Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of my European colleagues, it is a pleasure for me to welcome you all here today in Warsaw. I would like to thank Andrzej Olechowski, our Polish hosts and sponsors for providing both the venue and a context which I think will make this a memorable meeting. The very large attendance bears testimony to the views of the members of this occasion because we gather in Poland at historic times, for both Poland and for the Trilateral Commission, and times of challenge too for the relationship between the Trilateral members.

Very often the term historic is overused. Today, its meaning is fully justified, for just a few days ago Poland and nine candidate countries joined the European Union to create a democratic community of 25 member states and 450 million citizens. It was a historic occasion. I was present in Dublin, and it was really startling to watch the effect, and the emotional effect in particular, on those who were present as the flags of the new member states were raised to the strains of Beethoven’s "Ode to Joy." An ode to joy was appropriate in terms of expressing the feelings of everyone present about this moment.

As stated in the Dublin Declaration, I quote: “This is truly the best testimony to the success that is the European Union. We pause to reflect on what we have created. We must never forget that from War we have created Peace, from Hatred we have created Respect, and from Division we have created Union.”

It is also appropriate in particular that we should gather in the place, more than perhaps anywhere else, where the end of Yalta was confirmed and in a country whose troubled history as a victim has provided evidence of the past failures of our continent and the need for renewal—which we are all participating in.

We all believe in the Trilateral Commission that we have created an open Europe—certainly not a fortress—open to our partners over the Atlantic and in Asia. Together, we can within our Commission strengthen this vital partnership, build for the common good of our countries and our peoples, and also beyond. But our partnership as we know in these troubled times requires constant care. We are well equipped to face together the challenges ahead. But we must do it together.

What more fitting and appropriate person could there be to open our conference, in the presence of our Trilateral colleagues and friends, but the Prime Minister of Poland, who is himself one of our company, Dr. Marek Belka, whom we warmly greet this morning. We are honoured by your presence and look forward to hearing what you have to say.