconnaissance the exclusive purview of the Space powers for the following quarter century.

The Interim Period

For more than 30 years relatively little attention was focused on the use of aircraft in a strategic sense as a basis for achieving overhead reconnaissance. In September 1986, this pattern began to change with the signing of the Stockholm Declaration on Confidence- and Security Building Measures in Europe. Termed the Stockholm Document, the agreement provided for a system of monitoring and observation of military activities in Europe using a combination of aerial and ground inspection measures. Although not seen initially as a breakthrough in terms of airborne surveillance for ACD verification purposes, the agreement by the 35 members of the Stockholm negotiations (particularly by the USSR) to the following four (89-92) provisions of the Stockholm Document has gained increased significance within the last three years:

- (89) The inspecting State will specify whether aerial inspection will be conducted using an airplane, a helicopter or both. Aircraft for inspection will be chosen by mutual agreement between the inspecting and receiving States. Aircraft will be chosen which provide the inspection team a continuous view of the ground during the inspection.