

NATO Flying 'Open Skies' Mission Over Russia

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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U.S. and Canadian military inspectors are expected to complete on Monday their two-day joint monitoring mission over Russian territory under the international Open Skies Treaty, the Russian Defense Ministry said.

The NATO inspectors fly on board a refitted C-130 Hercules transport aircraft along a designated route with a total length of 5,500 kilometers (3,417 miles), the ministry said.

Under the Open Skies treaty, each aircraft flying a routine monitoring mission is fitted with a sensor suite including optical panoramic and framing cameras, video cameras with real-time display, thermal infrared imaging sensors, and imaging radar.

The Open Skies Treaty, which entered into force on January 1, 2002, establishes a regime of unarmed aerial observation flights over the territories of its 34 member states to promote openness and transparency of military forces and activities. Russia ratified the deal in May

2001.

The image data recorded during the observation flights can be shared among all signatories to support the monitoring of compliance with existing or future arms control treaties.

According to the treaty, Russia and the United States each have a quota of 42 inspection flights per year, while other signatories have quotas of 12 or fewer.

Russia conducted 10 Open Skies monitoring missions so far this year, the defense ministry earlier said.

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