

Belarus's Relations with NATO and Russia in the Context of European Security

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Although termination of the cold war radically decreased the probability of world-scale military conflict, it did not, unfortunately, completely eradicate the threat. Euphoria that arose at the beginning of the 1990s has diminished with the realization that confrontation continues to exist, though essentially at a lower level and with quite another correlation of forces. Two global problems that currently seem to cause the most concern are the continuing tensions between the United States and the Russian Federation over nuclear weapons and the increasing tension between Russia and NATO.

After the breakup of the Warsaw Pact, NATO remained Europe's only military alliance; it now involves almost all European states in its activities. So it is quite natural that proposals for creating a post-cold war European security order are more and more related with it. However, Russia, the only state in Europe whose military force is more or less comparable to NATO's, is categorically against this idea. Therefore, it is evident that relations between NATO and Russia will define the future of European security in a global sense.

A tremendous number of publications investigate practically all aspects of the NATO/Russia problem. At the same time, virtually no attention is paid to the point that Russia is not alone in confronting NATO: there are two more states on the same "side of the barricade"—the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Belarus. Though this splinter will for a long time darken Russia-NATO relations, the case of Yugoslavia in general is more or less clear. But the situation concerning Belarus seems to be more complicated because of the country's close political and military union with the Russian Federation.

Sometimes, under certain circumstances, small forces can cause great tremors, and some facts permit one to suppose that the role of Belarus could be significant. Therefore, it is of more than academic interest to answer the following questions: How will the relatively small country of Belarus influence the general situation between NATO and Russia? To what extent should it be taken into account

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in the process of forming NATO-Russia relations and creating a European security system?

Belarus-NATO Relations

For four decades, up to the very end of the 1980s, extremely active propaganda in the media made Soviet peoples, including Belarusians, see NATO as a mortal threat. The perception began to change slowly before the collapse of the Soviet Union so that relations between independent Belarus and the North Atlantic alliance occurred against a more or less neutral background. Nevertheless, such a long-term image of NATO as "enemy number one" left a strong mark on the minds of the people, especially the older generation. This attitude continues to influence the country's population, and political authorities use it in support of their interests.

The first contact between independent Belarus and NATO at the official level took place on 10 March 1992 in Brussels, at the North Atlantic Cooperation Council meeting of the ministers of foreign affairs, where Belarus, among ten other newly independent states, was accepted into this body. From that time forward cooperation developed rather actively, and contact became constant at different levels. In March 1993 and May 1994, Belarus's minister of defense visited NATO headquarters and met with his colleagues from the alliance and partner countries. During 1992–95, NATO secretary-general Manfred Woerner and other top-ranking military and political officials visited Belarus. Belarusian delegations, mainly composed of politicians and journalists, also visited NATO frequently. The principal questions discussed at those meetings were disarmament problems, confidence-building measures, conversion of defense industries, and civil-military relations.

However, after the election of Alexander Lukashenka as president of Belarus, relations worsened rapidly. The first problem to arise was connected with weapons reduction in accordance with the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE treaty).

As the most militarized country in the world after the collapse of the Soviet Union,¹ Belarus met great problems in fulfilling the obligations of the CFE treaty, which it joined on 15 May 1992, in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. It had to destroy 3,127 weapons (1,873 tanks, 1,224 armored combat vehicles, and 130 aircraft), 2.8 times more than the United States, Great Britain, and France combined.

Though for an economy in crisis the burden was rather heavy, a year before the treaty deadline (15 November 1995), almost 70 percent of the equipment had been destroyed. But on 23 February 1995, Lukashenka announced that he had ordered a halt to implementation of the treaty because it was creating a dangerous imbalance of forces because of possible NATO expansion to the east.² Later on, Belarus changed its argument; it began to use economic difficulties as a reason for ceasing destruction and linked its continued fulfillment of the treaty to receiving foreign assistance and monetary credits from the West. Almost a year later, under strong Western pressure, the elimination of weapons in Belarus was resumed, but the experience showed that relations would not be simple.

