

**Analytical note:**  
**Situation in the field of**  
**national security and defense**  
**of Belarus**  
**(January 2016)**

**Minsk**

**The most important events of the month.** The most important event of January was the comprehensive inspection of the Armed Forces, which started on January 11, 2016. The event was interesting in the first place due to the tasks, which fulfillment was worked out. It allows us to understand the nature of fear among the Belarusian authorities.

The inspection was large-scale according to the national standards. In particular, both mobile units and all existing four mechanized brigades were involved.

The vehicles from the national economy were involved for the war purposes together with the call of the reservists, to restore which skills even the infrastructure of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was used. The military equipment was taken from storage and prepared for combat use.

The issues of strengthening protection of the state border by the army were once again discussed as part of the inspection

Equipping of the bridge crossing across the river Neman under the conditions of the hard ice cover was practiced. When moving the units of the engineering troops the anti-sabotage actions were worked out.

The Air Forces diluted a part of their forces and means.

The measures were taken for staffing with the reservists of the Special Operation Forces (hereinafter referred to as SOF) within a short time period. The reservists were also called to military service for staffing the parts of the air defense units and ensuring logistics. The mobile SOF battalions together with border guards fulfilled strengthening border protection on the temporary border posts, as well as search, blocking and destruction of saboteurs. The assistance to the military and border guards was carried out by the interior troops of the MIA.

The 103<sup>rd</sup> mobile brigade completed the task of defeating the conditional illegal armed group in the Vitebsk region.

The mechanized units fought with mythical fighters, who had to act under the conditions of destructing the road infrastructure.

One of the tasks of the conditional illegal armed groups was transition from the “civil disobedience actions to active combat operations”. This seems to be taken after the example of the eastern regions of Ukraine in spring 2014.

The border was also protected by the anti-aircraft missile units, which task was “to prevent the border violations by the light-motor aircraft, as well as by the trikes, in order to deliver the ammunition and weapons to the destructive forces”.

On January 25-27, at the Military Academy of Belarus the command and staff exercises were held in planning the use of troops. The military bodies at various levels were formed from the officers, teachers and students. The issues of planning to use the troops in the so-called hybrid war were developed.

The readiness of territorial defense was checked. Thus, in the Shumilinsky district of the Vitebsk region the measures were practiced to maintain readiness of the territorial defense forces to carry out activity in wartime: alert, mobilization, distribution of the

reservists among the divisions. In total more than 200 people were involved, which represents a significant number in the area with population less than 19 thousand people.

And in the Tolochinsky district of the Vitebsk region held a mobilization training was held on “Managing the transition of the military commissariat from peacetime to wartime while calling the reservists and delivering the mobilization resources to the troops”. The command of the battalion of the area of territorial troops took part in the event.

**The dynamics of the situation development for the past month.** The State Military Industrial Committee of Belarus (hereinafter referred to as SMIC) considers one of the priority matters the creation of missile weapon systems “... of different ranges”, but taking into account the limitations imposed by the international commitments of Belarus (i.e. up to 500 km for ground-based systems and without by range limitations for air-based systems). Further there go the means of intelligence (including radar), electronic warfare, means of automated control systems, and means of mobility. The tasks in the field of air defense are set. It became known that MZKT started developing the domestic light-armored vehicle V-1. At the same time the details of the project were not disclosed.

On 14.01.2016, the Chairman of the State Border Committee Leonid Maltsev announced their plans to strengthen protection of the Ukrainian border and the construction area of the Belarusian NPP. Either engineering equipment of the border and introduction of modern technical means of protection (signaling systems, technical surveillance points, UAVs) were offered. Such equipment is already being used on the border with Ukraine and proved its effectiveness.

On the same day Alexander Lukashenko sharply reacted to the information in mass media that the citizens of Belarus, who fought in the Ukraine on the part of the self-proclaimed Lugansk Peoples Republic and Donetsk Peoples Republic, returned to the country and do not bear any legal responsibility. The Belarusian leader demanded that the law enforcement agencies immediately investigated the situation: “There should be no militants in the country”.

The next day, on 15.01.2016 the Main Department for Combating Organized Crime and Corruption of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (hereinafter referred to as GUBOPiK) reported that the operative-search measures are being carried out on identification of the citizens of Belarus, who took part in the war action on the territory of Ukraine from the both sides. The materials against 24 persons are being studied by the General Prosecutor's Office and the Investigative Committee to decide whether to prosecute them. GUBOPiK also deals with countering extremism.

On 15.01.2016, the first Belarusian telecommunication satellite «Belintersat-1" was successfully launched from the Baikonur Sichan, China. The device is manufactured on the basis of DFH-4 platform and is planned to operate for fifteen years since its launch. The suppliers of the main components are represented by the leading European manufacturers, all systems and control schemes have a high degree of redundancy and reliability.

On 19.01.2016, Minister of Emergency Situations Vladimir Vashchenko stated that the agency, together with the Belarusian scientists and manufacturers have developed a virtually complete line of necessary equipment and facilities, allowing to abandon the acquisition of imported analogues.

