

U.S. Performs Observation Flight over Russia and Belarus

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U.S. OC-135B Open Skies aircraft

A group of U.S. inspectors will make a one week surveillance flight over Russia and Belarus in line with the international Open Skies Treaty beginning on Monday, a spokesman for the Russian Defense Ministry said.

“In line with the implementation of the Open Skies Treaty, a U.S. mission will make an observatory flight over the Russian and Belarusian territories between July 30 and August 4 on board an OC-135B aircraft,” the spokesman said.

He said the surveillance flight will begin at the Kubinka airport in the Moscow Region and both Russian and Belarusian experts will be also on board the aircraft to make sure the flight goes along the earlier coordinated route.

The Open Skies Treaty, signed in 1992 on an initiative of U.S. President George H.W. Bush, established a regime of unarmed aerial observation flights over the territories of its 34 member states to promote openness and the transparency of military forces and activities.

The treaty entered into force on January 1, 2002 and its regime covers the national territories (land, islands, and internal and territorial waters) of all the treaty signatory states. It is an important element of the European security structure.