

The European Community is also ready to work as a federated union within a much larger community, which will include all of the European states in a confederation.

Mr. Chairman, your conference is a first step in the re-establishment of an agreement between our countries, the Eastern countries and Western countries, as well as the others, the fruit of detente which should lead to an agreement.

This is what is at stake in this debate beyond the discussions that our experts are going to have here in Ottawa and later in Budapest.

I would like to thank you very much.

THE CHAIRMAN:

Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. Our last speaker this morning is the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway, His Excellency Kjell Magne Bondevik.

HIS EXCELLENCY KJELL MAGNE BONDEVIK,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, NORWAY:

Mr. Chairman, the present meeting is the first gathering of the foreign ministers of the 23 member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Warsaw Treaty Organizations since the peaceful revolution that swept Central and East Europe as the eighties drew to a close.

It is also the first east-west ministerial meeting of the nineties, a decade that at the outset would seem to hold more promise of political dialogue and east-west co-operation than at any point in the post-war period.

The old order which divided Europe and kept nations as well as individuals apart is increasingly being transformed. The overcoming of the division of Europe and of the ensuing ideological and political confrontation, which only a few months ago seemed a Utopian dream, now has become a political objective within the realm of reality.

We have, indeed, passed a watershed in European history. The continent is advancing from confrontation to co-operation. From this point of view, it is symbolically highly appropriate that we are gathered here today to launch negotiations on a proposal that was originally introduced some 35 years ago, in the heyday of the Cold War.

The original Open Skies proposal fell victim to the chilly political climate that prevailed in those days, to the lack of trust and to feelings of suspicion between nations.