A good opportunity to establish more confident relations was provided by the NATO program "Partnership for Peace." However, the Republic of Belarus was among the last countries to join it, after great doubts and hesitations,³ and its participation was extremely sluggish. Financial difficulties, of course, did play their role; however, the involvement itself looked insincere. As far as is known, the Belarusian military did not take part in any joint exercises, and even the country's representative to the partnership coordination cell in the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe has been sent there relatively recently.

Of course, discussions about possible NATO enlargement did not go unnoticed. On 9 May 1996, the Belarusian president stated, "We cannot look calmly

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at this terrible monster approaching the borders of our blue-eyed Belarus,"⁴ and he frequently repeated this thought in many other presentations. Following the Russian president's lead, Lukashenka refused to participate in NATO's Madrid summit. The main arguments of Belarus against the alliance's enlargement repeated the usual Rus-

sian objections: it violated the existing system of international relations, created new dividing lines in Europe, and so on. However, Belarus presented two of its own items as necessary preconditions for enlargement: signing a bilateral agreement similar to those NATO signed with Russia and Ukraine, and creating a nuclear-free zone in Europe.

The former was motivated by the fact that with NATO expansion, Belarus would border a NATO state—Poland. The perceived threat emanating from NATO expansion into Belarus's neighborhood was noted by Sergei Kostyan, deputy chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the present Belarusian parliament: "If Poland joins NATO, and it will, we can become Polish lands. . . . If Belarus is not eager to join NATO and puts up any resistance, then the West will provoke conflict in the territories of Grodno and Brest oblasts and after that will bring in NATO troops to defend its citizens."⁵

Despite such anti-NATO sentiments, Belarus's leadership intended in some way to join the negotiation process between the alliance and Moscow. The idea of signing some kind of NATO-Belarus charter appeared in the beginning of 1997, stimulated greatly by information concerning negotiation of such a document between NATO and Ukraine. Belarus's foreign minister, Ivan Antanovich, stated that Belarus had prepared a set of proposals, which Yevgeny Primakov allegedly promised to support in Brussels. According to unofficial information, Lukashenka sent a letter to Bill Clinton, asking assistance in solving this problem.⁶ The head of Belarus' delegation at the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council meeting in Madrid also promoted the agreement. Of course, an agreement with Belarus was

always unlikely; Russia and Ukraine are of much greater political weight, and Western countries had been highly critical of the November 1996 referendum in Belarus.⁷ Nevertheless, the idea had been promoted for a long time. A possibility for an accord seemed to arise in autumn 1997, when NATO secretary-general Javier Solana's visit to Belarus was announced. But when this visit had not occurred by summer 1998,⁸ hopes for the agreement were finally canceled.

As for creating a nuclear-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe, Lukashenka sent Solana a personal letter containing this initiative. However, this proposal, though supported by the Russian Federation, did not find a positive response in Brussels. In his reply, the NATO secretary-general applauded withdrawing nuclear weapons from Belarus, but explained NATO's policy with respect to nuclear weapons—that there was no plan to deploy them in the new member countries' territories.⁹ Belarus continued to insist,¹⁰ but after the signing of the NATO-Russia Act, it became clear that none of these efforts would have brought results anyway.

Moreover, one can hardly believe that Russia itself supported this initiative sincerely. In the middle of the 1980s, when the Warsaw Pact had more than twice the conventional forces of NATO, alliance strategists proposed to use tactical nuclear weapons for deterrence and defense. Today's situation has reversed, and since it is the alliance that now has a large advantage in conventional forces, the idea of a nuclear-free zone, though attractive, will probably not be officially adopted in the foreseeable future.

