

Policy Wars on Several Fronts

Dr. Francis X. Kane, President GPS International Association

As the GPS global community grows, so does more attention fall on policy issues which drive the future. The issue of modifying the GPS satellite signals to degrade accuracy, a technique called Selective Availability (S/A), is presently getting the most attention. The Congress commissioned several studies on GPS, and two study reports were issued in May. As reported in the first issue of *GPS Solutions*, the combined reports of the National Academy of Public Administration and the National Research Council recommended that the Defense Department turn off S/A and deactivate it in three years to make the clear signals available to the civil community. Dr. Schlesinger, Chairman of the NAPA Study, repeated those recommendations at the September Meeting of the Institute of Navigation. At both the May and September meetings, members of the Defense Department objected to the recommendations because of the national security requirement to prevent hostile forces from using GPS accuracy in attacks on US forces. (This problem of providing GPS accuracy to the civil community while denying it to enemy military forces is termed "the GPS Dilemma.") However, the debate has renewed interest in DoD for

changes to deny the use of GPS in combat areas. Industry is responding by creating new technical solutions to the GPS Dilemma.

The other front involves attacks on the 1994 Federal Radionavigation Plan which gives policy direction all US radionavigation programs for navigation, position location, and time. Just as with the 1992 FRP, the controversial issue in 1994 FRP is termination of US Government support of Loran and OMEGA. US operations of Loran will terminate in 2000, OMEGA in 1997.

At the first annual meeting of the GPS International Association, Dale Johnson, President of the Loran International Association, and Mr. Ian Anderson, President of the International Navigation Association, proposed that our three organizations (GIA, ILA, and INA) sponsor a conference on User Requirements for Positioning, Navigation and Precise Timing. That conference, the International Radionavigation Users Conference (IRUC), is planned for November 16 and 17, 1995 at Westfields, near Dulles Airport. I was asked to organize the program which calls for one day (the 16th) on technical presentations, and one day (the 17th) on policy issues. A government panel will make the policy presentations, but their participation, which I arranged with the Department of Transportation, was based on the objective of receiving proposed

changes and improvements in the 1994 FRP as well as recommendations for the 1996 version. Heywood Shirer of DoT termed our conference a "mini-users conference" of individual users, inasmuch as there is a "users' conference" of government agencies and other groups to help prepare the FRP.

The IRUC provides an unprecedented opportunity for an open forum on policy issues related to the FRP and user requirements. Some of the battlelines on the FRP have already been drawn, as you have observed from the first issue of *GPS Solutions*. However, the conference participants already recognize that DoT policy is as Secretary Frederico Peña recently wrote in a letter to me, "We in the Department of Transportation believe that GPS is the best technology for becoming the standard for worldwide navigation and positioning."

For me, the issue of phasing out Loran, OMEGA, and other aids goes back 20 years when, as I discuss in my article "Present at the Creation," that idea was advanced as a way to pay for GPS.

If you have any recommendations on the FRP and are seeking a forum, you have an opportunity in November at the International Radionavigation Users Conference.

Still to come is the debate over "Governance" of the GPS Program, an issue already raised by the NAPA and NRC studies.