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Special Feature

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International Disaster Relief Activities by the MOD/JSDF

1 The Japan Disaster Relief Team Law

Since the enactment of the Law Concerning the Dispatch of the Japan Disaster Relief Team (Japan Disaster Relief Team Law) in 1987, Japan has engaged in international disaster relief activities in response to requests from the governments of affected countries and international

organizations. In 1992, the Japan Disaster Relief Team Law was partially amended, enabling the JSDF to participate in international disaster relief activities and to transport its personnel and equipment for this purpose.

2 International Disaster Relief Activities by the JSDF and JSDF's Posture

Responding to specific relief requests by the governments of affected countries and the scale of disaster situations in these countries, the JSDF's capabilities in international disaster relief activities encompass (1) medical services, such as first aid medical treatment and epidemic prevention; (2) transport of relief items, patients and personnel by helicopter and other means; and (3) water supply activities using water-purifying devices.

In addition, the JSDF uses transport aircraft and ships to carry disaster relief personnel and equipment to the affected area.

The Ground Component Command, regional armies of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) and other relevant JGSDF units maintain their readiness to ensure that they can carry out international disaster relief activities in an independent manner anytime when needed. The Self Defense Fleet of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) and Air Support Command of the Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) also constantly maintain their readiness to transport personnel and their supplies to disaster affected areas. In addition, in April 2015, the Ministry of Defense (MOD)/JSDF also improved its readiness to be able to swiftly respond to a request for search activities using P-3C patrol aircraft.



3 Recent Activities of International Disaster Relief

International Disaster Relief Activities in Response to the Earthquakes and Tsunami in Indonesia

On September 28th, 2018, a magnitude 7.5 earthquake struck the area near Sulawesi Island in central Indonesia. Upon request by the Indonesian government, the MOD/JSDF decided to dispatch an JSDF Disaster Relief team (Local Coordination Center and an air transport unit) on October 3rd.

Local Coordination Center personnel arrived at the disaster site on October 3rd, followed by the air transport unit on October 5th, and the transport using a C-130H Transport Aircraft started on the following day. On the

25th of the same month, Defense Minister ordered termination of the mission and the activities of the disaster relief team, which had lasted for 23 days, ended on October 26th. The transport unit conducted transportation of about 200 tons of relief goods (food, water, tents, clothes, etc.) in total and about 400 displaced and other people between Balikpapan (Kalimantan island), Jakarta (Java island), and disaster-affected Palu (Sulawesi island).



To contribute to the advancement of international cooperation, the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) has engaged in international disaster relief activities proactively from the viewpoint of humanitarian contributions and improvement of the global security environment.

International Disaster Relief Activities in Response to the heavy rain in Djibouti

In response to the damage caused by the heavy rain in Djibouti, a part of the JSDF originally deployed for anti-piracy operations conducted international disaster relief activities from November 26th to December 2nd, 2019. The total of approx. 230 personnel conducted approx.

1,950 tons of water pumping in total in elementary school and junior high school, and transportation of about 4.3 tons of relief goods (tents and blankets, etc.) offered by the Japanese government through JICA.



International Disaster Relief Activities in Response to the Bushfire in Australia



In response to the bushfire which had raged since September 2019 in the Commonwealth of Australia, upon request by the Australian government, the MOD/JSDF dispatched a Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) Team (Japan Self-Defense Forces Units) including two JASDF C-130H Transport Aircraft and approx. 70 personnel to transport firefighters and goods on January 15th, 2020.

The dispatched unit was based in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Base Richmond in New South Wales and conducted air transport of Australian Defence Force personnel, local firefighters and goods in the areas including

Edinburgh and King's Court in eastern Australia, where suffered significant damage.

On February 7th, Defense Minister ordered termination of the operation, which had lasted for 25 days, ended on February 8th.

The dispatched unit conducted transportation of about 11 tons of vehicles and firefighting equipment in total and about 600 people including Australian Defence Force personnel, firefighters and disaster victims.

Defense Minister's Visit to Germany

From February 15th to 16th, Defense Minister Kono visited Germany to attend the 56th Munich Security Conference.

Cabinet members of governments, such as Foreign and Defense Ministers, and leaders of international organizations, including the U.S. (Secretary of State Pompeo and Secretary of Defense Esper), Germany (Defence Minister Kramp-Karrenbauer), France (Minister for the Armed Forces Parly), Russia (Minister of Foreign Affairs Lavrov)

and NATO (Secretary General Stoltenberg) participated in this year's conference. Taking into account the increasingly complex security environment, various discussions on Europe including NATO and EU were held.

During his visit, Minister Kono held meetings with representing leaders and exchanged views on bilateral defense cooperation and exchanges.

Japan-Ukraine Defense Ministerial Meeting

Minister Kono held the meeting with Minister of Defense of Ukraine Zagorodnyuk, and it was the first meeting between the defense ministers of Japan and Ukraine.

