

Analytical report:
National security and defence
of Belarus (June 2021)

The most important events of the month. On June 14, 2021, a meeting under the chairmanship of the head of the Council of the Republic Natalia Kachanova on urgent military service was held:

- Defence Minister Viktor Khrenin said that in peacetime the 65% of the Belarusian army are professional servicemen. He added that not only the army should be engaged in the patriotic education of youth.

- Minister of Health Dzmitry Pinevich said that, despite the decrease in the requirements for the health of conscripts, in 2020 the percentage of those declared unfit for service decreased slightly and amounted to 19.8%.

- According to the Minister of Education Ihar Karpenka, from September 1, 2021, the post of the head of military-patriotic education will be introduced in schools (which means around 2 thousand of such jobs will be created).

- According of the representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs' statement, during the last conscription campaign, the internal affairs bodies received about 5 thousand reports about conscription evasion and around 3 thousand - about bringing recruits after initiating an administrative case against them. Take into consideration the fact that officially a little more than 10 thousand young people were sent to military service.

Judging by the proposal of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Investigative Committee to initiate criminal proceedings in the absence of a conscript in the country in order to organize an international search and get assist of law enforcement officers in other countries, the evasion of military service is growing despite the vigorous quasi-patriotic rumble of officials and propagandists.

The lease period for Russian military facilities in Belarus expired in June. Earlier, Russia indicated an interest in extending the agreements (there are two of them – one per each of the objects) for 25 years at once. However, until now there was no information about a new agreement or the negotiations in this regard.

The developments within the month. From June 1, 2021, in the Brest region, training camps of territorial defence (hereinafter referred to as TD) units were held in the Pinsk and Ivanava districts. According to official statements, more than 120 persons liable for military service were involved in the events. The headquarters of the zone (region) and two headquarters of the TD districts were formed, the defence councils of the region and of the two districts were created as well. The efficiency of the control system of the territorial defence forces was checked. The TD troops practiced the protection and defence of facilities, participation in ensuring martial law and countering sabotage and reconnaissance groups. The issue of moving control points has been trained as well. Two rifle battalions and one rifle company were formed, divisions of one region were solving tasks on the territory of another.

On June 3, 2021, a working meeting between the Director of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service Sergei Naryshkin and the Chairman of the State Security Committee of Belarus Ivan Tsertsel was held. They discussed the issues of interaction of special services “in the conditions of the aggressive policy of the United States and Western countries”. In fact, the anti-Western environment of the meeting was expected given the current situation. From the speeches following the event, one gets the impression that the confrontation with the West was the only topic for discussion. It is interesting that this

time Lukashenka did not meet with Naryshkin, who is considered one of the last supporters of the Belarusian ruler in the Russian elite.

On June 11, 2021, Lukashenka adopted the decree No. 214 “On the Security Council of the Republic of Belarus”, which approved the provisions on the Security Council itself and the State Secretariat of the Security Council. It is stated that the new document “... is aimed at enhancing its role in protecting the independence, territorial integrity, sovereignty and constitutional order of Belarus, maintaining civil peace and harmony in the country, countering extremism and combating terrorism”. The new provision on the Security Council includes the norms of Decree No. 2, which provided for the providing the Security Council the functions of a “collective president” in the event of assassination of the president.

On June 14, 2021, Lukashenka visited a number of military-industrial complex enterprises located in the Orsha district of the Viciebsk region including:

- production and technical cluster “Ustye”, where, in particular, repair and modernization of aircraft and anti-tank missiles, assembly (note, assembly, not production) of ammunition of various calibres, modernization and production of certain types of small arms are carried out;

- Orsha Aircraft Repair Plant, which, according to the company’s management, has no problems with loading and operates without losses.

On June 16, 2021, Lukashenka made a number of statements during a meeting on the development of territorial defence, which caused a wide public reaction. We have devoted a [special material](#) to this event.

