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The Impact of Force Structures and the Army on Maintaining the Regime in Belarus***

The article analyzes how the army and other Belarusian institutions constituting the architecture of security can make an impact on the stability of the regime. Two problematic issues are raised. The first issue deals with how the force structure system and its formal and informal control, management and definition of short- and medium-term functions determine the stability of the Belarusian regime. The second issue poses the question whether the centralization of internal and army management, definition of control and functions is the decisive factor or militarization. Attention is paid to institutional analysis. Attempts are made to reveal how and why functions of the army and security institutions are defined, which of them are formal and which are informal, and what informal institutions or organizations contribute to the efforts of formal institutions to ensure the stability of the regime.

Introduction

The police or militia, Special Forces, other militarized units and the Army constitute a common network of institutions (also called force structures) ensuring security, a network which has clearly outlined and defined functions in each state. Depending on the specifics of each state, these functions might not be very distinctly named but have been established with time.

Certainly, the definitiveness of functions often depends not only on the legal base but also on the political system or political regime within the country. Traditionally, the police or internal forces associated with it are allotted

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the functions to ensure security within the country, whereas military forces are responsible for the readiness to repel external threats. In Belarus this distinction is obvious. However, differently from what is usual in democratic regimes, the accountability and control of all force institutions, both formally and informally, are centralized in single hands, i.e. in the President's institution. The second obvious difference from the police and other force structures typical in democracies is the militarization of the institutions ensuring internal security. The militia, which is subordinate to the Ministry of the Internal Affairs of Belarus, has more than one special militarized unit. In addition to that there exist internal security forces and finally even the Belarussian Border Service is a military service.

The authors are trying to answer two questions in this article. The first question deals with how the force structure system and its formal and informal control, management and definition of short- and medium-term functions determine the stability of the Belarussian regime. The second question is whether the centralization of internal and army management, determination of control and functions or militarization is the decisive factor.

1. Force employment architecture: to make use of the old one or create a new one?

The relation of the institutions ensuring the security of East European countries and especially that of Belarus with regime stability or survival is not a popular direction of study. One of the most exhaustive surveys of internal and public security as well as Army systems existing in Belarus has been prepared by the Belarussian analyst Vyacheslau Paznyak¹. The relations of civilian authorities and the Army in the countries of the Community of the Independent States (CIS) have also been explored in a collective monograph². The research study on the relation of the police, the Army and other institutions that enjoy the right to legitimately use force within the state with regime stability has been carried out by analyzing cases of Latin America or the Middle East. That is so because it has

¹ Paznyak V., „Saugumo sektorius: jėgos struktūros, valstybės paslaptys ir Rusija“, in Vitkus G., Pugačiauskas V., sudar., *Baltarusijos paradoksai: įstrigusi transformacija ir regioninis saugumas*, Vilnius: Lietuvos karo akademija, 2004, p. 32-64.

² Демократический контроль над военной сферой в России и странах СНГ. /Под ред. Никитина А.И. М.: Эслан, 2002. 248 с.

been in these regions that most military coups d'état have taken place³.

As J. Gandhi and A. Przeworski point out, though it is often claimed that the monopoly of using all-encompassing force enables regimes to stay in power longer, such a conclusion, according to the authors, is not so unambiguous⁴. On the one hand, this conclusion is correct if we keep in mind the long-lasting regimes of the former USSR dictator Joseph Stalin (31 years) or the dictator of China Mao Zedong (33 years) who are responsible for the demise of millions of people. On the other hand, the regime of the former dictator of Cambodia Pol Pot that caused the loss of two million people, survived just three years.

The direction of transformation studies pays plenty of attention to the exploration of how regimes change from non-democratic to democratic and what conditions these processes call for but little to the analysis of the regimes stability factor. J. Goldstone claims that regimes change if at least several conditions coincide: first, it is acknowledged that conduct of the regime may harm or harms the future of the country; second, the elite (particularly the military one) distances itself from state affairs and has no intention of defending the government; third, the majority of society due to ethnic, religious or other motifs get mobilized against the regime; fourth, there exists a certain external support for the change of the regime⁵.

Regimes change rarely because all three conditions seldom coincide. What is important though is that in J. Goldstone's generalization, the institutional, namely the element of military forces as one of the four essential factors for revolutions to take place, is mentioned. In trying to understand why the democratization process does not develop in some states, it is important to define the afore-mentioned institutions, determine their functions, subordination and a concrete role assigned to them. In terms of the network of security forces and its impact on the political regime stability, several questions arise: what is the relation of civilians with military personnel, how is the control of the police or militia, forces of the interior and the Army executed, what is the interrelationship of these institutions, how their functions overlap (or not), who and when determines the functions? Lastly, who takes final decisions to operate under usual conditions and at a time when the situation, though not necessarily an extreme one, is yet politically motivated, causing repercussions both in the country and beyond it.

³ At least some of them: Gandhi Jennifer, Przeworski Adam, „Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats“, *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 40, No 11, November 2007, p. 1279-1301. Goldstone, Jack A., „Understanding the Revolutions of 2011. Weakness and Resilience in Middle Eastern Autocracies“, *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2011, p. 8-16.

⁴ Gandhi Jennifer, Przeworski Adam, (note 3) p. 1280.

⁵ Goldstone, Jack A. (note 3) p. 8

After the collapse of the USSR in 1991, in Belarus, Azerbaijan and the former USSR republics in Middle Asia, authoritarian regimes got established. These regimes share similar features: concentration of power in the hands of a single leader and his inner circle, subordination of the legal and legislative power to the executive power, suppression of the opposition. Force structures—the Army, security apparatus, intelligence and other institutions—perform one of the most important functions, that of supporting the regime. Formally, force structures are subordinate to civilian political leaders though they retain no small autonomy.

As Andrew Cottey claims, the “symbiosis” between civilian authorities and force structures is double-sided. “The relationship is one of symbiosis: Civilian leaders need military, security, and intelligence forces and agencies to sustain their rule; in return, civilian leaders provide resources for these forces and allow them to maintain a degree of independence.”⁶ As A. Cottey adds, the Regular Army in this type of regimes does not play a very important role. Regimes rest on the internal security supporting structures which suppress the internal opposition⁷.

For the regime to survive the leader has to maintain the balance among diverse political forces and institutions and also make sure of the support through various coalitions as well as find suitable channels and means to maintain power for a long time. Most heads of state that come to power in a non-democratic way have to establish loyal institutions or an institutional structure which would conform to the leader’s survival goals, be loyal to him and use the same communication channels. On the other hand, it might be difficult to control the old institutions as well as force structures and channel their actions in the desired direction since available resources are not sufficient and convincing measures are not effective. David H. Bayley, who had analyzed the specifics of the police and internal forces operation in Latin America, stated: “Whether police are single or multiple, centralized or decentralized, supervised by politicians or bureaucrats, self-disciplining or not, stratified or egalitarian rank structure and specialized or unspecialized makes no difference to equality of political life”⁸.

One may agree with the argument that formal structures do not necessarily affect the quality of political life. However, in this case, it seems that the

⁶ Cottey Andrew, „Civil-Military Relations and Democracy in the New Europe“, *Yearbook on the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)*, Vol. 13, p. 291.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 281-295.

⁸ Bayley, David H., *Patterns of Policing: A Comparative International Analysis*, New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1985, p. 210.

police or any other internal forces should operate in an isolated from society way and implement only their own institutional interests.

In part of the former USSR republics, for example, the Baltic States, democratic regimes were established. In these states, institutions loyal to the new regime were recreated. In other former USSR republics, for example, in Russia or Belarus, after 1991, there essentially remained departments operating on the basis of USSR institutions and that guaranteed no success for the forming new regimes. As Verena Fritz pointed out, during the turning moment in the post-Soviet space, it was recommended to carry out the change of institutions as a “big-bang”; however, only in some states of Central and Eastern Europe and also in the Baltic States this strategy was effective. In other countries, the change contrary to plans lasted long and a deep erosion of institutions occurred⁹.

Belarus, which restored its independence at the end of 1991, did not make haste to establish new or at least reorganize the existing security forces. The system of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Border Troops and military forces had not been reformed by the end of 1992. During the first years of the independence, the establishment of new institutions or reorganization was only declared. But such institutions as the State Security Committee (KGB) of Belarus did not even change its Soviet name. Such typical of the USSR period structures as the Ministry of Emergency Situations also remained. The only more significant novelty was the Security Council of Belarus (SCB) established in 1992.

The SCB has been the main political coordinating control body of force structures in Belarus up until the present time. Its primary function is to ensure a smooth functioning of the national security system when national security issues are discussed and corresponding decisions related to the national security are made¹⁰. The SCB is composed of the heads of the most important Belarusian institutions¹¹. The working and administrative body of the SCB is the Secretariat. In compliance with the decree of 2010 on the National Security Concept, the secretary constantly informs the Head of state about the security

⁹ Fritz Verena, *State-Building. A Comparative Study of Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, and Russia*. Budapest, New York: CEU Press, 2007, p. 50.