A new deterioration of relations between Belarus and NATO occurred in fall 1998 as a result of the Kosovo crisis. Various Belarusian official bodies and public organizations adopted statements condemning NATO's intention to start air strikes against Yugoslavia. Some political parties and movements expressed a desire to send volunteers to Serbia, but authorities did not permit it. Instead Lukashenka sent a government delegation to Belgrade to find possibilities for rendering political, economic, and military-technical assistance to Yugoslavia. Belarusian authorities even considered the introduction of economic sanctions against Bulgaria and Romania, which permitted flights of NATO aircraft over their territories.¹¹

Though at that time they managed to avoid military action, Belarus's leader continued to demonstrate a rigid position. In February 1999 the Belarusian president gave an interview on Iranian television in which he called on Iran to take part in creating a new, powerful military-political union to confront NATO's expansionist intentions. In his opinion, in addition to Belarus and Iran, this union could include Russia, India, and China.¹²

The beginning of the NATO campaign in March 1999 caused the strongest indignation. Extremely severe statements were made by Lukashenka and by the National Assembly of Belarus; NATO actions were called aggression, a challenge to common sense, and a direct peril to international security. Lukashenka personally visited Belgrade to support Milosevic and push forward the idea of Yugoslavia joining the Belarus-Russia union that was being seriously considered at that time. Similar to Russia, Belarus broke all its relations with NATO and did

not take part in the Washington summit. Rhetoric used by the president in his annual message to the parliament was very close to that used during the cold war.

These actions were accompanied by a burst of anti-NATO propaganda in official media, which influenced Belarusian attitudes about the North Atlantic alliance to a large degree. Since television, radio, and state-owned newspapers are under exclusive governmental control, their expounding only negative views clearly demonstrates the leadership's attitude toward the alliance. State propaganda with respect to NATO continues the traditions of Soviet times in the 1970s.

The aforementioned examples show that, due to the position of Belarus's president, Belarus's relations with NATO are very tense, not to say hostile. Sometimes the reactions of Belarus have been more rigid than those of Russia. It is logical to conclude that Belarus and the Russian Federation will move even closer in the military sphere. Let us consider it in more detail.

Belarus-Russia Relations

It is no secret that Russia would like to draw Belarus into as close a military alliance as possible and that this intention is grounded mainly on opposition to NATO enlargement. Despite all subsequent denials, Yeltsin's January 1997 letter to Lukashenka expressed this initiative quite distinctly.¹³

Similar ideas were expressed repeatedly by the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, an influential nongovernmental organization close to the Russian political elite. Its recent publication concerning Russian-Belarusian integration includes a special chapter devoted to defense issues, in which this initiative is strongly advocated. It states directly that, in light of Russia's complicated geopolitical situation as a result of NATO enlargement and the growing potential threat in close proximity to its borders, close interaction of Russia and Belarus in the field of defense permits Russia to strengthen its strategic interest in the West.

According to the document,

As a result of the full integration with Belarus, Russia will get a number of incontestable geopolitical privileges: direct access to the borders of the Central European region; removal of the potential threat of a so-called Baltic-Black Sea belt isolating Russia; strengthening of Russia's position in its relations with states, blocs, and unions, first of all in Europe; increase of military resources of the state in conventional forces due to integration with the Belarusian army; development of new perspectives for maneuver in the framework of the CFE Treaty; elimination of the military strategic isolation of the Kaliningrad separate defense region.¹⁴

One can add to these perspectives a strong desire to keep two Russian strategic military bases—in Baranovichi (for early warning of ballistic missile attack) and Vileika (for long-distance communications with strategic submarines)—on Belarusian territory. The former is of special importance for Russia now, since the dismantling of a similar station in Skrundze in Latvia. A chance to push the deterrence line three hundred to five hundred kilometers back from its territory also looks extremely attractive to the Russian military.