The ministers confirmed the importance of defense cooperation between two countries and agreed to engage in various types of cooperation based on the Memorandum between the

Ministry of Defence of Ukraine and the Ministry of Defense of Japan on Cooperation and Exchanges in the Field of Defense signed in 2018. They also exchanged views on the regional security situations surrounding both countries.



Japan-Canada Defense Ministerial Meeting

Minister Kono held a meeting with H.E. Mr. Harjit Singh Sajjan, Minister for National Defence of Canada.

Minister Kono welcomed the progress of cooperative efforts involving defense authorities from both countries in various fields including the effectuation of the Japan-Canada Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) in July last year and cooperation in warning and surveillance activities against ship-to-ship transfers conducted by North Korea. Furthermore, in the field of peacekeeping, Minister Kono expressed gratitude for the participation of observers from the Canadian Army in the heavy equipment operations training

Japan conducted in Vietnam last year as part of the UN Project for Rapid Deployment of Enabling Capabilities which Japan has contributed to. Minister Kono also stated that he would like to continue to engage in further cooperation.



After reviewing recent efforts in defense cooperation and exchanges including Minister Sajjan's visit to Japan in June last year, the two ministers shared the view to continue working to strengthen cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

Japan-France Defense Ministerial Meeting

Minister Kono held a meeting with French Minister of Armed Forces Parly.

The two ministers welcomed the progress of Japan-France security and defense cooperation, confirmed that they would work closely to coordinate the upcoming Japan-France Foreign

and Defense Ministerial Meeting ("2+2") in Tokyo, and shared the view to continue to make concrete steps to promote cooperation for achieving the vision of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" as partners.



Japan-Germany Defense Ministerial Meeting

Minister Kono held a meeting with German Minister of Defence Kramp-Karrenbauer.

The two ministers confirmed efforts to promote cooperation in the fields of security and defense, and shared the view that they would promote concrete cooperation to realize the vision of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific". They also exchanged views on the security situation in the Indo-Pacific region.

Furthermore, Minister Kono expressed his gratitude for the Staff Band of Bundeswehr's participation in the JSDF Marching Festival 2019 held at the end of November last year and stated that he would like to promote future opportunities and exchange in the field of music.



Meeting between Minister Kono and EU High Representative

Minister Kono held a meeting with EU High Representative Borrell.

Both sides welcomed the progress of cooperation between Japan and the EU, particularly in the field of maritime security. They shared the view that they would continue to promote

substantial efforts for defense cooperation and exchange including joint training exercises with anti-piracy personnel in the EU Naval Force taking part in Operation Atalanta.



Meeting between Minister Kono and NATO Secretary General

Minister Kono held a meeting with NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg.

Both sides welcomed the progress of cooperation between Japan and NATO, particularly in the fields of cyber security and

maritime security, and shared the view that they would proceed with efforts for the next revision of the Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (IPCP).



RJNO: Group photo

Cobra Gold 20

The JSDF participated in the multilateral exercise Cobra Gold 20 (CG20) in Thailand from January 26th to March 9th. Approx. 240 personnel from the Joint Staff Office, JGSDF, JMSDF, and JASDF joined this exercise.

CG20, hosted by the U.S. Armed Forces and Royal Thai Armed Forces, is one of the biggest multilateral exercises in Southeast Asia. This is the 16th time that the JSDF has participated since 2005.

A total of 9 countries from the Indo-Pacific Region, Japan, Thailand, U.S. Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, ROK, China, and India participated in CG 20.

During the exercise, the JSDF conducted various training such as cooperation and support activities under the international peace joint response situations, Rescue of Japanese Nationals Overseas (RJNO), and also joined response to cyberattacks, and friendship jump for the first time.



HCA: JSDF personnel constructing a multipurpose hall with U.S. and Thai armed forces



RJNO: JSDF personnel watching out for the ground transportation



HCA: Local children playing Kendama with JSDF personnel



RJNO: JSDF and MOFA personnel taking care of Japanese evacuees



Opening Ceremony



RJNO: JSDF personnel guarding building



Friendship Jump



RJNO: JSDF personnel watching out for C-130H

In the humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) training, the JSDF joined Disaster Relief Rescue Operation assuming heavy flood disaster and enhanced the HA/DR capabilities. Also, the JSDF constructed the multipurpose hall for the local school with the U.S. and Thai armed forces as part of Humanitarian Civic Assistance. The JSDF stayed at the elementary school during the one-month construction work and had a good friendship with the local students.

Through this exercise, the JSDF maintained and improved its capabilities in cooperative support activities in the international peace joint response situations, RJNO, international peace cooperation activities, and international disaster relief activities. The JSDF also enhanced mutual understanding and strengthened relationships of trust with the participating countries.

