

# U.S. Army Paratroopers to Train National Guardsmen in Ukraine

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Custom officers inspect a Bradley Fighting Vehicle, for U.S. troops deployed in the Baltics as part of NATO's Operation Atlantic Resolve, at Riga port March 9, 2015.

About 290 U.S. Army paratroopers will travel to western Ukraine next month to train three battalions of Ukrainian national guard troops, the Pentagon said Thursday, moving ahead with a long-planned mission that was delayed due to a peace deal.

Army Colonel Steve Warren, a Pentagon spokesman, said 290 members of the 173rd Airborne Brigade based at Vicenza, Italy, would carry out the training at the Yavoriv training center in western Ukraine, probably sometime in late April.

An exact date has not been finalized but the training, which was announced last August, had been due to start in mid-March and was delayed after being placed under review.

Lieutenant General Ben Hodges, the head of U.S. Army troops in Europe, told reporters this

week the training mission had been delayed in part to avoid giving Moscow a reason to back out of a peace deal agreed last month between Ukraine and Russian-backed separatists.

Violations of a fragile cease-fire have strained the so-called Minsk plan. The Ukrainian military suffered new casualties from rebel attacks on Wednesday and Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk said there was little optimism Russia and the separatists would adhere to the accord.

Moscow and Kiev have clashed publicly over the next steps in implementing the agreement.

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