

## SACT address at United States National Day Flag Raising

2 July 2014

I couldn't think of better introduction for the United States of America National Day celebration than in recognizing its dedicated men and women. They are at the heart of the "permanent truths" stressed by Abraham Lincoln; the principles of liberty, democracy, rule of law, justice and solidarity which have governed America since the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1776.

The Founding Fathers couldn't imagine what sacrifices it would take to protect, to defend, to re-establish those values through the years. But today they could be proud of the nation they built; a nation which, in accordance with Benjamin Franklin's memorable saying, has never been ready "*to give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety*".

As a matter of fact, through its History, the United States has always been true to its founding values and to its commitment to the freedom of its Allies;

- 100 years ago, during the "Great War", in sending many fine soldiers to Europe as part of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) led by Gen. John J. Pershing,

- 70 years ago, when the United States joined the Allied armies in battle to reclaim the European continent to liberty,

- And then in the aftermath of the Second World War, when they contributed to rebuild a new Europe in reconciling those who had been enemies for so long.

In 1949, the United States became a founding member of what would become the greatest Alliance of the modern age, one alliance that today serves as a shield for freedom and for peace of 900 million people with 28 Allied nations.

Today, 65 years later, as a global power in a global world, the United States is still assuming more than its fair share of responsibility;

- In bringing an unrivalled combat contribution to almost all NATO's operations ,
- And particularly today, in taking its part in NATO's prevention and deterrence posture, in the Eastern part of Europe.

70 years ago, in 1944, when President Franklin Roosevelt announced that the D-Day invasion had begun, he stated;

*“Our sons, pride of our Nation, this day have set upon a mighty endeavour, a struggle to preserve our Republic, our religion, and our civilization, and to set free a suffering humanity.”*

We are all very fortunate and immensely grateful that the sons of the United States have always been ready to pay the ultimate price to maintain freedom, to defend the eternal values that we all cherish.

As the United States are commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Vietnam War, I would like to seize this opportunity to honour the fallen and the Veterans of this war, as well as their families.

The 4th of July is a day that reminds us the price of liberty; it is a day of patriotism and civic pride, it is a day of memory and solidarity.

Dear American friends, ACT's international community is very proud to join you wholeheartedly in this celebration to share our “common heritage” still so worth defending today, so worth to pass on to future generations.

Long live our Alliance, long live the United-States of America!