¹⁰ Указ Президента Республики Беларусь, Об утверждении Концепции национальной безопасности Республики Беларусь, 9 ноября 2010 г. № 575, Глава 9/58. <http://www.sovrep.gov.by/index.php/1.7943..0.0.0.html>. 06 14 2013.

¹¹ President; Prime Minister; heads of both Parliamentary Houses; Head of President's Administration; Chairman of the State Control Committee; Procurator General; Head of the National Bank; Minister of Foreign Affairs; Minister of Defense; Minister of Emergency Situations; Minister of Finance; Minister of Internal Affairs ; Chairman of the State Security Committee; Chairman of the Military-Industrial Committee; Chairman of the State Border Troops Committee; Commander of the Internal Troops; Advisor to President on the Issues of National Security. See: Указ Президента Республики Беларусь, Состав Совета Безопасности Республики Беларусь, № 3 от 5 января 2007 г.

situation in the country, coordinates actions of different institutions in strengthening and ensuring security, guarantees smooth work of the SCB and implementation of the national security policy¹². In fact, as V. Paznyak underlines, there is little public information about the composition, structure and activity of the Secretariat, though supposedly it might be composed of a hundred or possibly even more officials¹³. Although, in V. Paznyak's words, the powers of the SCB changed in different periods of time, the key function of this body still remained the control of the main force structures¹⁴.

When President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko came to power, almost all force structures, from top (those shaping policy) to bottom ((those implementing policy in districts), including the SCB, were reformed. Since 1992, the functions and subordination of the SCB have changed several times. The Constitution of the Republic of Belarus of 1994 stipulates that the SCB is accountable to the President of the country who appoints and discharges the Head of the SCB Secretariat¹⁵. Since 2009 General Leonid Maltsev has been the Head of the SCB; he has twice headed the Ministry of Defense of Belarus (in 1995-1996 and in 2001-2009). The SCB has also been headed by: General Victor Sheiman (in 1994-2000 and in 2006-2008)—one of the closest President's comrades-in-arms, the former Head of A. Lukashenko's Administration associated with the disappearance of certain critics of the regime; Ural Latypov (2000-2001), a former regular cadre of the USSR KGB, and Jurij Zhadobin, the former Head of the KGB of Belarus.

On the basis of statements by Gandhi and Przeworski, the example of the change of SCB functions and authorities shows that the establishment of particular institutions and control of the latter is not only "hanging of curtains on the windows". It is a strategic autocrat's choice having an impact on the survival of the regime and even capable of influencing current policy¹⁶. In Eastern Europe, particularly in Russia and Belarus, the obvious reestablishment of institutions and their adjustment to the needs of the authoritarian regime was

¹² Указ Президента Республики Беларусь, Об утверждении Концепции национальной безопасности Республики Беларусь, 9 ноября 2010 г. № 575, Глава 9/58.

¹³ Paznyak V., „Saugumo sektorius: jėgos struktūros, valstybės paslaptys ir Rusija“, see: Vitkus G., Pugačiauskas V. comp., *Baltarusijos paradoksai: įstrigusi transformacija ir regioninis saugumas*, Vilnius: The General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania, 2004 m., p. 36-38.

¹⁴ *Ibidem.*, p. 37-38.

¹⁵ Конституция Республики Беларусь 1994 года (с изменениями и дополнениями, принятыми на республиканских референдумах 24 ноября 1996 г. и 17 октября 2004 г.), Статья 84/27, Президент Республики Беларусь: формирует и возглавляет Совет Безопасности Республики Беларусь; назначает на должность и освобождает от должности Государственного секретаря Совета Безопасности. <http://pravo.by/main.aspx?guid=6351> . 06 15 2013.

¹⁶ Gandhi J., Przeworski A., (Footnote 3) p. 1280.

underway. Analysts titled this process as the “construction of the power vertical”. In Russia, differently from Belarus, a presidential party which enables the heads to maintain power leverages was also established. In Belarus, such a party was not created though attempts had been made; however, at the top of the vertical, the President’s institution was unambiguously established.

Another relevant question is: how does the regime ensure the long-term support of the Army, the police or other force structures, particularly keeping in mind the fact that even in authoritarian regimes, and also in Belarus, elections take place and those in power may change, at least theoretically?

It has already been mentioned that the leader himself chooses or creates the institutional structure. He may set the rules and may even choose to what extent to violate them. However, what happens in those cases when the leader cannot guarantee an obvious and “clean” victory? Such a question should arise in any political regime. Institutions of force each time encounter a dilemma when those in power attempt to use them as instruments in seeking political goals and first of all to employ them as an instrument for maintaining power. In such a case, there may appear a split inside the regime or a part of security sector officials may go over to the opposition, whereas those institutions that used force and supported one of the parties assume the responsibility for repressive actions. This question arises individually and to each person related to these institutions. For example, in Russia, when the former Head of State Boris Yeltsin issued the order to assault the Parliament, the Army obeyed. However, when in 1988 the former dictator of Chile Augusto Pinochet lost the plebiscite which had to extend his term in office, the military junta refused to use force to help the dictator stay in power¹⁷. The Special Forces, first of all the regiments of the interior, obeyed A Lukashenko’s order to disperse the protesting people after the 2006 presidential election. Thus, a certain “closed circle” is formed. On the one hand, one can expect really free and democratic elections when neither the Army nor the police nor other force structures support one of the political forces and remain unbiased. However, this would mean that the official in power is ready to leave his post. On the other hand, if attempts are made to maintain the power at all costs, it is necessary to correspondingly set unequal conditions in the elections, be ready to fabricate them, but also have under one’s influence force institutions which would obey civilian authorities. Still, civilian authorities have no guarantee since in each critical case force structures encounter the dilemma of personal responsibility for the actions taken.

¹⁷ Gandhi J., Przeworski A., *Holding onto Power by Any Means? The Origins of Competitive Elections*, unpublished m., Emory University, 2009, p. 32.

It is complicated to unambiguously answer the question what factors determine the loyalty of the Army and force structures to the ruling regime. As previously mentioned, though the institution, controlling the supervision of the institutions eligible to use force (the SCB), has been created, the logic of the operation of the institutions themselves after the collapse of the USSR has not changed. Perhaps the established during the seven decades control and influence of civilian authorities in individual units have taken such deep roots, that they cannot be easily replaced. For example, The USSR Central Committee was capable of maintaining the control of the Army, because each unit had infiltrated party and security agents who guaranteed the indoctrination of military personnel, control and encouraged to report on others to the Procurator's Office or other security structures for any political deviation¹⁸.

Like in Soviet times, in the Belarusian Army and security services, an autonomous personnel selection policy is non-existent, particularly referring to the highest-ranking officials. However, the loyalty of force structures depends not only on historically established interpersonal relations. It is necessary to guarantee sufficient financing of force institutions. As J. Gandhi points out, that dictators, being afraid of military coup d'état, have to ensure sufficient resources for military forces and other security structures as well as guarantee the distribution of annuities and other privileges. But because of the investment in force structures, other areas, also important for the longevity of the regime, for example various social groups may suffer. Investments in such areas as education, social security, health care are considered "long-term investments", whereas those for force structures are "short-term investments"¹⁹.

Ethan S. Burger and Viktor Minchuk claim that the Belarusian security apparatus is composed of 110,000 people. In addition to them, a secret subunit of body guards personally selected by A. Lukashenko himself is functioning²⁰. Still, accurate information about the strength of the forces of security structures is not available. Some sources indicate that in the system of the MIA of Belarus, approximately 80 thousand people may work; at the same time, 10-12 thousand-strong internal troops are subordinate to the MIA. It is estimated that there are 1,442 security officials to 100 thousand people in Belarus. Thus, if the number of the population in Belarus amounts to 9.5 million, from 100 to 136 officials work in the Belarusian force structures. In terms of these num-

¹⁸ Gandhi, Jennifer, „Political Institutions under Dictatorship“, *Cambridge University Press*, 2008, p. 30.

¹⁹ *Ibidem.*, p. 112.

²⁰ Burger, Ethan S., Viktor Minchuk, „Alyaksandr Lukashenka's Consolidation of Powers” in *Prospects for Democracy in Belarus*“, in Joerg Forbig, David R. Marples, Pavol Demeš ed., *German Marshal Fund of the United States*, printed in Slovak Republic, 2006, p. 34.

bers, Belarus takes the first place among all the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States²¹. The financing of all related security institutions in Belarus is not talked about, the information is limited. Some sources claim that, for example, the KGB employs about 12 thousand people but the exact number of employees is made secret. True, it is added that the KGB budget might amount to 28 million dollars²².

