



# Defense Official at Open Skies Treaty Review Conference

*Open Skies parties embark on current implementation review, treaty's future*

Opening Statement

By Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Celeste Wallander

U.S. Chair of the Open Skies Treaty Review Conference

Vienna, June 7, 2010

Good morning Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen. It is a privilege to welcome you to the second Review Conference for the Treaty on Open Skies. It is a pleasure to be here and to Chair this Conference for a Treaty that continues to contribute to security from Vancouver to Vladivostok. I want to thank Assistant Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller for asking me to co-chair the conference. Assistant Secretary Gottemoeller will be joining us on Wednesday (June 9) after she has completed her testimony to the Senate on the New START Treaty.

The Open Skies Treaty has become a model for cooperation and transparency. Although it took about 12 years to enter into force, the Treaty is one of the pillars of conventional arms control and military transparency in Europe.

As we embark on a review of current implementation and a discussion of the future of the Treaty, it is useful to recall its history. After an initial attempt to spark the effort in 1955 by President Eisenhower, it was in 1989, in the light of Soviet efforts to recast East-West relations through the policies of new thinking, perestroika and glasnost that Open Skies came into being.

The first President George Bush, encouraged by Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, restarted the idea of Open Skies. In the spirit of a Common European Home, the Treaty was viewed as an ideal vehicle to achieve lasting improvements in cooperation among former adversaries and improve arms control verification measures.

## **Open Skies Contribution to European Security**

All Open Skies states parties are examining how we can effectively support European security in an evolving political, economic, and military environment. This is reflected in the reset in U.S.-Russian relations, the New START Treaty, discussions about a new NATO Strategic Concept, and our collective efforts to respond to a new global security environment that focuses largely on transnational threats rather than conflict among states.

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As both Vice President Biden and Secretary of State Clinton have noted in recent statements, European security is not a zero-sum game. We all benefit from increased cooperation and transparency and this Treaty is one of the key instruments by which we can move Euro-Atlantic security in a positive direction.

Our discussion this week on modernizing the Open Skies regime fits well within the five principles of European security articulated by Vice President Biden.

The first of these principles is reciprocal transparency, which extends to conventional forces, nuclear forces, and other defense assets in Europe, including missile defense.

It is important to remember that Open Skies is one piece of an already robust European transparency regime. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the Vienna Document 1999, and the related Confidence and Security Building Measures are important tools for preventing conflict in Europe. Together, these mechanisms create a robust system for sharing information on military forces in Europe, improve confidence and prevent conflicts that arise from misperception. Our task this week is to modernize the Open Skies regime adapting it to challenges – and opportunities – of a new era.

### **Reenergizing the Open Skies Treaty**

We face two challenges in our efforts to reenergize the Open Skies Treaty: an austere fiscal environment and preparing the Treaty for the digital era. These challenges intersect and must be addressed together.

The first challenge: the difficult fiscal environment confronting all the nations represented here.

In our discussions about cost, we need to keep in mind the potential alternatives. We recognize that commercial satellites serve the international community as a source of high quality imagery. But there are advantages in Open Skies not readily available from satellites, notably versatility, cost, and imagery exchange. For instance:

Open Skies missions provide flexibility with the ability to fly north to south, east to west, allowing imagery to be taken in accordance with a State Party's imaging needs. Satellites are restricted to predictable tracks, rendering imagery only in accordance with the satellite's schedule.

Open Skies provides a mechanism to exchange enormous amounts of imagery between and among State Parties at a low cost. Sharing equivalent amounts of satellite imagery would be prohibitively expensive.

One creative suggestion to overcome concerns about cost comes from a proposal President Gorbachev made during the initial discussions – an international pool of aircraft and sensors for the Open Skies mission.

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Some participants in Open Skies have already embraced this concept with shared aircraft and they will provide us insights into their experiences this week. Sharing assets can also contribute to the effectiveness of the Treaty by allowing nations that may not be able to afford national aircraft to participate in, and gain verification from, Open Skies activities.

The second challenge which we will be discussing throughout the conference is modernizing the Treaty for the digital era. With extraordinary diligence and expertise, our technical teams have moved Open Skies to the brink of a new generation of Treaty implementation. We now face the issue of how to make a digital Open Skies a reality.

Apart from the up-front investment involved with upgrading to digital sensors, making that change will also require us to think through new implementation mechanisms and the costs associated with them. How should digital data be stored and how should it be shared among Treaty participants? How can we combine the new Open Skies Digital Imagery with Earth viewer software to achieve increased transparency? There is important work ahead for our technical experts.

## **Conclusion**

The United States strongly supports the Treaty on Open Skies as part of an important web of transparency and confidence building measures, and is investing in its future. We are currently reviewing our options for more ambitious Open Skies implementation. This includes reviewing our mission needs in terms of aircraft and sensors to modernize how we accomplish the vital mission of this treaty.

Some countries here, notably Russia, are well ahead in the process of upgrading to digital technology, and we appreciate their leadership in that area. We will all certainly benefit from their experience.

As we move through our ambitious agenda, let's keep in mind the broader context for our work: to enhance the security and the well-being of our citizens. We should celebrate the successful implementation of the Treaty over the last five years and move forward in a spirit of cooperation and transparency.

Thank you again for this opportunity to chair the Open Skies Review Conference, and I look forward to sharing our views and ideas for fully advancing our common objectives in European Security.

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