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- **Belarusian Authorities Indoctrinate Young People**
- **Belarusian Court Rejects Election Complaint**
- **Nikita Belykh: No Real Union of Russia and Belarus Under Lukashenko**

Human Rights & Independent Media

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HUMAN RIGHTS & INDEPENDENT MEDIA

1. Belarusian Authorities Indoctrinate Young People

The old proverb says that if you make a fool to pray to God, he will hurt his forehead. This statement fairly aptly defines the actions of the authorities and the police in promoting the state approved-ideological line in the provinces. It means all means are justified, including the continued intimidation and beating of dissident youth and also confiscation of private property.

In Gomel, young people, wearing t-shirts and badges with the sign "For Freedom!", suffer the most. The authorities see these t-shirts and badges as opposition. It is not clear what is so "oppositional" in the "For Freedom!" expression, but it looks like the authorities would prefer t-shirts with the message "For Slavery". That might be the reason why the Gomel police organized searches at the usual gatherings of young dissenters. During the ideological operation, policemen explained to the "opposition fools" the correctness of the selected state line. They also confiscated with no good reason the "For Freedom!" badges, and badges with number 16 on them, which symbolize the Day of Solidarity.

During the weekend, unidentified persons beat up two young men wearing t-shirts with the "For freedom!" sign. One of the victims is still in the hospital, having lost his teeth from a beating.

According to the victims, athletic men in dark clothes and hats approached them. They asked the young people some obvious questions, like "What organization are you from?" and "What kind of badges are these?" Then the instigators just beat the young people for their refusal to take off the t-shirts.

None of the opposition activists has doubts that the assaulters acted by order of the "competent agencies." This method of persuasion has been known well since the "herd" communistic education times: "Are you a member of Komsomol? – No? Get a punch in the face!"

Trans. Ed.

Source: AFN; September 13, 2006; <http://www.afn.by/news/default.asp?newsid=78539#data>

2. Vyachaslau Siuchyuk Arrested for 10 Days

Vyachaslau Siuchyuk, an opposition politician, who was detained yesterday, is now in the special remand prison in Akrestsyn Street, *BelaPAN* was told by a remand prison officer. Halina Siuchyuk, the politician's mother, believes her son could have been detained on charges made against him on May 19, 2006, when Siuchyuk in his absence was found guilty by the Belarusian court and sentenced to 10 days of arrest.

Siuchyuk was detained on September 12 at about 9.20 in the Beau Monde cafe in the center of Minsk, where he was talking to a journalist Pauluk Bykouski.

Siuchyuk is one of active participants of the tent camp on October Square in Minsk after the presidential elections. The camp was set up on March 19 and existed for three days, until its dispersal by law-enforcers. In the evening on March 23 the politician was detained on the square and taken to the surgery department of the third clinical hospital of Minsk, because he had been beaten up during detention. He suffered a concussion. On March 29, he managed to escape arrest after being discharged from the hospital.

For several months Siuchyuk was in Ukraine, where he was engaged in political activities.

Source: Charter 97; September 13, 2006; <http://www.charter97.org/eng/news/2006/09/13/10>

3. Belarusian Court Rejects Complaint Against Presidential Election Results

The Supreme Court has refused to consider a petition filed last month by nearly 6,000 people demanding the non-recognition of the official results of the March 19 presidential election, *Belapan* reported on September 12.

According to Alyaksandr Bukhvostau, an independent trade union leader who headed a group that sent the petition, the court explained its decision by saying that the matter does not fall within its jurisdiction. "I must admit there was little hope that the court would consider our complaint. We did this in order to have an opportunity to appeal to international organizations. A petition to the UN Human Rights Council will be the next link in this chain," Bukhvostau said.

