

Optimisation takes into account day-to-day realities

Alexander Lukashenko notes need to tackle further development of Belarusian army, to ensure that none dare threaten military force against Belarus

By Vasily Kharitonov

“Our Armed Forces are designed to prevent warfare and should also be ready to defend the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the country in today’s world. We need to make sure that no one dares speak to Belarus from a position of military power,” the President asserts.

Meanwhile, the President stressed that all nations build their Armed Forces depending on the international situation, especially in the area where they have to live and work.

According to the President, the military and political situation, especially in recent decades, has revealed dramatic changes in international relations. “Global powers still attempt to shape the foreign and domestic policy of ‘non-allied’ countries. Moreover, they employ a variety of instruments, including armed struggle,” added Mr. Lukashenko.

The President believes that, fortunately, this has never happened in Belarus and is very unlikely to happen in future. However, western countries and NATO, including the USA, use other methods to pressurise Belarus. He underlined that the international situation has been turbulent recently and countries formerly treated as allies have become unwanted. “The situation is becoming absurd: they’ve deposed everything they could in the Arab arc, in north Africa and in the East. Now, they’re about to start a new round of overthrows — acting like peacekeepers: es-



Alexander Lukashenko orders practical realisation of arrangements with Russia on aviation and air defence

pecially the European Union. You see this yourselves,” emphasised the Head of State.

The President believes that our army should be able to provide an adequate response to new challenges and threats in the 21st century. “However, the Armed Forces should be resourced in line with present-day reality,” Mr. Lukashenko is convinced. Further steps to improve the army should be well-balanced and carefully planned.

He also noted that much has been done in recent years to develop various combat systems and territorial defence, to improve garrison

towns and other infrastructure. “In the near future, I and the people in charge will check what’s going on. This will be well-timed, taking into consideration that we’re going to hold the *Zapad-2013* joint exercise with the Russian Federation,” the President said.

Mr. Lukashenko also sees the need to determine measures to enhance the social protection of the military, with the aim of raising its prestige, especially for junior officers. He is keen to see the terms of the state programme to develop military towns prolonged, where

necessary. “We have enough of this ‘happiness’ — military towns and everything from the days of the Soviet Armed Forces,” notes the Head of State. He believes that these sites should be ‘brought to order or transferred (if the military don’t need them) to those who will be responsible for them.’

The President emphasises, “I charge the Defence Ministry with the practical realisation of agreements reached with the Russian Federation regarding air force and air defence systems.” The President also remarked that ‘the results of recent meetings

with the Russian Defence Minister and our arrangements with President of Russia Vladimir Putin’ should be taken into account.

Mr. Lukashenko believes that items of military equipment and ammunition no longer needed should be sold, or disposed of safely, saying, “We certainly should dispose of these without breaking international commitments before such military items become outdated and as long as someone needs them; it must be done wisely.”

Belarus seeks to optimise the financing of the Armed Forces while expanding ex-

penditure for the air force and air defence. The President has already charged the government with scrutinising army funding, taking into account his instructions and present-day reality. “The military should understand what we can do and what we cannot,” said Mr. Lukashenko. “At the same time, it’s necessary to clearly remember that we and our nation are not going to feed foreign soldiers.” He wishes to see close attention paid to additional targeted funding for top priority measures concerning the air force and the air defence. “Analysing recent conflicts and wars, we’ve determined that the air force and air defence are crucial today; being the core of our Armed Forces, they’ll be given top priority.”

The President pointed out the need to continue optimising the structure of the Belarusian army while reducing personnel numbers. “You know that we are doing this calmly, without revolution, in an evolutionary manner. We haven’t cut things out and left them bleeding,” he said. The Head of State reminded that the Belarusian army used to number up to 200,000, with present numbers close to 100,000. “We don’t need these numbers nowadays. It is not numbers that matter today, as far as the armed forces are concerned,” said Mr. Lukashenko. “We should reach the levels set several years ago but in a calm manner, without disturbing the lives of those serving in the army. Optimisation should stay on the prescribed path.”

Six countries are fighting for purity of the environment

United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) to set up clean technologies centre in Belarus as part of Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production (RECP) Programme

Yuri Lukashевич, the Aide to the Chairman of the State Science and Technology Committee of Belarus, tells us, “The programme envisages co-operation with six countries: Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Az-



erbaijan, Belarus and Georgia. The four-year project is to receive funding of around 12.5 million Euros.”

Implementation will be in several stages, with the first stage envisaging train-

ing of Belarusian specialists in pure technology issues. The second will cover the development of concepts and the assessment of the efficiency of pure technologies, leading to the third

stage, which will focus on the support of technology transfer.

The UNIDO, the State Committee for Science and Technology, the National Centre for Technology Transfer, the National Academy of Sciences, the Economic Ministry and the Ministry for Natural Resources and Environmental Protection are expected to meet soon to discuss the way forward, including the selection of an organisation co-ordinator for the programme.

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