On June 23, 2021, at the Moscow Security Conference, the Minister of Defence of Belarus Khrenin made a speech. Which reflects not only the position of the department, but also the setting of the regime as a whole. The speech was presented in an aggressive anti-Western tone and represents a collection of messages from the most radical Russian propaganda. We have devoted a [special material](#) to this event.

The traditional exhibition of arms Milex was held in Minsk on June 23-26. Within the framework of this event a number of statements regarding the prospects and current positions of the Belarusian military-industrial complex were made. Thus, it is planned to conduct live-fire tests of a domestic anti-aircraft missile with a range of up to 70 km in December this year. The tests of a missile with a range of up to 300 km for the "Polonaise" has already begun – it will last for several years. The first stage (throw tests) on the territory of a foreign state has already been completed. It is possible that the second stage will take place until the end of this year. More than 30% of weapons and military equipment in the Armed Forces of Belarus are of Belarusian production. Deliveries of Belarusian defence products to Russia amount to about USD 250-300 million per year.

It is known only about two agreements within the framework of the exhibition: the Russian concern “Almaz-Antey” and the Ministry of Defence of Belarus approved a cooperation scheme for the repair of combat vehicles from the Tor-M2K anti-aircraft missile systems for the Belarusian military. Russia will also carry out the overhaul of the

self-propelled gun mounts “Akatsiya” of the Belarusian army. It is also reported that State Military Industry Committee (SMIC) of Belarus enterprises signed 12 export contracts for USD 140 million and initialled a number of others for USD 70 million.

Within the framework of the Milex-2021 exhibition, a delegation led by the Federal Minister of Defence Industry of Pakistan Zobayda Jalal visited Belarus. He took part in the meetings at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the State Military Industry Committee of Belarus, during which the state and prospects of bilateral cooperation in the military-technical sphere were discussed.

On June 29, 2021, Lukashenko met with the Secretary of the Russian Security Council Nikolai Patrushev. During the meeting, the issues of cooperation in the military-industrial complex and in the military-technical sphere were discussed.

On June 29-30, scheduled consultations of the security councils of Belarus and Russia took place. The main topic was the topic of hybrid wars (which the West allegedly wages against Minsk and Moscow), regional, international, biological security, information security and the activities of non-governmental organizations. In the latter case, it was about counteracting the political opponents of the regimes ruling in the two countries and the independent media.

The parties outlined the plans for further interaction between Russia and Belarus through the apparatus of the security councils, military departments, special services and law enforcement agencies. They also discussed the preparation for the joint exercises “West-2021”, military-technical cooperation and facilitation of control measures on the border between the two countries (obviously, we are talking about the land border).

In June, the State Border Committee completed the first stage of the annual military training camps with conscripts in reserve. The mobilization training system within the border agency was established in 2014.

Of the notable military training events of the army in June, we note the following:

- At the 50th mixed air base, there was a training on the use of an aviation and helicopter squadron in combined arms combat. The issues of the combat use of subunits, the withdrawal from the strike of aviation equipment from the airfield, the fire engagement of enemy targets, the airborne and disembarkation of military personnel, the relay of commands from command posts to the crews, the transportation of personnel and cargo to operational airfields were trained.

- A mobilization exercise with the military commissariats of the Mahiliou region, involving 120 persons liable for military service.

- A joint special exercise with the electronic warfare forces of the regional grouping of troops (forces) of Belarus and Russia, which is a stage of preparation for the joint strategic exercise “West-2021”.

- On the territory of Russia, the traditional Russian-Belarusian-Serbian tactical exercise “Slavic Brotherhood – 2021” was held. About 300 servicemen of the 103rd Viciebsk Airborne Brigade with equipment took part in it. The search and destruction of enemy forces, the liberation of a captured settlement, landing from helicopters and overcoming water obstacles have been trained. All these tasks are traditional for the “Slavic Brotherhood”.

The prosecutor's office continued its activities to counter the protests. So, they discussed the issue of dissemination on the Internet of materials which the current regime considers extremist and responsibility for these activities with the workers of the Pinsk Bread Products Plant.