However, the number of the Regular Army has been consistently diminished since the restoration of independence. It is believed that in the Land Forces there may serve approximately 30,000 military personnel, in the Air Force and the Antiaircraft Defense Forces up to 20,000. The Army Reserve amounts to about 259 thousand. For the maintenance of the Army in 2005, Belarus allotted about 1.4 percent of the GDP—a little more than Lithuania or Latvia.

It is estimated that in the Ministry for Emergency Situations about 13,000 employees may work, in the Border Troops – about 6 thousand, at the Customs – 4,000²³. In spite of the Army reductions, it is likely that in this case the security system is not short of human resources.

In summary, after the collapse of the USSR, the security apparatus in Belarus has not been essentially restructured but adjusted to the needs of the new regime (particularly after 1994). The loyalty of the security apparatus to the regime depends on the financing allotted to the security apparatus, on positions assigned to security cadre and most often depending on the personal will of the President or his inner circle and on personal relations with high-ranking regime officials and the President. Both the “old” (of the USSR times) and the “new” institutions and the formal and informal practices of their operation grant the President of the country and his inner circle the power to control the security apparatus.

2. The Armed Forces and the role of the army in society

Before discussing the structure of the Belarusian force institutions and the impact of these structures on the conciliation of society with the current

²¹ Виктор Федорович, „Сколько в Беларуси милиционеров?“, *Naviny.br*, 22 октября 2013 года, http://naviny.by/rubrics/society/2013/03/04/ic_articles_116_181024/, 22 10 2013.

²² „Комитет государственной безопасности (КГБ) республики Беларусь“, *Agentura.ru*, <http://www.agentura.ru/dossier/belarus/kgb/>, 22 10 2013.

²³ BELTA, *KGB should meet today's requirements, Lukashenko says*, 19.11.2012, http://news.belta.by/en/main_news?id=699337, 22 10 2013.

political situation, it should be pointed out that not all the authors carrying out research, for instance on problems of the police or the Army and political regimes, would agree that the centralization and reorganization of functions are the most important aspects ensuring the stability of the regime.

Christopher M. Cardona points out that in predicting regime stability it is important to determine the relation of the police and the Army as well as their mutual subordination²⁴. Of course, historical examples show that in Latin America or the Middle Eastern region, the involvement of the Armed Forces in politics often used to result in military coups d'état after which one non-democratic leader would be replaced by military autocracy or a dictatorship²⁵.

According to Robert Śmigielski, the Army in Belarus and Azerbaijan is used for the establishment of the symbolic power of the regime, sometimes for the consolidation of identity. Due to this reason, the subordination of the Regular Army belongs to the Head of state but not to various defense links²⁶.

After the declaration of the independence of Belarus in 1991, the remaining forces of the territory of the USSR were not withdrawn but essentially came under the control of the authorities of the Republic of Belarus. The status, structure and key functions of the Belarusian Armed Forces were for the first time defined in the published Army law „Законодательство Республики Беларусь, О Вооруженных Силах Республики Беларусь“ in September 1992. The Armed Forces are defined as a “state military organization with the aim of safeguarding the national security”. After the expansion of presidential powers in 1994 and 1996, the control of the army is directly under the President of the country – the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces – alongside the Parliament and the Government whereas the Ministry of Defense is responsible for the maintenance of the functioning of the Armed Forces²⁷.

In the winter of 1992, the first Military Doctrine of Belarus was published. It is based on two principles: the neutrality policy and the status of a non-nuclear weapon state are emphasized, since at that time, on the territory of Belarus, a nuclear weapon of the Soviet times was still present. In 1994, the

²⁴ Cardona Christopher M. „Police Systems and Political Development in Latin America“, *Prepared for delivery at the 2007 Congress of the Latin American Studies Association*, Montréal, Canada, September 5-8, 2007, p. 2.

²⁵ Holger Albrecht, Bishara Dina „Back on Horseback: The Military and Political Transformation in Egypt“, *Middle East Law & Governance*, Feb 2011, Vol. 3 Issue 1/2, p.15.

²⁶ Śmigielski R., „Introducing Democratic Civilian Control over the Armed Forces in the Countries of the Eastern Partnership—Problems and Perspectives“, Zaborowski Marcin, Kopec Agnieszka ed., *PISM Bulletin*, Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM), No. 60 (277), June 6, 2011, p. 520-521.

²⁷ Законодательство Республики Беларусь, О Вооруженных Силах Республики Беларусь, 3 ноября 1992 г. № 1904-XII.

document was amended. It was from that time on that a close military cooperation with Russia started; thus the position of neutrality and the policy of non-alignment with any military blocs were de facto renounced. In 2002, the doctrine which consists of the military-political and military-technical parts was once more amended taking into consideration the processes in the region and the international space. The necessity to reconsider the doctrine arose in Belarus after the changes in the international system related to September 11 terror acts in the USA, NATO expansion to East Europe and of course ever closer and closer relations with Russia²⁸. The doctrine underlines the defensive principle of the country defense policy and emphasizes that for Belarus “at present, none of the states is its potential enemy”. The commitment to the provisions of the Collective Security Treaty (signed in May 1992) and the Treaty of the Union State (December 1999) is emphasized, the factor of regional security, the necessity of the protection of the political system of Belarus and fighting against internal threats are stressed²⁹. It is underlined that regional forces, which were to be created, should be commanded by the highest bodies of the Union State though it is worth mentioning that in the 2002 Military Strategy of Russia, the like intentions concerning regional units were not present³⁰.

The third document is the Concept of National Security. Its first variant was approved in March 1995 and later the concept was amended, for the last time in 2010. The concept defines the situation in the international system, underlines national interests, identifies threats – external and internal – and identifies national security goals and principles, institutions responsible for security and their functions³¹. An important aspect is the emphasis in all military documents that the Armed Forces, the Border Troops, the Army of the Interior and the State Security Committee Forces should maintain interaction³².

In term of the development of Belarusian Armed Forces, they have been and, in spite of reductions, have remained among the largest of all post-Soviet states. In the Soviet times, the territory of Belarus was strategically one of the most important USSR regions responsible for the defense of the western borders. Military units stationed in Belarus were not only well armed but also well prepared for possible operations against the forces of the West. On the eve of

²⁸ Main J. Steven, *The Belarusian Armed Forces: A Military-Political Analysis, 1991-2003*, Conflict Studies Research Centre, October, 2003. p. 35-40.

²⁹ Военная доктрина Республики Беларусь, <http://www.mod.mil.by/doktrina.html>, 22 10 2013.

³⁰ Main J. Steven, (note 28) p. 22.

³¹ Концепция национальной безопасности Республики Беларусь, 9 ноября 2010 г. №575. <http://mod.mil.by/консер.html>, 22 10 2013.

³² Законодательство Республики Беларусь, О Вооруженных Силах Республики Беларусь, 3 ноября 1992 г. № 1904-XII.

the Soviet Union collapse, the 28th Army, the 7th Tank Army, the 5th Army Corps, the 103rd Paratrooper Division, the 11th Corps and others were deployed on the territory of Belarus – in total 280,000 military personnel. According to V. Paznyak, in the military district of Belarus as many as 1500 military units operated³³.

In March 1992, the Supreme Council of Belarus announced that military forces of the Republic of Belarus would be formed. The reform of the Army was first of all orientated towards the reduction of military personnel and armaments because of both lack of financial resources and international commitments. In 1991 the ratio between the army and the civilian population in Belarus was 1 soldier to 43 citizens (in Ukraine – 1:98, in Russia – 1:634). In addition to that, in compliance with the Helsinki Agreements, the set military personnel quota for Belarus did not exceed 100 thousand soldiers³⁴. The reforms in the Army were executed fast, much faster than in the neighboring Russia. During the first stage, by approximately 1993, the number of the military personnel had been reduced by 30 thousand. Besides, during this time, the most important afore-mentioned legal acts, regulating the functions, goals and missions of the Army were adopted. The second stage took place in 1993–1994. The Armed Forces were reduced by 16 thousand military personnel again. According to the then defense officials, in 1992–1996, from 200 to 250 military units and other formations were reformed. At that time, the number of military personnel amounted to 85,000 and stayed fixed for some time. The number of officers amounted to 198,000, that of generals – to 40. During this period, defense financing was considerably reduced, a part of military equipment and military exercises were given up; also by 1996 the remaining USSR stores of the nuclear weapon had been withdrawn from the territory of Belarus. According to V. Poznjak's summary, by 1996 military formations, units, offices had been reformed, military training system improved, a military academy established, etc.³⁵

In 1995–2001 the foundations for the establishment of the professional Army were laid, the number of servicemen and the duration of contracts were planned. The second direction of the reform provided for the formation of territorial units by dividing the country into military districts subordinate to the committees of the local authorities. The formation of mobile military forces composed of three brigades: those of the Air, Land and Special Forces were initiated. The control system was reformed, a part of functions of internal

³³ Paznyak V., (note 1) p. 36-38.

