Generals, Ministers, Ambassadors, ladies and gentlemen.

I was in Norfolk back in 1991, at that time I was a junior Deputy Ministry of National Defence and that was the time when I could only dream about Poland’s membership in NATO.

Today I am really proud and happy that I am going to speak about Polish good fortune and Poland’s achievements of being a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

The membership in the Alliance has become a crowning of the Polish reclaimed freedom.

But there are few other nations in the world that can understand as well as Poles do, that if you reclaim your freedom, you don’t have it from granted, and you don’t take it for granted; you have to care for it, you have to reinforce it. That is why I want to express my satisfaction that today, when I am in Norfolk, I am also visiting SACT.

Because it means that Poland is not only a member of the Alliance that is a consumer of security, but that we are here, as those who are thinking about how to work in order to increase the security of all the members of the Alliance and the future of the whole Alliance.

Our contribution to the Alliance is not only in the form of our needs and expectations, but also in the form of our assets and capabilities. We are also strengthening the Alliance by the modernization of the Polish armed forces who are also contributing to the future of NATO, NATO today and in the post Afghan era.

We, Poland, still remember the objectives that we once have to reclaim our freedom, and we know the price of freedom. We know how painful it was when the situation was different. In this spirit now we are contributing with quite significant money to our defence budget that is able to take fruits from the economic growth that we have continuously enjoyed for over 20 years in our country.

The modernization of the Polish armed forces that is a pending process in Poland now is a contribution not only to the security of Poland, but to the security of the whole Alliance.

Annually we allocate almost 2% of our GDP to our defence budget and this is our contribution to the future of the Alliance too.

And we would like in the future to share also the same thinking, the same thinking about the modernization of the Alliance which would also be a guarantor of the security of the member states and their territories.

And we would like NATO to be a force that is capable to operate anywhere in the planet, but first and above all, it should focus on the homeland security of its member states.

That is why we attach great significance not only to our actions and solidarity in Afghanistan, but also in the performance of the exercise that is important not only for Poland, but also for other countries of central Europe, namely Steadfast Jazz 2013.

And I am sure that this exercise will also become food for thought for the transformation of the Alliance, and we will keep in mind the principle that the priority is the defence of our homeland and the execution of the contingency plans, and after that, our expeditionary capabilities.

And there is also a Poland’s contribution in the form of the Polish personal that is deployed here at SACT and I’d like to greet everyone very cordially.