

Top level integration continues

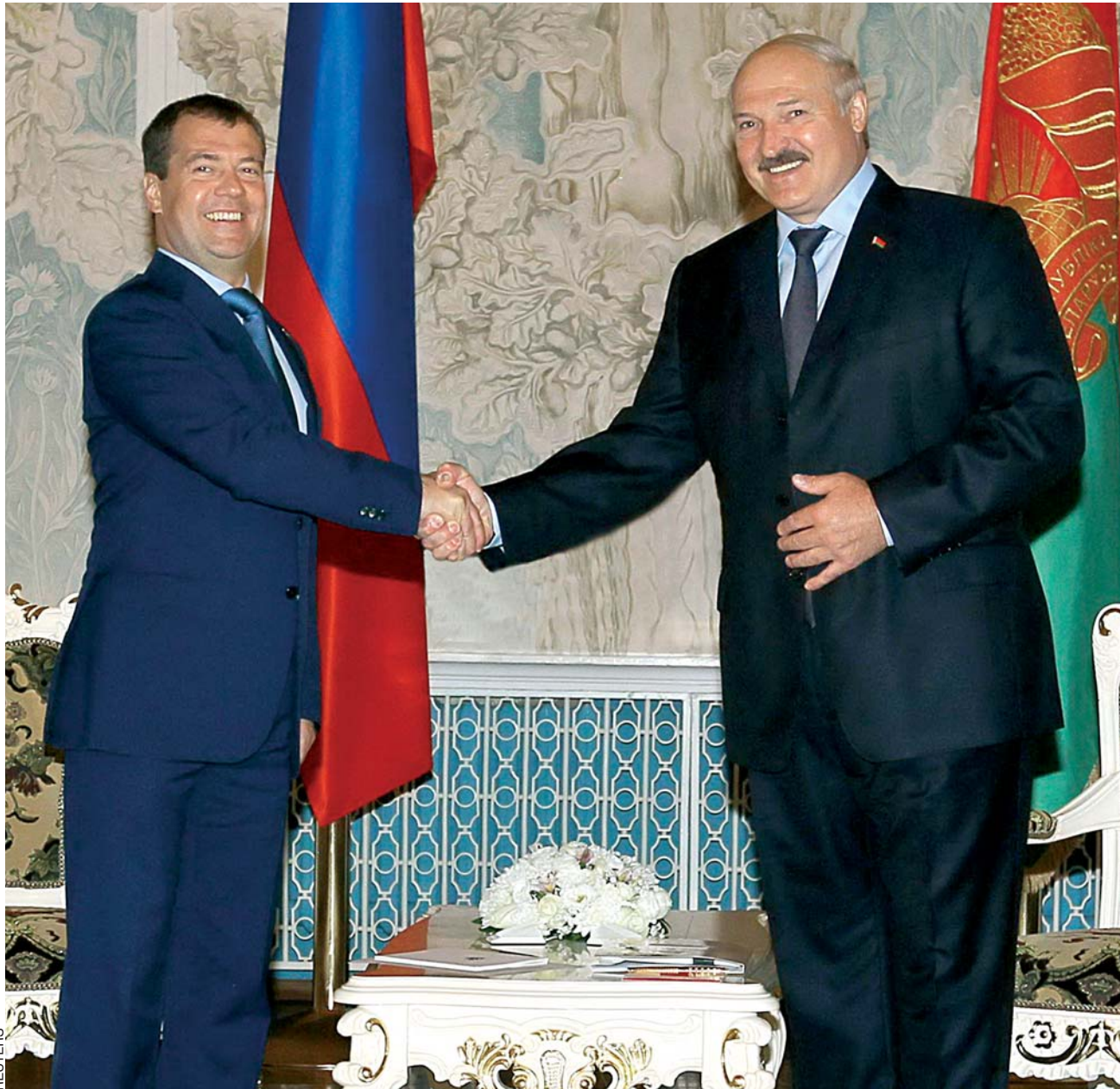
President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko joins Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev in confirming intention to promote Union State

By Veniamin Mishutin

On the eve of the Minsk session of the Union State Council of Ministers, the Chairman of the Supreme State Council of the Union State, the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, accepted the Russian PM and the Chairman of the Union State Council of Ministers.

The last months of Belarusian-Russian relations have been marked by active dialogue at the highest level, showing the strategic partnership which exists between us in bilateral relationships and in multi-lateral integration unions. Russia remains Belarus' major trade partner, accounting for around half of the country's turnover.

