

**Analytical report:  
Situation in the field of  
national security and defence  
of Belarus (July 2018)**

**The most important events of the month.** On July 3, 2018 in Minsk, the traditional military parade took place. The event this year had its own specifics. Last year because of possible political demarches of Western and Ukrainian diplomats, servicemen of the 76th Airborne Division of Russia who participated in the aggression against Ukraine were not invited to participate in the parade. This year the Russian paratroopers again took part in the event. Representatives of the diplomatic corps of the Western countries and Ukraine ignored the event. For the first time in history, servicemen from China took part in the parade.

**The developments within the month.** On July 5, 2018 during the reception of graduates of military educational institutions and higher officers Aliaksandr Lukashenka emphasized the importance of a personal example of officers as well as the need to strengthen discipline, healthy moral and psychological climate in military collectives. He demanded from the special services employees not to allow manifestations of terrorism and extremism, incitement of national, religious, social hostility.

Meanwhile, according to the judicial statistics for the first half of 2018, 28 people were convicted for committing military crimes in criminal cases of hazing in the Armed Forces. Note, that for the entire 2017, 31 people were convicted for committing such crimes. Of these 28, 16 people were convicted for hazing. In 2017, nine people were convicted of such crimes. 12 people are convicted of abuse of power, excess of power or inaction of the authorities. Most likely, these are commanders and officers who shielded the misdeeds of their subordinates.

On July 10, 2013, the decision to merge military missions of the Ministry of Defence at defence industry enterprises into one institution was made. This is done to improve the quality of technical control and acceptance of weapons, military and technical equipment supplied for the needs of the army.

On July 11, 2018 it became known that on June 27-29 the 15th meeting of the Belarus-China Coordination Committee for Cooperation in the Field of Arms and Military Equipment took place in Beijing. The Belarusian delegation was headed by the Chairman of the State Military Industrial Committee (SMIC) Aleh Dvihalyou, the Chinese one - by Lieutenant-General Liu Sheng, deputy chief of the Central Directorate for the Development of Arms and Military Equipment of the Central Military Council of the People's Republic of China. The parties discussed the results of the implementation of the decisions of the previous Committee meeting held in October 2016, as well as identified promising areas for cooperation. Mr. Dvihalyou held a series of meetings and negotiations with the top bureaucracy of Chinese government bodies and companies of the military-industrial complex. Among other things, the Belarusian delegation visited the ALIT corporation, where they got acquainted with its developments in the field of air defence, in particular the LY-80 medium-range anti-aircraft missile system.

On 19-20 July, Foreign Minister of Belarus Uladzimir Makei visited Latvia. Among other issues, NATO military activities in the region were discussed during the visit. The importance of transparency in the military sphere in order to strengthen stability and security was emphasized. The Belarusian official stressed the readiness of the official Minsk to ensure the transparency of its activity in the military and political sphere. Once again he stated his interest in the development of a dialogue with NATO.

On July 20, 2018 Baku hosted a meeting of the Council of Ministers of Internal Affairs of the CIS countries. During the event ten issues were considered. They included the following:

- cooperation within the framework of interstate programs to combat crime;
- the mechanism for the exchange of information on persons participating in armed conflicts in the territories of third countries.

On July 24-27 a territorial defence exercise was held in Vitsebsk. The issues for organization and formation of territorial troops, increasing the level of staff coordination and planning for the defence of settlements were trained. The event involved representatives of the Vitsebsk City Executive Committee, reserve officers, who were assigned to staff the headquarters of the territorial defence area, and territorial troops.

In July, it became known about the plans of the Ministry of Defence of Belarus to create an IT-company in the Armed Forces by the end of the year. The recruitment is supposed to be provided at the expense of conscripts who have an education in IT-specialties and experience in practical work in this field. In total, 60 people are expected to be called up for urgent military service. The unit will be created on the basis of the Military Academy. Apparently, at the first stage it will carry out tasks in the field of research and development for the benefit of the army.

Last month, the Turkish company “Roketsan” presented the operative-tactical missile complex “KHAN” on the Belarusian MZKT chassis made by Minsk Wheeled Tractor Plant. It is necessary to recall that on October 23-26, 2017 a meeting of the Joint Belarusian-Turkish Committee on Cooperation in the Field of Defence Industry was held in Minsk. The Turkish delegation visited a number of enterprises of the military industrial complex of Belarus, including the Minsk Wheeled Tractor Plant (MWTP). The event was not ordinary: it was attended by Deputy Minister of National Defence of Turkey Shuai Alpai. He also met with the SMIC top-management and heads of the Ministry of Defence of Belarus to discuss prospects for joint projects in the field of the military-industrial complex.

At the end of July, the IV International Army Games started. They are initiated by the Russian Ministry of Defence. To participate in the professional airdrome competition “Aviadartts-2018” Belarus sent crews of Yak-130 combat training aircraft, which were claimed as light (unarmoured) ground-attack planes. The competitors of the Belarusian aviators were Russians on the Su-25 and Su-25SM ground-attack aircraft.

