

**Analytical report:**  
**Situation in the field of**  
**national security and defence**  
**of Belarus (September 2019)**

**The most important events of the month.** On September 11-13, the 16th meeting of the Belarus-China Coordination Committee for Cooperation in the Field of Arms and Military Equipment was held in Minsk. Belarus was represented by the Chairman of the State Military Industrial Committee (SMIC) of Belarus Raman Halouchanka, China - by the Deputy Head of the Main Directorate for the Development of Arms and Military Equipment of the Central Military Council of the PRC, Lieutenant General Liu Sheng. The parties discussed the results of the previous agreements, noting that over the past year a number of important and technologically complex projects have been completed or are being completed. It is stated that “countries have reached the optimal scheme of interaction from the supply of military products ... to joint development and production of high-tech products”. Promising areas of cooperation were identified, a number of commercial contracts were signed. The Chinese delegation during the visit also visited a number of SMIC enterprises.

On September 12, 2019, the Minister of Defence of Belarus Andrei Raukou met with Liu Shen. The parties discussed the main directions of bilateral military cooperation.

**The developments within the month.** On September 2, 2019 the training of troops of the CIS Combined Air Defence System “Commonwealth - 2019” started at the Russian training ground Ashuluk. The organization of joint use of coalition groups of aviation and air defence forces during anti-terrorist operations and in armed conflicts has been trained. In particular, deployment in new positional areas, the reflection of a massive missile and air strike. Syrian experience in the fight against cruise missiles and UAVs was taken into account. In total, the exercise involved more than 2 thousand military personnel, about 200 units of equipment and weapons, including about 60 units of aircraft. Both anti-aircraft units and attack aircraft represented Belarus.

On September 3, 2019 a meeting of the board of the department on the development and production of armaments within the framework of the Program for the development of the defence sector of the economy and SMIC of Belarus until 2020 was held. SMIC of Belarus head Raman Halouchanka chaired the meeting. It was stated that **in general** the completion of projects implemented under the Program is expected by 2020. Which means that some important projects will be not implemented.

The importance of implementing projects personally controlled by Aliaskandr Lukashenka was noted once again. They include rocket science (obviously surface-to-surface missiles and medium-range anti-aircraft missiles), training of UAV operators and the creation of Belarusian combat UAV.

The need for close cooperation between defence industry organizations and the Belarusian law enforcement agencies was ascertained. Mr. Halouchanka demanded from his subordinates to be active, to uphold their positions and to provide complex proposals. In the near future SMIC will hold a series of events with potential customers to present the capabilities of the enterprises of the Belarusian defence industry and their development.

On September 4, 2019 Secretary of State Security Council of Belarus Stanislau Zas said that Belarus is interested in developing contacts with NATO. This issue was discussed at a meeting in Warsaw of the leaders of the Security Councils of Poland, Ukraine, Belarus and the Assistant to the President of the United States for National Security. At the same time, the reference point (and ceiling) is the format of relations that

has developed among other CSTO countries (Armenia and Kazakhstan) with the Alliance. Belarus's relations with NATO and Ukraine will not develop to the detriment of cooperation with Russia. At the same time, Minsk will try to "stake out" another topic for itself: the creation of a new arms control mechanism. First of all, of missile arms: the Belarusian authorities began promoting the initiative of adopting a declaration on the non-deployment of medium and shorter range missiles in Europe. They continue to declare their commitment to the expired Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (hereinafter referred to as the INF Treaty).

On September 9, 2019 Aliaksandr Lukashenka met the Minister of Internal Affairs Yury Karaeu. Following the meeting, the head of the department outlined a number of steps to eliminate irritants for both society and employees. Which is rather forced. So, the cancellation of the requirement of a mandatory polygraph for the traffic police for their illegal activities was caused by a large staff shortage due to the dismissal of police officers who did not pass the polygraph. The agency intends to objectively respond to negative information about the activities of the Belarusian MIA in the media, including in the opposition ones, as well as to critical comments on the Internet. For the first time in a long time, the head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs publicly recognized the unlawful actions of his employees against a citizen.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs intends to focus on combating crimes that pose a real danger to society and the state: a flexible system for evaluating the work of law enforcement officers will be developed to replace the currently accepted assessment by numerical indicators without taking into account the complexity/severity of the crime.