However, on welcoming Mr. Medvedev, Mr. Lukashenko noted that some problems continue — including of strategic character; clearly, these need to be discussed. Mr. Lukashenko added that Mr. Medvedev has begun his 'old new life' in politics with the organisation of the meeting, which is vital to both states. "This indicates that we attach great attention to the integration process and will continue to do so. We'll devote attention to this and to our major project of the Union State, promoting it seriously," the



Dmitry Medvedev and Alexander Lukashenko during their meeting in Minsk

Head of State emphasised. Mr. Lukashenko assured all present that Be-

larus is ready to discuss all issues — from Union State construction to de-

fence and finances. Taking into account unfavourable trends from abroad, he

noted a 'range of problems which need to be agreed'. Mr. Medvedev believes

that Belarusian-Russian relations have reached a high level of partnership. "We've made important headway over the last year or more, achieving a completely different level of strategic partnership. This pleases us in Russia and I hope that the same mood reigns in Belarus," smiled the Head of the Russian Government.

Concrete figures show the active collaboration of our two countries. Mr. Medvedev called the level of trade turnover between us 'unprecedented' and the 'highest in the history of our bilateral relations'. "This is the result of our joint activity and integration processes within the Union State and the Customs Union," he asserted. Undoubtedly, the session of the Union State Council of Ministers in Minsk will give additional impetus to these positive processes. The session tackled issues of economic interaction for Belarus and Russia, as well as liaisons in the spheres of defence and humanitarian issues.

"Overall, we believe that our relations are now solid; we have understanding regarding most current affairs. Of course, some issues remain," added Mr. Medvedev. The Minsk meeting was dedicated to solving such issues.

Belarusian satellite launched from Baikonur in Kazakhstan

The 400kg Belarusian satellite was launched into space on the Soyuz-FG space rocket (coupled with its 'Fregat' upper stage), in a cluster of five, with two Russian spacecraft, one German and one Canadian. Within approximately 43 minutes, it was inserted into the orbit which is close to its working orbit.

At around 500-520km above the planet, this will ensure full space surveillance of Belarusian territory, with panchromatic resolution to around 2m. The satellite has high dynamic characteristics and is highly manoeuvrable, to allow prompt movement while in orbit, to gain the necessary shooting angle. Moreover, it gives Belarus an opportunity to create its own independent remote sensing of Earth, to avoid reliance on the services of other states in receiving and processing space data.

Mikhail Zakharevich, a senior research officer at the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, tells us that it took exactly 2,674 seconds from launch to orbit. He adds,



Belarusian satellite before launching

"The 'Soyuz-FG' rocket carrier was launched from Baikonur launching site, placing the satellite in reverse orbit inclination (at an angle of more than 90 degrees); we are against with the Earth's rotation, which uses more energy."

Oleg Semenov, the Deputy Chief Constructor of the Belarusian remote sensing system of the Earth and chief engineer at the National Academy of

Sciences' Geoinformation Systems enterprise, announced from Minsk's Flight Control Centre that the Belarusian satellite will be working in conjunction with the Russian Kanopus-B satellite.

"The working efficiency of the pair increases over a range of fulfilled operations and functions," he underlines. "This is an opportunity to organise regimes which couldn't be

realised with a single satellite."

Mr. Semenov explains that data from the two satellites will be sent (by agreement) to that point in the two states which will be programmed to receive space information. Specialists note that the formation of the Russian-Belarusian orbital group (using the Belarusian space aircraft and Russian Kanopus-B) offers not only technological advantages but security regarding control. The efficiency of the group will increase 3 or 4 fold, enabling Belarus to gain data in the interests of the Russian side and Russian researchers making the same in the interests of their Belarusian colleagues.

The terrestrial segment of the Belarusian Earth remote sensing space system includes the Belarusian terrestrial control centre and the Belarusian terrestrial centre to collect, process and distribute space information. In its turn, the control complex unites a satellite flight control centre and a command-and-measurement complex.

Raising children is serious work

Women with several children nationwide awarded Order of Mother

In all, 59 women with large families — from the Brest, Gomel, Grodno and Mogilev regions — have been awarded the Order of Mother (for giving birth to and raising five or more children). A corresponding decree has been signed by President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko.

Those recognised for their efforts include Sofia Guzarevich — a vet in the Pinsk District's Novodvorskoe-agro, Yelena Prokopchik — a social worker at Ivatsevichi District Centre of Social Services, Natalia Lakhvich — a trader from Zhitkovicvhi, Olga Potapenko — a post woman from the Svetlogorsk District, Zoya Odinets — a housewife from the Voronovo District, and Tatiana Orekhova — a doctor-bacteriologist at the Osipovich District Centre of Hygiene and Epidemiology.