

Analytical report:
National security and defence
of Belarus
(November 2022)

The most important events of the month. On November 14, 2022, Aliaksandr Lukashenka met the command of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, who reported on the situation in the country and the development of the system of internal affairs bodies. During the meeting, Lukashenka warned the generals against exaggerated expectations regarding the financial possibilities of the budget: there is no and there will not be extra money. Secondary expenses of all law enforcement agencies must be transferred to the future period.

Among other things, the issues of changing the structure of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Internal Troops (hereinafter referred to as MIA IT) were discussed. It is planned to create a battalion for counter-sabotage struggle in Minsk and company-level units in Homiel and Brest. It is assumed that these units will be formed at the expense of internal personnel capabilities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs without increasing the overall MIA staffing.

The developments within the month. On November 3, 2022, a meeting of the secretaries of the security councils of the CIS states was held in Moscow. Among other things, the parties discussed the issues of nuclear and radiation safety, countering terrorist threats from the territory of Afghanistan, as well as "... issues related to destructive activities carried out on the territory of the CIS countries by foreign non-governmental organisations and the media".

On the sidelines of the event, State Secretary of the Security Council of Belarus Aliaksandr Valfovich again expressed concern about the militarization of Poland and its aggressive intentions: the neighbouring countries of Belarus do not want to negotiate, although Minsk is ready.

The secretaries of the security councils of the CIS countries considered it necessary to resolve the "conflict in Ukraine" peacefully as soon as possible.

On November 15-18, a Belarusian delegation headed by the First Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Army, Major General Ihar Karol, visited Pakistan. Where, on the sidelines of the international defence exhibition IDEAS-2022, the delegation met with Deputy Minister of Defence Industry Humayun Aziz and Deputy Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Pakistan Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Ahsan Gulrez. The state of and prospects for the development of military and military-technical cooperation between the two countries were discussed.

On November 23, 2022, the CSTO summit was held in Yerevan. As part of the event, Lukashenka spoke out against threats to use nuclear weapons. Blaming "individual Western leaders" for this as well as mentioning Poland's readiness to join NATO's joint nuclear missions and deploy American tactical nuclear weapons on its territory.

The CSTO summit held in Yerevan ended in a scandal: Armenia refused to approve some of the final documents of the event, due to insufficient support for the Armenian position in its confrontation with Azerbaijan from the CSTO countries.

Obviously, the demarche of the Armenian leadership at the CSTO summit is dictated by internal political considerations. One should hardly expect Armenia to withdraw from

the CSTO or bilateral security agreements with Russia. At least until a sustainable peace with Azerbaijan is reached and the Armenian-Turkish relations are normalised.

More interesting are the plans of the official Minsk for the period of its chairmanship in the CSTO. We have devoted a [special article](#) to this event.

In November, the Ministry of Defence issued another refutation of information about preparations for an early mobilisation. This time the reason was the purchase of forms by the military registration and enlistment offices. The Ministry of Defence claims that:

- this is a standard annual procedure;
- the open nature of the procurement indicates the absence of unusual plans;
- the volume of purchased products is at the level of previous years.

In November, it was announced that Russia allocated (or plans to allocate) USD 200 million for the military developments in Belarus. The main resources will be directed to the development of the production of electronic and component bases. Starting next year, it is planned to begin serial modernization of T-72B tanks at the facilities of the Belarusian military-industrial complex.

In November, a delegation headed by Minister of Public Security of Vietnam To Lam visited Belarus. He held meetings at the State Secretariat of the Security Council and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Belarus. Particular attention was paid to the development of cooperation between the two countries through the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Security Committee, and the Ministry of Emergency Situations. The parties also discussed the training of Vietnamese specialists on the basis of the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the University of Civil Protection of the Ministry of Emergencies and the Institute of National Security.

Conclusions. In December, it was announced that counter-sabotage units would be created in all brigades of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Internal Troops. Not only in the ones deployed in the conditional “Ukrainian direction”. This large-scale activity indicates that, despite public statements, the Belarusian military volunteer formations in Ukraine are taken extremely seriously by the Lukashenka regime.

Judging by the available information, counter-sabotage units will be created at the expense of the organisational (command) core from among the active military personnel of the MIA IT (most likely reconnaissance companies) and assigned staff (persons who are in the reserve, but who have experience of urgent military service in the MIA IT special forces). They will be gathered for training on a regular basis. Thus, at first glance, we are talking about the formation of reserve units.

Regarding the prospects for Belarusian-Western negotiations, it is necessary to note the following:

- So far there is no common ground for such negotiations. Official Minsk would like to discuss the international agenda without discussing the internal political situation in Belarus. For the West, such a format is doubtful.

- Minsk failed to formulate (as far as is known) a clear and most importantly realistic proposal for negotiations with the West.

- In the West, there is a consensus between political and military elites about the lack of independence of Minsk in security issues that are of the greatest interest. The Lukashenka regime is seen as a proxy for the Kremlin. So far there is no way to change this conviction.

- In the West, there are doubts not only about the subjectivity, but also about the conscientiousness of the Lukashenka regime.

- In addition, there is a personal rejection of Lukashenka at a high level.

Therefore, for now, both the EU and the US will rather take a wait-and-see attitude towards Minsk. Which will be accompanied by loud statements, but without practical actions to implement these statements. At the same time, a targeted resolution of practical issues interesting to both parties at the level of industry experts is possible.

Speaking about the prospects for Belarusian-Pakistani cooperation in the military-technical sphere, it is necessary to pay attention to the ammunition industry in general. Which is quite developed in Pakistan. The development of domestic production of these products is of interest to Belarus both in terms of meeting their own needs and exports. The Russian-Ukrainian war confirmed the important role of artillery on the battlefield and to a large extent emptied the arsenals of the countries involved (directly or indirectly). Pakistan can be considered by Minsk as a promising partner in organising the production of ammunition in Belarus. Moreover, there are no political restrictions between the two countries. At least the public ones.

Although the formal reason for Lukashenka's anti-nuclear statements was Warsaw's nuclear ambitions, it is more likely that there is an attempt to identify with Beijing's position. China met the Kremlin's nuclear rhetoric without enthusiasm. Beijing allegorically made it clear that the possibility of Russia's confrontation with the West and Ukraine to develop into an atomic format is undesirable.

An example of persistent fears on the part of the Belarusian society of possible mobilisation indicates a low level of trust in the official statements of state structures. The average Belarusian inhabitant readily accepts the information that nothing good can be expected from the state. At the same time, rumours/reports about the preparation of mobilisation in Belarus or its absence may be part of the information-psychological war, which is being waged throughout the region by several players at the same time.

The allocation of resources by Russia to the Belarusian military-industrial complex for the development of production is a consequence of the limited capabilities of the Russian defence industry itself against the background of increased needs. Russia returns to the role of the main client of the Belarusian military-industrial complex. Most likely, we are talking about targeted credit resources and not about direct investments in Belarusian enterprises by Russia.