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Japan Ground Self-Defense Force soldiers train for UN patrolling in Mongolia

FIVE HILLS TRAINING AREA, Mongolia — The rolling terrain of Five Hills Training Area, Mongolia, is host to a virtual symphony of sounds.

As soldiers of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force patrolled down a plunging valley June 21, columns of band-wing grasshoppers jumped out of the way, making a signature noise as they flew. Click, click, click. The loud insect sounds could obscure the movement of simulated insurgents or the cry of a civilian in danger, but the soldiers were vigilant in scanning the horizon with their eyes and listening through the clamor.

Then the platoon's world exploded with AK-47 rifle fire. Crack, crack, crack. A simulated rebel was hiding behind a rock outcropping and was further obscured by a herd of wild horses nearby.

Trained during Khaan Quest 2018 for peacekeeping operations, The Japanese soldiers were nonetheless ready to defend themselves and to protect civilians during the patrolling lane.

Japan Ground Self-Defense Force 2nd Lt. Seiga Kudo, platoon leader, rapidly deployed his right flank to grapple with the threat. Clinging to cover behind a small ridge, the Japanese soldiers suppressed the rebel gunman before flanking and finishing him.

Though the scenario quickly went kinetic, most of the platoon's encounters during the training event required differing levels of interpersonal engagement and judicious use of force.

The purpose of Khaan Quest is to gain United Nations training and certification for the participants through the conduct of realistic peace support operations, to include increasing and improving U.N. peacekeeping interoperability and military relationships among the participating nations.

Teaching the training were members of the Mongolian Armed Forces, fellow Japan Ground Self-Defense Force soldiers, the Nepalese Army, the Qatar Armed Forces and the Republic of Korea Marines.

Alaska Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Oliver Meza, Khaan Quest 2018 field-training exercise lead, said every lane instructor, regardless of nationality, attends the same U.N. peacekeeping course qualifying them to teach and evaluate U.N. principals and techniques.

Kudo said he relished the chance to gain different perspectives on how to carry out peacekeeping operations.

“This is a rare opportunity to get the experience and skill of multiple countries,” he said. “We get to share a lot of information, and that is a very good thing.”

Mongolian Armed Forces 2nd Lt. D. Duurenertene, an instructor for the patrolling lane, said the U.N. has a single framework for carrying out peacekeeping operations, and his staff doesn't focus on the nuts and bolts of how each country tackles the scenario.

“We're not teaching tactics,” Duurenertene explained. “We're teaching the platoons how U.N. operations work.”

Meza said the patrolling lane specifically focused on training and testing rules of engagement, the U.N. code of personal conduct and protection of civilians.

Duurenertene, who has studied peacekeeping operations and civil affairs abroad in the U.S. and Nepal, said U.N. patrolling serves four purposes.

The first purpose is presence.

“As U.N. peacekeepers, we need to show our presence to the local people,” Duurenertene said. “It says, 'We are going to protect civilians and provide help.'”

The second purpose is to collect information from the local populace such as insurgency activity and the needs of the community.

The third purpose is to ensure freedom of maneuver for coalition forces, allowing them to rapidly deploy to hot spots.

The fourth purpose is to protect civilians.

During another engagement, the Japanese platoon encountered a simulated rebel beating a citizen.

“Stop! Stop!,” the Japanese bellowed in English as they ran to close the distance.

In a matter of seconds, they had the rebel in custody, and the platoon medic was giving aid to the injured civilian. The incident was straightforward, but it required quick judgment on the part of Kudo and his soldiers to properly address the situation.

Though the platoon was bristling with rifles and trained to fight anywhere in the world, Duurenertene said, throughout the training, soldiers of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force showed they were ready to meet any challenge facing them during peacekeeping operations.

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PHOTOS

1. **Attached pdf** includes story and a small selection of low-resolution photos for viewing on screen.
2. **Flickr link** includes an event album with the complete selection of full-resolution, free downloadable images. (May not be accessible from all military computers.)

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/alaskanationalguard/sets/72157692022475800/>

3. **DVIDS link** includes story and selected full-resolution photos. (Primarily for media, DVIDS is accessible from .mil computers.) <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/282069/japan-ground-self-defense-force-soldiers-train-un-patrolling-mongolia>



Japan Ground Self-Defense Force Sgt. 1st Class Junya Sawada and Sgt. Yuta Takano close ranks after neutralizing a simulated rebel June 21, 2018, at Five Hills Training Area, Mongolia, during a Khaan Quest 2018 patrolling lane. The purpose of Khaan Quest is to gain United Nations training and certification for the participants through the conduct of realistic peace support operations, to include increasing and improving U.N. peacekeeping interoperability and military relationships among the participating nations. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. David Bedard/Released)



Japan Ground Self-Defense Force Sgt. Yuta Takano observes his sector June 21, 2018, at Five Hills Training Area, Mongolia, during a Khaan Quest 2018 patrolling lane. The purpose of Khaan Quest is to gain United Nations training and certification for the participants through the conduct of realistic peace support operations, to include increasing and improving U.N. peacekeeping interoperability and military relationships among the participating nations. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. David Bedard/Released)



Japan Ground Self-Defense Force 2nd Lt. Seiga Kudo commands his platoon under the watch of multi-national instructors June 21, 2018, at Five Hills Training Area, Mongolia, during a Khaan Quest 2018 patrolling lane. The purpose of Khaan Quest is to gain United Nations training and certification for the participants through the conduct of realistic peace support operations, to include increasing and improving U.N. peacekeeping interoperability and military relationships among the participating

nations. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. David Bedard/Released)