Source: RFE/RL; September 13, 2006; <http://www.rferl.org/newsline/3-cee.asp>

4. Laureates Receive Zavadsky's Prize

Today the Belarusian journalists Andrey Dynko, an editor-in-chief of *Nasha Niva*, Yulia Darashkevich, a photographer and Aleh Ulevich, a journalist from *Komsomil'skaja Pravda v Belorussii* received Zavadsky's prize 2006. The prize was organized by Dmitry's colleagues: The *First Russian Channel* with the assistance of *BAJ*.

The prize was given out by Pavel Sharamet, the head of the channel's special projects department and Svetlana Zavadskaya on behalf of the Dmitry Zavadski fund.

"The ceremony is sad and festive at the same time. We commemorate our colleague and encourage Belarusian journalists," Pavel Sharamet noted. The choice of laureates was complicated, candidates were discussed at a *BAJ* meeting and then at a meeting of the *First Channel's* Board of Directors. Sviatlana Zavadskaja thanked the journalists for their work and added that the fund would support independent journalists working in Belarus.

Yulia Darashkevich, a photographer from *Nasha Niva* was the first to get the prize. Yulia, who is always courageous at work, felt excited: "I think the prize was won not only by me, but also by the people I photographed. I would like to thank them for that."

In difficult circumstances *Nasha Niva* has managed to remain an up-to-date quality newspaper. *Nasha Niva* has done a lot so that Belarusians would not lose their national identity," Pavel Sharamet noted while giving the prize to Andrey Dynko. Andrey thanked the Russian journalists for the professional solidarity and said that "the prize establishes good relationships between Russia and the future free Belarus".

"Reporters from Russia and Belarus encounter many problems while doing their job. They even have to risk their lives and freedom." Pavel Sharamet said, using the words of Constantine Ernst while giving the prize to Aleh Ulevich. "Dmitry Zavadsky's prize is a confirmation of Your professionalism."

Pavel Sharamet added that by every year it is becoming more and more difficult to decide on the laureates because the number of the independent Belarusian mass media is decreasing. "On the other hand, independent journalists presenting events in an impartial way when it needs courage to say word of truth, it needs courage to stand out against the background of state journalists".

Belarusian diplomats, Dmitry Zavadsky's relatives and colleagues came to congratulate the laureates.

Source: *BAJ*; September 11, 2006; <http://baj.ru/indexe.htm>

5. Brest: Four Young People Detained for Posting Stickers

On September 9, at the midnight the police detained Ihar Dzemedovich, Andrei Sharenda and two minors, Mikhail Iliin and Dzianis Pradun in Brest. The young people were posting a sticker with invitation to the 'Large Jeans Feast' which is to take place in Banhalor Square in Minsk on September 16. The detainees were taken to Brest Leninsky Borough Board of Internal Affairs (BDIA).

Lt. Barodzin and Sgt. Katovich, who conducted the detention, wrote in their reports, that the detainees distributed printed materials. The police did not confiscate stickers and badges with the words "For Freedom!", the young people were wearing. Lt. Ivanou, graduate of a Russian police academy, demonstrated an aggressive attitude to all young Belarusians. Dozens of drunk teenagers, who were detained at the same time, were released quite quickly, while 'the political four' were kept for quite a time. When the young people's parents arrived they were not let to see their children. Iliin and Pradun were put into the register of the commission of minors' affairs, videoed and fingerprinted.

After numerous consultations with the Brest Regional Department of Internal Affairs Uladzimir Mazanets, the police inspector, composed on the detainees a report for violation of presidential decree #31 of January 17, 2006, streets pollution. As a result, the young people can be fined from 165 000 to 825 000 rubles (\$77 to \$825).

At about 3 a.m. the minors were ordered to sign the reports and were told they could go, but then they were returned to the BDIA twice. Uladzimir Vialichkin, the human rights activist, who expressed his indignation with the police lawlessness, was not let in the BDIA. The policemen stated it was prohibited for 'extraneous persons' to stay there after 11 p.m.

