

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

**The most important events of the month.** 19.10.2016, Two new military helicopters Mi-8MTV5-1 from among 12, previously ordered in Russia were demonstrated to Aleksandr Lukashenko. The first six machines have already been transferred to the Belarusian army.

The same day Aleksandr Lukashenko stated about the necessity to improve military training system in Belarus. Transformation directions: emphasis on practical training of future officers, attracting teaching personnel in military schools: not theorists but officers practitioners. Secretary of Security Council of Belarus Stanislav Zas highlighted the fact that the recent conflicts "... were in the cities and for the cities." And so the focus of the officers' training should be conducting combat operations in urbanized area. However, this has not already been fully done. A weak point of combat training of the army is ignoring the situation when the enemy has dominance on the radio and private communication system can be suppressed.

**The dynamics of the situation in the past month.** There was indirect evidence in October that the armored vehicle "Lis-BM" (version of Russian armored vehicle "Tiger" localized in Belarus) was decommissioned from the national army. Special Operations Forces of Belarus received armored vehicle Volat V of MZKT production for testing. According to the results of testing, the decision will be taken on the possibility of further purchases of equipment for the army. The whole line of armored vehicles for different purposes is expected (medical, intelligence, management, supply, armored personnel carrier).

A series of activities related to the development of military-technical cooperation (hereinafter referred as MTC) between Belarus and other countries were held in October.

October 3-6, the 7th meeting of the Joint Belarusian-Emirati committee on MTC was held in Minsk. The parties confirmed their mutual interest in developing cooperation noting its positive trend.

October 17-20, the 17th meeting of the Belarusian-Russian intergovernmental commission on MTC was held on the basis of OJSC "558th Aircraft Repair Plant" (hereinafter referred to as the 558th ARP) in Baranavichy, which brought together representatives of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (hereinafter referred to as CSTO). Among other issues, the parties revised questions of delivery of military products for the benefit of the two states. It is noted that the two countries "... use weighted, constructive approach to resolving problems existing today".

October 23-28, 5th session of the joint Belarusian-Cuban commission on MTC was held. The parties reviewed the results of the earlier reached agreements and the implementation of joint projects, defined a plan of future cooperation. It is reported that there is "... a wide range of promising projects" in the field of defense industry between the two countries.

25.10.2016, Meeting with the delegation of Chinese state aviation company AVIC was held at the National Academy of Sciences. The main topic was cooperation in the sphere of development, foundation and operation of UAVs on the basis of existing developments in this area in Belarus.

A number of activities for territorial defense (hereinafter referred to as TD) and Civil Defence (hereinafter referred to as CD) passed in October.

From September 28 to October 12, training muster of reserve forces passed in Slutsk district. Objective: to improve skills of the reserve officers, district headquarters of TD and territorial battalion of troops, as well as improving combat and mobilization readiness of the these structures.

October 19-21, a sudden check of TD system was conducted in Vitebsk and Liozno regions. Objective: to estimate readiness and ability of local authorities to form a unit of territorial troops. Activities were carried out regarding the notification and concentration of military forces, providing them with military equipment, preparing of placement for territorial troops. Reserve officers took part in conducted sessions on territorial defense.

October 18-21, command-staff training on CD passed in Baranovichi. Objective: to work out measures in case of an accident at a nuclear power plant in a neighboring country, chemically dangerous objects, as well as in case of emergency situations.

During October 19-21, trainings on the protection of the population from emergency situations of various kinds as well as on the implementation of civilian activities were held in Shumilino district. Among other tasks were rescue operations at the site of contamination source.

28.10.2016 Command-scale trainings for CD took place in Minsk. The topic was measures of the authorities in case of threat and possibility of emergency situation in peacetime and wartime. Also some other activities were worked out such as transfer of civil defense of Minsk Zavodskoy district to the military situation, carrying out of rescue and other emergency operations.

October 4-7, the MIA in cooperation with the KGB and the State Border Committee conducted a special operation "Illegal". The attention was focused on improving the effectiveness of control over the stay of foreigners on the territory of Belarus, the identification of illegal immigrants, the prevention and suppression of committed crimes and offenses. During the special operation over two thousand foreigners who had violated the rules of stay and the order of work in Belarus were brought to the administrative responsibility. 238 persons were deported, 34 criminal cases were raised to foreigners, 9 persons being on the international wanted list were arrested.

