

New Weapons from China, Taking Offence at NATO, Afghanistan Border – Belarus Security Digest

China regards Belarus as a promising market for its armaments. Attempts to establish cooperation between NATO and CSTO have failed.

The situation in Afghanistan keeps special services and border guards from CIS countries on their toes: an escalation of the conflict is expected in the spring. Several ex-Soviet countries are getting ready to repel attacks from the Taliban.

Belarus plans to start manufacturing engines for cruise missiles with the support of Ukrainian experts in 2016. Belarus' Ministry of Interior has a hard time recruiting new staff. All of this and more in this edition of the Belarus Security Digest.

China will assist the Belarusian army

On 8 November, the defence ministries of Belarus and China signed a protocol for a bilateral agreement on non-repayable military assistance provided by China to Belarus. It is highly likely that it will be another batch of armoured vehicles. Conversely, it is unlikely that the amount of aid will exceed \$7m as Beijing pushes its military wares on international markets.

The gifting of these goods is really a sales promotion, which allows potential buyers to familiarise themselves with the quality and technical features of the Chinese products. Belarusian soldiers are already became familiar with Chinese

small arms back after a November 2012 a joint anti-terrorist training session known as "Swift Eagle – 2012" took place in China.

CSTO took offence at NATO

The Collective Security Treaty Organisation ([CSTO](#)) decided to suspend efforts directed at establishing relations with NATO. They have motivated this decision by their non-constructive, and often openly hostile, position held by the EU and the Alliance.

The CSTO regularly accuses NATO of attempts to destabilise the situation in CSTO countries. They cite the alleged "disproportionate increase in the number of employees of Western embassies and, first of all, the United States" as well as "revitalisation of numerous NGOs funded through Western grants" as being reasons for concern.

The CSTO's renunciation of contacts with NATO was expected: CSTO has attempted to establish dialogue with their western colleagues since 2004. The West ignored them and favoured the development of bilateral relations with CSTO's member states.

In fact, this decision, even if it does not affect anything directly, is one of the hallmarks of the "Cold War 2.0" between Russia and the West. The lack of recognition by the West signals the limited international importance of CSTO.

The Situation in Afghanistan

The situation in Afghanistan has been at the centre of attention of the CIS' special security services and border guards. On 5 November, a meeting of the Council of Heads of Security and Special Services of the CIS member states took place in Minsk.

The agenda included the issues of combating international terrorist organisations operating in Afghanistan because of

the threat of an expansion of their activities into the territory of the CIS after the withdrawal of most the ISAF's troops in 2014. Separately, they have discussed measures to protect their transportation infrastructure from terrorist attacks.

On 20 November, in Brest, a meeting of the Council of Commanders of Border Troops of the CIS took place. According to experts, the situation on the ground is showing signs of deterioration. In spring 2015, the situation on the border with Afghanistan will become even more difficult.

Belarus Hopes to Join the League of Missile Wielding Nations

In November, a meeting of representatives of the Ukrainian corporation Motor Sich and the State Military and Industrial Committee of Belarus took place in Zaporizhzhya, Ukraine. Both the Ukrainian and Belarusian parties avoided advertising this event officially and have refrained from making any comments on it as well. Meanwhile, information is circulating about some preliminary agreements on expanding cooperation between the two parties.

In particular, the manufacturing line for small gas turbine engines for cruise missile may be moved to the JSC Orsha Aircraft Repair Plant. Belarus has never manufactured anything similar; it lacks the expertise, an engineering school and even the manufacturing equipment. If the agreement were implemented, it would become a serious technological breakthrough for Belarus. Even despite the fact that the Ukrainian experts be the ones to make it happen. Manufacturing is preliminarily scheduled to begin in 2016.

Belarus' New Defence Minister

On 25 November, Minister of Defence [Jury Zhadobin](#) was discharged from his post as a result of aging out. The forty-seven-year-old [Andrej Raukou](#) was appointed to take over his post. This move can be viewed as one technical manager of the

military agency being replaced by another. This staffing decision was taken in the framework of Lukashenka's recent policy to bring in younger senior managers to important posts in the government.

The new minister has already made it clear that no major changes should be expected in the defence field as Alexander Lukashenka has defined the strategy. He will simply have to implement it. Traditionally, the details of this strategy are not disclosed. The indicator of the defence budget for 2015 will be of critical importance. It will be a sign of a possible shift in government priorities in connection with the ongoing regional security crisis.

Problems with Police Staffing

The Ministry of Interior is undertaking efforts to improve the situation with the nation's police force staffing. They view the professional orientation of youth as one of the potential tools to rectify the situation. In November, the Academy of the Ministry of Interior held a seminar with managers of the nation's school system, which has introduced legal education classes as well as the cadet schools with the participation of Major General [Ihar Shunievich](#), the Interior Minister. This confirms the importance of this policy shift in the activities of the ministry.

The lack of budgetary funds limits the ministry's ability to overcome the more negative trends associated with new personnel recruitment. Discussions about the bloated budgets of security agencies in Belarus is nothing but speculation. A year ago, the Office of the Prosecutor General of Belarus demanded that the Department of Internal Affairs of the Minsk region to fully staff the economic crime units with qualified experts.

Police Colonel Siarhiej Bandaryk, head of the Main Department of Ideological Work of the Ministry of Interior recognised

then the existence of serious problems with the recruitment of high quality personnel. Three main reasons explain it: recruits poor health; tough competition on the labour market; and new recruits' mind-set that views financial well-being "here and now" and an issue associated with their prospective careers' progression.

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