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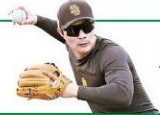
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Korea-US space partnership embodies future of alliance, FM says

By Nam Hyun-woo
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Space partnerships represent "the moonshot" or ambitious and groundbreaking goal of the Korea-U.S. alliance, Seoul's Foreign Minister Park Jin said, Monday, stressing that the cosmos is where the two countries' global, comprehensive and strategic partnerships converge.

Park made the remarks during the opening ceremony of a two-day space forum co-hosted by the ministry and the U.S. Department of State at the Grand Hyatt Seoul, which was held to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the bilateral alliance.

He also said the collaborative reach of the two countries has spread to

outer space, after President Yoon Suk Yeol and U.S. President Joe Biden agreed to expand the alliance to space during the Korean leader's state visit to Washington in April.

"So space is where the global comprehensive and strategic dimensions of our partnership converge," Park said. "And building a space alliance literally represents the moonshot of our alliance."

Park stressed the importance of bilateral cooperation in handling the space agenda is increasing more than ever, because of emerging challenges that no single country or entity can tackle alone.

"Already, nearly 40,000 space debris poses serious collision risks to our critical space infrastructure, and competition for orbital paths, and the

risks of technologies being misused are growing," Park said.

"Space is becoming increasingly militarized and weaponized. All of these are turning space into a giant geopolitical chessboard," he added.

To overcome those challenges, the foreign minister said the allies are fully committed to ensuring a safe, secure and sustainable environment for the benefit of all humankind, and will strengthen cooperation on the multilateral stage to establish norms, rules and principles for responsible space behavior.

In line with this view, the foreign minister noted that the leaders of Korea, the U.S. and Japan pledged to strengthen their conversations on space security during their trilateral summit



Foreign Minister Park Jin, center, U.S. Ambassador to Korea Philip Goldberg, right, and White House National Space Council Executive Secretary Chirag Parikh applaud during the opening ceremony of the Republic of Korea-U.S. Space Forum at the Grand Hyatt Seoul, Monday.

at Camp David, the U.S. presidential retreat, in August, and representatives of the three countries will hold a space

security dialogue on Wednesday.

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EDITORIAL

Space agency plan adrift

Lawmakers should speed up efforts for Korea's NASA

The National Assembly, already notorious for excessively partisan disputes and incapability, has again come under growing criticism for having failed to deal with seemingly significant agenda, such as the creation of a national space agency for example.

The Yoon Suk Yeol administration earlier vowed to establish the new agency by the end of the year. Toward that end, the government formed a task force team, drafting a special bill for the "establishment and management of the space agency" in March.

Yet, the move has made little progress with the related bill still pending at a parliamentary sub-panel. The government and the opposition Democratic Party of Korea have been at odds over the details of the envisioned agency.

For starters, the government has been seeking to place the new agency under the umbrella of the Ministry of Science and ICT, while the DPK prefers to place it under the direct control of the president. They remained poles apart on whether to endow the new agency with a research and development (R&D) function. The agenda seemed to surmount a hurdle as the government partially conceded to the DPK's stance late last month.

But the Assembly has made no tangible efforts since then. Should things continue like this, the parliament will be unable to pass the bill until Nov. 9, the deadline for the ongoing Assembly session.

This means the fate of the agency will face uncertainties with the bill expected to remain pending through the year. Worse still, the prospect of a passage early next year is slimmer, given the upcoming general elections slated for April 10.

Private organizations went all out to call for the passage of the relevant bill. On Nov. 1, the Korea Aerospace Industries Association (KAIA) and Korea Association for Space Technology Promotion (KASPT) released a statement calling for the immediate establishment of the space agency.

"The aerospace industry is

the dream and hope for future generations. It should not be the objective of political and regional haggling. The agency should be set up promptly for the nation to catch up with the leading countries," the statement read.

The political parties should attentively listen to the voices of related organizations. Any belated setup of the agency will cause adverse consequences on the domestic aerospace sector.

Most of all, they will face growing setbacks in bids to promote technology exchanges with leading enterprises and institutes of advanced countries. This will also deal a fatal blow to the Yoon administration's ambitious plan of becoming a global hub nation in the space sector.

Already equipped with prowess in semiconductors and automobiles, Korea needs to find a new growth engine in the aerospace area.

Currently, more developed countries are rushing to sharpen their respective competitiveness in the aerospace sector, initiated by enterprises.

For instance, SpaceX and Amazon of the United States are launching space rockets to the moon and Mars. A Japanese start-up firm launched a lunar spacecraft and is developing a satellite with a mission to clear space debris. Space internet company Starlink already proved its efficiency during the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine and is ready to land in Korea soon.

To sum up, space has emerged as the main platform of future industries in the 21st century.

Now, the political parties are in a dispute over where to place the envisaged agency, either in Sacheon in South Gyeong-sang Province or in Daejeon. The parties should refrain from deciding the issue from a political perspective, only mindful of votes ahead of the general elections.

The lawmakers should first think about the future of the nation and the young. They should not commit the grave mistake of wasting golden time to advance the aerospace sector.

particularly regarding threats in the space domain, national space strategies, and the responsible use of space."

During the forum, U.S. Ambassador to Korea Philip Goldberg highlighted Seoul's successful launch of the Nuri rocket and the Danuri lunar orbiter, and NASA's ShadowCam on board the Danuri providing valuable data to scientists in both countries.

"Our space cooperation is rooted in our shared values — innovation, integrity and transparency — and these bring benefits to both of our people," Goldberg said, citing the Yoon-Biden summit in April.

"We have committed to strengthening our space cooperation across all sectors, including space security, commerce, and civil space exploration."

Chirag Parikh, executive secretary of the White House National Space Council, said that the U.S. is seeking regional and global security through space cooperation, and sees the Korea-U.S. partnership as being essential for the expanding space economy. He also stressed that the two countries should make efforts to set up international rules for the peaceful and responsible use of space.

Following the opening ceremony, the forum featured a series of panel discussions involving policymakers and experts from the two countries to address topics such as the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, reducing space threats, space security and space exploration.

Alliance

In a joint statement issued at the Camp David Summit, Yoon, Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida agreed to hold a "trilateral dialogue on space security cooperation,