05.10.2016, almost immediately after the return from China, Aleksandr Lukashenko went to Pakistan where he had several meetings with the leadership of this country. Pakistani Prime Minister Navaz Sharif confirmed the readiness to develop cooperation with Belarus in all areas including in the field of defense. The same was said by Pakistani President Mamnoon Hussain. It should be noted that the Minister of defense production of this country, Rana Tanvir Hussain, attended the meetings of A. Lukashenko with Pakistani leaders.

10.10.2016, a working visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus Vladimir Makey to Poland took place where he was received by the President Andrzej Duda. It is reported that "there was an exchange of views on the prospects for expanding Belarusian-Polish cooperation including on sensitive issues". For Poland this includes the situation with some of the Polish minority organizations located in Belarus and the ability of the official Minsk to avoid involving into a confrontation between the West and Russia on the side of the latter. It is declared that the two countries are set to overcome the existing contradictions in bilateral relations and increase contacts at all levels.

It's interesting to note that, when asking about the prospects of cooperation with the EU, Vladimir Makey pointed out the necessity to build relations "... with the highest number of trade-economic and political partners in order not to fall into a trap in case of crisis". Not obviously that the Minister had in mind only the economic crises.

V. Makey confirmed that Belarus does not consider the extension of NATO presence in the Baltic States and Poland as an immediate threat. However these steps contribute to the overall tension in the region. The statement of the Minister should be also highlighted separately that Belarus "... together with some of our allies, in particular, the Chinese have created ... a new type of weapon – missile weapon." If it's not a misspeak of person simply unfamiliar with the topic, there is a confirmation expressed by us before, that China – is not the only partner in the missile program of Belarus.

Also a clear fact, being obvious for specialists, was recognized: Western sanctions, even such limited as in regard to Belarus, have a significant negative impact.

It is stated about the readiness to the dialogue with the EU including on questions of democracy and human rights. However, dialogue and practical steps in this direction – is a very different thing. Traditionally Minsk wants to get something from the EU for its liability.

12.10.2016, the meeting of the Board of the State Military-Industrial Committee (hereinafter referred SMIC) took place, where the results of the activities for the first three quarters of this year were announced. We have devoted a separate article to this event ([source](#)). It was also stated on the prospects of entering of the United Russian Aircraft Corporation (hereinafter referred URAC) into the shareholders of 558th ARP.

13.10.2016 Pinsk border detached unit was provided with a large number of transport and equipment purchased under the project of technical assistance of the EU "Strengthening the protection of the green and water border between Belarus and Ukraine".

On the same day it became known about the visit of Belarusian military delegation headed by the Chief of General Staff of the Belarusian army Oleg Belokonev to China. It was traditionally stated about the readiness to further deepening bilateral cooperation during the talks with the Chinese military leadership.

14.10.2016, CSTO summit took place in Yerevan. And although officially the event passed rather successfully, after a detailed inspection the results are not so clear.

During the summit, CSTO chairmanship was transferred to Belarus. A. Lukashenko in the traditional manner made several high-profile statements about Minsk priorities for the chairmanship.

However, it is doubtful that Belarus was somehow able to give new impetus to the CSTO, and even had such intentions. Membership in the Organization is primarily a demonstration of political loyalty to the Kremlin in order to obtain economic benefits. Within the framework of the bilateral Belarusian-Russian cooperation in the field of security, all issues of mutual interest can be resolved.

20 documents were adopted during the summit. The most important of them is the Strategy of collective security of CSTO until 2025. Being a result of compromise and agreement on divergent positions of member countries, the document turned out very cautious. There is no mention of any State or group of States as the source of the threat.

Disproportionally too much attention is paid to the protection of the political regimes of the CSTO countries. One of the positive notes is that the document pays considerable attention to the fight against cross-border crime, and particularly - with drug trafficking.

