

The Pentagon's Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFAB) Will Teach the Art of War to Foreign Armies

By [Valeriy Kulikov](#)

Global Research, November 07, 2017

[New Eastern Outlook](#)

Region: [USA](#)

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In spite of its irresistible urge to address the challenges it created by a handful of armed interventions in various states of the world, we're witnessing Washington's ever decreasing commitment to direct warfare, as it prefers to lead regional forces from behind. The experience accumulated in this sort of leadership in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Middle East and Africa is now going to be applied on a global scale by the US.

Under these circumstances, we're noticing an ever growing demand for "military instructors" that are sent to all sorts of states as an instrumental part of the new US military doctrine. In fact, a new industry is being created as entire drill brigades started to get formed by 2016 as the US 10th Mountain Division prepared Iraqi Army units for an assault on Mosul.

For this reason, last summer the Pentagon would announce its plan to create six **Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFAB)** which will be employed as "military advisers and instructors" across the world to support the power of pro-US regimes across the world. This process is being carefully supervised by the 39th Chief of Staff for the US Army, General Mark Milley.

The first brigade of such instructors that is known as 1SFAB or the "Legion" started its formation in the spring of 2017 on the basis of Fort Benning (Georgia) under the supervision of Col. Scott Jackson. Of its 529 troopers, 360 are officers. Servicemen of the brigade receive a bonus of five thousand dollars a year in addition to their respective salaries. The subdivision is formed on a voluntary basis. As early as November 30, the 1SFAB "Legion" brigade should be operational and prepared to carry out its missions abroad, while the funds have already been allocated on the creation of the second similar brigade.

All six such SFAB, according to the Pentagon, are expected to be fully operational by 2022. It is planned that each regional command of the USA (for example, AFRICOM, EUCOM, etc.) will receive a SFAB brigade under its command. Should the situation in any of US satellite states become aggravated, the Pentagon expects that local forces trained by SFABs will be dispatched to "resolve the situation" on their own. Should there be any more assistance needed from Washington, a full-fledged brigade of four thousand servicemen will be formed on the basis of one of such SFABs, consisting of 500 servicemen in the shortest possible time.

The Pentagon's SFAB brigade program provides training for US military personnel in foreign languages, it's expected that more that 200 servicemen will undergo intensive foreign languages courses for four months, while they will be allowed to get acquainted with foreign

weapons samples. Also, SFAB soldiers will be informed of the importance of understanding local customs, culture, traditions, political nuances. The officers will also be instructed to establish personal contacts with local political and military figures.

The training of new military advisers will take place with the involvement of the same US special forces that are already operating in various regions. This will be an additional burden for them. Therefore, the decision of the Pentagon on the new brigades SFAB caused a lot of controversy in the military environment, especially among representatives of the special forces, as many did not understand what functions will be assigned to this new type of units. Indeed, until recently, it was the US special forces that would spend a lot of their time instructing and training local security agencies, learning the situation on the ground, while establishing informal contacts with local populations. It would be understatement to say that those units were simply engaged in routine military operations. Many fear that the new SFAB will either duplicate certain functions of special forces, or will simply replace them.

For this reason, in the military environment of the United States in recent months, additional explanatory work has been conducted on the true aims of the SFAB program. In particular, the high-ranking of the US military department was forced to emphasize that the SFAB is designed not to create individual combat-ready units, but also indirectly work on the emergence of the entire military structure of a state, which would ultimately advance US interests. As a result, the US military units will work more closely with those forces within a country.

The US special forces are not designed to create foreign armies. At best, as we're witnessing in Iraq and Afghanistan, it can effectively train elite units in other countries.

In any case, according to the estimates of the US military establishment, the creation of SFAB will become an important element of the US war machine, but also a tool to advance American values abroad. And by 2022, the six SFAB brigades will be ready to be assigned to a wide variety of tasks, thus strengthening the US military expansion around the world.

Valeriy Kulikov, expert politologist, exclusively for the online magazine "[New Eastern Outlook](#)."

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