

desired by my country. The Atlantic Alliance for us is a guarantee of essential safety.

But, as with any human undertaking, the Alliance cannot remain unchanged. I am sure that it will find itself, as it has in the past, the resources to adapt to the need for a changing East-West relationship and for co-operation with the countries of central Europe and eastern Europe, especially when it comes to arms control.

We also hope that the Atlantic Alliance will continue to meet the requirements of a true partnership between North America especially when it comes to arms control. We also hope that the Atlantic Alliance will continue to meet the requirements of a true partnership between North Americans and Europeans.

It is, with this changing background, full of hope that I have come to the Open Skies project which is, properly speaking, the topic of our meeting. The very idea of transparency, considered by some as a type of unacceptable intrusion a while ago, is now part of the existing order.

It is not that the project was bad 35 years ago, when the idea was first launched by President Eisenhower, but, rather, that the mentalities have changed, as well as the policies. This gives us an idea of the road that we have taken.

For us, Open Skies is an instrument which will allow all of the countries who are interested in the security of Europe, to contribute directly to better mutual information on the military facilities of all countries.

Open Skies assumes that there will be active and passive co-operation on the part of all. This seems to be as important to me as the objective, itself, of greater transparency. Open Skies is no longer to be considered as a mechanism between blocs and to be negotiated between blocs because these concepts have been surpassed by the events. Now it will be up to the experts to set up the terms of this new regime.

I would like to stress two points that are very important from a political point of view. First of all, an Open Skies regime, according to us, should be extended at the right time to all of the European countries who would like to take part in it. Such an extension to neutral countries, I think, should eventually take place because they are nations, not alliances or pacts, which have rights and obligations which would stem from the accord.

Second, an Open Skies agreement, if it is to be judged on the basis of its actual merits, is also related to other verification systems which are being negotiated, starting with the CFE negotiations. There is a very close relationship between them,