**Conclusions.** The formal reason for the invitation the paratroopers from Pskov to participate in the parade on July 3 is that this unit participated in the liberation of Belarus from the Nazis. However, this year the main goal of the Belarusian authorities was to show Moscow that, despite possible adverse political consequences, they remain a reliable ally of Russia. In addition, Belarus is sure that the relations with Minsk are too important for the western capitals and Kiev, that’s why unfavourable practical consequences were not supposed to follow because of the symbolic event.

Formally, China is an ally in the anti-Hitler coalition in World War II. But in this case we are talking about the current politics. The Chinese ceremonial unit went before the Russian according to the alphabet. Which is very symbolic. And in politics, symbols are of great importance. Especially in Asia and for the politicians prone to vanity. And Xi Jinping is clearly one of them. The participation of Russian and Chinese servicemen

should symbolize the strategic nature of relations between official Minsk and Moscow and Beijing. But the order of the ceremonial units emphasizes which partner is more important.

In addition to the desire for further development of relations with Beijing, the invitation of Chinese servicemen to participate in the parade on July 3 also had a message for the West and Russia: they are not the only geopolitical landmarks for Minsk. The Belarusian authorities allegedly have a real Chinese alternative. Which is based on the interest and guarantees of Beijing. The fact that the relations between the two countries are developing most intensively in the sphere of security, implies the nature of Chinese interest and guarantees.

Obviously, the state of affairs in the security forces, the level of discipline and law and order there, the moral and business qualities of the officer corps are perceived by President Lukashenka as an actual problem. Judging by the attention that he pays to this problem in public speeches after the death of private Aliaksandr Korzhych in the autumn of last year, the situation raises Lukashenka's fears.

It is also interesting to note Aliaksandr Lukashenka's focus on the prevention of disagreements in the society. If passages about terrorism and extremism are traditional stamps, then the situation is different with the resistance to inciting hatred and "split" of the society. Obviously, there are fears of the possibility of destabilization of the situation in the country through the deepening of existing disagreements in the society. The fact that this requirement is addressed to the employees of the special services, and not to the police, implies that this "split" can be provoked from the outside.

The program of creating a national medium-range SAM (up to 100 km) is one of the priorities of Belarusian military-industrial complex. Given the technical complexity of the project, the progress is clearly delayed. So, back in 2017 a public demonstration of a sample of Belarusian SAM was planned. But it has not yet taken place at all. ALIT is already an important partner of Belarus in the field of missile technology. It is also worth recalling that this corporation also has relations with Turkey in the field of missile weapons.

Belarus assesses NATO's activity in the region rather negatively. But it does not call into question the right of neighbouring countries to strengthen their military potential, including coalition potential. Minsk does not intend to take steps (including building up a foreign military presence on its territory), which can be perceived by neighbours as a threat. The Belarusian authorities continue to adhere to the policy of non-involvement in the confrontation between Russia and the West.

So far there are questions on the implementation of the idea of forming an IT company on the basis of the Military Academy. High-class IT specialists (and the military department clearly targets precisely these ones) are expecting the appropriate material incentives: the Defence Ministry is not able to pay the private USD 1500-2000, which he can earn in the civil sector. This raises the question of the motivation of those called to the service. While the goals of forming an IT company, where it is planned to recruit specialists-practitioners, are not clear. The special services deal with practical activities in the field of cyber security in the army. They definitely need new specialists and for the soldiers this would be a valuable professional experience. But the company is being created within the framework of the Military Academy, which is a scientific and

educational institution. It has already been announced that a scientific supervisor will be assigned to each of the 60 soldiers-conscripts. The Academy is budgetary institution. The wages of its employees are several times lower than those offered in the IT sector. In recent years, most young professionals, who are competitive in the civilian labour market, leave the budget sector (including law enforcement agencies). It may turn out that the soldiers recruited for service will turn out to be more professional than their scientific supervisors. How can a research process in these conditions be organized? There is a high probability that in the foreseeable future the format of the IT company will be completely transformed.

Missile weapons sphere is a priority direction for the development of the military-industrial complex for both Turkey and Belarus. Earlier Belarus indicated that it was developing its own missile program, taking into account, among other things, the Turkish experience. From the exchange of experience, the parties moved to specific technical cooperation. The Belarusian-Turkish military-technical cooperation has a significant development potential. Turkey, on the one hand, seeks to diversify its partners in this area. The Belarusian capabilities can be interesting to the Turks. On the other hand, Ankara has significant potential in areas interesting to Minsk.

Su-25 remains the main specialized air assault aircraft of the national air force. The problem is the aging of machines. Earlier, the Belarusian military command repeatedly made it clear that it was considering Yak-130 as a potential replacement for Su-25 aircraft and, together with the manufacturer, was studying the possibility of creating a specialized assault aircraft on their base. Participation in “Aviadarts-2018” on Yak-130 for Belarus was clearly of a research nature. It will allow to compare the potential of Yak-130 with modernized Su-25 attack aircraft.

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