*Source: Viasna Human Right Centre; September 12, 2006;
<http://www.spring96.org/en/news/4253/>*

DOMESTIC

6. Belarusian Opposition Activist Sues Former Minister Over Hitler Quote

Valyantsina Svyatskaya, a member of the opposition Belarusian Popular Front, has sued former Interior Minister Yury Sivakou over his article that appeared in the July edition of "Spetsnaz" magazine, which is published by the Interior Ministry, *Belapan* and *RFE/RL's Belarus Service* reported on September 11.

In his article Sivakou, currently chairman of an association of special-task police veterans, copiously quoted from a German army officers' code of honor written by Adolf Hitler, suggesting that the Belarusian army should consider adopting some principles formulated by the Nazi leader. Svyatskaya argues in her suit that the publication insults her honor and dignity and claims 60 million rubles (\$28,000) in damages.

"I was very disturbed by the fact that the authorities have in no way reacted to this article. The point is that what is presented there as a model -- that is, a fascist platform -- is not only a personal insult to me, but an insult to the entire Belarusian nation," Svyatskaya told journalists. "Did I write something that contradicts elementary logic? ...I did not write there that it is necessary to be guided by Hitler's code. I quoted there [Russian military leader] Suvorov, [Russian Tsar] Peter I, and Hitler, and then, based on all that, I formulated what I believe to be relevant to present-day servicemen," *RFE/RL's Belarus Service* quoted Sivakou as saying.

Sivakou has been barred from the European Union over his suspected involvement in the 1999-2000 disappearances of four prominent opponents of President Lukashenka.

Source: RFE/RL; September 12, 2006; <http://www.rferl.org/newsline/2006/09/3-CEE/cee-120906.asp>

7. Lukashenko Orders Financing of Loyal Union of Writers

Aleksandr Lukashenko has signed a presidential edict that public funds should be allocated to finance the Union of Writers of Belarus (UWB).

The new pro-government organization, the UWB, is seen as an alternative to the Union of Belarusian Writers, which celebrated its 70th anniversary in the summer of 2005 and which government-controlled media outlets have branded as politicized and nationalistic.

By October 10, 2006, the Council of Ministers has been directed to put forward suggestions regarding the payment of salaries to no more than five members of the UWB Board and the heads of the Union's six regional offices and the Minsk city office out of public funds in the "presidential reserve fund."

The edict also provides for the financing of "expenses for the statutory activities of this non-governmental organization," including those connected with travel and accommodation on business trips, utility bills, communications services, equipment purchases, and the promotion of "fiction literature."

The Belarusian leader has also directed that, for the purpose of granting government support to the UWB, the Council of Ministers should earmark funds for the maintenance of the Union in the national budget starting 2007.

In addition, the presidential property management department has been tasked with providing the UWB with offices to house its board on a rental basis and "settling matters concerning the providing of this non-governmental organization with motor vehicles, office equipment and communications means."

The regional executive committees and the Minsk City Executive Committee have been directed to provide premises for the regional and Minsk city offices of the UWB before October 10, 2006, arrange for the payment of salaries to the members of the councils of these departments, except their heads, and finance their "statutory activities."

This spending has been ordered to be earmarked in the local budget starting 2007.

The Union of Belarusian Writers (UBW) was evicted from its longtime office in central Minsk on August 30.

Vasily Danilyuk, a judge of Minsk City Economic Court, ruled this past March that the UBW, which was founded in 1934, had occupied premises in the House of Writers illegally since January 2003, and fined the UBW with 55.5 million rubles. //BelaPAN

*Source: Belorusskie Novosti; September 12, 2006;
http://www.naviny.by/rubrics/inter/2006/09/12/ic_articles_259_147914/*

8. Lukashenka Says 'Minsk More Comfortable Than Paris'

Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka has said that Minsk is ahead of London, Madrid, and Paris, and a little behind Berlin in terms of residents' satisfaction with living conditions.

Lukashenka was speaking on September 8 at a meeting of the CIS International Association of Capitals and Large Cities, which took place in the Belarusian capital.