On September 6, 2019, visiting Brest on the occasion of City Day, Lukashenka made a number of statements on foreign policy and security:

- Belarus adheres to the principle of multivectorness in foreign policy and is guided by pragmatic goals (benefits);
- Minsk is interested in restoring relations with the United States because of their role in global politics and economics (and not because of the common values of Minsk and Washington);
- alternative deliveries of hydrocarbons to Belarus could hit Russia's interests (Russia's loss of the Belarusian oil market and difficulties in transporting Russian oil through Belarusian territory).

At the same time, Lukashenka made it clear that he hadn't planned a serious political rapprochement with the West.

On September 8-11, a delegation headed by the Commander-in-Chief of the Ugandan Army, Colonel-General David Makhuzi, visited Belarus. During the negotiations in the SMIC the parties discussed both the current military-technical cooperation between the two countries and the perspective directions of its development. The delegation from Uganda visited a number of enterprises of the military-industrial complex of Belarus, where they got acquainted with the potential and capabilities for the provision of services and the production of military products in Belarus.

On September 10, 2019 Lukashenka met the Secretary of the Security Council of Russia Nikolai Patrushev. Although the event was planned previously, it is necessary to pay attention that its agenda could change due to the intensification of Belarusian-American relations in August-September. Further, the heads of the Security Councils of

Belarus and Russia discussed issues of interaction within the framework of international organizations on global and regional security, the current state of arms control mechanisms, and international information security. Nikolai Patrushev and Stanislau Zas signed a Plan for the implementation of the main areas of cooperation in the field of ensuring international information security for 2019-2020.

On September 16-18, the active phase of the joint operational exercise of the armies of Belarus and Russia “Union Shield-2019” was held. It is reported that the troops were trained to conduct a defensive operation against a superior enemy grouping during a conventional interstate conflict. The troops trained:

- overcoming enemy minefields, disguising own forces, forcing a water barrier;
- the interaction of special operations forces and artillery during reconnaissance and hostilities and the release of hostages in a settlement;
- manoeuvrable defence of mechanized units at night in cooperation with artillery;
- air support of the troops (including with the defeat of enemy units on the march) in the conditions of interference with the satellite navigation system and in the absence of light landmarks on the ground;
- helicopter landing of tactical assault by both parachute and non-parachute methods on buildings in a settlement under enemy control, and its subsequent capture with air cover and fire support of the landing by Mi-24 helicopters;
- the assault of the settlement by special operations forces with the support of aviation and artillery as well as the defence of the city using a multi-tier fire system and underground communications of the settlement for the covert movement of units.

The main part of the firing took place at night.

A one-time tank refuelling on the march was also organized. It involved more than 600 troops and more than 200 pieces of equipment (more than 100 tanks were refuelled and 240,000 litres of fuel were pumped). Refuelling one tank took no more than 5 minutes (source).

The exercise “Shield of the Union-2019” were held in a calm atmosphere.

On September 17, 2019 the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale visited Minsk. Accepting an American official, Aliaksandr Lukashenka expressed his readiness to develop bilateral Belarus-US relations. Once again he called on Washington to more actively engage in the settlement of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and in the situation in Eastern Europe in general. He also commented on the situation around the INF Treaty: Minsk is concerned about its destruction, but welcomes statements about the non-deployment of medium and shorter-range missiles in the region. He repeated that Belarus would not deploy such weapons on its territory, unless it is required for the security of the state. Moreover, the main reason for peace is the lack of financial resources for obtaining such weapons.

On September 18, 2019 State Secretary of the Security Council of Belarus Stanislau Zas visited Azerbaijan. An interaction plan between the apparatus of the security councils of Belarus and Azerbaijan for 2020-2021 was signed. In Baku Mr. Zas met President Ilham Aliyev. The issues of Belarusian-Azerbaijani cooperation in various fields, including military-technical and energy, were discussed.

