

# Security remains topical

Alexander Lukashenko has met the heads of security agencies to discuss how the Armed Forces and the State Border Committee can work together to meet contemporary requirements. The session followed a set agenda, as is held regularly to help the security forces liaise effectively.

By Kirill Dovlatov

Starting the meeting, Mr. Lukashenko reminded everyone present, "In early 2012, we agreed that, within the coming few months, we'd discuss the reformation of national security forces to conform with modern requirements. In the near future, we'll tackle how best to improve the Prosecutor's Office bodies and their interaction with the Investigative Committee. Definite proposals are being prepared to reform the interior affairs system. Moreover, we're looking at ways of further improving the activity of other security agencies."

Mr. Lukashenko is focusing on today's needs, to meet new geopolitical challenges, and the latest economic and political threats to security. With the advent of contemporary IT, borders and distances are no longer any obstacle to the spread of information, so any negative trend spreads worldwide within a flash. We can now see the result — the situation in the Middle East and North Africa affects the lives of people and the fates of entire nations.

The President continued, "Traditional means of war-



During the meeting

fare are being replaced by special techniques (including psychological 'undermining'). Well-prepared extremist groups are sometimes involved, under the patronage of various organisations. While formally advocating the spread of democracy, inner destructive forces are being nurtured, consolidated and directed towards a specific course decided by foreign hosts."

According to Mr. Lukashenko, counteracting such phenomena acquires particular topicality during political campaigns. On the threshold of our parliamentary elections, the Belarusian leader clearly specifies, "We should ensure free expression of the will of citizens in a calm atmosphere, in strict compliance with Belarusian law."

The agenda saw Mr. Lukashenko discuss the role of

the army, saying, "We need to assess whether the army's image meets contemporary requirements, how it should best be modernised and developed and which solutions are most appropriate against the background of our economic opportunities."

He asked how his instructions are being met regarding the ensuring of state border policy and the country's border security for 2012, wheth-

er tasks are being fulfilled on time and with proper initiative. The President sees no imminent emergency but is concerned by such elements as the growth of criminality — including corruption within the State Border Committee; clearly, this is inadmissible.

The President raised some important points, such as the crossing of the Belarusian border by a single-engine air-

craft. He questioned whether this ensures the safety of citizens and why the plane was allowed to proceed when detected in advance. He wonders whether an individual took pity on it or whether an error occurred through the air border defence system. "I'd like to hear answers to these questions," he demanded. "I'd like to honestly and sincerely tell those interested in the matter and those present here that the perpetrators must take responsibility. As you can see, I don't rush to draw conclusions. I've wanted to investigate the matter thoroughly and see those guilty bear responsibility. I'll make decisions after the session, including regarding personnel," he added.

The President demanded that the matter result in further strengthening of the national security system, ensuring an adequately prompt response to challenges and threats. In their reports, the heads of the Defence Ministry and the State Border Committee assured him that subordinate structures have been brought into play, meeting contemporary needs. The session resulted in concrete measures aiming to ensure national security.

## Question of presidency in real terms

**Vladimir Putin supports suggestion of CIS Executive Committee for Belarus to preside over CIS in 2013**

The President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, is supporting a proposal by the CIS Executive Committee to pass the order of rotation of the presidency of the CIS in 2013 to the Republic of Belarus (as announced by the CIS Executive Committee).

The issue was discussed by Mr. Putin at a meeting with the Chairman of the Executive Committee, CIS Executive Secretary Sergey Lebedev, at the Kremlin. Mr. Lebedev informed the Russian President of the activities of the Executive Committee, in particular, its preparation for meetings of the Council of the Heads of Government and the CIS Council of Heads of State, scheduled for this autumn.

The question of the presidency of the CIS in 2013 was on the agenda of the Council of Heads of State meeting, at which Mr. Putin stressed the need to strengthen integration processes across the CIS; he sees this as a priority for Russian foreign policy. Operating within the post-Soviet space, integration associations will continue to receive full support from the Russian leadership. Moscow is convinced that strengthening and improving multilateral cooperation meets the interests of each CIS member.

## Powers assume clear responsibility

**Belarus taking on chairmanship of CIS**

By Kirill Dovlatov

Meeting the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, the CIS Executive Secretary, Sergey Lebedev, noted that the Executive Committee has sent letters suggesting Belarus' chairmanship to all CIS countries. According to preliminary information, there are no objections.

Belarus' stance is one of responsibility, with Mr. Lukashenko remarking that he knows of the existing problems within the CIS and can view them objectively. "You know our position, and we will act in this context. We believe that every CIS state should bear its burden. If there are problems with the presidency, you can always rely on Belarus; we host the headquarters of the CIS — its integration centre. We are primarily responsible for this."

Belarus' view on integration is also well-known, as the Presi-

dent explained, "We do not view states as being outside the integration process. No economy can exist independently — even that of Russia. The whole world is developing in this direction. This is why we'll guide our policy appropriately."

During the meeting, talk turned to the upcoming parliamentary elections. Mr. Lukashenko stressed, "We won't hide anything, as you know. We want to conduct elections in an open, transparent manner, with dignity. The most important thing is that the elections should be legitimate. Of course, all depends on how much freewill people have. We've conducted a series of training and information sessions and have formed the institutions hosting elections, with the nomination of candidates begun. We'll do everything to the highest standard."

The President of Belarus has invited the CIS mission to ob-



serve the elections. He told Mr. Lebedev, "We always welcome the mission of the CIS with pleasure and want you to head it, as usual, because your credibility is very high in Belarus, across all institutions."

The Chairman of CIS Executive Committee emphasised that the formation of the CIS mission has already begun, with long-term observation to be conducted by about 30 people. On voting days, there will be about 300 observers from the Commonwealth. Division headquarters for the mission are planned for all regions and Mr. Lebedev is confident of the success of the monitoring.

"Our previous experience of observation shows that, as a rule, we receive full support from all structures of power in Belarus and from the Central Election Commission. There is no reason to believe that our mission won't be able to fulfil its responsibilities." The CIS mission will liaise with observers from the OSCE, and various international western organisations. Mr. Lebedev is convinced that such contacts are useful, saying, "Experience shows that such contacts allow the exchange of views, giving us a more objective assessment of electoral processes taking place in the Commonwealth. I think the same thing will happen in Belarus."