Belapan reported that Lukashenka said that 86.2 percent of Minsk residents are satisfied with their standard of living. The Belarusian president also revealed that Minsk accounts for 20

percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and some 30 percent of Belarusian exports.

Belarus is regularly criticized internationally for its democratic record.

The U.S. nongovernmental organization Freedom House recently ranked Belarus among the worst nations in terms of democracy.

Freedom House says the Lukashenka's government grew increasingly dictatorial during 2005, with the authorities clamping down on free media and public expression ahead of Lukashenka's reelection in 2006.

Source: RFE/RL; September 11, 2006; <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/09/9B67B18B-5ED2-432F-9BC7-86614A9312EC.html>

9. Changes Proposed to Belarusian Language

The newspaper *Belarusy i Rynok* recently ran a series of articles on education, devoted first to the new school year, but second to proposed changes to orthography and punctuation in the Belarusian language. These new rules are anticipated to move from draft to law in short order, with little discussion among the public or among specialists in the Belarusian language.

The new school year began with fanfare. President Alexander Lukashenka opened Palesky University in Pinsk and announced the future Belarusian State University of Information and Electronics -- a research and education complex that he maintained would be a Belarusian version of Harvard University. Meanwhile Belarusian students received instruction in their first lesson: "I live in Belarus and I am proud of it!" A new methodological concept elaborated by the Ministry of Education focuses on important monuments of Belarusian culture such as the Belaya Vezha forest, the medieval city of Polatsk, and the palace at Nesvizh, the ancestral home of the Radziwill family.

Under this façade of progress lies a stark picture: the closure of 580 schools over the past five years at a time when the number of pupils is rising after many years of decline: 92,301 children began Grade One in 2006, compared to 90,576 last year. Official figures from the Ministry of Education reveal that only 20.5% of students receive instruction in the Belarusian language. To protest this situation, the new Russian version of the history of Belarus for Grade 10 students was symbolically destroyed in Minsk's Yakub Kolas Square by young protesters on September 1.

The same lamentable situation is reflected in the circulation of books, magazines, and newspapers. In 1999, 63.3% of books were published in Belarusian; by 2003 the figure was 48.4%. Only 10.5% of all single-circulation newspapers appear in the native language, and, from the perspective of Belarusian speakers, the situation deteriorates each year.

Language has long been seen as a political issue by the Lukashenka regime, which now appears ready to delve into the complex area of orthography. A new edition of the Regulations on Belarusian Orthography and Punctuation is in preparation. It is supported by Alexander A. Lukashanets, director of the Yakub Kolas Institute of Linguistics, who maintains that new rules are needed to reflect changes that have occurred over the past 50 years and to bring Belarusian orthography closer to the main principles of the language. Critics are in no doubt that this is a new move introduced by the regime to curtail further the use of the native language in Belarus.

At the core of the problem is the *Belaruskaya hramatyka* authored by Branislau Taraskievich in the late 1920s, which sought to systematize Belarusian orthography. The Belarusian Popular Front, for example, has always adhered to the Taraskievich orthography. Lukashanets argues that it is impossible to return to it as the "living language constantly changes and develops." In 1933, the Stalin regime began its repression of Belarusian intellectuals and introduced an academic, but Sovietized, version. The new rules were systematized in 1957 and a new

publication, Rules of Belarusian Orthography and Punctuation, appeared in 1959. In January 1990 Belarusian was adopted as the state language of the republic, but progress was curtailed abruptly by the Lukashenka regime, which advanced Russian to the status of second state language through a referendum of May 1995, with 83.1% support among voters.

The latest draft on orthography appears to be the priority of the Ministry of Education, which is being advised by Viktor Ivchankau. There has been no public discussion of the amended version and the new rules have never been published. The head of the Belarusian Language Society, Aleh Trusau, for example, has not seen the new draft. Linguist Zmitser Sauka commented that the decision is absolutely unique, because previous reforms did not interfere with punctuation. In his view, the changes are political and they are being rushed through. Earlier discussion among linguists, led by former director of the Kolas Institute Alexander Padluzhny, had not reached a satisfactory conclusion. Ivchankau did not participate in this discussion, yet the new draft is being presented as part of the "Padluzhny Project."

