Recent Discussion in the Committee on National Space Policy of Japan

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Abstract

Following the Space Basic Law of 2008, the Committee on National Space Policy of Japan has been established in 2012. This Committee is regulated by Cabinet Office Establishment Act and it will consult the Japanese space policy to Prime Minister. The number of member is 7, who are designated from the industrial circle and academia. Under the Main Committee there are 4 Subcommittees to support the Main Committee's discussion. Until now, the Committee selected 4 major space fields and 3 additional fields that should be noted. The Committee also recommended the security in and from outer space, contribution to the Japan-US alliance, international cooperation, long term sustainable satellite development, human resources development to the government.

1. The Basic Space Law

Japanese Diet passed the Space Basic Law[1] in 2008 after its space development of almost 40 years. This Law was drafted on a bipartisan basis and proposed to the Diet. While Japan successfully launched its first satellite "OHSUMI" in 1970, there was no fundamental legal system for national space activities.

This Basic Law provides that Japanese space activities will be done not only for scientific purposes but also for all national level purposes including industrial promotion, environmental protection, national security, etc. Japan should of course observe its Constitution and international law for its own space utilization according to this Basic Law.

[1] http://law.e-gov.go.jp/htmldata/H20/H20HO043.html

2. The Committee on National Space Policy of Japan

(1) Establishing of the Committee
The Committee on National Space Policy has been established in 2012 under the scheme of Japanese Space Basic Law. The formal legal basis for this Committee is Cabinet Office Establishment Act[2]. According to Article 38 of this Act, the Committee on National Space Policy shall be made as an advisory organization to Prime Minister in all the Japanese space activities' fields.

(2) The Main Committee
The Main Committee of National Space Policy consists of seven permanent members. The Chairperson is Mr. KASAI, Yoshiyuki. He is Representative Director & Honorary Chairman of Central Japan Railway Company. Other six members are five university professors (Prof. MATSUI, Takafumi (Deputy Chairperson) as a planetary exploitation expert, Prof. NAKASUKA, Shin-ichi as a satellite engineering expert, Prof. MATSUMOTO, Hiroshi as a cosmic plasma expert, Prof. YAMAKAWA, Hiroshi as an astrodynamics expert and Prof. AOKI, Setsuko as a space law expert), and one astronaut, Ms. YAMAZAKI, Naoko[3]. Six members other than the chairperson are all experts from wide range of space science.

(3) Four Subcommittees
Under this Main Committee, there have been 4 Subcommittees for more detailed and deeper discussion. Those are Space Transportation System Subcommittee, Space Science and Exploitation Subcommittee, Space Industry Subcommittee, and Research and Analysis Subcommittee. In those 4 Subcommittees, some Main Committee members participate, and additional temporary members are designated by the government. Those 4 Subcommittees worked from March of 2013. Only Research and Analysis Subcommittee was closed in March 2014. Instead of this Subcommittee, the Fundamental Policy Subcommittee was established in June 2014[4].

(4) Discussion in the Main Committees
Until now, the Main Committee has decided some policy guidelines for national space development budget, considering suggestions and opinions from four Subcommittees. These guidelines selected four fields of space utilization as social infrastructure and allowed enough investment. Such fields are (1) positioning, (2) remote sensing, (3) communication and broadcasting, and (4) launching systems. Other than those major fields, the Committee selected three fields to engage.

2 http://law.e-gov.go.jp/htmldata/H11/H11HO089.html
3 http://www8.cao.go.jp/space/comittee/about.html
4 http://www8.cao.go.jp/space/comittee/kaisai.html

Those are (1) space exploitation, (2) manned space activity and (3) solar power generation[5].

(5) Discussion in Subcommittees

Subcommittees' discussions were as follows.

The Space Transportation System Subcommittee discussed the present and future launching rocket systems. The present rocket systems (liquid fuel rockets and solid fuel rockets) remain and Japan will improve their reliability. They concluded that the future liquid fuel rocket system should be developed not mainly by Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) but mainly by civil sectors. The Subcommittee paid attention to the international cooperation, reusable rocket systems and air breathing engines[6].

The Space Science and Exploitation Subcommittee accepted the space science and exploitation roadmap of JAXA[7] and made additional recommendations for more effective space actions, which included higher frequency of launchings, its connection to space transportation system development, competitive selection of exploitation proposals and cooperation with universities.

The Space Industry Subcommittee discussed civil-public cooperation, technology and know-how transfer from the government to the civil sectors, various policies for business promotion, etc.[8]

The Research and Analysis Subcommittee contributed to other Subcommittees as well as Main Committee by informing of major space powers' national space policies and technological trends. And this Subcommittee emphasized the importance of strengthening research and analysis function lead by the Japanese government itself[9].

The new Fundamental Policy Subcommittee, which was made in June 2014, accepted the interim report on the basic future Japanese space policies in August 2014. By this interim report this Subcommittee paid much attention to the security use of outer space, which was not included in the past Japanese space utilization. Additionally bilateral cooperation with USA in the fields of Space Situational Awareness (SSA) and Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), promotion of international cooperation, steady satellite development and their operation on the long term viewpoints, and human resource development were included in this report[10].

5 http://www8.cao.go.jp/space/comittee/kettei/27housin.pdf
6 http://www8.cao.go.jp/space/comittee/yusou-dai14/siryou2.pdf
7 http://www8.cao.go.jp/space/comittee/kagaku-dai10/sankou2.pdf
8 http://www8.cao.go.jp/space/comittee/sangyou-dai8/siryou1.pdf
9 http://www8.cao.go.jp/space/comittee/tyousa-dai10/siryou3.pdf
10 http://www8.cao.go.jp/space/comittee/kihon-dai2/siryou1.pdf

3. Conclusion

By the Committee on the National Space Policy, Japan has opened their windows for the national level discussions on all Japanese space activities and its policies. This scheme is, however, just a starting point. Japan still faces some problems to be considered. For instance, the policy and budget integration among different Departments in the government, the possibility of establishing the National Space Agency of Japan, the policy coordination between this Space Policy Committee and other national organs like the National Security Council (NSC) should be well solved in future. It should be necessary to watch such matters carefully.
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