

Korea eyes jet sale to U.S.

T-X exports would strengthen alliance: Park

By Shin Hyon-hee, news reports

President Park Geun-hye on Thursday revealed in the announcement of South Korea's improved jet trainers, saying the country's possible exports to the U.S. could strengthen the bilateral alliance.

South Korea has improved the T-50 Golden Eagle supersonic trainer to attempt exporting new jet trainers to the U.S. The T-50 was codeveloped by Korea Aerospace Industries and U.S. defense firm Lockheed Martin.

Park said possible exports of T-X trainers to the U.S. will make a big contribution to South Korea's aviation industry and its economy.

"The exports could become a catalyst in further strengthening the South Korea-U.S. alliance," Park said in a ceremony rolling out the first T-X jet trainer at the headquarters of KAI, the country's sole aircraft maker, in the southern city of Sacheon, South Gyeongsang Province.

Park also said the possible exports to the U.S. could pave the way for South Korea to sell jet trainers to other countries.

The U.S. is deemed the largest market for the T-50. KAI is hoping to sell at least 350 units there, but the final figure may surge to nearly 1,000 given perceived additional



President Park Geun-hye speaks during a ceremony to unveil the T-X trainer for export to the U.S. at the Korea Aerospace Industries in Sacheon, South Gyeongsang Province, Thursday. Yonhap

demands from the U.S. Marine Corps and other branches.

If KAI manages to secure the bid, it could garner additional contracts from U.S. allies and other friendly countries.

Experts have projected the global demand for trainer jets and light fighters to reach about 3,300 units over the next three decades. KAI aims to export around 1,000 units during that period.

The U.S. Air Force is forecast to announce the winner in late

2017 after an assessment of on-site production preparations and test flights early that year, after delays caused by defense cuts.

The FA-50 fighters, a light attack variant of the T-50, are currently in service with the South Korean Air Force.

Last month, KAI made the first delivery of the two FA-50PHs, multi-mission jets, to the Philippines as part of a \$420 million government-to-government deal inked between Seoul and Manila, which calls for

the export of 12 aircraft.

KAI has so far received 133 plane orders from Indonesia, Turkey, Peru, Iraq and Thailand for both the T-50 series jets and the KT-1 tandem, prop-driven basic trainers. These orders are worth some \$3.3 billion.

The company said it is negotiating with Peru and Botswana to sell them T-50 jets, as well as seeking new customers in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America for the KT-1. (heeshin@heraldcorp.com)

N.K. could deploy H-bomb around 2020: 38 North

WASHINGTON (Yonhap) — North Korea's claims of hydrogen bomb development are technically unlikely for now, but the communist nation could deploy a single-stage thermonuclear weapon with a yield of 100 kilotons around 2020, a U.S. expert claimed Wednesday.

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un claimed last week that the country has become a "powerful nuclear weapons state ready to detonate a self-reliant A-bomb and H-bomb." It was believed to be the

first time that Kim has publicly claimed development of a hydrogen bomb, which is much more powerful than conventional nuclear weapons.

But the White House effectively rejected the claims, saying U.S. intelligence "calls into serious question those claims."

Officials in Seoul also expressed skepticism, saying Pyongyang is not believed to have such capabilities when it has not yet mastered the technology to miniaturize nuclear warheads.

Joel Wit, editor of the website 38 North, said during a press briefing that the North's H-bomb claim is "technically unlikely, but boosting yields with fusion fuels is not." He also said Kim's pronouncement states exactly what North Koreans have been saying for years.

"Every country that has built nuclear weapons has done that as next step in the development process," he said.

But beyond 2020, Wit said that the North could deploy a single-stage thermonuclear weapon with

a yield of 100 kilotons and could make significant progress on a two-stage weapon. That yield is hugely more powerful than conventional nuclear bombs, considering the yield of the nuclear device the North last tested in 2013 was estimated at about 7 kilotons.

Wit also said the U.S. should accept the North's demand for peace treaty negotiations.

Pyongyang has stepped up the demand in recent months as the six-party nuclear talks have long remained stalled.

'Why I became a refugee'

From Page 1

refugees in foreign countries. In 2009, a 28-year-old Korean conscientious objector, who was also gay, was granted refugee status in Canada. In 2013, another Korean gay conscientious objector became a refugee in Australia. A number of Korean male-to-female transgender people have left Korea to live as refugees overseas, claiming social and cultural discrimination, as well as difficult job prospects and costly medical treatments not covered by the national health insurance system, making it virtually impossible for them to live with dignity in Korea.

