

Technology a threat or means of support for the Security of the Citizen at the beginning of this new century

Alois J. SIEBER, JRC-INSTITUTE FOR THE PROTECTION AND SECURITY OF THE CITIZEN, EC (ITALY)

Ola DAHLMAN, OD Science Application AB, Stockholm, Sweden

Abstract

Two parallel revolutions are going on, in security affairs and in science and technology. Both these are independently affecting all of us every day. The purpose of this short presentation is to identify how science and technology can improve on our security – at the same time, we should also assess if S&T could not also be the origin of threats for the citizen.

The security perspective of today and tomorrow is broader than that of yesterday. On the global scale we are moving from deterrence to confidence building, from armed conflicts to crisis prevention and management. Conflicts today occur within rather than between States and non-state actors are playing an increased role.

The security of each of us depend more and more on our ability to handle non-military Crises. The terrorist attacks in New York and Washington are tragic illustrations of the vulnerability of modern societies. Also Europe has suffered from terrorist activities and attempts have been made to interrupt an orderly democratic process during recent EU summits. The non- military crises can also include organized, more “conventional“ crime, trafficking or environmental disasters. In many parts of the world the greatest threats to human security are still famine and disease. We are also facing a growing number of threats to our modern societies of an economic and technical origin. Deliberate attacks on our information systems to manipulate the very nerves of our societies can be launched from any point on earth and by small groups of people.

We have, in short, moved from a situation where we were planning to cope with disastrous military confrontation that might occur with a low probability to a situation where we have to cope with a number of threats to our security and safety facing us every day. A challenge in the development of our future security structure is to find a proper balance between the military and the civilian components. How do we spend the resources wisely to cope with this broader spectrum of threats to our security?

In science and technology we are witnessing a dramatic development in information technology. This has dramatically improved our ability to communicate and to transmit large amount of information also over global distances. The development in computer hardware and software has given us the capability to collect, store and retrieve and to analyze huge amount of data. It has also provided the basis for developing models to study and simulate complicated systems and scenarios. New type of sensors are

becoming available that can be connected in cost – effective networks to form surveillance and command and control systems. The development in bio- and nano technologies makes it possible to create and miniaturizes new types of sensors and other equipment. The development of remotely controlled and autonomous systems and vehicles are well under way.

The presentation will try to provide a definition of the security of the citizen at the beginning of this century and reflect on how S&T could improve the ssecurity or be the base of a threat to it.