Sauka notes that the more changes are introduced to language rules, the less such rules are used by the people, and the lower the number of students who will select Belarusian for their language examinations. Much of the Belarusian population speaks the mixed language -- trasyanka-- of Belarusian, Russian, and words derived from Polish and Ukrainian. Without publication of the draft version it is impossible to discern precisely the import of the proposed changes. But Lukashenka has consistently elevated the Russian language, derided those who advocate linguistic purity as encapsulated in the Taraskievich Orthography, and embraced the changes to the orthography introduced in the Soviet period.

Thus the new draft appears to be the latest stage in the regime's assault on Belarusian language and culture, an integral part of nation building for any newly independent state. It highlights the irony of one of the new textbooks issued to first-year pupils on September 1: the third edition of *Belarus: Our Motherland: A Gift from the President of the Republic of Belarus*. According to the text, the word "president" must always be capitalized. // *Belarusy i Rynok*, September 4; *Narodnaya Volya*, September 2; *Statisticheskiy Ezhegodnik 2004* [Minsk, 2004], p. 215; Nationalities Papers, December 1999)

Source: David Marples, The Jamestown Foundation; September 11, 2006; http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=414&issue_id=3850&article_id=2371434

REGIONAL

10. Nikita Belykh: No Real Union of Russia and Belarus Under Lukashenko

The head of the Union of Right Forces (SPS) said about that at the round table "Belarus: between Russia and the European Union. Political and economical prospects." The round table took place within the frameworks of the Economical Forum on September 8, 2006 in Krynitsa, Poland. The full report of Nikita Belyck is available on the SPS website.

The collapse of the Soviet Union created a few extra vectors in the Russian foreign policy and, as a matter of fact, created the whole line of extra tension points. The new boards within the former imperia created the territorial claims, the difficulties with the Russian population's ethnical status appeared, and the ethnical conflicts flared up. Russia has to build totally new economical and political relations with its neighbors. One of this tension points on the new world map for Russia is Belarus.

Belarus is the last dictatorship with its unique personalized political regime named after its President.

Russia's presence or influence in Belarus caused by a few blocs of interest. First, the geo-political position of Belarus on the turn of the European Union and Russia forms the unique position of Belarus. The carbohydrates' transit is going through Belarus to Europe. There are plans to create the transport corridor from the South-East Asia to Europe through Russia and Belarus. In addition, Belarus breaks the buffer zone, which will be formed around Russia in case of the Democratic Choice Community (DCC) creation. Georgia, Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova and Poland signed the declaration about the DCC creation.

The Belarusian industrial complex, partly reserved from the Soviet Union, is also interesting for the Russian business. It is machine-building, petrochemical, and agricultural enterprises.

Furthermore, the Russian political leadership works on expanding its influence on the nearest neighbors.

However the major difficulty of the Russian-Belarusian relationships comes not from the Russian-Belarusian relations and even not from the Lukashenko's regime features.

The major problem, though it is paradoxically, is in the features of the internal course of Russia itself. The political ambitions of the authorities form the authoritarian regime of the soviet model. The moods of the Russians allow, and even in a certain sense, legalize, the authoritarian developments in Russia. In addition, the light Russian authoritarianism looks quit well against a background of the Lukashenko's regime, which is close to the dictatorship.

In general, the specific of the Russian political regime determine the external policy. On the one hand, we can speak about the imperial ambitious which took roots in the Soviet past. On the other hand, we can speak about the aggressive external policy, typical for any authoritarian regime. As a result, it creates the rough partition between Russia and the West (in the wise sense). It is this rough partition that makes the dilemma for the CIS countries: the West or Russia.

In fact this dilemma is false and irrelevant.

