

Chinese Missiles, CSTO, Belarusian Air Force – Belarus Security Digest

China is gradually replacing Russia in the security arena for Belarus. The programme of development for the domestic UAVs is well under way.

The national Air Force has received four combat Yak-130 training aircraft, all manufactured in Russia.

Despite the difficulties in the traditional markets of Russia and Ukraine, the Belarusian military and industrial complex has shown exhibited some positive dynamics. Belarus helps Tajikistan to secure its border with Afghanistan.

Chinese missiles are in already Belarus

Sino-Belarusian high-level contact has been rather active over the past month. On 7-10 April, Alexander Miazhujeu, State Secretary of Belarus' Security Council, visited the People's Republic of China. The parties discussed, among other things, China's support to Belarus in strengthening its defence capabilities.

Alexander Miazhujeu held several meetings with China's top military and Party leaders as well as with Yin Liming, President of the China Great Wall Industry Corporation, and Guo Zhaoping, President of China's Airspace Long-March International Trade Company.

Long-March is a manufacturer of defence goods, including missiles, multiple rocket launcher systems (MRLS), rocket engines, high precision guided bombs, and unmanned aerial vehicles.

The next stage of tests of Grif-1 UAVs has begun

In April, military tests of Grif-1 unmanned aerial vehicle have started. The army received one BAK-100 system, which includes four GRIF-1s and several support vehicles. After the testing is concluded, the Ministry of Defence is set to receive several more systems before the end of this year.

The tests are supposed to confirm the UAV's estimated parameters. Thus far, the drones have been equipped with foreign-manufactured engines, but there are plans to develop a domestically manufactured engine before the tests are over (by the end of the year).

The Belarusian Air Force has four more aircraft

On 27 April, at the Belarusian air force base in Lida, the Air Force received four Yak-130s, a combat training aircraft, that are manufactured in Russia. Additionally, the Irkut Aircraft Corporation plans to supply eight more of these aircraft to Belarus. The contract for four Yak-130 has already been signed, and there is an option for four more aircraft. Belarusian officials have confirmed these plans.

The next batch of aircraft should be delivered before 2020. This option is likely to be taken up sometime after 2020. The Czech combat training aircraft L-39, ten units of which the Belarusian Air Force uses, will remain in service until 2020.

The domestic military and industrial complex is looking for new markets

On 28 April, the Board of the State Military and Industrial Committee (SMIC) met. The Board focused on the efficiency of the chief technical designers' work in developing and manufacturing new (innovative) products. It was said that presently, all of the necessary conditions had been created for the development of new types of equipment and sources for funding of for them has already been secured. However, it

appears that the chief technical designers have not been working efficiently enough.

Siarhiej Huruliou, the head of the SMIC, spoke about implementation of the projects for the development of medium-range anti-aircraft missile systems and a range of light-armour combat vehicles.

In general, in the first trimester of this year, the SMIC-sponsored companies increased their industrial output twofold. The exports of goods and services increased by 2.7% compared to the same period of 2014. After the first half of 2015, the SMIC plans to increase the volume of industrial output by 47% compared to the same period of 2015 and the exports of goods and services by 3 to 5%.

The main issue concerns the overdue receivables, especially foreign receivables. There is a high dependence on the Russian market or on a narrow range of customers to get the necessary inputs. Belarus needs to take systematic efforts to diversify supplies of works and services.

Belarus has fulfilled its obligations towards Tajikistan in the framework of the CSTO

For two years already, Tajikistan has been waiting for emergency assistance from the member states of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) to secure its border with Afghanistan. Dushanbe has legitimate grievances due to these delays. On 2 April, at a meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the CSTO, Sirodzhiddin Aslov, Tajikistan's Foreign Minister, expressed his dissatisfaction with this state of affairs. The heads of states early adopted the decision to assist Tajikistan back in September 2013.

This initiative was to be implemented in two stages. First, the emergency assistance should have been sent, and then a special programme to reinforce the Tajik – Afghan border should have been developed. Thus far, only Belarus and Armenia

have provided emergency assistance to Tajikistan. Belarus sent clothing as well as protective and survival equipment, and Armenia provided vehicles.

There has been no information about other CSTO member states providing assistance. Meanwhile, all of the Alliance members (and especially Russia) have been vocally expressing their concern about the possibility of the situation in Afghanistan destabilising, the increase of cross-border crime, and extremism in the Central Asian countries.

The level of cooperation of the CSTO members continues to be rather minimal. The parties fail to demonstrate their willingness to cooperate even on the issues that affect their own interests. Traditionally, in the post-Soviet space, high-level agreements are not binding. Meanwhile, the CSTO's concern about the developments in Central Asia has a sturdy foundation. It is not only the prospects of destabilisation of Afghanistan that raise alarm, as other issues carry weight as well.

Central Asian countries are still vulnerable, and the ruling regimes there are unstable. As opposition political activities are being suppressed in the countries of the region, with the exception of Kyrgyzstan, and there are still serious social problems, the protest potential is moving more and more towards religion-related political activities.

Notably, the Soviet-era leaders still remain in power in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, the largest countries in the region, and the question of a transition of power after their departure remains unresolved there. Or rather, that is how it looks from the outside.

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