

Excerpt from *European Military Space Capabilities: A Primer*

By Theresa Hitchens and Tomas Valasek | May 2006

Introduction

European nations, and Europe collectively, maintain launch, satellite manufacturing, and research facilities. European space activities, especially collective projects, traditionally have been focused on the civil and commercial arenas. This is changing, however, as more European nations see the need to pursue military capabilities in space. The reasons for shifting perceptions about, and budgets for, military-related space programs include: the recognition of the tremendous advantage robust space capabilities currently provide to the U.S. Armed Forces; the decade-long trend in Europe toward collective action in foreign affairs, defense policy and military operations; and, increasingly, Europe's desire to develop capabilities for strategic decision-making and action independent of the United States—a desire that has quickened in recent years as negative perceptions in Europe about U.S. unilateralism and militarism have hardened.

While there is no formal European space policy, much less a European military space policy, the nexus between space and security is now widely recognized. According to the European Union (EU):

European Security Policy is developing rapidly. Space-based situation awareness and reaction capability will play a substantial role in this policy. The differentiation between defense infrastructure and internal security infrastructure and systems is becoming blurred and common use needs to be clarified. The Council of the EU has recognized that space assets could contribute both to making the EU more capable in the field of crisis management and to fighting other security threats. It has therefore approved the idea that identified and agreed upon ESDP [European Security and Defense Policy] requirements should be reflected in the global EU space policy and European space programme.¹

European space programs and activities with relevance to military operations and strategic security cross the boundaries from commercial to civil to dual-use to military, and run the gamut from collective programs managed by the 25-nation European Union and/or the 17-member European Space Agency (ESA),² to joint projects involving two or more European nations, to national programs. Unfortunately, there is no one database that identifies, tracks and elaborates upon the myriad efforts. This report is designed to remedy that fact by presenting a *primer* on the European programs with the most strategic and military import—though, by no means do the authors claim to provide a fully comprehensive picture of what is an increasingly complex and shifting pattern of activity. Further, all data included in this report come from open sources: official when possible and unofficial (such as media reports) when official data was not available.

###

To order a full-version of this monograph, call the Center for Defense Information at (202) 332-0600. Please visit our website for more information about CDI and on our products at <http://www.cdi.org>.