

INTERVENTION BY ANA GOMES, MEP

EU CONFERENCE ON SPACE SECURITY, ARMS CONTROL IN SPACE AND THE ROLE OF THE EU (BERLIN, 21/22.6.2007)

- I would like to thank the German Federal Foreign Office for the invitation to be here; I commend the German Presidency for this excellent initiative: more are needed to put the EU - **as EU** - at the forefront of the global debate on arms control in space;
- Some of you might ask yourselves why the European Parliament should be represented at this table, together with all the European space policy heavy-weights: Member States (Mr de Montluc from France), the European Commission (Ms. Kainz-Huber) and, of course, industry (Mr Klädtke from EADS);
- The reasons are twofold, well-known, but worth reiterating at every opportunity: **the European Parliament is the only political institution in Europe with impeccable democratic credentials** - it is the closest there is to a democratic barometer of European public opinion; secondly, **as a budgetary authority, we are one of the hands firmly grasping the European purse strings** - any European space program with implications for the EU budget has to be explained to the EP;
- I am not trying to flex any institutional muscle here: I merely remind you of the example of Galileo - as the public/private partnership has collapsed it is possible (and, we hope, likely) that Community funding will have to fill the breach; and, while the Parliament firmly supports Community funding for this strategically vital programme, we intend to keep our fingers firmly on the pulse of the programme, to make sure European tax-payers' money is spent according to Europe's interests; the same goes, of course, for the 7th framework programme and its implications for space research;
- So, we don't build huge space-toys, like EADS; we don't own fancy satellites like France; and we don't shower money on

industry, like the Commission: **but arms control in space and the peaceful use of space are as vital to us as to those other stakeholders;**

- I am sure yesterday's panels have already highlighted:
 - The dilemmas of separating dangerous weaponization from legitimate military uses and of defining 'weapons in space';
 - The virtues and flaws of the Outer Space Treaty;
 - The difficulties of verification of any legal instrument in space;
 - The particular role of the US in this debate and how to move on with arms control in space;
- As I see it, dilemmas or no dilemmas, **there is one conclusion we can easily draw from recent debates: Europe needs to push for greater legal clarity about the peaceful use of space and it needs to help the US find a way out of the unilateral impasse it manoeuvred itself into - in this area, as in others;**
- Let me start with the first issue: legal clarity and confidence-building measures; I am not a specialist and I am not dogmatic about this - **the only unshakeable principle behind our efforts to strengthen PAROS (the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space) should be that they take place in a UN framework;** whether we focus our efforts on the Conference on Disarmament, or on the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), or on the General Assembly's First Committee, or even on the Fourth Committee¹ **is a tactical decision;** the First Committee regularly puts a PAROS resolution up for vote, while the two working documents put forward jointly by Russia and China in the Conference on Disarmament in May 2006 on definitions like 'outer space', 'space weapons', 'space objects' and 'peaceful use' and on Confidence Building Measures in space also represent important advances;

¹ PARA INFORMAÇÃO: "The GA Fourth Committee (on Special Political and Decolonization) could be a better forum to work on preventing the weaponization of space than the first committee since the framework of this committee is based on development instead of security and there are more actors using space for development purposed than for military ones". On the other hand, the most divisive issues are in the realm of security and weaponization, which makes the First Committee a more appropriate form to discuss these issues.

- In any case, **the first important step would be for the EU to apply for observer status at COPUOS, where it should push for the adoption of guidelines on space debris**; short of creating a completely new treaty (a PAROS Treaty) **maybe Europe should focus on more modest goals, such as developing rules of the road** (general practices and procedures in outer space) **and confidence building measures**; finally, the EU should embrace the proposal of Hans Blix's WMD Commission and **call for a review conference of the Outer Space Treaty, to strengthen it, extend its scope, and push for its universalization**;

In short, where there's a will, there's a way - and the problem in Europe is not a lack of diplomatic ways - rather, it is a lack of will;

- In the EU, **we like to ignore the political dimension of this debate, we have forgotten that space and security are not merely technical issues, led exclusively by industrial needs and military imperatives; the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU and the European Security Strategy should serve as the doctrines within which we embed our approaches to space**;
- **Space and its security** are not ends in themselves - they *are means to the EU's ends of spreading peace and security through effective multilateralism and of building human security globally*;
- The recent trends in the US are well-known and are of course driven by the military, especially the Air Force; they are aware that this Administration offers a window of opportunity to push forward all sorts of aggressive doctrines of space dominance; for the first time, in 2005, the US voted against the PAROS draft resolutions in the First Committee; an extraordinary speech by the State Department representative in the Conference on Disarmament in June last year contained such unforgettable statements as (and I quote) **"there is no - repeat, no - problem in outer space for arms control to solve"**;
- **Bush's new National Space Policy**, which came out in October 2006, asserts in its introduction that (and I quote) *"freedom of action in space is as important to the US as air power and sea power"*, thus **clearly presenting space as a sub-heading in this administration's overarching approach to international**

relations that sees US military dominance as the best guarantee for global stability; one of the major goals of the new US Space Policy is to (and I quote) "*enable unhindered US operations in and through space to defend our interests there*"; of course, **the logical conclusion of this unilateral claim to total security through total dominance is that (and I quote again) "the US will oppose the development of new legal regimes or other restrictions that seek to prohibit or limit US access to or use of space."**

