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CANADA RATIFIES OPEN SKIES TREATY

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, has announced that Canada has become the first country to complete the process of ratifying the Open Skies Treaty. Canada's Instrument of Ratification was deposited today in Budapest.

"Canada is proud of its pioneering role in launching this effort to help reduce global military tension," said Mrs. McDougall. "We have worked hard to bring about this historic level of transparency in military activities in all participating countries."

The Treaty, signed by 25 nations belonging to NATO and countries of the former Warsaw Pact, allows signatories to conduct short-notice observation flights over one another's territory. It is designed to foster confidence among states by opening military activities to outside inspection.

The first negotiating session for the Open Skies Treaty was held in Ottawa in 1990. The Treaty was signed in Helsinki in March 1992. In recognition of their leading role in promoting the Open Skies Treaty, Canada and Hungary have been designated official depositories.

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