On September 21-24, the Belarusian delegation led by the Chief of the General Staff of the Belarusian Army Aleh Belakoneu visited Armenia. During the negotiations

with the Armenian military leadership, the state and prospects of bilateral military cooperation, cooperation within the framework of international organizations, joint operational and combat training of the armies of Belarus and Armenia were discussed. An exchange of views regarding the military-political situation in the region and the world also took place.

On September 23, 2019 Lukashenka met the SMIC Chairman Raman Halouchanka. The state and prospects of development of the national military-industrial complex were discussed. During and following the meeting, a number of statements were made:

- more than 15 thousand people work at the enterprises of the SMIC system, and about 30 thousand people are employed in the military-industrial complex of Belarus and their number is growing, the average salary in the industry is about USD 800;
- one of the leaders of the domestic defence industry, “558th Aircraft Repair Plant”, at the end of 2019, plans to achieve positive development dynamics (in 2018, the company worked at a loss);
- in 2019, it is planned to maintain the positive growth dynamics of exports of products and services at the level of 101 - 102% compared to the previous year with a positive balance in trade;
- work on creating UAVs continues, there is progress in creating a combat UAV;
- the development of anti-UAV systems is an important issue;
- the creation of satellite communications complexes series is underway;
- it was possible to ensure full utilization of the capacities of the Orša Aircraft Repair Plant, the formation of a portfolio of orders for the next year is underway;
- the creation of Belarusian military software is critical in the light of the complexity of weapons systems;
- in the Orša district, the industry of ammunition and explosives is being formed, the production of three-calibre cartridges for export has already been launched, work is underway on the repair and maintenance of aircraft missiles.

On the same day in Kazan (Russia), a meeting of the heads of the special services of the CIS countries was held. Among other things, they discussed a more efficient exchange of intelligence information, countering international terrorism and religious extremism. Russia has traditionally accused the West of interfering in the affairs of post-Soviet countries and provoking conflicts around the world. At the same time, they spoke of Western interference in certain democratic processes in the CIS countries. It is not entirely clear what was meant: out of 10 CIS countries, only three have a democratic political system. And some CIS states are closer to a concentration camp than even to authoritarianism.

On September 23-26, Belarus hosted a delegation led by Assistant Minister of Defence of Serbia for Material Resources Nenand Miloradovich. The guests visited JSC 558th Aircraft Repair Plant, where the second meeting of the Joint Belarus-Serbian Commission on Military-Technical Cooperation took place. The parties discussed the results of the implementation of previously reached agreements, identified promising areas of cooperation.

On September 25-26, Kazakhstan held a joint command-and-staff exercise of the CIS countries “Naiza-2019” to resolve the border conflict at the external borders of the CIS. The issues of organizing actions to search for and eliminate illegal armed formations on the state border using military equipment and aviation were trained.

At the same time, the meeting of the heads of the anti-terrorist units of the CIS countries special services and the joint anti-terrorist exercise “Ararat-Antiterror-2019” were held in Armenia. During the event the algorithms of interaction of the CIS countries in identifying and preventing international terrorist activity were developed.

On September 26, 2019 Lukashenka met with Ukrainian journalists. During the meeting, he made a number of statements:

- the number of the Belarusian army is 75 thousand people;
- after the collapse of the INF Treaty, Belarus, in his opinion, has the right to create missiles of shorter range (i.e., up to 1000 km) and is ready to do this in cooperation with Ukraine;
- during the cadet period of Petro Poroshenko, Minsk proposed to Kiev a number of joint projects in the field of weapons production, including missile, but they were not implemented through the fault of Ukraine.

In September, the prosecutor’s office continued to strengthen law and order in the troops. So, before sending the Belarusian units to participate in the “Shield of the Union-2019” exercise to Russia, preventive measures with the military were taken.

Preventive measures for maintaining discipline and the rule of law with maximum coverage of personnel were also taken at the 72nd joint training centre. Prosecutors selectively checked the activities of the centre’s leadership in preventing violations of statutory relationships and excesses of power.