³⁴ Main J. Steven, (note 28) p. 6.

³⁵ Paznyak V., p. 39.

security safeguarding were assigned to the Army, in other words, the subordination of a part of units was transferred from the Ministry of Defense to the MIA. In 2001, the then leader of the Defense Ministry Leonid Maltsev stated that the control of the Army would be reformed as well (the Ministry of Defense and the General Staff would be separated, the former would be responsible for defense policy, the latter – for the control of the Armed Forces³⁶). At the same time it was planned to reduce the number of the armed forces (from approximately 85 thousand to 65 thousand)³⁷, to establish two operational-territorial headquarters, one in Grodno (the headquarters of the former 28th Army) the other one in Borisov (the headquarters of the former 65th Army)³⁸. These headquarters control the entire territory of Belarus. In 1992–2009 the Defense Ministry was headed by 7 ministers – army officers³⁹.

At present, the military forces of Belarus are composed of land, air, anti-aircraft defense, missile/artillery, engineer, nuclear/radiation, chemical and biological forces, also units of communications and radio-electronic combat and Special Forces⁴⁰. In 2001 a novelty was introduced – Territorial Defense Units. They are composed of trained reserve professionals who could be mobilized in case of war. It is estimated that the number of reservists may reach 300,000. They are annually called up for two-three month long exercises. Right now the Land Forces are 30,000 men strong. An important Army element is independent Mobile Brigades deployed in Vitebsk, Borovukha near Polotsk and in Brest and the special-purpose Army Brigade “Marina Gorka”.

The analysis of the laws and reforms regulating the activity of the military forces reveals that military forces in Belarus are not used to maintaining internal order except in those cases when, in face of a terrorist threat or when public actions are likened to terrorism, Special Forces are mobilized. However, one cannot say that the Army plays no role in securing the loyalty of society to the regime. Several aspects could be singled out: educative-educational, financial and ideological.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 40.

³⁷ Xinhua, *Belarus to Create New Army: Defense Minister*, Feb 25, 2002, <http://www.cctv.com/english/news/20020225/83962.html>, 06 23 2013.

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

³⁹ Генерал-лейтенант Юрий Викторович Жадобин (since 4 December 2009).

Генерал-полковник Леонид Семёнович Мальце (28 March 2001 (24 September) – 4 December 2009).

Генерал-полковник Александр Чумаков (11 January 1997 – 28 March 2001).

Генерал-полковник Леонид Семёнович Мальце (10 October 1995 – 1 November 1996).

Генерал-полковник Анатолий Костенко (July of 1994 – 6 July 1995).

Генерал-полковник Павел Павлович Козловский (April of 1992 – July of 1994).

Генерал-полковник Чаус Петр Григорьевич (December of 1991– April of 1992).

⁴⁰ Paznyak V., „Saugumo sektorius: jėgos struktūros, valstybės paslaaptys ir Rusija“, p. 40.

With reference to the first, opposition activists were, on occasion, expelled from universities and immediately taken to the mandatory Military Service Registration Centers for having been ill-disposed to the ruling regime⁴¹. At least one of these activists claims to have been discriminated against for civil disloyalty. Besides, at the time of elections, military units perform the function of the “patriots” of the regime and the country. They participate in the elections 100 or 99 percent and, of course, vote accordingly⁴².

The financial role of the Belarusian military forces for the regime stability is difficult to assess. The Belarusian Army inherited a large portion of the USSR military equipment⁴³. It is believed that legal or illegal trade in military equipment and military technologies finances the regime. According to the official data alone, in 2010, Belarus traded weapons with such countries as Yemen, Sudan, Uganda, Nigeria and Azerbaijan⁴⁴. In 2007, international institutions suspected that Belarus illegally sold armaments to Iran.

All these cases of selling are kept secret in Belarus; the exact income is not known. It is assumed that all this profit is not even taken stock of through the Defense Ministry budget but is channeled directly to the account of the “Sports Support Fund” headed by A. Lukashenko’s son Viktor Lukashenko, the Fund which is always full and is used to sponsor not only outstanding sportsmen but also costly sports infrastructure projects.

An important factor for regime stability is the formation of the Russian–Belarusian military alliance with a threefold function: the first is a deterrent to Western security structures; the second is the formation of the geopolitical identity and legitimization of the regime; the third is the stability of the financial regime.

⁴¹ Radio Free Europe, „Two Belarusian Activists Forced Into Army“, January 30, 2009, http://www.rferl.org/content/Two_Belarusian_Activists_Forced_Into_Army/1376810.html, 28 09 2013.

⁴² The New York Times, *Lukashenko wins Belarus election with over 90 percent of vote*, March 19, 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/19/world/europe/19iht-web.0319belarus.html?_r=0, 28 09 2013.

⁴³ On the basis of the research conducted in 2010 by the International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS), the Armed Forces of Belarus are armed with soviet T-80B, T-72B, T-55 tanks, infantry combat vehicles BMP-1, BMP-2, BRM-1K, BMD-1, armored personnel carriers ТМПК „Мул“, ВТР-D, МТ-LB, ВТР-60, ВТР-70, ВТР-80, artillery systems 2С9 „Нона-С“, 2С1 „Гвоздика“, 2С3 „Акация“, 2С5 „Гиацинт-С“, 2С19 „Мста-С“, 2С7 „Пион“, Д-30, 2А36 „Гиацинт-Б“, 2А65 „Мста-Б“, Д-20, Д-1, 2С12 „Сани“, missile systems БМ-13 Катюша, 9П138 „Град-1“, БМ-21 Град, БМ-21 Град, БМ-21 Град, anti-tank systems „Фарот“, 9М113 „Конкурс“, „Штурм“, „Метис“ ir „Скиф“, tactical missile systems Точка, Р-17 and anti-aircraft systems С-300В „Бук“, „Оса“, Стрела-10, „Тор-М2Э“. The military Air Force is composed of fighters Су-27, Су-27УБ, МИГ-29, МИГ-29БМ, МИГ-29УБ, Су-25, Су-25УБ, cargo planes Ил-76М, Ан-26, light attack aircraft L-39, cargo and combat helicopters Ми-8, Ми-6, Ми-26, Ми-24В, Ми-24К, Ми-24Р, missile systems С-300ПС, С-125, Бук, С-200. Belarus army equipment,

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/belarus/army-equipment.htm>, *globalsecurity.org*, 27 09 2013.

⁴⁴ „Может ли Беларусь стать новой Югославией на глобальных рынках вооружений?“, 9 September 2011, <http://nmbny.eu/news/analytics/3272.html>, 28 09 2013.

Some experts claim that the cooperation and integration of the two strategic partners establishing a single state is well underway⁴⁵. The attitude presented that Belarusian authorities maintain close relations with Russia is significant. It is emphasized that it is this cooperation that will safeguard Belarus in case of any danger. Besides, keeping in mind the fact that the external pressure is one of the elements which might destabilize even a well-established non-democratic regime, the military alliance with Russia and belonging to the Collective Security Organization have a strategic importance for the stability of the regime. On the one hand, the alliance with Russia is useful as a means of deterrent to the external pressure while the arguments of the Collective CIS Space Defense are used by the regime, in case of necessity, to balance the influence of Russia. On the other hand, the support allocated to the Belarusian Army by Russia is important for the stability of the regime (particularly in terms of finances).

With reference to the military alliance of Belarus–Russia, the close cooperation between the two countries in the military area from 1991 till 1994 was exceptionally determined by the economic situation after the collapse of the USSR⁴⁶. In 1992, Russia and Belarus signed a number of cooperation documents. The most important of them was the Treaty on Collective Security signed in May 1992. In November 2002, on the basis of this Treaty, the Collective Security Treaty Organization was established. Still, at that time, it was the issues of the technical support and the removal of strategic weapons of the USSR times that were more often coordinated between the two countries⁴⁷.

A new stage in developing relations began in 1994, when A. Lukashenko won the presidential elections in Belarus and announced the Belarusian relations with Russia a priority. Since 1995, when Belarus joined the collective CIS air space defense system, the air space defense integration (its beginning is associated with the period 1996–1997) between Russia and Belarus has been gradually developing. The creation of the common air defense system has taken a long time. In 1997, the Treaty on the Establishment of the Union between Russia and Belarus was signed in which quite a lot of attention was paid to the joint formation of the defense policy. Emphasis was put on the fact that many issues related to army logistics, development and defense strategy would be solved during the process of the collective decision making between Russia

⁴⁵ Jasutis G., *Karinio aljanso patvarumo tyrimas: Rusijos ir Baltarusijos atvejais*, a doctoral dissertation, Social sciences, political sciences, Vilnius University, 2011 m.

