



OSCE representatives visit 61st Fighter Airbase in Baranovichi to receive answers to all their questions

Foreign experts see everything of interest with their own eyes

Belarus demonstrates its full adherence to 1999 Vienna Document

Representatives of 27 OSCE member states recently visited Minsk, in line with the 1999 Vienna Document on Negotiations on Confidence and Security-Building Measures; this stipulates that each of its members must allow OSCE representatives to examine its national military sites every five years.

During the visit, representatives of 27 European defence agencies attended. In particular, they visited the 61st Fighter Airbase at Baranovichi, meeting its top

officers and personnel, while gaining familiarity with its major armaments and military machinery.

Lithuania's Paulyus Mnitavyichus stressed that 'the Belarusian military demonstrated openness during the visit to the Fighter Airbase in Baranovichi'. He noted, "There were no secrets. We gained answers to all questions of interest." He admitted that the professional training of Belarusian pilots and the operational capabilities of fighter jets were of

particular interest and views the practice of visiting foreign army facilities, as part of the Vienna Document, as a path to strengthening trust between countries.

The Colonel of the US Army's Land Forces, James Jenz, was also part of the delegation, noting that the examination of military sites in Belarus — as part of the Vienna Document — is a measure which builds mutual trust between countries at a national level. The process of familiarisation with

Belarus' military sites was a success and, as the American noted, since his previous visit to Belarus, much has changed for the better. According to him, Belarus and the USA have more in common than they have differences.

The Commander of the 61st Fighter Airbase at Baranovichi, Alexander Potekhin, in turn, said that representatives of OSCE member states gained familiarity with operational procedures, samples of military

machinery, and leadership and pilot training methods. They had additionally received answers to all questions in which they had been interested. The guests were primarily interested in how combat training is conducted, the re-organisation of air defence troops and the optimisation of the Air Force. Mr. Potekhin believes that modern challenges facing countries are much similar: threats of terrorist attack, technogenic disasters and natural calamities.

Orbit already known

Complex testing of Belarusian satellite continues

Anatoly Rusetsky, the Chairman of the Belarusian National Academy of Sciences' Presidium, has told the media, "Complex tests of the satellite are yet to conclude but are nearly done. We are on schedule, as approved jointly with the Russian Space Agency." He tells us that a launch date is yet to be set but stresses that there is no hurry; launch dates of Belarusian and Russian satellites have been shifted several times for various reasons. "The creation of new equipment, instruments and devices always entails certain problems. We've aimed to create a reliable satellite, testing it thoroughly on the Earth's surface, to allow us to operate it with confidence in space," he notes.

It is expected that, this year, the Belarusian satellite will go into orbit, jointly with the Russian Canopus-B satellite, from Baikonur — via a Soyuz carrier rocket and a Fregat booster module. It will orbit at about 500km above the Earth's surface. The Belarusian satellite will be lighter and more manoeuvrable than its predecessor, weighing just 400kg and having a resolution of about 2 metres. It will be able to provide space imaging of the whole of Belarus. In the future, Belarus plans to set up a multiple-layer system for the remote probing of the Earth.

Punishment is inevitable

Investigation regarding terrorist act on metro is now in progress, following all necessary legal procedures

Belarus isn't the first country to suffer from terrorism. We can recall the explosions in London (on the bus and metro), in Moscow (in residential houses, on the metro and at the airport) and in Spain (on trains and at the airport). Investigations into these terrorist acts took years and months, although conducted by the best professionals. Unfortunately, they had much greater experience in such cases compared to our own Belarusian specialists.

We aren't likely to receive the answers to all questions regarding the explosion on the Minsk metro as quickly as we'd like but we have enough reliable facts, as have been already made available to the public. General Prosecutor Grigory Vasilevich hopes that the inquiry will be complete within two months.

Informing journalists of progress so far, Mr. Vasilevich pointed out that the investigation into the explosion on the night of July 4th, 2008, which



Security measures on metro have been intensified

occurred in Pobediteley Avenue, involved over 117,000 people being questioned, with over 80,000 mobile subscribers' call accounts checked, having been close to the explosion site at the time.

During the investigation, dozens of other crimes were solved as a result. 854 people were questioned as witnesses. In fact, 70 were given polygraph tests and 509 searches were conducted. There were 863 expert investigations made, alongside 75 inspections at the accident site and

93 checks of evidence on the spot. Moreover, around 500 investigative requests were sent, including 10 internationally.

The General Prosecutor notes that, last November, the investigation of the 2008 case was extended until May 2011, as interrogating officers felt they were making progress. According to Mr. Vasilevich, over 2m people have been fingerprinted in connection with the crime; although the procedure was legally justified, the action has been con-

demned as violating human rights by some, restricting the further reach of the compulsory overall fingerprinting programme. If it were not for this, the fingerprints of those who are responsible for the explosion on April 11th would have been registered in the database and the latest victims may have been avoided.

The General Prosecutor's Office is yet to reveal any new data regarding the investigation of the crime of April 11th. However, Maxim Voronin, the Deputy Head of Investigations at the General Prosecutor's Office, underlines that the investigation continues, with some details being kept confidential. Acquaintances of the suspects are being questioned, alongside their secondary and primary school teachers and headteachers, the heads of the enterprises where they worked, and co-workers.

Interfax Agency has cited the Head of the State Security Agency's Information and Public Relations Centre, Alexander Antonovich, who notes that 'at the moment of indictment, all surnames will be announced'.

Kind words are best medicine

By Tatiana Velitskaya

Chinese delegation visits injured in hospitals and transfers money to support fund for those suffering from the terrorist act on Minsk metro

The first wave of those injured in the terrorist act on the Minsk metro — 25 people — was accepted by the 3rd City Clinical Hospital, which is located closest to Oktyabrskaya metro station.

Recently, the hospital was visited by members of the Chinese Embassy in Minsk, alongside the heads of Bel Huawei Technologies Ltd. They praised the hospital's prompt work and brought flowers to patients. Meanwhile, the Chinese company transferred \$10,000 to a charitable account to help those suffering.

"An injury caused by exploding shrapnel is serious," notes the Chief Doctor of 3rd City Clinical Hospital, Vladimir Komar. "Physical treatment must be supplemented by psychological

support, since such a tragedy injures the soul. However, attention and support can help patients recover."

One injured woman tells us, "It's a true wonder that we've survived. Of course, nobody enjoys being hurt or having to spend time in hospital, but the important thing is that we're alive. It may sound strange but it's like a second birth." The faces of those injured beamed with joy on seeing the Chinese delegation's flowers and hearing their wishes for a quick recovery, although they didn't express their feelings in words.

"We'd like to express sympathy and support to the whole Belarusian nation, with our deepest condolences to the families of those who died and who are suffering," noted the Director General of Bel Huawei Technologies Ltd., Xu Zhidong. "This event has been a heavy blow for us, as we live and work in Belarus — a beautiful and calm country. We wish all those who are suffering a quick recovery."