However, the most important outcome of the CSTO summit was the fact that no candidate for the new Secretary General of the Organization representing Armenia was approved. The formal reason was the absence of the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev at the summit because of the illness. However, his "illness" was of political and diplomatic nature and was intended to show support for Azerbaijan and the displeasure of the existing contradictions in the Armenian-Kazakhstan relations.

20.10.2016, the meeting on the development of bilateral military cooperation between the delegation of the Belarusian Defense Ministry and the Pentagon took place in Washington. At the end of the event the parties signed a Joint statement on cooperation between the defense ministries of the two countries and the Bilateral military cooperation plan for 2017.

21.10.2016, Belarus Security Council Secretary S. Zas held a working meeting with the Assistant of the President of Azerbaijan on defense issues Vahid Aliyev during which they discussed security cooperation.

26.10.2016, the resolution of the Council of Ministers approved the Regulation on the military representatives of the Ministry of Defense in organizations engaged in activities related to military goods. Military representatives of Defense Ministry will perform functions of purchaser, developing military products at all stages of its life cycle (research and feasibility of design, development, production, maintenance, repair). Their competencies include: quality control, testing, acceptance and shipment of military products; control over the price of products purchased by the state defense order; supervision over the protection of state secrets; participation in work on technical regulation and standardization, metrological support and more. The range of goods subject to control of military representative is determined by the Ministry of Defense.

October 26-28, the efficient collection of Armed Forces under the leadership of Defense Minister of Belarus Lieutenant-General Andrey Ravkov took place. The event was attended by the heads of the military authorities, commanders and chiefs of staff formations and military units, chiefs of military educational institutions, students of the Faculty of General Staff of the Armed Forces, military commissioners. The operative collection was dedicated to the training of troops and military control bodies. The main task of training of the Armed Forces was defined as further improvement of the level of training of commanders (commanders, chiefs) and officials of the subordinate bodies of military administration. The main event of combat training is a joint Belarusian-Russian study "West-2017". Particular attention was paid to the basics of the application of the territorial defense forces. Official sources report that "... a balanced approach was demonstrated in the definition of the role and place of the regional group of troops (forces) in the system of the Common State's military security".

In the context of financial constraints, the military leaders have the task to use the available resources maximum effectively for the training of troops.

Since October 30, Aleksandr Lukashenko visited the main partner of the official Minsk in the Persian Gulf – Qatar and the UAE. According to the official information, the parties discussed the issues of economic cooperation in Doha. In the Emirates,

Belarusian leader held negotiations with the heads of law enforcement agencies regarding bilateral military-technical cooperation.

**Summary.** Speaking about the prospects of transformation of military education in Belarus, it is worth noting the following. Secretary of the Security Council of Belarus S. Zas, who comes from military environment, acted as a public critic of the army. This may be due to the fact that the Ministry of Defense does not demonstrate the expected activity in the adjustment of the curriculum to new realities. This is evidenced by the fact that the Defense Minister Andrey Ravkov actually refuted the words of S. Zas, saying that there are very few omissions in the preparation of officers which are not of systemic nature.

The attention should be paid to the change of the Head of the Military Academy: Major General Sergey Bobrikov dismissed as a Head of the institution in connection with his election as a Deputy of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus. The corresponding decree was signed by Aleksandr Lukashenko as of 20.10.2016, the next day after giving the order to change the system of military education. Election / appointment of members of the House of Representatives is sanctioned at the highest level about a year before the election. Obviously, Belarusian leader was informed about the plans for the nomination of S. Bobrikov as a candidate for a Deputy and the prospects for receipt of deputy mandate for many months prior to each of these events. Therefore, the statement of A. Lukashenko on the necessity for changes in officer training program is a working plan, not just thoughts aloud. The new management of the Military Academy can get a carte blanche for holding reform towards a more narrow specialization of the military education system, reducing the training period and focus on practice rather than theory. It is possible to expect not just update of the teaching staff of the Military Academy, but a serious staff reduction.

The importance of the UAE as a partner of the domestic defense industry is confirmed in particular by the fact that the Belarusian part of the bilateral MTC Committee is headed by the Chairman of SMPC Sergey Hurulev.