⁴⁶ Clelia Rontoyanni, „Belarusian foreign policy“, in: Dov Lynch ed., *Changing Belarus*, Chaillot Papers, No. 85, November 2005. p.58.

⁴⁷ Main J. Steven, (note 28) p. 10-12.

and Belarus⁴⁸. The same year, the Treaty on Military Cooperation was signed. Cooperation guidelines were defined more specifically in it. It was agreed to cooperate in the following areas: the formation of defense policy and strategy, the unification of normative acts related to the military area, the formation of common state military orders, establishment of the regional military group, the unification of its control, common training of the military personnel, pooling of the reserve, maintenance and utilization of military objects⁴⁹. By 1999 two more agreements had been signed: The Agreement on Common Ensuring of Regional Security in the Military Area⁵⁰; The Agreement on Common Use of Military Objects of Infrastructure in the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation⁵¹. One of the more interesting aspects of the Russian–Belarusian Military Doctrine, published in 1999, is the establishment of regional forces which, in case of necessity, are subordinate to the top bodies of the Union State. Yet this doctrine does not provide for the establishment of a common army or a unified air defense system⁵².

In 1999, the major joint military exercises of Russia and Belarus “Zapad 99” were mounted; regional military units participated in them for the first time. Military exercises of Russia–Belarus take place regularly. In 2009, the exercises “Zapad 2009” were organized and in 2011, in the exercises “Zapad 2011” 12 thousand military personnel, 120 aircraft and military helicopters as well as other military units participated. The anti-aircraft complexes (missiles “ground–air”) S-300 and S-400, complexes Tor (Тор), Pantsir (Панцирь-С1) and Buk (Бук) also participated in the exercises. In September of this year, another traditional exercise “Zapad 2013” took place⁵³.

Though Russia has not deployed its military forces in Belarus, it has two strategically important military posts there in Baranovich, near the border with

⁴⁸ Законы Республики Беларусь, О ратификации Договора о Союзе Беларуси и России и Устава Союза Беларуси и России, 10 июня 1997 г. № 41-3. <http://www.pravo.by/main.aspx?guid=3871&p0=H19700041&p2={NRPA}>, 26 06 2013.

⁴⁹ Договор между Республикой Беларусь и Российской Федерацией о военном сотрудничестве. <http://pravo.levonevsky.org/bazaby/mdogov/megd3108.html>, 26 06 2013.

⁵⁰ Закон Республики Беларусь, О ратификации Соглашения между Республикой Беларусь и Российской Федерацией о совместном обеспечении региональной безопасности в военной сфере, 5 мая 1998 г. №143-3. <http://pravo.levonevsky.org/bazaby/zakon/zakb0901.htm>, 26 06 2013.

⁵¹ Соглашение между Республикой Беларусь и Российской Федерацией о совместном использовании объектов военной инфраструктуры Республики Беларусь и Российской Федерации в интересах обеспечения безопасности государств, от 16 октября 1998 года. http://base.spinform.ru/show_doc.fwx?rgn=29801, 26 06 2013.

⁵² Paznyak V., „Saugumo sektorius: jėgos struktūros, valstybės paslaptys ir Rusija“. In.: Vitkus G., Pugačiauskas V., „Baltarusijos paradokasai“, p. 57.

⁵³ Dyner Maria Anna „Prospects and Consequences of Military Cooperation between Belarus and Russia“, *The Polish Institute of International Affairs Bulletin*, No. 61 (514), 4 June 2013. p.1.

Poland, and in Vileyka, to the north of the capital Minsk⁵⁴. On the base in Baranovich, the Russian radar station “Volga”, capable of detecting ballistic enemy missiles within the range of five thousand kilometers, is operating; the station deployed in Vileyka enables to maintain communications with strategic submarines carrying nuclear weapon⁵⁵. Both the stations have been rented until 2020. Recently there have been open talks about the establishment of common Rapid Reaction Forces and in the future, perhaps, of common Army. In 2012, the Russian–Belarusian Agreement on a Common Air Defense System was finally signed. It is rumored that a Russian Air Force base might soon get established in Belarus. Its objective is to ensure the air space defense of both the countries. The Russian side claims that fighters Su-30 could be deployed in Belarus. The base might get established in Baranovich on the operating 61st Belarus Air Force base where fighters Su-27 are deployed. Russia is also planning to provide Belarus with the modern anti-aircraft systems S-300s; the Belarusian Army has already procured three Top-M2 missile batteries designed to repel near-range air strikes⁵⁶. Statements against the “presence of a foreign army on the territory of Belarus” are considered as political and intolerant and those voicing such statements incur arrest⁵⁷. This testifies to a particularly important ideological charge of the military cooperation between Belarus and Russia in securing the loyalty of society.

In the sense of deterrence, the collective defense principle existing between Russia and Belarus would make potential aggressors assess the risk of a possible war with Russia as a nuclear state. Additionally, the geographical position of Belarus is important to Russia from the geostrategic point of view as a buffer zone from NATO states; thus both the political and military involvement of Russia in the processes in Belarus is highly feasible. In terms of the geopolitical identity aspect of the alliance with Russia, the role of the Army is most often manifested indirectly through the creation of the loyalty-to-the- regime model. The factor of the alliance with Russia enhances the image of the Belarusian Army as capable of actually defending society of the country from aggressors; in other words, this cooperation imparts important ideological message to both citizens and opponents of the regime. The support given to the Belarusian Army by Russia (in the financial sense) is important for the stability of the regime.

⁵⁴ Trenin Dmitri, „Moscow’s relations with Belarus: An awkward ally“, in: Dov Lynch ed., *Changing Belarus*, Chaillot Papers, No. 85, November 2005. p. 71-72.

⁵⁵ Paznyak V., (note 1) p. 59.

⁵⁶ Dyner Maria Anna, (note 53) p. 1-2.

⁵⁷ „Opposition activist in Minsk sentenced to 10 days in jail over protest against foreign military bases“, *Navyyny.by: Belarus news*, 27.08.2013, http://navyny.by/rubrics/english/2013/08/27/ic_news_259_423599/, 28 09 2013.

3. Internal security for the citizens or the authorities?

After Lukashenko came to power, military forces and their control were reformed. These reforms were carried out for the practical purpose of the defensibility of the country. However, referring to the reforms in the force structures ensuring the internal order and citizens' security, these reforms were implemented seeking not only direct goals for making these institutions more effective but for other goals that, most probably, influence the survival of the regime as well.

Throughout almost two decades of A. Lukashenko's ruling, practically all Belarusian security services have been restructured. Formally, their reorganization took place at least several times: at the very beginning of A. Lukashenko's ruling in 1994, also, some time later, in about 2004-2005. The key guidelines of these reforms provided for the extension of the institutional powers and centralization of their subordination. The last reconstruction was carried out in 2010. It is evident that the reforms of force structures essentially coincide with the cycles of elections in the country. Elections mark the period when the Head of State feels the most vulnerable even in terms of a not democratic process.

The apparatus of internal security structures in Belarus is large. Alongside the Ministry of Defense and all military forces, the Belarusian defense and security structures include the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), the State Security Committee (KGB), the Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES), the Border Troops (the State Border Committee), the State Customs Committee, the Procurator's Office and other interdepartmental offices, for example, the Commission on Export Control and Economic Safety⁵⁸.

The State Control institution plays a particular role within these force structures. This institution does not use force leverage directly, but very often the actions of other institutions are based on its decisions⁵⁹. It should be emphasized that among the afore-mentioned institutions, the BSC and its Secretariat are directly subordinate to the President; however, indirectly A. Lukashenko, in fact, controls all the force institutions since the President appoints ministers, participates in Government activities and discharges, for example, the Head of the KGB; besides, the President's administration can interfere in personnel matters in institutions and carry out inter-institutional coordination as well. It is interesting that semi-independent educational, qualification improvement and analysis-performing institutions function at practically all security institutions. Thus, a very elaborate cadre training and maintenance system has been created.

⁵⁸ Paznyak V., (note 1) p. 35.

⁵⁹ Fritz V., (note 9) p. 50.

Table 1. The system of security services defined by V. Paznyak⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Paznyak V., "Belarus: Civilian control of national security structures", *International Institute for Policy Studies Minsk*, Belarus, Geneva center for the democratic control of armed forces, Conference paper, 2002, <http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00001373/01/Paznyak.pdf>, 20 02 2014.

3.1. The Ministry of Internal Affairs

Alongside the Ministry of Defense, the MES, the KGB, the State Border Committee, the State Customs and the Procurator's Office, the MIA belongs to the so-called bloc of the Belarusian force structures. Four of the afore-mentioned institutions have special-purpose military/militarized units: the MIA, the Ministry of Defense, the KGB, and the State Border Committee. Other force structures, for example, the Border Troops⁶¹ and its special-purpose platoon ACAM (also known as WASPS), the customs or other institutions, are also important for the stability of the regime.

