

Noble Sums Up: Canada Wants Meaningful Regime

The following is the text of the statement to the press made by Mr. John Noble, head of the Canadian delegation to the official portion of the Open Skies Conference, at the close of the Conference in Ottawa on February 27. Mr. Noble is Director General of the International Security and Arms Control Bureau of External Affairs and International Trade Canada (EAITC).

In recent years, a new word has entered the English language. Like so many, it comes from another language. That word is glasnost. The emergence of this word into common usage, and the concepts behind it, represent the fundamental changes that have led to the improvement in East-West relations. Initially, some of us in the West spent a lot of time debating whether the term meant openness or transparency, and that debate seems rather odd now, since glasnost has come to be a much larger concept. It is only when all societies practice glasnost that we can hope to have a world in which we can truly say there is peace.

First, and above all, democratic ideals demand that glasnost exist between a government and its people, but peaceful international relations demand that glasnost also exist among and between governments. We have already noted the effects of glasnost in international relations — improved communications, honesty, openness. Tangible results include the progress we have made in arms control, the democratic elections taking place this year across Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and the rapid progress we have made toward the construction of what we call the "new European home."

It was the Canadian conviction that it was possible to put into practice the spirit of glasnost that led us to become such fervent promoters of Open Skies. We believe that the time has come to create a confidence-building regime of a much greater scale than anything tried



Mr. John Noble briefing the press at the close of the Open Skies Conference in Ottawa on February 27.

in the past. The Open Skies regime that we have supported is much more open than what we have accomplished up till now in the framework of the CSCE. This regime would apply to an area three times larger than the territory covered by those CSBMs. Putting into place such a regime would be seen, without a doubt, as a large step forward.

We have an expression in the English language that says "you cannot be a little bit pregnant." Similarly, in international relations, you cannot, in any meaningful sense, be a little bit open. Canada joined with the other nations of NATO in developing and putting forward a regime for Open Skies that is based directly on the understanding that restrictions on openness serve only to undermine confidence and build distrust.

We proposed, therefore, that sensors be capable of operating in all weather, day or night. We proposed that territorial restrictions be limited only to those necessary for air safety. We proposed also that each nation fly its own aircraft, thus taking upon itself, to the largest degree possible, the responsibility for the successful implementation of its overflight. In this way we will

avoid creating situations where the host country can be blamed for failures.

It is a clear principle of openness and confidence-building that the greater the degree of control left to the host country, the greater the perception that the regime is limited and based on distrust. It is by symbolically opening our doors as wide as possible that we will build a regime that fully achieves its potential.

In practical terms, if this negotiation is to succeed, we must have an early commitment by all participants to the following essentials:

(A) no limitations to the territory overflown, except as required by air safety;

(B) a high frequency of overflights to provide full coverage of the territory of the overflown country;

(C) the use of sensors capable of operating in all weather, day or night;

(D) full control over the aircraft and sensors by the overflying country.

Since the opening of this Conference, Canada has sought to demonstrate the kind of flexibility necessary to achieve a meaningful regime. We have listened with care to the concerns put forward by various nations that the principles of equity must be respected.

In his opening speech, the Right Honourable Joe Clark promised to take the concerns about equity expressed by the other foreign ministers seriously. We remain committed to that promise, but I must say that equality in an insignificant regime is hardly a goal worth pursuing. Equity in an Open Skies regime that brings openness to our military activities in the broadest sense will engage the fullest efforts of the Canadian delegation, both in the coming weeks as we prepare for Budapest and at the Budapest negotiation itself. ■