

a) Remote Sensing (Reconnaissance) Satellites

Photographic reconnaissance satellites serve a wide range of military purposes including arms control verification, crisis monitoring, early warning of attack, and weapon targetting. There are two basic types of reconnaissance missions. Area surveillance missions allow large areas of a particular country to be scanned for objects of potential military interest using a wide angle, low resolution camera. The second type of mission permits the closer view of areas of particular interest detected during the area surveillance mission, using cameras with a high resolution and a narrower field of vision. These satellites are equipped with recoverable capsules or digital photographic transmission systems capable of transmitting images in real time in digital form to a ground station. This rapid transmission of information facilitates the detection and description of enemy targets. The quality of details which can be detected by such satellites is extremely accurate: it is estimated that ground resolutions of about 5-15 cm. can now be obtained.

In sum, factors such as the altitude of the satellite, and the availability and advancement of technology increase the potential role that photographic reconnaissance satellites may play in a country's defence strategy and planning.