

Main state holiday

Presidential speech at Minsk garrison parade in honour of Independence Day, on 3rd July, 2013

Comrade soldiers, sergeants, warrant officers and officers!

Dear veterans!

Dear compatriots and visitors to Belarus!

Today, we solemnly celebrate the main holiday of our country: the Independence Day.

The life of each person consists of fateful days and events, which become the starting point of a new stage in the history of the state and inspire joy and unification among citizens. On this day we remember the liberation of our country's capital — Minsk Hero City — from the Fascist invaders.

This historical date, at the choice of Belarusians, has become our Independence Day, connected intentionally to the sacred ideals of freedom and independence. Freedom cannot be gained at the stroke of a pen. Our independence came through the sacrifice of the victors, who each gave their most precious possession: their life. Their heroic deeds brought long-awaited freedom to our land.

Belarus was the first to face the perfidious attack of the aggressors. The heroic resistance of our people began in the first minutes of the war, near the walls of Brest Fortress, and continued until the full repulsion of the enemy from the territory of our Motherland.

During those years, Belarus suffered the biggest loss of all the USSR republics and of the states of the anti-Hitlerite coalition. As a result of brutal genocide, the country lost a third of its population.

Today, we pay a tribute of respect to the memory of those who contributed to our common victory over Fascism and to the libera-

tion of our Motherland and the whole world from those enslavers.

The new millennium has not brought calm and peace

of international terrorism.

Tools of pressure include not just methods of force but economic diktats, and information wars.

to destabilise our country will have no chance.

I am certain that we will stand up well to even the toughest of tests.

are distinctive features of our national character. We are sincerely devoted to our friends and allies and are always glad to see those who

are given from the heart.

Meanwhile, we will not accept lies, hypocrisy or dictatorship.

The principle position of Belarus is transparent and firm: relations should be based on openness, mutual respect and supremacy of international law. Most important to international affairs is honesty. For Belarus, this ever has been and remains the cornerstone of both internal and foreign policy. In order to ensure that no one has the inclination to test our strength, we ensure the combat readiness of the Belarusian army at the highest level — such that nobody has ever considered attacking our country.

Our border should be open to all well-meaning visitors and closed to intruders and violators — whoever they may be.

Peace and order are the highest values for Belarus and the greatest asset of our people. We must ever protect them.

Dear veterans!

My deep gratitude goes to you for your unprecedented courage and for your great feats. You gained not only freedom and independence but gave us and following generations of Belarusians the most essential prize: you gave us life!

Dear compatriots!

I wish you peace, a bright tomorrow, happiness, health and well-being on this sacred day for all Belarus.

Glory to the people of Belarus, who defended the independence of the Fatherland and who act always for the sake of our Motherland's prosperity!

Congratulations! Happy Independence Day, dear compatriots!

Hurrah!



Alexander Lukashenko during Independence Day parade



of mankind; rather, we continue to observe dictatorship in some countries, and military blocks, intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign states and displays

Our country is undergoing a test of strength. However, the unity, wisdom and determination of Belarusians have been proven more than once: any attempt

Dear comrades!

Belarus is a peaceful and open country. We wish all states and peoples happiness and prosperity. Friendliness and warmth

are ready to work, trade and communicate with us. Our nation does not suffer from delusions of grandeur; we are ready to listen to others' opinions and advice if they

Congratulations on Independence Day

President and Belarusian people receive various congratulations on the Independence Day from foreign leaders and famous public and political figures

Congratulatory messages have arrived from the leaders of CIS countries and the presidents of China, Cuba, Austria, Italy, Vietnam, Laos,

India, the Republic of Korea, Greece, Afghanistan, Serbia, Singapore, the Swiss Confederation, Indonesia, Turkey and Bangladesh, as well as from the kings of Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Sweden and Spain. Pope Francis and the Prince and Grand Master of the Sovereign Order of Malta also sent congratulations.

Russian President Vladimir Pu-

tin's congratulatory message read: 'It's symbolic that this holiday is celebrated on the day of Belarus' liberation from the Nazis. Our centuries-old bonds of brotherly friendship and alliance have stood many tests and are now a pledge of the successful development of Russian-Belarusian co-operation. I'm sure that the realisation of agreements reached during

the sitting of the Highest State Council of the Union State in March in St. Petersburg will promote the further advancement of our bilateral integration. I expect also to see constructive co-operation continue within the Customs Union and the Single Economic Space, aiming at forming the Eurasian Economic Union.'

Chinese President Xi Jinping not-

ed in his congratulation that Belarus and China have been strengthening their political confidence in recent years, producing significant results in the spheres of trade and economic, financial, scientific and military-technical co-operation. Cultural exchange has been extended and close co-operation has been promoted internationally and regionally.