Although the fighting efficiency of the Belarusian army is not very high for

various reasons, above all economic ones, there is no doubt that the Russian High Command takes its military potential into consideration as well. Belarus's armed forces now number 83,000 men, among them a 23,000-strong officer corps, 17,000 ensigns, and 11,000 contractors. Even after huge reductions in accordance with the CFE treaty, there remain 1,778 tanks, 2,513 armored combat vehicles, 1,515 artillery systems, 252 planes, and 62 assault helicopters¹⁵—a quantity of weapons that seems excessive.¹⁶

As of today, Belarus is the only supporter of Russia's attitude toward NATO enlargement, and a military bloc is de facto being pulled together: "The Concept of Joint Defense Policy of Belarus and Russia" was adopted in early 1998. The text of the document has not been published; however, available information indicated that in the future a unified defense space would be created.¹⁷

It seems that today both sides are ready to go even farther. In July 1999, Belarusian officers participated in Russia's West-99 strategic military simulation exercises. In the exercise scenario, Belarus was

invaded by a simulated aggressor, and a unified Russian-Belarusian force was formed to counter the aggression.¹⁸

The new draft of the Russia-Belarus Union Treaty has again attracted attention to the problems of relations between the two countries in the context of the regional and global situation. Harsh criticism of this document by Lukashenka did not prevent the defense ministers of the two countries from signing a resolution creating a regional joint military group of the units of the Moscow Military District and Belarus's armed forces, which they aimed toward the West. And though Russian minister Marshal Sergeev pointed out that the group was not directed against any specific adversary, there are no doubts that the only adversary can be NATO.

As General Portnov, assistant to Belarus's minister of defense, said in an October interview, there is no intention to create a united military force now. However, work is going forward to create united defense systems—anti-aircraft, information exchange, equipment, and control. It is assumed that the joint military group on Belarusian territory will be put into operation during a threatening period.

Though Portnov rejected as senseless the idea of returning strategic nuclear forces to Belarus, he said that Russia and Belarus would take adequate measures if tactical nuclear weapons appear on the borders of the United States.¹⁹ The suggestion of deploying such weapons in the Kaliningrad oblast, on Baltic Fleet warships, on the western borders of Russia, and even in Belarus has been expressed from time to time by both Russian and Belarusian politicians.²⁰

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Analysis

Since Russia's points of disagreement with NATO are well known, a more interesting question is how to explain Lukashenka's extremely negative perception of the alliance. Although he has delivered a great number of harsh anti-NATO speeches, he has given practically no serious grounds for his apprehensions. General phrases concerning a continent divided into two uneven and unequal groups, as well as negative consequences for Belarus, explain little.

It is impossible to believe that Poland has aggressive intentions that are a danger to Belarus's territorial integrity, though this idea used to be very popular. Thus Deputy Foreign Minister Antanovich has presented a similar version:

Who can guarantee today that a number of right-wing, anti-Russian, and anti-Slavic forces in Central and Eastern European states will not require a revision of borders, claiming to be the recipients of insults for several centuries? . . . Being under NATO's "umbrella," politicians can come to power in these countries who will take revenge against Russia and the Slavic world for military and other clashes, which were common between them for the thousand-year history.²¹

Curiously, Poland and Czechoslovakia were not referred to as Slavic nations.

These so-called arguments cannot be taken seriously. One can hardly imagine American, British, and other NATO soldiers fighting to give western Belarus to Poland. As for the West's moral readiness to go to war for alien territories, even such an active and consistent adversary to NATO as Vladimir Zhirinovskiy has expressed doubts about the existence of this kind of danger:

It is silly to go off into hysterics about NATO, first, because our former allies will join NATO anyway and thus we are doomed to diplomatic defeat. Second, and mainly, there is no military threat for us in the West. One can hardly claim that Americans, Belgians, and Frenchmen who cannot live a day without a mobile telephone, hot bath, and a cup of good coffee will go to war with us. The West for a long time has been fighting by other methods—informational, organizational, and financial. And we still keep notions of World War II.²²

Moreover, the same Antanovich admitted that

in spite of all the debates and doubts that NATO participation in the solution of the former Yugoslavia conflict—as well as its success—cause in our society, for the sake of objectivity we have to point out that no NATO member has used the five years of weakness after the collapse of our unified integrity for its own interests.²³

To finish, it is worth quoting Zbigniew Brzezinski: "Every sensible Pole understands that should Poland move in the direction of Grodno and Novogrudok, it will soon say farewell to Szczecin and Wrocław."²⁴

The Russia-Belarus Union

In 1996 the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus prepared an inquiry in which the plans and intentions of different Western countries were analyzed with respect to the expected NATO enlargement. This document differed from other public statements because of its high level and absence of political engagement, so one cannot say that Belarusian leadership has no objective information.