On 22.01.2016, a meeting of the Security Council took place to discuss the draft of the new military doctrine of Belarus. During the event, Alexander Lukashenko said stressing the contradictions between Russia and the NATO countries that Belarus is "... like between the hammer and the anvil". The threat of global and regional security remains high. Further escalation of the situation could have irreparable consequences. The Belarusian leader stated that "...the last ruble of the budget... should be spent on the safety of our people".

On the same day the Defense Ministry discussed plans on the activities of the scientific department institutions in the coming year. It is stated that all the scientific work should be of an applied nature. The fight against unmanned aircraft and cruise missiles, strategic management of special operations, identification of image of the intelligence and fire complexes are among the priorities.

On 25.01.2016, the "Helicopters of Russia" said it expects to deliver to Belarus ahead of schedule 12 military transport helicopters Mi-8 MTV-5. The official explanation is the request to the Belarusian side.

On 28.01.2016, A. Lukashenko took the chair at the board of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the results of work in 2015. In 2016 it is planned to complete the optimization of the structure of the bodies of internal affairs: "We need a high-quality and efficient structure of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which will be profitable". Optimization here means reduction in support and administrative staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and transfer of free human resources for direct struggle against crime. "We should get better results at a lower cost" – that is the leitmotif of the Lukashenko's address to the department board.

Careful approach is required for the selection and placement of personnel, where betrayal is intolerable. The cleanliness of the police staff is one of the priorities.

Lukashenko also demanded to strengthen the executive discipline and expressed the wish to enlarge the bodies of internal affairs "... to achieve reduction of the heads".

Requires careful approach to the selection and placement of personnel, is intolerable betrayal. Cleanliness police series - one of the priorities.

Alexander Lukashenko criticized the Interior Ministry for the lack of results of work on the identification of complex corruption schemes. The Ministry reveals more than 70% of the total number of recorded crimes of corruption, but at the low level. Moreover, he drew attention to the fact that the police officers themselves are involved in corruption. Even when such a phenomenon is not of a mass character, but causes concern. Also, not enough work is being done to identify the major economic frauds. However, the Belarusian leader expressed confidence that the Belarusian police knows everything and sees everything.

The Belarusian leader demanded to "create the unbearable conditions" for the persons convicted for drug trafficking.

At the same time Alexander Lukashenko expressed confidence in the ability and willingness of police to resist attempts to destabilize the situation "... anywhere". Supposing the geographic location in Belarus. It is also interesting to note that the Belarusian leader expressed confidence in the loyalty of the personnel of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The Belarusian Minister of Internal Affairs Igor Shunevich said that the agency refused from the formal assessment of police activities and carries out “the most severe struggle with various types of fraud, concealment of accounting crimes”.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has completed creation of the Internal Troops units for the Belarusian nuclear power plant safety. The Minister also stressed that among the priorities of the internal affairs bodies is countering extremism. Which is especially important taking into account the state of affairs outside Belarus. The operational-search measures are already organized to identify persons planning to carry out extremist acts. Enhanced protection of transport infrastructure is implemented.

The Minister said that the new measures to strengthen discipline will be taken in 2016. The unreliable staff will retire. The offences of the MIA staff “... have a negative effect on the law enforcement system ... undermine the credibility of public authorities”. One cannot break the trend of growth in the number of police officers, subject to criminal prosecution. There is an increasing number of revealed facts, when the policemen on duty is in a drunken state.

The agency reports of a growth in staffing, which for the first time in the last five years exceeded 90%. The average competition for one vacancy amounted to four people.

It is worth paying attention to the priorities of the police in the current year:

- the fight against alcoholism;
- the fight against illegal import of goods, especially alcoholic beverages;
- suppression of illegal currency transactions;
- fight against drugs;
- control of foreigners staying in Belarus.

**Conclusion.** The illegal armed groups, with which in January “fought” the Belarusian military were very specific: during the fighting they lost “lightly armored and other equipment” and their “leaders” tried to escape with a helicopter. At the final stage of the complex inspection, the anti-aircraft missile batteries “Osa” hit the target, simulating the fire support helicopters and the high-speed small-sized aerial targets. The Belarusian division was largely comprised of soldiers of the first period of military service and the called up reservists.

Although the scenario of the January training at the Military Academy is unknown, it is worth noting that hybrid warfare is characterized by several features: the extensive use of special operations forces, a massive psychological impact and misinformation, provocation/civil unrest and armed rebellions, and as evidenced by the Ukrainian experience, by a massive betrayal of civil servants and security forces.

The attack helicopters and armored vehicles in a terrorist organization, especially in Europe is more than the wildest imagination. Obviously, the training was designed to fulfill a limited reflection of aggression on the part of the neighboring state, which occurs on the background of internal destabilization of the situation in Belarus. And is accompanied by the defeat of the country's transport system, the threat of strikes in places of permanent deployment of troops, the use of large-scale sabotage aggressor forces, the limited the use of aviation. The basis of the conditional aggressor forces was formed by light-infantry/air assault divisions.