And the Ambassador of Belarus in the UAE Roman Golovchenko has experience in the Security Council of Belarus and before the appointment had been the First Deputy Chairman of SMPC. Prospective areas of Belarusian-Emirati cooperation are:

- supply of automotive vehicles, weapon guidance systems, optics from Belarus to the UAE;
- development and production of wheeled armored vehicles and UAVs;
- rendering services to the UAE in the field of space communications, remote sensing, creating electronic maps of terrain;
- financing of Belarusian developments of new military products, including missile by the UAE.

Although the meeting of the Belarusian-Russian commission on MTC demonstrated optimism, it is worth recalling that many problematic issues in this area exist for many years. For Belarus it is the problem of access to direct participation in the implementation of Russian state defense order; for the Russian side – the opportunity to invest in the Belarusian defense industry enterprises.

Obviously, these problems won't be fully solved in the near future because it was not done in the previous years at least, when the level of trust in bilateral relations was

higher and there was no confrontation between Russia and the West. Currently the official Minsk is trying to avoid the participation in it by all means.

It should be noted separately that the Rules on the resolution of disputes regarding possible violations of rights for the results of intellectual activity, used and (or) obtained in the course of bilateral military-technical cooperation, were presented in the course of the meeting. It is obvious that the development of such a specific document is dictated by the practical necessity, that is unconscionable behavior of the enterprises of the two countries.

Cooperation in the field of defense industry between Belarus and Cuba was previously limited by the supply of optical instruments. It's known about the negotiations about the supply of Belarusian UAVs to Havana, but nothing is known about the results.

The constraining factor of bilateral cooperation is the limited financial capabilities of Cuba. Probably, the prospective cooperation projects between the two countries' defense industries relate to the delivery of Belarusian vehicles, communication systems and automated control systems, as well as assistance to Belarus in the repair and modernization of Soviet armored vehicles, air defense systems and helicopters Mi, being the armament of the Cuban army. In the future, the assembling of Belarusian UAV developments in Cuba is possible. In turn, Minsk may be interested in the Cuban experience in the transfer of self-propelled artillery to self-moving wheelbase. This trend seems to be promising in terms of increasing mobility and vitality of the Belarusian army artillery units.

Belarusian-Chinese cooperation in the field of unmanned aviation will refer to both aircraft vehicles and airships. The greatest interest for Belarus is assistance from the Chinese side in the creation of a fully-fledged UAV with long flight duration. It is logical to expect the transfer of Chinese technologies used in the production of UAV Wing Loong I UAS to our country.

The situation of illegal immigration in Belarus is under control. In 2015 the law-enforcement bodies detained 61 illegal persons belonging to 12 groups, in the first half of this year – 10 groups (30 people). In recent years, the experts note a decrease in the number of illegal migrant groups: previously such groups may be up to 20 people, now they consist of about 2-3 illegal persons. The inability to move in large illegal groups is the evidence of the effectiveness of our country's measures to combat illegal migration.

Relations of Pakistan with the leading Western countries are currently on the decline which affects the intensity of military-technical cooperation between them. This poses a threat to critical dependence of Islamabad on the transfer of military technologies and the delivery of defense products from China. Therefore, Pakistan's interest to cooperate with our country in the sphere of military-technical cooperation is logical. Russia, in view of the special nature of relationship with India, has tight restrictions on defense cooperation with Islamabad. Belarus has no such restrictions and can act both as an independent supplier of products, services and technologies, and as a mediator. By the way the cooperation is possible in both directions. Our country is interested in receiving technologies and components for missile and ammunition from Pakistan.

The interest of the UAC to the 558th ARP is associated with the deficit of own production capacities. Russia seriously considers the possibility of restricting the importation of short- and medium-range civil aircrafts. This will increase the domestic

demand for Russian-made airliners. 558th ARP can get a significant portfolio of orders from the UAC. And it means new jobs in the not rather rich Belarusian district. It is possible to accommodate service center for transport aircrafts of IL-76 type in Baranavichy, which originally was projected on the facilities of Orsha Aircraft Repair Plant, owned by Ukrainian corporation "Motor Sich". However, after the start of the Russian-Ukrainian war it was extremely improbable. The problem may occur in case of the expansion of western technology sanctions against Russian also against Belarusian enterprise.