Nevertheless, Lukashenka himself recently presented an even more terrible possible future scenario: "If in the near future unification of Belarus and Russia does not happen, there is a real threat that the territory of the two states will be divided into parts, and one's will be dictated."²⁵

At first sight, military union with Russia solves all possible problems, and from the military point of view creating such a coalition does not represent any danger. However, Russian analyst Yury Fedorov has convincingly demonstrated by analyzing the conventional weapons in the two states that after the forthcoming enlargement, safeguarding Belarus's neutrality may become a much weightier factor in support of Russia's security than this military alliance.²⁶ One of the major arguments for this is that a wide neutral zone (excluding the Kaliningrad enclave) will separate the armed forces of NATO and Russia. At the same time, the formation of a broad-scale bilateral alliance—in other words, the actual transfer of the Russian Federation's armed forces to Poland's eastern frontier—may induce Warsaw to decide to station foreign troops and/or tactical nuclear weapons in its territory, which will in no way help relax tensions.

It is interesting to note that similar concerns with respect to establishing the NATO-Belarus border were expressed by Ted Carpenter and Andrew Stone from the Cato Institute.

That should greatly concern all Americans, because Belarus is a political and economic volcano waiting to erupt. The repressive, erratic regime of Alexander Lukashenka and the country's moribund economy provide ideal conditions for the same type of armed chaos that has engulfed such countries as Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Zaire.

If Belarus explodes, Poland is going to expect help from its NATO allies to contain the effects and protect Polish security. At the very least, that would mean a Bosnia-style morass for NATO. Even worse, Belarus is Russia's last remaining security ally in Eastern Europe, and the two countries are closely linked politically and militarily. A NATO military presence along the Polish-Belarusian border risks a collision with a nuclear-armed Russia.²⁷

Another problem with the Belarus-Russia union is the aforementioned possibility of Russia's returning tactical nuclear weapons (TNW) to Belarus territory. Thorough analysis shows that this would not enhance but, on the contrary, decrease security of both sides because these weapons represent a destabilizing factor. TNWs promote a hair-trigger posture, making accidental nuclear war more likely; they are better suited for fighting than deterrence, and they cannot achieve nonmilitary goals.²⁸ Nevertheless, no one can guarantee that, under the union, this idea will not be resurrected. Taking into account Lukashenka's numerous regrets about the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from Belarus,²⁹ the possibility looks quite real.

One more peril was expressed recently by a large group of prominent representatives of Belarusian society, who addressed the UN secretary-general, heads of state of the G-8, the secretary-general of the Council of Europe, and the OSCE chairman-in-office. In their appeal they expressed their concerns that in the event that Lukashenka reaches the highest power in a unified Belarusian-Russian state, he will get access to strategic nuclear weapons and become an extremely great

threat.³⁰ This does not appear very likely for the time being, but it cannot be excluded completely.

Since existing military threats hardly explain the opposition to NATO, what are the true reasons underlying such an attitude? For both Belarus and Russia, the first, of course, is their Soviet heritage. Due to the aforementioned propaganda, the alliance's image as an aggressor is still retained at a subconscious level, even in the evident absence of real threats. It follows that the enemy image can be rather easily reinforced, and as one can see, that is occurring already. When the economy is collapsing or some other internal problem arises, it is extremely advantageous for politicians to explain everything by enemy intrigues, especially foreign ones. This approach was demonstrated recently by a high-ranking Russian general. In an interview, General Leonid Ivashov said, "Events in the North Caucasus are connected with the intersection of strategic interests of many states and political forces. . . . And one has to say about NATO and the USA that they are attempting to attract some Caucasian countries to their side and to induce them to anti-Russian actions and rhetoric."³¹

Another reason for this criticism of NATO is that Belarus's current leader obviously wants to become a head of the unified state. This desire sometimes pushes him to take unexpected steps. In early July 1999, Lukashenka even threatened to abandon the treaty with Russia altogether and ally his nation with the West if Russian leadership did not agree to his proposal to create a common president for the union.³² Of course, the threat was nothing more than the customary blackmail, but the very fact that he pushed the union has been very demonstrative. Opposing NATO provides Lukashenka a good opportunity to show himself as a fearless defender of Slavic interests for the Russian electorate and therefore to move closer to the Kremlin.