In the Viciebsk region, the prosecutor’s office checked the 7th brigade of the Interior Ministry’s Internal Troops on the prevention of corruption and the preservation of weapons in the brigade’s units in Orša, Polack, Navapolack and Hlybokaje.

Also in September, it became known that in the spring of 2019, the prosecutor’s office of the Mahiliou region checked the activities of the military commissariats and the police in search and prosecution of citizens who evade military conscription. An algorithm for the interaction of interested structures in case of non-appearance of those liable for military service without good reason was proposed. As a result, more than 100 young people were additionally called up. It is - not reported how many of them were sent to the service.

In September, it was announced that Belarus and the UAE intend to develop joint research and development in military-technical cooperation. Negotiations to supply a large batch of tank tractors to this country are underway. There are also new areas of cooperation in the field of electronic warfare and radar, special software. Obviously, in this area that the parties can begin joint development.

Customs of Belarus released some data on the extent of seizures of drugs and weapons:

- 129 criminal cases were instituted, almost 626 kg were seized (against 155 kg a year earlier) of which 615 kg were intended for Russian consumers;
- 12 criminal cases were opened on the facts of illegal movement of weapons across the border (five units of firearms, including traumatic acts, 180 units of ammunition, etc.).

In turn, the State Border Committee reported on the results of work for 8 months of this year:

- 230 border violators were detained, 70%, of which violated the border of Belarus;
- the number of cases of the prevention of drug and psychotropic smuggling increased (65 cases against 43 in 2018), and the amount seized more than doubled (1,054.6 kg against 449.11 kg);
- it is stated that the proportion of illegal weapons detained at the border with Ukraine remains high: more than 60 units, despite the fact that for the whole of 2018 it was about 80 units.

Traditionally, there is no information about the structure of illegal arms traffic across the Belarusian border (weapons / ammunition, cold / firearms, military / service / civilian).

Notable exercises of the national army in Belarus in September were the following:

- tactical exercise with live fire of the Osa air defence system, during which the counteraction against cruise missiles, helicopters and UAVs with the use of two experimental targets was trained;
- a comprehensive check of combat and mobilization readiness with the participation of more than 200 reserve personnel in the 391st artillery ammunition base.

A training on territorial defence of the Minsk region was also held. The issues of organizing maintenance in administrative districts were examined, new weapons and UAVs “which can be used as part of ensuring the fulfilment of territorial defence tasks” were demonstrated. Obviously, we are talking about UAVs, which units of the Ministry of Emergencies and the Ministry of Internal Affairs are equipped with. These are commercial quadrocopters and aircraft-type UAVs “Busel”, which are used to monitor the situation on the territory. There was no information about supplies of the military UAVs for the needs of the territorial defence forces.

**Conclusions.** We note that Liu Shen was not met by Aliaksandr Lukashenka. Given the special nature of the Belarusian-Chinese relations (the so-called “Iron Brotherhood”), the Belarusian tradition of receiving foreign officials and lower-level officials at the highest level, as well as the fact that a number of projects in the field of development and production of weapons that are carried out or can be implemented with Chinese technical support and are under the personal control of the Belarusian ruler, this may be a manifestation of Minsk’s dissatisfaction with the results of bilateral relations.

The requirement for representatives of the military-industrial complex to communicate more actively with the Belarusian law enforcement agencies is related to the latter’s reluctance to adopt raw, technically unfinished products under the promise of the defence industry to finalize them in the future. The military and law enforcement agencies are also dissatisfied with the facts of the purchase of imported products in the presence of national counterparts. The latter is typical for the UAV segment, where domestic manufacturers are often uncompetitive in price and quality.

Minsk’s calls for a new missile deal to replace the INF Treaty are aimed at securing Belarus the status of a peacemaker and stabilizer of the situation in the region. Moreover, according to Lukashenka’s statements, Belarus continues to develop the national missile program. And is ready to refuse from the production of smaller and medium-range missiles exactly until the moment when security of the state requires otherwise.