Regarding the prospective armored vehicle V-1 one may assume that it is a practical realization of development, which was shown to Lukashenko during his visit to the 103<sup>rd</sup> mobile brigade in summer 2014.

Although it is officially reported that satellite “Belintersat-1” will be providing satellite services on a commercial basis, the project is supervised by SMIC. Which is itself an eloquent testimony.

Sending the materials of inspection on the citizens of Belarus, who took part in military actions on the territory of Ukraine, to be studied by the Prosecutor General is an indirect indication of significance of the problem and the ambiguity of the situation: the decision to prosecute will be made essentially collectively, after inter-ministerial consultations. This is due to the fact that the subject has acquired a pronounced political connotation.

During the January meeting of the Security Council Alexander Lukashenko once again made it clear that the main objective is preservation by Belarus of equidistance from the parties to the conflict in the region, the quasi-neutrality. But the nature of it changes: it becomes armed. It is interesting to recall that earlier the Belarusian authorities explained low defense expenditures by to the fact that the potential military threat will be eliminated by the military alliance with Russia. The fact that now the authorities are ready, albeit so far only in words, to spend the last ruble on defense, indicates a loss of confidence in the Russian “shield”. And perhaps a suspicion about the Kremlin's plans in Belarus.

The “Helicopters of Russia” are ready to supply the helicopters to Belarus ahead of schedule, as the manufacturer has an available number of machines manufactured for foreign customers, which were not purchased. The reason was the Western sanctions on sale of aircraft equipment in Russia. Because of which the “Helicopters of Russia” cannot provide customers with the machines in the previously agreed equipment. Belarus is less choosy and is not interested in the Western avionics. It is interested in the price. Given the fact that the Russian military budget is de facto sequestered and procurement for the needs of Russian security services will be reduced, the “Helicopters of Russia” are interested in every client and obviously prepared to offer attractive financial conditions to customers.

It is interesting to note the fact of the loyalty matter presence. It is worth noting that the mass media of the country in recent years has been actively discussing the possibility of Crimean scenario repetition in Belarus in the event of a tough confrontation with Russia. I.e. mass evasion of duty performance or outright betrayal on the part of law enforcement officers and military personnel. The reason for this may lie in the ideological failure of the Belarusian regime and higher wages in the Russian security agencies. Not the least role in the mentioned doubts in loyalty of the Belarusian security forces is played by the fact of involvement of some former soldiers and policemen in the fight in Donbass in the pro-Russian forces.

It is not clear whom exactly had in mind the Minister of Internal Affairs speaking on extremism. Recently, the role of enemies was given to the football fans. However, their accusations of extremism were very artificial: this is a subculture, and not a political phenomenon. In addition, the statement on strengthening of the transport infrastructure protection is difficult to relate to the football fans activities. But the transport objects are the targets either of the acts of terrorism, or the hybrid war.

We should pay attention that the shortage growth in the MIA staffing since 2007. In the same period there is growth in incomes. The only exceptions were in 2011, when due to the financial crisis the real disposable income fell short by 1.5%, and the last one in 2015, when the drop in revenue was much deeper. If in 2011 the authorities as a whole were able to quickly recover the income level of the population and to continue the practice of distribution of social promises, the enthusiasm of officials sharply diminished in 2015. The authorities were forced to admit that the crisis is systemic and therefore protracted. The public services, including the MIA, become more attractive, primarily because of stability both in terms of income and opportunities. In this regard, it is not clear what contributes more to MIA staffing: the quality personnel work of the department or the economic crisis. In the latter case, admission to the police service may bear either the forced nature of the new employees, as well as how ensure stable income. It is difficult to speak about the ideological motivation and psychological stability of such employees.

The Belarusian police will strengthen its work in the areas directly affecting completion of the budget (the illegal importation of alcohol and illicit trafficking). It is obvious that there is a coincidence of two factors: the magnitude of these illegal phenomena and problems with the revenue part of the budget. In operation of the gray market in Belarus not the last role is played by the lack of control on the border with Russia. Introduction of police guards at the Belarusian-Russian border is becoming a necessity based solely on considerations of fiscal and law enforcement nature, and not the political ones.

It is worth noting that the criticism concerning the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the part of A. Lukashenko to counteract economic crimes was unjustified. Perhaps the police reveals not many large crimes in the sphere of economy. But their total sum shows impressive results. Thus, in 2014 every employee of the MIA department on combating economic crimes returned to the state and prevented damage to the public interest in the amount of about USD 70 thousand. There are still no public data for 2015, but the figure of profitability, according to A. Lukashenka, is kept stable. The allowance of the Lieutenant Colonel of MIA is less than USD 500 per month. As a result over 40% of staff of the MIA departments on combating economic crimes have length of service of up to three years. In Minsk this rate makes 68%. To put it simply, due to the inadequate material support of high-level professionals, able to work on disclosure of complex economic crimes find more “grateful” application of their knowledge and experience.

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