Official Minsk is actively working to strengthen the protection of the border with Ukraine. It is connected with the situation in the neighboring state, including with a de facto loss of control of Kiev over the part of territories neighboring with Belarus and covered by the illegal extraction of amber ([source](#)).

Belarusian presidency in the CSTO will have a ritual character and the propaganda value. It is highly probable that the official Minsk will try to use its presidency to lobby for the opportunity to participate in the implementation of the state defense order of Russia. Belarus may try to consolidate the CSTO member states to create a common market of military products without restrictions. The success of this idea is rather doubtful: the competition for the "weapons" money is growing also among Russian manufacturers. In this regard, the opening of access to the "cake" of Russian state defense order to new competitors from CSTO seems almost incredible. In addition, the size and the export potential of the MPC of other CSTO countries is incomparably lower than the Belarusian one and this topic is not really relevant for them.

The Strategy of CSTO Collective Security until 2025 in accordance with the post-Soviet political culture – is a declaration rather than a document of direct action. It is relevant as the evidence of the mentality of the ruling circles of the member countries of the Organization.

Failure to approve the candidacy of the new Secretary General of the CSTO demonstrates a lack of internal solidarity and the presence of contradictions between the participating countries. Thus, to talk about the Organization as a real factor of regional and especially global security is not possible. CSTO – is just one of the specialized communication platforms ruling in the former Soviet Union.

Agreement on American-Belarusian cooperation in the military sphere – is rather a political and symbolic act. The level of trust between the parties is obviously not enough for any significant practical cooperation in this field.

Some expansion of cooperation between Belarus and the United States along the same lines that have already been implemented by Washington with other CIS countries can be expected over the time. First of all with Armenia and Kazakhstan. In the meantime, it is possible to expect cooperation in terms of exchange of views on the current situation in the region, in the field of military education and training (language, health, peace-building), and humanitarian cooperation. The agreement with the United States – is the only the first among those planned for concluding with the NATO countries. Currently it is known about the prospects of establishing a limited cooperation between the defense ministries of Belarus and other four NATO countries.

It is highly probable that during the meeting S. Zas and V. Aliyev discussed the prospects of new deliveries of arm equipment from Belarus to Azerbaijan, first of all –

UAVs and multiple launch rocket systems "Polonaise". The latter will be the answer to the accommodation of tactical missile complexes "Iskander" in Armenia. Recall that September 2016 stands out intensive contacts between Minsk and Baku in the field of defense and MTC ([source](#)).

Providing the military representatives of the Ministry of Defense with the right to control the pricing of MPC products was an intermediate result of the contradictions between the military and national defense industry: the first complained of inadequate quality, high price and low efficiency of purchase service. MPC enterprises were not satisfied with the rigid pricing system for products supplied for the needs of national defense. Currently the military "win" because A. Lukashenko took their side ([source](#)). The logical result can be the requirement for MPC enterprises to deliver products and provide services for internal needs at production cost, and to earn on exports. Actually, for the majority of enterprises national customers are not major clients. Therefore, although this situation is not pleasant for the native suppliers, it won't lead to a catastrophe.

"Balanced approach" of Belarusian military leaders to the regional grouping of Belarusian and Russian forces means that it is not considered as a tool for "all occasions". The situation, in which one of the countries (Belarus and Russia) will be involved in combat operations in Eastern Europe region, while the second will maintain neutrality in this conflict, is also admissible.

Official Minsk, realizing the vulnerability of its position, is afraid that the West will try to take advantage of it. Under these conditions, the Belarusian side is actively searching for a kind of mediator and guarantor of Belarus to the West. The goal of Minsk remains unchanged: preservation of the existing political regime of inviolability; achieving maximum return with minimal counter steps.

It is supposed to reach also through the use of the contacts and capabilities of other countries to promote the interests of the Belarusian authorities in the West and especially in the United States. Qatar, the UAE and Poland have rather serious lobbying power in Washington and could act as intermediaries or as guarantors for the official Minsk. The open question remains the same: what Belarus can offer them in return.

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