Further motivation for Belarus's rigid position is that Russia, being more tightly related with Western financial organizations, cannot permit itself to take extremely harsh positions every time it disagrees with NATO. It seems that Russia utilizes Belarus as a probe so it can monitor Western reaction without directly involving itself.

Unfortunately, the principal Russian reason to oppose NATO seems to be its lingering imperial thinking. It is hard to imagine that Russian politicians, being at the height of their power, do not realize that there cannot be a military threat to the nuclear superpower that Russia continues to be. The real cause is that they understand perfectly: after former satellites join NATO, it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to return them to Russian influence again. And since in their mind a state's might is still identified mainly with military power and territorial size, not technological development and quality of life, they conceive it as a catastrophe.

That is why almost all of the Russian political elite so strongly oppose any attempt of the former Soviet republics to come nearer to NATO. And Belarus is the best proof of these Russian attitudes, since in 1996, with a choice between supporting democracy in Belarus or asserting their understanding of Russian interests there, the leaders of the Russian Federation preferred the latter.

Conclusion

It is evident that Belarus itself cannot present any serious danger for European security. Even creating a union with Russia cannot be regarded as a peril per se. However, some aforementioned scenarios give rise to a feeling of anxiety.

In this situation, Western politics seem rather flexible. NATO could, for example, recede from its rigid position on the question of revising the CFE treaty. Despite the unilateral reductions it made already, NATO still has many more weapons than are necessary for defense; moreover, in today's conditions one cannot even imagine Russia's using non-nuclear weapons for aggression. And even being much larger will not defend the alliance from nuclear attack.

As for the security dilemma along the Polish-Belarusian border, the Founding Act must be strictly fulfilled, and it is unlikely that a future conflict such as the one in Kosovo will arrive to disrupt it. Last, I would propose unilaterally annihilating or removing from Western Europe tactical nuclear weapons that are no longer militarily significant. These measures will assist in creating a non-provocative atmosphere and may impel Russia to meet NATO halfway, while in no way reducing the alliance's defense capability.

However, questions of principle, including certain dangerous aspects of the Belarus-Russia union, must not be ignored. That the union is backed so completely by Russian communists and nationalists has to give rise to concern. And taking into account anti-Western moods and the unpredictability and ambition of Lukashenka, the Euro-Atlantic community must be extremely careful of the development of threatening events and their possible consequences.

NOTES

1. At the moment of independence, there was one soldier per forty-two citizens of the state.

2. A. Fedorov and A. Opimakh, "Foreign Policy of the Republic of Belarus in 1995," *Vector* 1 (1997).

3. The Partnership for Peace program was initiated on 11 January 1995, but Belarus did not officially declare its intention to participate until 3 May 1996. Belarus's individual partnership program was coordinated only in July 1997.

4. V. Karbalevich, "Voenno-politicheskie faktory otnoshenij Belarusi i Pol'shi," *Belarus Monitor*, 1997, 50.

5. "Po mneniyu deputata Palaty predstavitelei S.Kostyana, Zapad mozhet sprovotirovats' konflikt na territorii Brestskoi i Grodnenskoj oblasti Belarusi," *Voennoe obozrenie BelaPAN* 12 (1998).

6. Yuri Karmanov, "Evroparlament protiv ratifikatsii dogovora," *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 17 April 1997.

