

We also appreciate its significant positive implications from the humanitarian point of view. We trust that this regime would definitively do away with such manifestations of the Cold War and its remnants as was the shooting down of civilian and other aircraft suspected of aerial espionage. After all, in the past the world found itself more than once in a crisis situation due to such conflicts.

The Open Skies project, the consideration of which we are today launching on political and expert levels, is in its potential so far without precedence. It represents a new quality in the field of confidence building and verification measures. Through this regime we would not only substantially raise the quality of the system of observation of military activities, but would also significantly strengthen the principle of verification of compliance with arms control agreements.

The implementation of the Open Skies project, of course, creates also some technical problems. Czechoslovakia, at the present time, possesses neither the necessary aircraft park nor the appropriate equipment. The proposed options, whether it should be an allied or a group or a national aircraft park, have both their advantages as well as their drawbacks. Our experts should find the optimum variants, both from the point of view of national security, effectiveness, as well as financial costs.

It is very important, in our opinion, to ensure equal access by all the participating states to observation equipment of identical technological level. My delegation will, therefore, propose uniform, jointly approved observation equipment.

In this connection, however, I feel the need to say openly that at a time when we are embarking on the very complicated period of transition to a market based economy, we could only with difficulty assume excessive financial commitments. That, of course, does not in any way detract from our political resolve to do our utmost for an expeditious launching of the Open Skies regime, nor does it change our decision to fully open the territory of Czechoslovakia to this form of international verification without any restrictions.

Mr. Chairman, the Czechoslovak delegation, which I am so instructing, will do everything in its power to make this important conference as successful as possible.

Thank you for your attention.

THE CHAIRMAN:

Thank you very much. May I now call upon the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, His Excellency Mesut Yilmaz.