The MIA is responsible for different areas: fighting against organized crime and economic crimes, such as smuggling, also fighting against corruption in state institutions, protection of state secrets, migration, protection of information space, etc. According to Belarusian law, the MIA is assigned the function of criminal investigations⁶². The force structures subordinate to the ministry are the following: the militia, special militia units and the Army of the Interior. As it is officially pointed out, these structures ensure public security, are in charge of fighting against terrorism and extremism, help to eliminate the consequences of accidents, catastrophes and natural disasters, etc.⁶³.

The main institution subordinate to the MIA whose task is to ensure security within the country is the Army of the Interior (AI). The Army of the Interior was formed on the basis of the units of the Internal Troops of the former USSR deployed on the territory of Belarus. The functions and subordination of the AI were defined by the law adopted in 1993⁶⁴. It states that the AI is a state

⁶¹ Lukashenko himself and his closest comrade-in-arms Genadij Nevygl served in the Border Troops. Presumably, this was the reason why this particular institution managed to retain the most conservative structure and a rather high position within the overall hierarchy of state institutions. It is subordinate to the Belarusian State Border Committee (Государственный пограничный комитет). The Border Troops make up slightly more than 10,000 troopers deployed in 7 border districts: Brest, Lida, Smolensk, Grodno, Pinsk, Gomel, and Polotsk. The Border Troops also have rapid-reaction forces (ACAM, also known as WASPS), consisting of slightly more than one thousand troopers, though very little is written about them publicly. The forces were created in 1993 and their first commander was G.Nevygl. The ACAM were created following the example of the USSR forces of a similar type that were subordinate to the KGB and the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union. In Afghanistan, the Special Border Forces were in charge of fight against secret services of foreign states and elimination of counter-revolutionary elements. Since the very beginning of their formation, the main task of the ACAM has been fighting against illegal immigration, though later more attention was paid to economic crimes, such as prevention of smuggling as well as terrorism and human trafficking. Counter-intelligence functions of observing the actions of special services of foreign states are also indicated among ACAM functions.

⁶² *The structure of the Belarusian MIA*, <http://mvd.gov.by/ru/main.aspx?guid=1071>, 21 06 2013.

⁶³ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁴ Законы Республики Беларусь, О внутренних войсках Министерства внутренних дел Республики Беларусь, 3 июня 1993 г. № 2341-XII.

military organization the main objective of which is “to ensure constitutional order in the state, security and sovereignty of Belarus”⁶⁵. Most often, AI units ensure order during mass events, for example, football matches, festivals and also protest actions.

The basis of the Army of the Interior is individual militarized militia units in regions and military brigades. On the Belarusian MIA website, the information about the brigade “Спецназ”, also referred to as “Uruchenskaya” (“the red berets”), is available. Apparently a special-purpose brigade, this is named one of the most important military links of the Army of the Interior. The brigade is assigned the functions of public security, tasks of fighting against terrorism; it is also obligated to assist the Border Troops units in emergency situations. The brigade consists of several battalions and several Special Forces units, including the Rapid-Reaction Force SOBR (SOBR - специальные отряды быстрого реагирования)⁶⁶. Since 2006, the COBR has been commanded by Dmitriy Pavlichenko, who, by the way, is associated with the mysterious disappearances of the former Minister of Internal Affairs Zacharenko, the politician Gonchar and the businessman Krasovski that had caused major repercussions.

Another unit of the Special Forces which is under the control of the MIA is АЛМАЗ (Подразделение антитеррора „Алмаз“) is exclusively intended for fighting against terrorism in the country and abroad. The “Алмаз” unit was established during the last years of the USSR, and in 1990 it was deployed in the Belarussian SSR. АЛМАЗ is a rapid-reaction force whose function is fighting against terrorism, hostage rescue, disposal of explosives, detention of extremely dangerous persons, protection of strategic objects and state officials as well as assistance to other force structures of the country.

The country’s militia, which is subordinate to the MIA, has the so-called special police units (Отряд милиции особого назначения (ОМОН), or, simply, special-purpose militia forces/riot police (ПМЧН), “the blacks berets”). Officially, on the website of the MIA, 10 ОМОН (special military/militia units in different regions) are indicated⁶⁷. The main function of the aforementioned units comprises keeping public order, ensuring order during mass events,

⁶⁵ *Ibidem.*, Статья 1. Внутренние войска Министерства внутренних дел Республики Беларусь; Статья 2. Задачи внутренних войск; Статья 5. Деятельность внутренних войск по защите жизни, здоровья, прав, свобод и законных интересов граждан.

⁶⁶ SOBR was created in 1999 m. as a unit intended to fight against the organized crime, though public information about this special unit is scarce. <http://mvd.gov.by/ru/main.aspx?guid=3901>. 21 06 2013.

⁶⁷ 5448th – in the capital, Minsk, 3310th – in Minsk region, 5522th – in Grodno, 5523th – in Mogiliov, 5524th – in Vitebsk, 5525th – in Gomel, 5526th – in Brest, 5527th – in Bobruisk, 5529th – in Minsk and 5530th – in Polotsk. The website of the Belarusian MIA. Access through the Internet: <<http://mvd.gov.by/ru/main.aspx?guid=3881>>. Referred to on 20 06 2013.

suppressing riots, fighting against the organized crime and criminal groups. In addition, in case of necessity, these groups must be ready to eliminate the consequences of disasters, catastrophes and other accidents.

3.2. The State Security Committee (KGB)

One of the essential links of the Belarusian security apparatus is the Belarusian KGB. The KGB of the Republic of Belarus performs the following functions: counterintelligence, intelligence, military counterintelligence, fighting against terrorism and other threats. In May 2002, a subdivision for fighting against terrorism was established⁶⁸. After the collapse of the USSR, the Belarusian KGB has undergone the least number of reforms as compared with state security services of other post-Soviet states⁶⁹. The role of the KGB increased after 1994, when A. Lukashenko came to power. The control over the KGB is in the remit of the President and the Council of Ministers which is appointed by the Head of State. In fact, many of the areas of KGB activities remain completely secret.

On the 24th of July 2013, the newest Presidential decree on the regulation of the KGB activities was published. It contains detailed specification of KGB tasks, functions and authorizations. Among the major KGB tasks are the following: coordination and organization of the actions of state security agencies and their military structures, foreign intelligence and counterintelligence, fighting against extremism, terrorism, organized crime, illegal immigration, smuggling, arms, drugs and human trafficking, protection of communications of governmental institutions. The KGB is responsible for: the development and implementation of national security programs, threat analysis, collection and transfer of information to security structures and the Head of State, administration of activities of other security structures, conducting intelligence and counterintelligence, ensuring security of strategic objects, state organizations, mass rally places, organization of and direct involvement in anti-terrorist operations, conducting pretrial investigations, surveillance and protection of communications channels on both the Belarusian territory and in the state's representations beyond state borders using special technical means, providing governmental telephone communications services to the CIS leadership during their visits on the Belarusian territory, ensuring state secret protection, providing coding services, performing monitoring of the information-financial system, organization of the training sessions for the employees of force

⁶⁸The Belarusian KGB website, <http://www.kgb.by/>, 21 06 2013.

⁶⁹Batalden K.Steven, Batalden L. Sandra, *The Newly Independent States of Eurasia: Handbook of Former Soviet Republics*, Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1997, p. 57-58.

structures, carrying out ideological work, etc. The rules regulating the structure and functions of the Belarusian KGB Board were approved and a list of military and other organizations subordinate to the KGB was presented⁷⁰.

Frequent change of KGB heads is a characteristic feature in Belarus. In 2004, Leonid Jerin was discharged from the position of the Head of the KGB⁷¹, in 2007, Stepan Sukharenka was discharged and replaced by Jurij Zhadobin⁷², in 2012, Vadim Zaitsev was dismissed and replaced by Valery Vakulchik. Since 1995, many of KGB heads did not work longer than five years.

The KGB Rapid Reaction Forces maintained the Soviet-time name “Альфа”. “Альфа” tasks comprise the fighting against terrorism, extremism and hostage taking. These are rapid-reaction forces subordinate to the Belarusian KGB. “Альфа” is considered an elite unit of the Rapid Reaction Forces and is often referred to as “Group A”. In essence, “Альфа” functions do not differ from those of the units for fighting against terrorism that are under the MIA, the State Border Committee and the Ministry of Defense.

The KGB does not have any public or official communication with society. Only one instance is known when after the 2004 Parliamentary elections, the Head of the KGB Leonid Jerin met with the representatives of protesters against non-democratic elections. It is stated that during the conversation he admitted that “everybody’s conversations are recorded”, having in mind the opposition⁷³. Such initiative was, most probably, not acceptable to the Head of State and a month later the Head of the KGB was discharged. As opposition activists themselves claim, in clashes with the KGB, physical and psychological violence is very frequent⁷⁴.

