

the French delegation, to express my wholehearted thanks to Canada, to its people and its government.

Then I would express my satisfaction at being present at a meeting, the opening of which alone is strikingly symbolizing the new climate of confidence that reigns among our countries.

Through the force of circumstance, this meeting is a major rendezvous of European history. For the first time, indeed, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the member countries of the two alliances together are going to broach questions of security.

Of course, this meeting was planned well before the events that have rapidly transformed the political map of the old continent, and I believe, indeed, that we now have the task of examining questions far broader than the simple question of Open Skies.

The confrontation which marked East-West relations is dissipating more and more every day. The arbitrary order and heritage from the Second World War is being swept away by the aspirations of people for freedom and democracy.

A new Europe is rising up under our eyes, before our very eyes. We need to consolidate this through new shows of solidarity. Even if there is considerable progress to be achieved and difficulties to overcome, confidence has replaced confrontation, co-operation has replaced mistrust. This is an example of that fact.

In this context, the Open Skies proposal launched, as has already been said, by the President of the United States of America, is highly welcome and innovating to us. Let us measure the considerable progress that it constitutes.

The right to control one's airspace is indeed an attribute of the sovereignty of states. To authorize in advance other states to overfly one's territory without restrictions, other than those linked to air safety, does indeed constitute a renunciation of considerable prerogatives, prerogatives considered up to now to be sacred.

I would note that our host of the Government of Canada, that I would once again thank for the quality of the welcome here, has placed this conference under the sign of an emblem, where we see side-by-side a red hemisphere and a blue hemisphere. A symbol, indeed.

France, indeed, considers that the Open Skies negotiations should not define a new state of equilibrium from alliance to alliance, but offers the opportunity of concluding national commitments that reflect the wish of each state to foster