Capacity Building Program by MOD/JSDF

Series 2 ▶ Capacity Building Program for Indonesia and Timor-Leste



• Capacity Building Program for Indonesia



Indonesia, as well as Japan, is a maritime nation, which consists of many islands. Therefore, it has been plugging the improvement in its capacity for hydro-oceanographic operations as its priority challenge in order to contribute to creating a stable maritime security environment for its national security.

In response to the request of Indonesia, the MOD/JSDF organized a series of seminars in the field of Oceanography in 2013 in Indonesia.

Besides the area of Oceanography, the MOD/JSDF has organized seminars for Indonesia in a variety of fields in recent years. In 2015, the MOD/JSDF delivered an International Aviation Law seminar, and in 2017, delivered a seminar on International Law of the Sea for the first time.

Indonesia and Japan share the same natural disaster risks such as earthquake, tsunami, floods, landslides, and volcanic eruption, and have suffered large-scale disasters frequently.

As such, as a result of the Japan-Indonesia Summit Meeting held in November 2018, both sides agreed to promote cooperation on disaster response for reducing disaster damage in Indonesia.

Against the backdrop, the MOD/JSDF started capacity building program in the field of HA/DR for the Indonesian Defense Force from 2019.

As part of the HA/DR program, the MOD/JSDF organized a seminar on HA/DR on November 20th, 2019 in Indonesia as a kickoff.

In addition, the MOD/JSDF invited 8 officers from the Indonesian Armed Force to Japan from February 19th to 22nd, 2020. During this period, workshops on the North-eastern Army HQ and Japan-U.S. disaster response and other activities were held. The program enabled both sides to understand each other better.



• Capacity Building Program for Timor-Leste



Timor-Leste became independent in 2002, making it the youngest nation in Asia. The Timor-Leste Defense Force has a short history, and required assistance to develop its human resources, technology and capabilities. Due to the slow development of public infrastructure, Timor-Leste suffered greatly from natural disasters such as floods.

For these reasons and following a request from the government of Timor-Leste, the MOD/JSDF started its capacity building program for the development of human resources of the Timor-Leste Defense Force.

As part of the program, JGSDF personnel delivered training to the Timor-Leste Defense Force personnel on vehicle maintenance management. In addition, the MOD/JSDF introduced its disaster relief activities and the JSDF vehicle maintenance system at the Timor-Leste Defense Force Headquarters.

The MOD/JSDF has implemented this program for the Timor-Leste Defense Force for 6 years in total.

In addition, the MOD/JSDF has participated in the Harii Hamutuk capacity building program sponsored by the Australian Defence Forces four times since October 2015, and provided technical guidance on civil engineering for the engineering units of the Timor-Leste Defense Force.

In efforts to create a security environment, desirable for Japan, cooperation with other donor countries is essential in the field of capacity building assistance, and it is important for Japan to closely cooperate with other countries providing capacity building programs and conduct such assistance effectively and efficiently by mutually complementing each other.

Through the participation in the Harii Hamutuk, the MOD/JSDF strengthened relationship with Australia, the U.S., and the Timor-Leste.

Recent Training and Exercises

Training and Exercise Overseas

Iron Fist 20

From January 5th to February 27th, the JGSDF conducted field training exercise Iron Fist 20 with the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) in California.

The exercise was conducted by the JGSDF and USMC to enhance tactical and combat capabilities of the JGSDF



U.S. Marines exiting from an AAV



JGSDF personnel and U.S. MV-22 Osprey



JGSDF personnel on the ground

required for operations on remote islands as well as bilateral response capability.

It is highly expected for the deterrence of the Japan-U.S. alliance to strengthen as the JGSDF and USMC conduct bilateral exercises together.

Cope North 20 - Trilateral Exercise in Guam

From January 31st to March 8th, the JASDF conducted trilateral exercise Cope North 20 with the U.S. Air Force and the Royal Australian Air Force at Andersen Air Force Base in Guam.

The exercise was designed to improve Japan-U.S. bilateral response capabilities and the tactical skills of the JSDF.

The JASDF dispatched 20 aircraft including fighters with approx. 450 JASDF personnel, and the JMSDF

dispatched US-2 amphibious aircraft with approx. 30 operating personnel to the exercise for the first time.

During the Cope North 20, from February 12th to 26th, trilateral humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) training was conducted to enhance the interoperability among the U.S., Australian and Japanese air components.

In the training, the three nations conducted various training including air transport and airdrop.



JMSDF US-2 taking off



JASDF and U.S Air Force personnel watching the perimeter by the JASDF C-2



Flight training with U.S. Air Force

Apology and Correction

The article entitled “The 60th Anniversary of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty” in the issue #121 contained an error in the photo caption. We apologize for this error. It will be corrected as follows.

The fifth picture from the top of Page 5

[Error] F-15J conducting joint exercise with the U.S. Air Force

[Correct] **F-2 conducting joint exercise with the U.S. Air Force**



F-2 conducting joint exercise with the U.S. Air Force



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