⁷⁰ Указы Президента Республики Беларусь, О некоторых вопросах Комитета государственной безопасности, 23 июля 2013 г. № 325, <http://www.pravo.by/main.aspx?guid=3871&p0=P31300325&p1=1>, 22 10 2013. A list of military units and other organizations subordinate to the KGB. 1. 14-й отдельный полк правительственной связи Комитета государственной безопасности Республики Беларусь. 2. Автотранспортное государственное учреждение «Гараж оперативного назначения Комитета государственной безопасности Республики Беларусь». 3. Государственное учреждение «Научно-технический центр Комитета государственной безопасности Республики Беларусь». 4. Государственное учреждение «Санаторий «Лесное» Комитета государственной безопасности Республики Беларусь». 5. Государственное учреждение здравоохранения «Военно-медицинское управление Комитета государственной безопасности Республики Беларусь». 6. Государственное учреждение образования «Институт национальной безопасности Республики Беларусь».

⁷¹ Silitski Vitali, „Internal developments in Belarus“, in Lynch Dov ed., *Chaillot Papers*, No. 85, November 2005, p. 44.

⁷² Liakhovich Andrei, „Belarusian elites – change and authoritarian rule“, in Fischer Sabine ed., *Chaillot Papers*, No. 119, November 2009., p. 41-42.

⁷³ Bennet Brian, *The Last Dictatorship in Europe. Belarus under Lukashenko*, Hurst and Company, London, 2011

⁷⁴ “How to dupe the KGB”, *The Economist*, Nov 14th 2011, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2011/11/belarusian-dissidents>, 05 10 2013.

3.3. Centralization, competition and militarization

The MIA system and the KGB are entrusted with the ensuring of the regime stability, preventing political or any other resistance. A characteristic example can be the fact that only several days before the 2006 Presidential elections, the Head of the KGB S. Sukharenka, the Minister of Internal Affairs V. Noumov and the Procurator General S. Miklasevich held a press conference in which they named opposition conspiracy to organize protests after the elections, using explosives devices, and to assault the Government building⁷⁵. The opposition leaders were warned that they could be punished according to the provisions of terrorist activities laid down in the Penal Code; thus, they can be sentenced to life imprisonment or death penalty.

Having surveyed the formal functions of the MIA and the KGB, one may attempt to answer the question: what is it that specifically determines the ability of these institutions to help the regime to survive? In this case, the key question is how to convince institutions, as certain social impact groups with their own particular institutional interests, to support the regime or, at least, not to resist the current situation.

First, the aspect of incentives, most frequently the financial ones, is important. Incentives at the personal level and the institutional level may be different: money, prestige, privileges. The loyalty of the security apparatus to the regime depends on the funds allocated to the security apparatus, the positions assigned to the security cadres, which most frequently depend on the personal will of the President or his inner circle as well as personal ties with high-ranking officials of the regime and the President. Of course, it is always possible to use force in persuading the opposition to collaborate. The use of force is not necessarily effective since it is impossible to control the entire society, particularly in the age of the Internet. In addition, seeking to ensure everybody's loyalty may be very costly. The more so, if these incentives are provided not only individually from the authoritarian leader's pocket, but are given a legal form, i.e. such relations are institutionalized. For example, through legal reforms and non-democratic elections, a controllable parliament is guaranteed, consequently – the control of the institutions having the right to exert force.

In terms of financing, there is, in fact, no information in the public space about the funds allotted to the Belarusian force and military structures. Such a “smokescreen” contributes to the competition between the institutions for maintaining the allotted resources, and this is how loyalty of the institutions is

⁷⁵ Burger, Ethan S., Viktor Minchuk, (note 20) p. 35.

ensured. For example, according to the data of different information sources, the financing of the Army amounts to 1.2-1.4 percent of the national GDP which makes up approximately \$550,100,000 dollars annually⁷⁶.

A slight decrease in the financing of military forces can be observed. In fact, this tendency can be noticed when estimating the salaries of ordinary military personnel. In recent years, an average salary barely amounted to 300 US dollars, whereas the military personnel of the elite forces earn up to 500-550 US dollars. Alongside the official pay (like in many states), the military personnel are offered some social guarantees: free public transportation, the possibility to see the doctor without an appointment or free education.

In Belarusian society there are discussions about militia employees' salaries amounting to 550-830 US dollars⁷⁷. So, salaries of the military personnel at the start of their career and the employees of MIA structures are similar; naturally, it is hard to expect that salaries in security structures would be made public or known. However, there are opinions that they might be from two to four times higher than the amounts mentioned above. Thus, not considering the total amount allotted to a particular institution, in terms of financial incentives for employees, one may assume that in this respect they are rather equivalent and it is still another element contributing to the inter-institutional and personal competition.

Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that the financing of the militia or even Special Forces within the MIA system does not require as much long-term and permanent investment as military forces whose modernization is necessary not so much for maintaining the regime but for performing their direct function—the ensuring of state defense⁷⁸. Being aware of the level of

⁷⁶ Shabanov Vladimir, "Russia must finance the army of Belarus?" *Pravda.ru*, 14.02.2012, http://english.pravda.ru/russia/politics/14-02-2012/120507-russia_belarus-0/ or <http://www.nationmaster.com/country/bo-belarus/mil-military>, 24 01 2014.

⁷⁷ See: „Вакансии охранных служб, милиция в Минске“, 2014 01 12, *Slando.by*. <http://minsk.mn.slando.by/rabota/ohrana-bezopasnost/>, 24 01 2014. „Белорусские милиционеры уже зарабатывают в среднем больше 500 долларов“, *5min.by*, <http://5min.by/news/milicioneri-zarabativajut-svishe-500-dollarov.html>, 24 01 2014.

⁷⁸ It should be kept in mind that the military-industrial complex of Belarus comprises a very large part of state economy (it is assumed that during the Soviet time, it made up approximately 70 per cent of all economy, at present – considerably less) and subsidies for its maintenance granted from the budget are the largest, only the construction sector is allotted slightly more. The military industry of Belarus manufactures several times more production than it is necessary for its defense, therefore, such subsidies are made; however, provided these subsidies were withdrawn, not so much the problem of disloyalty to the regime concerning the attitude of the leadership of these plants would arise, but rather a social explosion due to the abolishment of thousands of positions would be triggered. For more information see: Legvold R., Wallander C., (eds.). *Swords and Sustenance: The Economics of Security in Belarus and Ukraine*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2004, p. 131-133.

corruption in Belarus, it becomes obvious that the investment in technologies is also a perfect incentive for, at least, the leadership of the military forces to demonstrate their loyalty.

Second, it is the aspect of the use of force and centralization of security structures. In order to show at least front legitimacy, the parliament also has the right to amend laws regulating the activity of these institutions. However, since 2004, not a single representative of the oppositional party has entered the Parliament. However, if the need arises, the President has the right to issue legislative acts, for example, to establish a stricter supervision of Internet users which most often serves as evidence in courts against the opposition activists⁷⁹. The centralization of the security system control means that in terms of decision-taking, there is one dominating leader by whose decision work of the whole system can be adjusted. In this case, decision-taking is carried out relatively more smoothly and swiftly than in a different type of control; besides, under such subordination, each subject of the security system is directly subordinate to one center of power which makes the functioning of the system more effective. Judging by statistics, the heads of force structures in the institutions change rather frequently. And they change not just because they retire but with the special purpose of carrying out the rotation. For example, G. Nevygl commanded the Border Troops, held the position of the Secretary of the SCB, was also a special representative in the President's administration of the country. V. Sheiman was the Secretary of the SCB, later the Minister of Defense, at present he is employed in A. Lukashenko's administration. It seems that among the heads of the Belarusian force structures, both personal competition and rotational practices have been established. By changing the heads, A. Lukashenko not only demonstrates influence, since, as the analysts point out, sometimes it is hard for non-democratic leaders to rely on a particular influence group and they have to demonstrate their power not to the citizens or foreign countries but to the elite. At the same time, he is fully guaranteed that a head of an institution will not gain too much influence.

Third, having reviewed of the functions of the aforementioned institutions it becomes obvious that they overlap, even repeat themselves. During mass protests, observers often find it difficult to distinguish which institution's special-purpose unit is authorized to operate. Or, in case of necessity, all the Internal Forces are deployed simultaneously, as, for example, it happened during the 2006 Presidential elections. Supposedly, the overlap of functions is

⁷⁹ Chavusu Yury, „Soon there will be less privacy in Belarusian internet“, *Bell: Belarus Info Letter*. Issue 3(13), April 2010, p. 2.

necessary for both ensuring rapid operation of the forces and possible neutralization of “a revolt” of any forces against the authorities or the leadership of the regime, when, for example, a certain link of the forces or all forces refuse to obey direct orders of their commanders.

