



SPACE SECURITY THROUGH THE TRANSATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP

International Conference | June 12–14, 2011 Prague, Czech Republic

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

Space security is rapidly emerging as a crucial dimension of overall global space policy and the world's broader concerns. The transatlantic dialogue on space security is already underway, but needs significant bolstering. Accordingly, the European Space Policy Institute (ESPI) and the Prague Security Studies Institute (PSSI) identified the usefulness of convening an international gathering of space and security experts, as well as scholars, to help define the challenges ahead and how best to address them in the context of the long-standing alliance with the U.S., and partnership with Japan.

CONFERENCE PURPOSE

The shared interest of Europe, the United States and Japan in strengthened space security is growing steadily, as is the dependency of much of the world's population on space systems. Although there is no uniform understanding of space security, the Space Security Index, for example, uses a broad definition based on the 1967 Outer Space Treaty: "the secure and sustainable access to, and use of, space and freedom from space-based threats". As there is a pressing need to safeguard space-based assets which perform essential tasks, as well as to ensure free access to, and responsible behaviour in, space, this conference will seek to address this critical dimension of global space policy.

Important goals in this connection include: international support for more comprehensive space situational awareness (SSA); improved orbital debris mitigation; collision avoidance; orbital slots and radiofrequency management; space transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs); and deterring irresponsible activities by state and possibly non-state actors. Among the terrestrial security challenges that can, and do, benefit from space "leverage" are: international crisis management; responses to natural disasters; counterterrorist operations; curtailing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; avoiding, containing and managing environmental hazards; monitoring failing and failed states; and addressing humanitarian crises.

For its part, Europe could serve as a skilled global mediator to help defuse future space-related tensions and conclude multilateral accords which establish appropriate behavioural and governance guidelines. In 2007, the EU and ESA Member States, totalling 29 countries, endorsed unanimously the European Space Policy, thus demonstrating support for a comprehensive, common way forward. The fifth Space Council named "space security" among its four additional priority areas. Both ESA and the EU likewise recognize the importance of cooperation with the U.S. on these and other issues to bolster space security. Indeed, increasing space-related interoperability among Europe, the U.S. and Japan is emerging as a central component of efforts to improve coordination regarding space-related assets, capabilities and safeguards.

Europe's efforts in this direction are manifested by the release in September 2010 of a revised draft of the Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities designed to enhance the safety, security, and predictability of outer space activities. The 7th Space Council Resolution of November 2010, as well as European Council Conclusions of May 2011, acknowledged the increasing dependence of the European economy and policies on space assets and recognized the need for a future SSA capability.

In the U.S., the Obama Administration has set forth a number of reinforcing objectives in its 2010 U.S. National Space Policy (NSP). It emphasized that "the sustainability, stability, and free access to, and use of, space" is "vital to [U.S.] national interests" and "space operations should be conducted in ways that emphasize openness and transparency...". NSP also asserts that "the United States will employ a variety of measures to help assure the use of space for all responsible parties, and, consistent with the inherent right of self-defense, deter others from interference and attack, defend [U.S.] space systems and contribute to the defense of allied space systems, and, if deterrence fails, defeat efforts to attack them."

In short, collaboration in space is viewed as the only sustainable path forward. Moreover, the U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS), released in May 2010, made clear that America's relationships with its European allies "remain the cornerstone for U.S. engagement with the world, and a catalyst for international action." Specific to space, this document states: "To promote security and stability in space, we will pursue activities consistent with the inherent right of self-defense, deepen cooperation with allies and friends, and work with all nations toward the responsible and peaceful use of space." Finally, the National Security Space Strategy (NSSS) of January 2011 pointed out that space is "becoming increasingly congested, contested, and competitive" and emphasized measures that strengthen the security and stability of space and encourage international cooperation for these purposes.

With regard to Japan, it enacted a new "Basic Law on Space" in 2008 that had as one its central provisions a recognition that often space systems and activities are inherently "dual use" in nature, involving both civilian and military applications. This positive development came at a time when a number of nations are upgrading their space programmes and safeguards. Japan's unswerving dedication to the peaceful use of space has translated into its desire to enhance cooperation with other space-faring nations, hence the appropriateness of Japanese participation in this otherwise transatlantic gathering.

Despite these positive developments, space security in transatlantic relations is still an underdeveloped policy area. A high-level international conference like the one in Prague on 12–14 June 2011, co-sponsored by the European Space Policy Institute (ESPI) and the Prague Security Studies Institute (PSSI), could contribute importantly to expanding and enriching the transatlantic dialogue, as well as with partners such as Japan, concerning this vital dimension of space policy.

CONFERENCE GOALS

The Space Security Conference will seek to advance a number of goals, among them:

- identifying common space security concerns and the priorities they are accorded within the transatlantic relationship and with Japan
- assessing the need for NATO involvement in space security activities and governance
- creating a potentially useful "Track II" process in the U.S.-Europe-Japan dialogue on space security made up of leading NGO officials, academics, senior current and former policy-makers, relevant industry and media representatives, etc.
- offering an opportunity to network among space policy and security professionals
- promoting pragmatic space-related transparency and confidence-building measures and examining enforcement and verification issues
- building a broader consensus on the need for an effective and security-minded space code of conduct
- engaging more actively the broader security communities of key alliance countries in cooperative efforts and initiatives to safeguard the overall space environment
- proposing additional mechanisms to facilitate "real-time" exchanges between the U.S., Europe and Japan on urgent space security developments