In 2012, Lee, who decided not to serve in the military, had two options at hand. He could go to jail or flee to another country and apply for refugee status. He chose the latter. In an email interview with The Korea Herald, Lee shared his thoughts on his difficult decision to flee his home country, his life as a Korean refugee in Europe and why he thinks it's important for South Korea to provide an alternative to mandatory military service for conscientious objectors. Edited excerpts follow.

The Korea Herald: What made you want to refuse the mandatory service?

Lee: Ever since I was young, I haven't been comfortable with the idea of serving in the military — without having the option of refusing. I'm sure many other Korean men have felt the same way. When I was 14, I read Japanese manga artist Osamu Tezuka's "Buddha," which is Tezuka's unique interpretation of the life of the founder of Buddhism. I was deeply inspired by the work and the concept that emphasizes the importance of avoiding killing or harming living things.

I received my draft notice when I was 21, and a friend of mine gave me a book about people who choose to refuse to serve in the Army to

express their belief against violence and armed conflicts. That's when I first learned about the existence of conscientious objectors. From then on, I did my own research about Korea's participation in wars, including the Vietnam War, the war in Afghanistan, as well as historical events such as the 1948 Jeju Uprising and the 1980 Gwangju Democratization Movement. I came to a conclusion that the military (in Korea) has been failing to protect its own citizens. And as an individual I wanted to do something about it. Refusing to serve the duty was my way of doing that.

K.H.: What's your typical day like in Paris? How do you make a living as a refugee?

Lee: I work at a bagel shop part-time from Wednesday to Saturday. When I'm not working, I volunteer to spend time with migrants who have applied for refugee status and their children, and give antiwar speeches about my experience as a conscientious objector. I've been to Japan, Germany and Switzerland to share my experiences. Before I was accepted as a refugee — it took me about 10 months — I was given about 300 euros (\$325) a month by the French government. After gaining my status, I've been receiving about 250 euros a month in government subsidies. I get paid for lectures and speeches and media interviews. I plan to go to school next year. I've been making a lot of efforts to learn French.

K.H.: Have you considered the other option — serving a prison term — instead of being a refugee overseas?

Lee: I chose to flee the country (instead of serving a jail term) because I wanted to inform the public that in certain foreign countries, being a conscientious objector (faced with criminal charges) alone can be a legitimate reason to attain refugee status, and that refusing to serve in the military is recognized as an individual right. By doing so



Lee Ye-da (left) participates in a rally protesting against the South Korean government in France. Lee Ye-da

I wanted to challenge the general (Korean) notion that avoiding the duty is simply unthinkable.

K.H.: Have you ever regretted your decision?

Lee: Never. I've always tried to make life choices that would make me feel proud of myself. Fleeing Korea was simply one of them. I, in fact, met many more people whom I felt connected to after moving to France. I meet a lot of supporters. I'm definitely happier.

K.H.: War is what displaced half of the population in Syria. As a conscientious objector, what are your thoughts on the current refugee crisis?

Lee: I don't think one is responsible for every struggle he or she has to endure. As individuals, we face many things that are beyond our control. In a similar context, I think everyone in the world is partly responsible for today's wars and what's happening to those who are forced to uproot their lives to survive. For example, South Korea has sent troops to the Middle East, but did not pay attention to how these wars were affecting the lives of the local civilians there. The point was to stay close to powerful allies. As citizens, we should care about what our governments are

doing and how it's affecting those we don't know who live on other side of the world.

K.H.: You've met other refugees from other countries in France. What has the experience been like?

Lee: I left my home country because of my personal beliefs. My life wasn't in danger. But I've met many people who literally couldn't have survived if they chose not to uproot their lives. I empathize with fellow refugees with their struggles, and what it meant for them to give up their native language and culture. Spending time with them has made me want to study more on why wars happen and how to protect human rights in a time of crisis.

K.H.: Do you remember anything from the day you arrived to France?

Lee: My mother, who was very much against the idea of me refusing to serve in the military, gave me some cash the day I left Korea. I used the money to get a room at a guesthouse. I remember watching the sunset near the Seine riverside in the evening. It was so beautiful. I remember feeling sad, but was determined to stay true to the decision that I had made. (dyc@heraldcorp.com)

'Smart branding essential in innovative economy'

By Joel Lee

In an innovative global economy, branding is no longer a nicety, but a necessity that guarantees the success of companies and countries worldwide, Danish business consultant Martin Roll argued.

A long-time resident of Singapore, Roll, who authored "Asian Brand Strategy," has offered advice for navigating the volatile international marketplace to Fortune 500 companies and leading Asian enterprises and family-owned businesses with a focus on Asia.

"It's time for Korea to project confidence for what it stands for. You are not an underdog anymore," Roll said in an interview with The Korea Herald last week. "China's rise will continue and Japan will have its place as the world's third-largest economy, but a very large space exists for Korea both in Asia and the world."