Fourth, the institutions that have to ensure internal security are militarized. Special subunits, including even those that ensure public order during entertainment events, have the right to use military equipment, let alone the fact that fully armed Internal Forces inevitably follow major actions of the Belarusian opposition. In 2005, the Parliament of Belarus adopted the Law on the Forces of the Ministry of Internal Affairs which explicitly gives mandate to the Internal Forces to disperse anti-Governmental demonstrations. Besides, the Parliament entrusted the President with an exclusive right to order the national forces to use weapons and other military equipment for ensuring public order⁸⁰. At the same time, the possibility of statute officials to refuse to obey the order, for example, to fire, was restricted.

In summary, the Belarusian regime and the security system are closely related. The regime exercises a strict control over the security apparatus through incentives and direct centralized control of security structures. The control of those institutions is one of the main keys for regime survival – as enables institutions to act with a short and very short notice as well as without questioning orders. On one hand this control is institutionalized through legal acts and constant practices, on the other hand, control is merged with a president’s power to be above all legal system, all laws.

4. The control of society: the use of force and other methods

In 2000, in Belarus, like in Ukraine, the Church and the Army were the most trusted institutions in society. The confidence in these institutions exceeded 20 percent, whereas the confidence in the police was 40 percent negative in Belarus and 50 percent negative in Ukraine⁸¹.

With such relatively unfavorable assessment of the institutions that are responsible for the public and social security and have to ensure the security of the regime, not only the official power vertical but another institutional network is necessary so that society would trust the regime itself.

⁸⁰ Burger, Ethan S., Viktor Minchuk, (note 20) p. 34.

⁸¹ Fritz V., (note 9) p. 221.

As previously mentioned, the institutional system that helps to ensure the longevity of the regime is not necessarily formal. By convincing or forcing social groups to behave in one way or another, this function may also be performed by institutions that are not directly related to the force structures. On the contrary, in seeking legitimacy, it is simpler to use informal structures which not only directly motivate society, but can also act as a support network for formal institutions.

Alongside the educational system which helps to form the Soviet or pan-Slavic identity, the ruling regime of Belarus has also granted itself the monopoly of the mass media. The circulation of the biggest national daily newspaper “Sovetskaja Belarus – Belarus Segodnia” amounts to 550,000, and in 2006, all national mass media were allotted as much as 50 million dollars from the state budget⁸². According to the independent Belarusian Association of Journalists, only 16 registered independent newspapers, writing on social and political issues, have remained, and their total circulation does not reach 250,000 copies. Besides, the majority of them are not included in the publications subscription list; therefore, in fact, they have no possibility to gain readers. A part of them are not recommended to be sold in state stores, newsstands, and the like. On the other hand, such working conditions should be familiar to all the former states of the Soviet bloc. In the Soviet time, “samizdat” (printing of information in home conditions), for example, in Lithuania functioned rather successfully. However, as the 2006 and 2010 information campaigns conducted before the Presidential elections demonstrated, this way of communicating information is not developed in Belarus and there is neither a network of potential readers nor a list of potential circulators.

The controlled media is but one element. Controlled or, so to say, properly created civil society is still more important. In Belarus there still exists a pioneer organization, which has retained its Soviet-time name and encompasses practically all school children, as well as the Belarusian Republican Youth Union (BRSM). Thousands of young people, especially students, belong to the latter. Belonging to these organizations is voluntary; however, in reality, not belonging to either of them, a pupil or a student risks getting lower marks or, it is even feared, that parents who do not want to educate their children according to the proper ideology may suffer. What is more, both organizations are understandable in society and they are conceived as structures “of gathering information and transferring it to the appropriate institutions”.

The BRSM is allotted particularly good financing. In 2011, the BRSM

⁸² „На какую прессу уходят государственные деньги?“, *Charter 97*, 05 23 2013, <http://www.charter97.org/bel/news/2006/05/23/pressa>, 03 09 2013.

received 6.6 million US dollars, which made up 98 percent of all the funds allotted to the youth⁸³.

Contrary to the expectations of the theorists of institutionalism, the ruling regime did not try to co-opt the existing and still active social groups. It is believed, for the sake of simplicity, rather than negotiating or attempting to convince them, the regime just created an entire chain of loyal organizations bearing similar or even identical names as the organizations or social groups whose ideology is known, understandable and might seem attractive to society, for example, the Communist Party of Belarus, the Belarusian Council of Youth and Children's Organizations, the Belarusian Writers Union, trade unions. In all cases, duplicate, loyal to the authorities organizations were established, ensuring that at least several people from the old party would join the new one, and this is democracy: the discontented left and set up a new party, whereas the old party is no longer capable of carrying out its activities and is gradually dissolving or, having found legal excuses against it, its activity is terminated or banned. These organizations not only glorify the leader, but, if the need arises, make excuses instead of him. For example, when A. Lukashenko disrespectfully spoke about Belarusian literature, the Head of the loyal Writers Union explained why the country's writers did not achieve anything.

"To state" the legitimacy of the regime by a sufficient number of institutions, at the time when the Belarusian opposition were choosing a common candidate before the 2006 elections, in the main hall of Minsk, the All Belarusian People's Assembly was taking place, which, like some party congress of the Soviet Union, was setting goals for the nearest five-year period of the country's development. Such a meeting of representatives from different regions, various professions, educational institutions, enterprises from the whole of Belarus provides the President a pre-electoral audience; decisions taken by the same "common agreement" ensure legitimacy of the regime and ideological continuity. Both military forces and security services are represented in such national assemblies and tasks are given not only by the President, as it happens daily, but also by over two thousand representatives.

In summary, the vertical power structure in Belarus would not be complete unless it was based on informal structures – first of all, on loyal non-governmental organizations. All this not only helps to gather information, acts preventively as warning systems but is also a means of pressure to support the regime policy.

⁸³ Ryhor Astapenia, „Lukashenka's Youth," *Belarus Digest*, 19 September 2012, <http://belarusdigest.com/story/lukashenka's-youth-11229>, 03 09 2013.

Conclusions

The article analyses how the Army and other institutions constituting the Belarusian security architecture may affect the stability of the regime. The greatest attention is paid to the institutional analysis – how and why the functions of the Army and those of security structures are defined, which of them are formal and which are informal, what informal institutions or organizations contribute to the efforts of formal institutions in ensuring the stability of the regime.

To maintain the loyalty of both society and the institutions themselves, A. Lukashenko employs several instruments while institutionalizing his power. First, he creates personal competition among the heads of security institutions and ensures their dependence on the President's institution—through interference in the personnel policy, nomination of heads, and setting up financing. Second, inter-institutional competition is evident since the functions of at least of some of them overlap or are even identical. Third, all security services are militarized and centralized. In case of necessity, the President himself can undertake their direct control.

In the absence of strict control, the regime would not be capable of employing security structures to implement its goals, thus it would face the insufficiency of stability. The control of the Belarusian security forces, their structure (militarization) and overlap of functions (necessary to neutralize a possible rise of revolt in some link of the forces) allows rapid reaction to crises and performance of the assigned tasks, regardless of their character, from one center of power. This center of power is the President's personality that, through different formal and informal practices establishes the limits of his power. Legal limits in the authoritarian political system tend to disintegrate and merge with the image of a concrete person. In such cases, the person in power gradually changes laws.⁸⁴

In creating the vertical power structure for the regime to survive, the KGB and the MIA are of the greatest importance. This power structure would be incomplete, though, if it were not based on informal structures, and, primarily, on loyal non-governmental organizations. All this not only helps to accumulate information, and acts preventively as warning systems, but is also a means of pressure to support the regime policy. The militia and the Internal Forces that are subordinate to the KGB and the MIA are the main institutions

⁸⁴ Bekus Nelly, *Struggle over Identity. The Official and the Alternative „Belarussianness*, Budapest, New York: CEU Press, 2010, p. 105.

securing order within the country, the institutions that the regime relies on. These structures control the collected information, have possibilities to detain and imprison disloyal persons, and apply means of psychological pressure.

In Belarus, the Army is not directly involved in the implementation of the functions of ensuring security of society and public order. In regard to mass protests or the opposition to the regime, the Army remains neutral. Referring to the stability of the regime, military forces perform a symbolic ideological function; in other words, they provide an example of how true “patriots” of the country should behave, particularly, during elections. At the same time, the Army is used while establishing a certain Belarusian geopolitical identity.

An important factor for the stability of the regime is the formation of the Russian-Belarusian military alliance which has a threefold function: first, deterrence of the Western security structures; second, formation of the geopolitical identity and legitimacy of the regime; third, financial stability of the regime.

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