The Russian ruling class, even in its current form, is directed towards the West. The brand of the "energy power", introducing into the mass consciousness of the Russians, has no sense without the Western customers. Today almost 100% of the Russian energy exports to Europe. These supplies are quite inexpensive, but the power prices are high in Europe.

The statement about the possible the Russian resources' reorientation to the East, including China, is mostly bluffed. Neither Gazprom, not any other energy company in Russia has enough money to realize this project. Maximum what they can do is to diversify the energy customers, and it would not happen fast. According to experts, the oil and gas export to the Asian-Pacific region will not exceed 20% of the total export volume, even if all the projects of the oil pipelines and gas pipelines will be realized.

Thus, the Russian authoritarian model, or, rather, its economical base, in its current look, totally depends on the Western customers.

Though it is paradoxically, but it is the economical dependence of Russia on the oil and gas export to the West in combination with the authoritarian tendencies within the internal policy, that contribute to the Lukashenko's regime strengthening.

In other words, the existence of the last dictatorship in Europe is paid by the Russian ruling elite and the European customers together.

It is a simple arithmetic. In the prices of the beginning of 2006 Belarus saves \$3.9 billions on the Russian oil import. The Russian companies get an extra profit of \$370 mln by not paying the export duty for delivering oil to Belarus. It is extra \$1.5 billions of profit for the Russian companies if you compare the oil supplies to Belarus with the oil sales at the Russian internal market.

However, the Russian budget receives less export duties in amount of \$3.5 billions. And we are not speaking about subsidizing the Belarusians. The Belarusians buy the oil and gas at the price higher than it is in Russia. The price for Belarus comes closer to the average European price.

The gas is the second product, by which the Belarusian authorities exploit the passionate wish of Russia to rebuild the Soviet imperia within frameworks of at least two states. Russia sells “the blue fuel” to Belarus at the price a little bit less than \$47 per 1000 cubic meters. Gazprom present to the Lukashenko’s regime around \$2 billions, considering the supplies’ volume at 2005 and \$150 market price. Belarus’ GNP in 2005 was \$29.5 billions. Thus, the Russian authorities subsidize the Lukashenko’s regime in such values that none of the state in the world can dream about. And it is not all the support that Russia provides to Belarus.

At the same time, the union agreement between two countries, obviously, has no prospects. Lukashenko has and will have no interest in the further integration. He, as any of dictators, might be only interested in keeping his own regime. Nothing else is in his interests.

Everybody in Russia already understands that there will be no real union between Russia and Belarus under Lukashenko. Lukashenko appeals to the union and at the same time he requests the special attention as the participant of the uniting process.

It is necessary to note that Lukashenko’s orientation towards Russia is, in reality, false. It is enough to have a look at the recent steps of the Belarusian authorities to understand that. They decided to stop NTV channel broadcasting in Belarus. They had a suggestion to increase the price for transiting the Russian fuel through Belarus in one and half times. There is also a predictable request from the Belarusian authorities to Russia to pay for the Russian military bases in Belarus. The Belarusian authorities demonstratively arrested the Russian trucks with cigarettes onboard, transiting through Belarus on their way to Kalinigrad, after the Russian authorities arrested the train with Belarusian sugar onboard.

Authoritarianism, anti-Western attitudes inside the country and, at the same time, a raw materials orientation toward the West lead to the fact that the Russian leadership drove itself into a corner regarding its attitude to the future of Belarus.

Again and again, we have to make economic sacrifices to keep Lukashenko’s regime while we understand that there will be no real integration. Our support of Lukashenko will not bring us any serious political and economical benefits. Only the Russian authorities look more or less civilized against a background of Lukashenko.

As a matter of fact, Russia became the last patron of authoritarianism. Russia is not the donor who gives money and expects the economical return. Russia is the patron who acts unselfish. It is hard to explain the economical benefits, given to Lukashenko, by concern for the Russia national interests. There is no economical expediency in supporting Lukashenko.

