

I would now like to allude to the proposal of President Bush, to limit to 195,000 the Soviet and American Forces in central Europe.

We, as you know, have endorsed this initiative. It aims at solving what we know to be, for many peoples in Europe, a major source of concern, to recuperate the entire sovereignty of their territory. This legitimate requirement is that of states who wish to be masters of their own destiny.

Mr. Gorbachev rapidly responded, and recently responded, to the proposal and suggested that we extend to the entirety of Europe the limitations that Mr. Bush suggested should apply to central Europe. This is worthy of our attention, if it can speed up the Vienna negotiations, facilitate the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the countries who have expressed this desire, and contribute to the striving for a new state of balance and security in Europe.

It is under this triple aspect that we should examine this proposal.

The asymmetrical withdrawal of American and Soviet forces stationed in Europe would bring us closer to the objective of establishing security and limiting the risks of a surprise attack that we have over central Europe. Then, of course, any state in respect of this constraint could express its own defence concerns. Should I remind you that there are particular alliances, for example, the Joint Franco-German Brigade, which could not possibly be affected by the Vienna negotiations.

As to the American forces, their presence on the territory of some of our allies is the reflection of the wish of those governments. There are political and strategic reasons for this which are at the very heart of trans-Atlantic security relations. This also should be preserved.

Ladies and gentlemen, questions of disarmament that I have just alluded to are but a few of the aspects of the construction of Europe of tomorrow. And to the origin of this extraordinary movement in central and eastern Europe there was the wish of the people to do away with an anachronistic political order. Many ministers here present realize this. They themselves were yesterday the persecuted people of dictators whose day was past, and I would like to welcome them here wholeheartedly today.

I think also there was the question of an attraction of democratic values, the flourishing of these democratic values, a feeling shared by the majority of the countries of the CSCE. There was also the courage and the will of statesmen who realized before others that certain developments were inevitable. I am thinking here in terms of Mr. Gorbachev.