- It should be obvious that **Europe, which has enormous stakes in the peaceful use of space, would be the first global power to remind the US of the dangers of unilateralism in space** - after the US, we have most to lose from legal ambiguity, accidents, debris, escalation and arms races; unfortunately, while some European states think that space is no concern to them, others confuse loyalty to an old ally with irresponsible silence and complicity - **with very few exceptions, Europe has its head deep in the sand in this field**;
- A recent debate about ESDP and space in the European Parliament illustrated the growing **fetishization** of space as just another area where one can deploy hardware: it took about 2 hours of debate about networks of satellites, GPS, GMES, Galileo, missile guidance, the 2010 Headline Goal and qualitative goals in the realm of space technology, geo-spatial intelligence, satellite centres, etc etc. **before Dr Rebecca Johnson from the Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy brought everybody back to earth by reminding them that unless Europe succeeds in creating the right political and diplomatic framework for the peaceful use of space, all of the flashy toys will soon be endangered**;
- The greatest danger to the use of space for Europe in the long term is not a lack of funding, expertise, or institutional coherence - these problems have been identified and are slowly being addressed; **the real problem in this debate is its depoliticization and its presentation as a cocktail of technical, institutional and financial considerations**;

- **The most recent and disheartening example of all this is the new and long-awaited European Space Policy, jointly drafted by the European Commission and the European Space Agency:** plenty of interesting thoughts on satellite navigation, earth observation, ESDP, development, the modalities of public investment, the regulatory framework and so on; even the chapter on 'international relations' starts with the right approach (and I quote):

"Europe needs to remain an indispensable international partner providing first-class contributions to global initiatives and exerting leadership in selected domains in accordance with European values and interests."

- **But there is nothing - I repeat, nothing - in the new Space Policy on the vital issues being discussed in the UN concerning space and security: the concepts of 'debris' and 'weaponization',** for example, are never mentioned and while the idea of the "*peaceful exploitation of Outer Space*" is mentioned once, it is merely referred to as the legal status quo and **never as the cornerstone of a political and diplomatic strategy for the future;**
- Now you, as well informed observers of the EU, would probably say that **it is for the European Council to set political guidelines in this as in other fields**, and not the Commission and the European Space Agency, who jointly drafted the Space Policy - you would of course be right;
- In fact, the Space Council met exactly a month ago to approve the new Space Policy and adopted a resolution which included a political mandate for the Commission and the Agency to (and I quote) "*develop and pursue a joint strategy and establish a coordination mechanism on international relations*";
- More interestingly, a specific annex to the Space Council resolution **listed the areas that will have to be covered by that joint European approach to the international dimension of space policy**: this list covers interesting and important issues, such as "*making full use of potential space systems for sustainable development*", or even "*enabling Europe to participate in ambitious programmes the cost of which is too great for any one space power*": **but on space and security - nothing; on the**

danger of weaponization - nothing; on improving the legal and political framework for the peaceful use of space - again nothing;

In short, the European Space Policy doesn't just fail to recognize the growing dangers to the peaceful use of space posed by weaponization, US space doctrines and the Chinese ASAT test; it isn't just silent on the growing problem of debris, on the need for confidence-building measures in space and for a strengthened legal regime; it effectively lacks the formal guidelines and institutional arrangements for Europe to become a leading power on security and arms control in space;

- The conclusion I draw from this European Space Policy is that in the domain of space, security and international relations, *Europe is a dwarf*: we are wealthy, scientifically advanced, technologically savvy... dwarfs;
- In a way - and I am sorry to say this - *this whole conference is labouring under the false assumption that the EU is an actor in this field*: of course I would like there to be an EU Council Common Position on this subject; undoubtedly, I would love to hear any ideas about a role for the EU in a potential roadmap for a PAROS; finally, I would be delighted to hear what everyone has to say about the role the EU can play in the Conference on Disarmament;
- But the truth is that before deciding on the ways and means to implement policy, *we need to agree on two things*:
 1. Firstly, *that we have a problem* and that *we need to equip the international community with the tools (legal, political and technological) to deal with it*; that space is a *sui generis* medium, common to the whole of humankind, which should not be pulled into a trend towards weaponization;
 2. Secondly, *that Europe, as the EU*, and not as the mere sum of its national parts, *has an important value to add to the political and diplomatic efforts to protect space from an arms race*;

- Only *if* and *when* we all agree on these two ideas can we then move on and reflect how best to promote our goals in the UN and bilaterally with our partners around the world;
- As for me, although I come from a country, Portugal, which is not a major player in space, I feel there is no reason why Europe should shy away from this fight; there are reasonable voices across the Atlantic we should engage and join forces with;
- We have seen in the debate about missile defence that the most vocal voices of reason have not come from European capitals, but rather from the US Congress; **as soon as sanity find its way back into the White House in 2009 we should spare no efforts in calling on the US to revisit its Space Policy;**
- The US were the driving force behind the development of the present legal and political framework for peaceful space exploration: they will continue to be fundamental for its survival and improvement;
- Right now Europe is not ready to fill the gap left by the US in this field and we seem incapable to do little more than snipe from the sidelines; at this point in time, then, the least we can do is to be honest towards our allies and prepare for better times; and they will come soon;
- Again, my thanks to the German Federal Foreign Office and apologies for the somewhat bleak tone of my intervention.