7. Ibid.

8. V. Budkevich, "General'ny sakratar NATO planue navedats' Belarus u pachatku tsi naprykantsy getaga leta," *Zvyazda*, 26 March 1998.

9. "Prezidentu Belarusi – ot Khav'era Solany," *Respublika*, 30 January 1997; Yuri Karmanov, "NATO ignoriruet initsiativy Minska," *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 15 February 1997.

10. V. Kovalev, "Minsk nameren dobivat'sya ot NATO garantij bezopasnosti," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 3 April 1997.

11. "Zayava Miniserstva zamezhnykh sprau Respubliki Belarus u suvyazi z rashennem NATO ab sanktsyyanavanni vaennai aktsyi suprats' Sayuznai Respubliki Yugoslavii,"

Zvyazda, 15 October 1998.

12. "Lukashenko izobryol novyi protivovos NATO," *Belorusskaya delovaya gazeta*, 24 February 1999.

13. "Pri chyom zdes' NATO?" *Respublika*, 16 January 1997; Yuri Lyashkevich, *Zvyazda*, 29 January 1997.

14. "Theses by the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy," *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 30 September 1999

15. Yuri Portnov, "Al'yans vyshel na tropu voiny," *Vo slavu Rodiny*, 27 April 1999, 30 April 1999.

16. For every 1,000 soldiers, Belarus has 21.4 tanks (France—3.5, Germany—9.4, Poland—7.2); 30.3 armored combat vehicles (Netherlands—11.4, Czech Republic—22, Italy—5.3); 18.2 artillery systems (Hungary —17.1, Belgium —5.7, Turkey —8.1); numbers of planes and helicopters are similar. *The Military Balance 1997/98* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

17. A. Bevzo, "Rossiya-Belorussiya: perspektivy oboronno go soyuza," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 24 February 1998.

18. A. Golts, *Russia Journal*, 20 September 1999.

19. Yuri Portnov, "Sozdavaya nadyozhnuyu sistemu bezopasnosti," *Respublika*, October 1999.

20. A. Lyashko, "Khotya doktrina i novaya, ona pokhozha na staruyu," *Pravda*, 29 October 1995; S. Posokhov, *Belorusskaya gazeta*, 4 August 1997.

21. I. Antonovich, "Rasshirenie NATO predresheno," *Belorusskii Rynok* 31 (1996).

22. V. Zhirinovskii, "Novye pesni o glavnom," *Izvestiya*, 10 August 1996.

23. I. Antanovich, "Postsotsialism, predkapitalism i natsional'naya bezopasnost'," *Belorusskaya Dumka* 3 (1996).

24. Z. Bzrezinski, "O starykh problemakh novoi Evropy," *Narodnaya gazeta*, 19 August 1994.

25. "Mnenie A.Lukashenko o tom, chto proizoidet, esli v blizhaishee vremya ob'edinenie Belarusi i Rossii ne sostoitsya," 25 September 1999, www.open.by.

26. Yuri Fedorov, "Rasshirenie NATO i 'modernizatsiya' Dogovora OVSE," *Yadernyi kontrol'* 28–29 (1997).

27. T. Carpenter and A. Stone, "NATO Expansion Flashpoint No.1: The Border between Poland and Belarus," *Cato Foreign Policy Briefing* 44, 1997.

28. N. Sokov, "Tactical Nuclear Weapons Elimination: Next Step for Arms Control," *Nonproliferation Review* 4 (winter 1997): 17–27.

29. See "Rakety dlya prezidenta," *Belorusskaya delovaya gazeta*, 17 January 1999. Recently, Lukashenka has returned to the same subject: "Until 'Topols' (Russian strategic missiles) were 'growing' in Belarus, Poland, Czech Republic, and Hungary did not raise the question of joining NATO." 12 October 1999, www.open.by.

30. "Adkryty list," *Narodnaya volya*, 26 October 1999.

31. L. Ivashov, "Boeviki deistvuyut po edinomu planu," *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie* 30 (1999).

32. RFE/RL Poland, Belarus and Ukraine Report, 13 July 1999.

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