

But the Open Skies proposal has been launched once more. We have come together to negotiate a regime in which individual states of the two groups will be allowed to overfly the entire territory of states of the other group. This, in itself, bears abundant testimony to the dramatic change that has taken place in the East-West relationship and to the remarkable new commitment to transparency of the states represented here today.

Norway attaches great importance to the Open Skies Conference. We hope our negotiators will be successful in shaping over the next couple of weeks the outline of a mutually acceptable agreement which can be further elaborated and signed later this year.

But the present meeting is significant also because it provides an opportunity to give a political impetus to ongoing arms control processes, in particular the Vienna negotiations on conventional disarmament, and also to exchange views on the future direction of the East-West process.

Unprecedented achievements are within reach. The members of the Western Alliance have come here prepared to show flexibility and bringing along new ideas which we hope will contribute to eliminating some of the remaining obstacles to progress.

Mr. Chairman, Open Skies, to us, is primarily but not exclusively a confidence-building measure. The regime will strengthen the feeling of security of each of the participating states by placing at their disposal a mechanism for satisfying themselves of the peaceful intentions of the other participants. Particularly from the point of view of smaller nations with limited resources and without access to sophisticated national technical means, such as satellite surveillance, it is important to be able to monitor areas of particular interest and concern, either through overflights of their own or in co-operation with their allies.

In order to be meaningful, an Open Skies regime will have to provide for overflights of the entire national territory of participating states, without limitations other than those dictated by international flight safety rules.

Exclusion of areas deemed to be militarily sensitive would negate the very purpose of the regime. Unrestricted overflight may, in the eyes of some, seem a high price, but it is clearly a necessary one if we are to be able to harvest the benefits in terms of enhanced confidence and transparency.

Lack of openness clearly was a major cause of the suspicion and uncertainty that has previously characterized relations between the two parts of Europe.

An Open Skies regime will, therefore, contribute to