Prosecutors continue to meet with conscripts on matters of maintaining law and order in the military.

During June, the migration crisis continued to grow on the Belarusian-Lithuanian border. There is more and more evidence that the flow of illegal migrants from the Middle East to Lithuania is not spontaneous, but of a planned and organized nature. The Belarusian authorities ignore accusations of provoking the crisis. At the same time, it is stated that the Belarusian regime will not prevent those wishing to illegally enter the EU (at the highest political level) and the increase in the number of detained illegal immigrants: almost 20 times on the border with Lithuania.

Conclusions. The legal grounds for Russian military facilities in Belarus after the expiration of their lease last month are not clear. It is obvious that the Belarusian regime views cooperation with the Kremlin in the security sphere as a tool to achieve political and economic goals. Therefore, there is a high probability of an attempt to exchange the lease agreement for concessions from the Russia on other issues. But the lack of political and legal legitimacy of the Lukashenka regime casts doubt on the validity of a possible deal on the lease of military facilities. It cannot be ruled out that the parties entered into some kind of short-term agreement (possibly in the form of an addition to the existing ones), which allows Russia to maintain its military presence in Belarus. A full-fledged agreement on lease issues will be concluded after the constitutional referendum in Belarus.

Speaking about training camps for TD troops in the Brest region, one should pay attention to three points. Firstly, they can be considered as evidence of the further transformation of the TD system in Belarus: abandoning the district principle of the formation and transferring the operation of territorial troops towards the level of regions. Given the creation of an artillery component in TD troops, this step was expected. It is possible to put forward a hypothesis about the prospects for the transition to the brigade level, as the basis for the formation of territorial troops (one brigade and several separate battalions / companies in each zone of territorial defence). Secondly, the declared number of reservists called up (more than 120 people) does not correspond to the scale of the formation of subunits (two battalions and a company of territorial troops in the state of about 1000 people). Even if the units were formed in a reduced staff, we should talk about several hundred people. Thirdly, a command-and-staff exercise on the control of the territorial defence forces in the Pinsk region was already held last year. TD activities are extremely rarely repeated in the same administrative region after a short period of time. The reason for the deviation from the rules could be the fact that large-scale and fierce clashes between the people and the regime forces took place in Pinsk last August. An urgent transfer of riot police from Minsk was required, thanks to which it was possible to suppress the protests of the Pinsk residents. Note, that practicing the maintenance of the martial law regime includes, among other things, measures to strengthen control over the population (movement, mass gatherings, dissemination of information, etc.).

Speaking about decree No. 214 “On the Security Council of the Republic of Belarus”, we note that it is impossible to adequately assess the volume of innovations, since the previous decree No. 633 “Issues of the Security Council of the Republic of Belarus” is not in public. While it has no “secret” status. Moreover, there is no access to decrees amending decree No. 633.

Orsha Aircraft Repair Plant has been the most problematic enterprise in the Belarusian aircraft repair industry for many years. This is due to the fact that initially the company specialized in the repair of long-range bombers, but after the dissolution of the USSR, this market segment was lost for Belarus. Since then, the plant has struggled to survive. Despite the cheerful reports from the management, the situation is far from good. The profit level for 2020 is so scanty that it suggests that the company is actually unprofitable.

Viktar Khrenin’s speech at the Moscow Security Conference will be perceived outside Belarus as another confirmation of the Belarusian regime’s loss of foreign policy subjectivity and its low ability to act as a party to serious international agreements in the security sphere. Although in practice this is rather not true.

Speaking about the discussion of Lukashenko and Patrushev on cooperation in the military-technical sphere, it can be assumed that the discussion was about the old idea of the Belarusian ruler to use the balance of the Russian credit line for the construction of the Belarusian NPP in the amount of about USD 3 billion. Some of this amount can be used for purchases of Russian weapons. The main money will go to patching up the regime’s financial holes.

