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## Canada Conducts Trial Open Skies Overflight of Hungary

In preparation for the Open Skies Conference, Canada conducted a trial Open Skies overflight of Hungary on January 6, 1990. The purpose of the trial was to test the administrative and operational procedures that are expected to be necessary for an Open Skies agreement.

Because Open Skies overflights could follow a wide variety of routes (likely to be quite different from those used by normal civilian aircraft) and might feature considerable variations in altitude, existing civilian air traffic control procedures will have to be modified. Initial studies have shown that these modifications need not be excessive or expensive. They would primarily involve streamlining existing procedures for handling international air traffic so that requests for overflight clearances on complex and unique routes could be dealt with quickly by national authorities.

The need to identify the main technical requirements of a system for processing overflight requests led Canada and Hungary to examine the possibility of staging a trial overflight. After consultations, it was decided that a Canadian military aircraft would overfly Hungary in early January.

While trying to ensure that the overflight mirrored the procedures that might be agreed to in the Open Skies negotiations, Canada and Hungary recognized that more lessons would be derived if extra time was taken to evaluate each stage of the process as it happened. Thus, the periods devoted to notification and flight planning were slightly longer than those that might be agreed to at the Ottawa Conference. In addition, in an important difference from the likely regime, the Canadian aircraft carried no onboard sensors. It was therefore incapable of collecting any data on Hungarian activities.

A Canadian Forces C-130 Hercules left CFB Lahr in the Federal Republic of Germany for Budapest Airport on January 4. The aircraft flew over Czechoslovakia *en route* to Hungary with the full cooperation of the Czech authorities. Upon landing at Budapest, the aircraft was inspected by Hungarian authorities. They were allowed full access to the aircraft in order to assure themselves that it was not armed. Since the aircraft was not carrying sensors, there was no check to make sure that the sensors conformed to whatever specifications may be agreed to in negotiations. The right of the host country to conduct both inspections is expected to be a standard feature of an Open Skies agreement.

While the aircraft was being inspected, the Canadian crew filed a flight plan with the Hungarian authorities. The plan called for a flight of approximately three-hours duration that cut across a variety of air routes with considerable altitude changes *en route*. The Hungarian authorities had 24 hours to process the plan. The overflight itself took place the morning of January 6. The plane flew a huge figure eight over Hungary, viewing both Hungarian and Soviet military installations.

Hungarian observers were onboard the C-130 during the flight. The right of host governments to place such host-observers is envisaged as a feature of the eventual agreement. The observers had full access to all areas of the aircraft and monitored the aircraft's route to make sure that it was in keeping with the agreed flight plan. Since there were no sensors on the aircraft, the host-observers did not monitor the operation of the sensor suite. It is believed that host-observers will be permitted to monitor the sensor operations in an Open Skies regime.

After the overflight, the plane returned to Budapest where officials of the two governments discussed the trial and identified areas for further discussion at the Open Skies Conference. Both Hungary and Canada expressed pleasure with the results of the trial flight, which was itself a small exercise in confidence-building between East and West.

In addition to the flight crew and officials from the Department of National Defence, the Canadian government sent officials from External Affairs and International Trade Canada and Transport Canada to observe the overflight and participate in discussions on its results. The Canadians left Budapest on January 7.