

Summary on the Conference “Sicherheitspolitische Aspekte der Raumfahrt - Space and Security”, 09.02.2004, Industriellenvereinigung, Vienna, Austria

Abstract: The 9th of February saw one of the first conferences in Europe on the sensitive topic of “space and security”, featuring six presentations of high-ranking experts in the areas of strategic planning, international law, technology and economics as well as policy making, followed by an intense discussion on what types of challenges and threats are to be taken into account, how the USA and Europe are dealing with them and what Europe should do in the near future to establish a successful security and military defence doctrine, while utilising the power-multiplying factor “space”. A detailed programme, each speakers’ curriculum vitae and the presentation can be downloaded on the Website of the Austrian Space Forum under: <http://www.oewf.org/>.

Today’s threats and what to do against it: Both the European (Bgdr. Karner) and the US military expert (Lt. Col. Hays, speaking as a private person only), as well as the representative from the European Commission (Dr. Revelas) consider international terrorism and organised crime, as well as “failed states”, such as Afghanistan, etc., to resemble the biggest threats. The latter ones are especially dangerous in offering hideouts to terrorists and in terms of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction or associated technologies like missiles, etc. Various presentations provided thorough analysis and strategies for the mitigation of these various threats, especially the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the European Security and Defence Policy (EDSP) of the European Union got analysed in great detail by Dr. Balogh, a space expert of the Austrian Space Agency, who dealt with these issues from a space-related perspective. Due to its importance the topic of analysing and counteracting security threats was extensively discussed in the discussion round. The overarching statement was that the fight against terrorism and “failed states” requires a twofold strategy, calling on one hand for economic aid to improve the economic situation of and in the respective states, and on the other hand (looking specifically into Europe) for a uniform European policy in terms of intelligence and security to protect the EU borders and to monitor problematic areas both outside and inside the EU, such as possible terrorist cells, etc.

Power-multiplying factor “space”: All presenters agreed on one point: Space is a strategic asset; as such it acts as a power-multiplying factor, providing uninterrupted communication lines, navigation information and intelligence data, absolutely necessary features, especially in times of conflict. In addition, as Mag. Soucek pointed out, space data, such as pictures showing mass graves, destruction of private houses, refugee tracks, etc. may not only be used for intelligence or humanitarian goals, but also for propaganda purposes, such as was the case with the “prove” for Iraq facilities to build weapons of mass destruction, which turned out to be non-existent in the alleged way afterwards. And finally space is an important economic factor, not only in the area of telecommunications but also in increasing manner in the area of Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS), such as GPS, GLONASS and Galileo.

Taking all these sub-assets of space into account leads to only one conclusion: space is of vital importance for every all-embracing security doctrine. Although the EU White Paper states clearly: "Space has a security dimension and security has a space dimension" [Dr. Balogh], the Europeans lack – for the moment – both the political will and the financial resources to launch their own space platform systems dedicated to military purposes [Bgdr. Karner]. When Lt. Col. Hays pointed out how important gaining and maintaining space control is to the US, by presenting the US space control matrix, it became evident how far advanced the USA, as compared to Europe, is in thinking in terms of "space and security".

Galileo – Bone of Contention: Is Galileo really a civilian system or does it support a hidden military agenda? And what is the US position vis-à-vis Galileo? The Galileo-presentation by Mr. Oosterlinck, Head of the Navigation Department of the European Space Agency, made it clear: Galileo is a non-military system. Even though it will deliver "Public Regulated Services", to be used by the European police or military forces, Galileo has not been designed to support military applications. Neither the control systems nor the space segment itself fulfil military requirements. The Galileo-satellites for example do not store excessive fuel onboard, as their military cousins do, which is used to change their orbits such as to concentrate the satellites over a crisis area and hence improve signal accuracy if needed. Mr. Oosterlinck made another case for the civilian character of Galileo in stating that sticking to the fulfilment of civilian requirements only, in contrast to the EADS proposal of using Galileo for military purposes as well by Mr. Hertrich, reduces the cost of Galileo to one tenth of a similar military system. Mr. Oosterlinck mentioned also that the negotiations with the USA are proceeding well, issues like frequency allocation and modulation have been solved, others are still under discussion. The next discussion round will start on 24th of February. Lt. Col. Hays supported Mr. Oosterlinck's statements in the discussion round, apart of one point: The USA classify Galileo not to be a pure civilian but rather a dual-use system, since it is not primarily designed to support military applications (but can be used for those). As for the participation of non-European states (esp. China, Israel, India) in Galileo, Mr. Oosterlinck made clear that these states will not be granted access to critical parts of the system, while other parts will most likely be accessible. Europe is interested in establishing Galileo as a counterweight vis-à-vis GPS (technical standards, etc.), an intention to come only true with international support.

The relationship between the EU and the USA: The current security policy of the EU points primarily towards crisis intervention. If the EU ever wants to be a global player it has to make sure it's members move into the same direction, and to act as one entity. Only then the Union will be a calculable partner for the USA, such as Russia – despite all difficulties – proves to be at the moment. Raising public awareness is important; this might be done via certain projects and for example conducted under a Private Public Partnership set-up [Bgdr. Karner and Dr. Revelas]. On the question what the USA expect from their international partners, Lt. Col. Hays stated that the USA have not yet clearly formulated their own security policy, hence the role of the partners is not yet defined.

Conclusion: The conference provided an excellent opportunity to compare the opinions of various experts, providing not only an insight into their own area but also contributing to an overall picture of this sensitive topic. What became evident was that Europe needs to conduct far more work in this area if it wants to establish a Europe-wide common strategy, enabling itself to act as a global player in this area in a not so distant future (10 to 20 years from now). Threats like international terrorism, organised crime and “failed states” are too significant to be neglected. Europe must not think that it does not represent a potential target for terrorist acts like 9/11. Even though the USA have started earlier and are putting much more effort into the area of an all-embracing security doctrine, trying to clearly define the role of space in the future, the Europeans can close the gap to the USA - if they are willing. All it requires is to raise public awareness, create a common European position and streamline the European efforts to create a maximum of security for its citizens and the entire world.

Acknowledgement: The organisers would like to thank the following organisations for supporting this conference:

- Booz Allen Hamilton
<http://www.boozallen.at/>,
- Austrian Space Agency
<http://www.asaspace.at/>,
- European Space Agency
<http://www.esa.int/>,
- European Union
<http://europa.eu.int/>,
- Austrian federal Ministry of Traffic, Innovation and Technology (BMVIT)
<http://www.bmvit.gv.at/>,
- Austrian federal Ministry of Defence
<http://www.bmlv.gv.at/>,
- Industriellenvereinigung Österreich
<http://www.voei.at/>

Norbert FRISCHAUF (BAH, ÖWF) and Alexander SOUCEK (ÖWF)