Roll, who has been to Korea more than 200 times, visited Seoul to conduct a workshop on branding a country at the invitation of the Danish embassy. Aside from running his consulting firm Martin Roll Company, he is a goodwill ambassador for Denmark, attracting tourists and investment back home through personal networks. Roll earned his Master of Business Administration degree from business school INSEAD.

Unlike 15 years ago, when Westerners had difficulties differentiating between Asian countries, Roll said the global dominance of leading Japanese and Korean firms helped enhance the brand image of their respective countries in Europe. Korea, Japan and increasingly China are recognized as hotbeds of innovation and allure, he said.

In Denmark, Korea is associated with technological and cultural sophistication, Roll noted, as international brands such as Samsung, Hyundai and AmorePacific have become part of Danish life.

"Innovation is also not only about technology. It has to come with storytelling," he stressed. "It's about making consumers understand where the technology comes from."

As Korea has a wealth of assets yet to be unearthed from its long history, Roll highlighted that popularizing these customs, artifacts, identities and food could enrich the intangible value of modern-day products and services.

Danish toy brand Lego, he noted, has incorporated the essence of Danish children's playfulness and creativity.

"Lego capitalized on the notion of play, which is universal, and established its brand that way," Roll said. "It is not necessary to have the national flag on your products, but using the national identity appropriately can help lift your brand image."

Roll also cited the Danish multinational pharmaceutical company Novo Nordisk, which has championed the Nordic ideals of professionalism, authenticity and transparency; as well as the French cosmetics firm L'Oreal, which has globalized French beauty and elegance.

In a new business paradigm, businesses can reap the benefits of partnering with public



Danish business strategist Martin Roll Joel Lee/The Korea Herald

organizations and vice versa, he said. Tourism, trade and inbound investment agencies, such as Korea's Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Sports, the Singapore Tourism Board and the Singapore Economic Development Board, increasingly employ the national brand, he indicated.

The strength of the Danish public-private partnership lies in its nonhierarchical and participatory nature: "As an entrepreneur in Denmark, you feel very close to the government and politicians. Red tape is minimal and even our queen and prime minister engage average Danes in one way or another."

Nova Nordisk CEO Lars Rebie Sorensen, who was named the world's top business leader by Harvard Business Review two months ago, eats in the company cafeteria, talks to employees from the boardroom to the cleaning room and flies on regular airlines, Roll said.

"This means that when employees go to work, they feel like they are part of the organization, feeling empowered, balanced and involved. They feel they are doing meaningful work."

Parents can pick up children from kindergarten at 3:30 p.m., and take long maternity leaves. People swim in the Copenhagen Harbor. Conglomerates promote green initiatives. And there is lots of room for play at school.

"Being in control of your life, as a master and architect of your career, not being too worried about money. If you add up all of that, being happy in Denmark is natural."

Roll noted that Denmark and Korea can cooperate in the green economy, adding that Korea's production and engineering competence and Denmark's innovation and management acumen can be harmonized for synergy.

"Like Denmark's place within the European Union, Korea can position itself as a sophisticated and innovative hub in Asia," he said. "You don't need to be overly concerned about China's rise. China's challenges in cleaning up its environment and feeding, housing and educating people present enormous opportunities."

Like Singapore, which has become a connector between Northeast Asian and Southeast Asian markets, Roll suggested Korea could brand itself as a cosmopolitan hub of East Asia for the neighboring economies and cultures. (joel@heraldcorp.com)

Hyundai Steel loses suit over state carbon credit quota

By Lee Hyun-jeong

Korean conglomerate Hyundai Steel lost its lawsuit against the government's move to allocate carbon credits to businesses, a court announced Thursday.

The Administrative Court dismissed the steelmaker's request to revoke the Environment Ministry's action to allocate a set amount of carbon credits to the company.

This is the first verdict released over the controversial carbon credit quota after a number of companies filed lawsuits against the state to nullify the carbon credit move earlier this year.

In December last year, the government assigned carbon credit quotas to 525 companies, including 84 petrochemical firms, ahead of the opening of Asia's first-ever carbon

trade market in January this year.

Companies must purchase the carbon credits if they exceed the emissions allowed.

The business sector, however, has complained about the insufficient quota, claiming the ministry allocated only 80 percent of carbon credits they had requested.

Earlier this month, the Korean government pledged in Paris to cut emissions by 37 percent from the expected business-as-usual levels by 2030.

The industry has raised suspicion over the efficacy of the carbon credit trading system. As of this month, just 0.8 percent of this year's allocated amount of carbon credits — 543 million tons — had been traded in the market, officials said. (rene@heraldcorp.com)