

## **Gobi Wolf 2017 kicks off in Mongolia**

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DALANZADGAD, Mongolia – Exercise Gobi Wolf 2017 began May 1, 2017, with an opening ceremony, academic training, a United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs webinar and a reception dinner in Dalanzadgad, Mongolia.

GW 17 is a five-day disaster response exercise and exchange between the government of Mongolia and U.S. Army Pacific focused on interagency coordination.

The Mongolia National Emergency Management Agency hosts the exercise with support from the Mongolian Armed Forces.

Ambassador Jennifer Zimdahl Galt, U.S. Ambassador to Mongolia, said the exercise marks 30 years of cooperation between the U.S. and Mongolia, and she expressed her confidence in NEMA's ability to excel during the exercise. "NEMA is a partner that exceeds expectations at every turn," Galt said. "I look forward to hearing, as the exercise goes on this week, of the extraordinary performance of our NEMA colleagues."

The exercise scenario centers around a simulated magnitude 7.5 earthquake in Umnugovi (South Gobi) province along the border with China.

"The scenario and actions that follow will test disaster-management plans including earthquake preparedness plans at the national and local levels, and coordination of civil-military cooperation, and strengthen reception of international humanitarian assistance," said NEMA Brig. Gen. Badral Tuvshin, Chief of NEMA.

GW 17 activities also include a table-top exercise focusing on functional-area expertise in an office environment, a field-training exercise at several locations around Dalanzadgad, and an after-action review to capture lessons learned during the exercise.

GW was originally hosted from 2009 to 2012 and was reinstated in 2015 as part of USARPAC's Pacific Resilience series of humanitarian assistance/disaster relief exercises.

Pacific Resilience tests host nation defense support to civil authorities during disaster situations, the integration of foreign humanitarian assistance and the strategic communication required to implement emergency-management plans.

"We do this to facilitate cooperation and coordination [and] build relationships between host nations and other regional responding agencies – not just military but also governmental," said U.S. Army Maj. Edwin Morton, GW 17 exercise director and lead U.S. planner. "There are international components of this that we're exercising. We're not just building relationships. We're also working out the cooperation and coordination mechanisms that we need to effectively respond to a disaster where there's been a request for international assistance."

Gobi Wolf 2016 invited participation of multinational partners beyond Mongolia and the United States, and this year's exercise continues the practice. Other countries who sent delegates include Bangladesh, Canada, Hungary, Japan, Nepal, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea.

In a departure from past exercises, this year's Gobi Wolf moves away entirely from Mongolia's capital city of Ulaanbaatar. Morton said the change allows for a more realistic and challenging scenario owing to austere conditions and the added logistical demands of distance.

U.S. military participating in the exercise include active duty Army, Air Force, Army Reserve, Alaska Army National Guard and Alaska Air National Guard service members from across the Pacific Command. U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and numerous U.S. non-governmental agencies also sent delegates.

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20170501-Z-ZY202-0008: A Mongolian Armed Forces Central Military Band member performs May 1, 2017, during a dinner marking the opening day of Gobi Wolf 2017. GW 17 is hosted by the Mongolia National Emergency Management Agency and Mongolian Armed Forces as part of the United States Army Pacific's humanitarian assistance and disaster relief "Pacific Resilience" series. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Bedard)



20170501-Z-ZY202-0004: Mongolia National Emergency Management Agency Brig. Gen. Badral Tuvshin (right) greets U.S. Army Maj. Edwin Morton, Gobi Wolf 2017 exercise director and lead U.S. planner, May 1, 2017, during an exercise reception dinner in Dalanzadgad, Mongolia. GW 17 is hosted by the Mongolia National Emergency Management Agency and Mongolian Armed Forces as part of the United States Army Pacific's humanitarian assistance and disaster relief "Pacific Resilience" series. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Bedard)



20170502-Z-ZY202-0006: U.S. Army Capt. Maria Rodriguez and Master Sgt. Leroy Williams, both of the 25th Infantry Division Headquarters, confer with their Mongolian counterparts during Exercise Gobi Wolf 2017 May 2, 2017, in Dalanzadgad, Mongolia. GW 17 is hosted by the Mongolia National Emergency Management Agency and Mongolian Armed Forces as part of the United States Army Pacific's humanitarian assistance and disaster relief "Pacific Resilience" series. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Bedard)