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By Julian E. Barnes

U.S., Ukraine Weigh Expansion of American Training Program

Kiev wants U.S. instruction for its conventional and special-operations forces

США і Україна думають про розширення американської допомоги в навчанні

Київ хоче, щоб США навчали його регулярні війська і сили спеціального призначення.

Американські та українські представники будують плани розширення програм навчання збройних сил України в навчальному центрі, що знаходиться в західній частині країни в 45 кілометрах від Львова. В даний час американці навчають там бійців національної гвардії. Національна гвардія, що входить в міністерство внутрішніх справ, це не фронтові підрозділи, але її бійці виконують завдання з охорони шляхів постачання і несуть службу на пропускних пунктах нагадує автор. Українські військові представники заявили, що хочуть відправити у навчальний центр свої армійські підрозділи і сили спеціального призначення, щоб вони пройшли навчальні курси, організовані для них американськими військовослужбовцями зі складу сто сімдесят третьої повітряно-десантної бригади, яка базується в Італії. Американські представники також проводять підготовчу роботу з розширення програми навчання, вишукуючи фінансові кошти і складаючи плани. Однак вони зазначають, що приймати остаточне рішення про нарощування процесу навчання буде Білий дім.

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-ukraine-weigh-expansion-of-american-training-program-1436386108>



American soldiers from the Italy-based 173rd Airborne Brigade train Ukrainian National Guard members in battlefield medicine. Photo: Julian Barnes/The Wall Street Journal

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LVIV, Ukraine—U.S. and Ukrainian officials are making plans to expand the training of Ukrainian military forces at a training base in the western part of the country, officials said Wednesday.

The U.S. is currently training Ukrainian national guardsmen at the training site, about 28 miles from Lviv, Ukraine. Members of the National Guard, part of the Ministry of Interior, aren't front-line troops but are in charge of defending supply lines and operating check points.

Ukrainian military officials said Wednesday they want to bring their conventional army troops and special-operations forces to the training center to run through the course taught by U.S. soldiers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade, based in Italy.

The Ukrainians have selected mechanized and airborne units that would be part of an expanded training program.

U.S. officials have also begun planning for a potential expansion of the training, lining up funding and beginning planning for the expansion. But officials said a final decision on increasing the training is up to the White House. White House officials didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

On a visit to the training base, Gen. Ray Odierno, the Army chief of staff, said it was clear the Ukrainian government wanted the U.S. to expand its training, but declined to say whether he would support stepped-up training.

Still, Gen. Odierno said he backed Ukrainian plans to expand the capability of the training base to handle larger units, saying the center is critical for Kiev to prepare and sustain their forces fighting Russia-backed separatists.

Soldiers of the 173rd said the National Guard has fought high intensity engagements against well-armed forces, including sustained barrages of artillery fire by Russian forces, a particular kind of attack that U.S. forces haven't experienced for decades.

Gen. Odierno said that wartime experience meant U.S. forces are learning important lessons from Ukrainians even as they teach Kiev's forces about basic combat.

"This training is shared training," Gen. Odierno said. "It is American forces training Ukrainian forces, and it's Ukrainian forces training American forces."

A Wall Street Journal reporter accompanied Gen. Odierno on his visit to the base. As he toured the training ground, Gen. Odierno told the 173rd soldiers that it was important to learn from Ukrainians how the Russians and separatists were fighting.

"We haven't faced something like this ourselves for a while," Gen. Odierno said.

The U.S. also is teaching the Ukrainians how to disarm roadside bombs. The training is based on the kinds of mines being used in eastern Ukraine and on tactics that U.S. soldiers saw in Iraq and Afghanistan and believe are likely to migrate to Ukraine.

Soldiers from the 173rd also have brought lessons learned in Afghanistan and Iraq on battlefield medicine. At the training center, U.S. soldiers played the part of wounded civilians, complete with fake blood, dummy severed limbs and simulated chest wounds.

Staff Sgt. Brian Kociuruba, a battalion senior medic with the 173rd, said he was teaching the Ukrainians to work with limited supplies, emphasizing that all soldiers need to know how to administer first aid. He said that in recent weeks the units he has trained have quickly improved as medics.

"They have come a long way, I would fight with any of them, I would let any of them treat me," Sgt. Kociuruba said.

Gen. Odierno asked one Ukrainian medic if he was going to be a doctor one day.

"No," the Ukrainian officer responded. "I am going to be infantry"

"It is the same thing," Gen. Odierno quipped.

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