The leadership of the Ministry of Internal Affairs seeks to minimize the main irritants both within the department for ordinary employees and for society. These efforts

are part of the wider policy of the Belarusian authorities to prevent activation of citizens on the basis of dissatisfaction with the authorities. But one should not expect rejection of repressive practices against political opponents of the Belarusian regime.

Nothing has been reported about the meeting of the Ugandan military delegation at the Ministry of Defence of Belarus. It is very likely that Mr. Makhuzi visited Belarus at the invitation of the SMIC solely on the subject of military-technical cooperation. Nevertheless, the fact that the top military leader of a foreign state was not accepted by the Belarusian military leadership is surprising. The explanation may be that the Ministry of Defence simply did not know about the visit.

There is a partial intersection of the agenda of the September meeting of Stanislau Zas with Nikolai Patrushev in Minsk and the previous visit of the Secretary of State of the Security Council of Belarus to Warsaw. At the same time, Russia did not necessarily demand some explanations from Belarus. Rather, the situation itself implies the need for Minsk to prevent an already low level of political trust between the two countries.

Official Minsk is disappointed with the inability of the EU to act as a stabilizing force on security issues in Eastern Europe. In a situation of continued destructive role of Russia and amid Brussels' weakness, calls for the United States to take a proactive position in regional affairs are natural. The interest in expanding American participation in East European politics explains the restraint of the Belarus' reaction to strengthening NATO's eastern flank.

It seems that Stanislau Zas' visit to Azerbaijan was connected, among other things, with the need to assure Baku of the unchanged position of Minsk on the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict in light of the Belarusian representative's taking the post of CSTO Secretary General. It can also be connected with the study of alternative options for oil supplies to Belarus.

Minsk traditionally takes the side of Baku in the Armenian-Azerbaijani confrontation. However, the fact that Belarus will hold the post of CSTO Secretary General requires intensification of the Armenian-Belarusian dialogue on security issues in order to avoid confrontation in the CSTO and other post-Soviet integration structures. Which is especially true given the tense Belarusian-Russian relations. Minsk seeks not only to gain the support, albeit informal, of other influential post-Soviet countries (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan), but also, on the whole, leave Moscow in political solitude. Moreover, official Yerevan and Armenian society very ambiguously assess the role of Russia in security crises in the South Caucasus.

The combat UAVs developed in Belarus mainly belong to the light tactical class of unmanned aircraft and copters. Despite the fact that there is the political task of creating a full-fledged heavy UAV. Judging by the available information, the creation of such a UAV is still far from being completed. Consequently, the probability of purchasing finished products abroad (or sets/technologies for their production under the guise of the Belarusian) increases.

The threats of conflicts on the external borders of the CIS countries are traditionally linked to the situation in Afghanistan and the possible large-scale activation of Islamists - immigrants from the CIS countries on the territory of this country. The information about the training of extremists in Afghanistan for the use of toxic substances for military purposes and using the commercial UAVs for their delivery is especially worrying.

Earlier, Lukashenka claimed that the number of the army of Belarus is 70 thousand people (civilian and military personnel). At the same time, the military department stated a different figure: about 65 thousand military and civilian personnel. The increase in the size of the army explains the sharp deficit of draftees last year.

Issues of maintaining the rule of law in the troops remain in the focus of the country's leadership. Obviously it is connected with the fact that the external picture does not correspond to the real state of affairs. Moreover, it concerns all structures where the military conscription is present.

The fact that the prosecutor's office is forced to join the organization of the draft for military service indicates not only the seriousness of the problems in this area, but also the fact that a significant increase in the number of draft dodgers is predicted. It is so significant that bringing all of them to criminal responsibility will become not a legal, but a political problem and a serious irritant for the society.

The military-technical cooperation of Belarus with the UAE is also considered as a tool for penetrating the arms markets of the Arabian monarchies.

Obviously, unlike drug trafficking, arms smuggling does not pose a tangible threat to Belarus and does not affect the general criminal situation in the country. The official Minsk's discussing the topic of arms smuggling from Ukraine is exclusively propagandistic move and should connect popular protests and a threat to state security in the eyes of the Belarusian citizens.