Our economical cooperation is going down. It is easy to prove that if you do not use a cover of high prices for oil and gas. If we subtract from our turnover the supply of oil and gas, it will be obvious that the turnover between our two countries is reducing. For the first quarter of 2006 the part of Russia in Belarus export dropped to 32%, while the European Union part increased to 50.2%. In 2005 the turnover between our two countries decreased by 10.7% at the costs expression. The export value dropped by 10.9%, and the import value decreased by 12.9%.

But the main problem is not that supporting Lukashenko’s regime is too expensive for Russia. The problem is that this spending has no prospects.

Lukashenko became the only guarantor of keeping the Russian influence for appearance in Belarus. It is influence for show, because Lukashenko successfully prevent Russian business from getting in Belarus. In Belarus the authorities change the broadcasting of First TV channel, Russia TV channel and NTV, they “regulate” the Russian newspaper printing, and they arrest the

Russian journalists. Russia is not able to protect its interests. It is easier for the Russia mass media to demonstrate loyalty to Lukashenko's regime than to defend their independence without the support of the Russian authorities.

At the same time Russia still supports Belarus, because the collapse of the Lukashenko's regime will lead to the complete discredit of any authoritarian development models. The collapse of Lukashenko's regime will automatically bring Belarus to the necessity of integration into the West democratic agencies. And it will be the absolute strategic lost for the Russian ruling elite in her current form. The Russian elite is still thinking within the frameworks of the cold war logic. It is necessary to take into account that the unconditional support of the Lukashenko's regime separates the Russian elite and the future Belarusian regime. Under the history logic the Lukashenko's regime will come to its end sooner or later. Numerous opposition protests took place in Minsk during the presidential election campaign. It means that the fear of the regime is getting weaker and the demand for the democratic procedures and liberal values is appearing. The new political regime will be legitimized by denying the Lukashenko's regime. And it will create extra difficulties in the Russian-Belarusian relations.

The other attitude towards the European development vector is possible only in case of Russia itself following that vector. And it is impossible in the current political situation.

Lukashenko's regime is one of the main transit links for the Russian energy export, controlled by the current authorities. Thus, the position of the Lukashenko's regime remains strong while the favorable price situation on the oil and gas markets remains the same. So the position of the current ruling group in Russia will remain the same.

Hence, the interdependency of Russia and Belarus is already shown in the fact that the movement from authoritarianism to democracy is only possible synchronously in both of our countries. In this sense Belarus, most likely, repeats the fate of the Easter Europe countries during the cold war. The true democratization became possible there only after the beginning of the perestroika in the Soviet Union.

Trans. Ed.

Source: Belorussky Partizan; September 11, 2006; <http://www.belaruspartizan.org/bp-forte/index.fjspx?page=100&backPage=13&news=5152&newsPage=1>

11. Moscow Companies To Build Dozen Hypermarkets in Minsk

On September 8 Yury Luzhkov, the Moscow Mayor, told reporters in Minsk that the Belarusian authorities had given their consent for Moscow companies to build about a dozen hypermarkets in the Belarusian capital city.

Mr. Luzhkov said that been issues concerning the construction of the "House of Moscow" in Minsk were also under discussion.

He noted that Moscow would continue purchasing Belarusian-made refrigerators, televisions, clothes and foodstuffs.

Mikhail Pavlov, the head of the Minsk city government, said that Aleksandr Lukashenko proposed to Mr. Luzhkov that Moscow should place Minsk's Moskovsky district under its patronage.

Mr. Luzhkov and several dozens of other mayor and vice mayors of cities in the post-Soviet region were staying in Minsk on Friday to attend a session of the CIS International Association of Capitals and Large Cities. The Moscow Mayor chairs the association.

While in Minsk, he had a face-to-face meeting with the Belarusian leader, visited the newly opened ProStore hypermarket and the nearly completed underground mall on Independence Square. //Belapan

Source: *Belorusskie Novosti*; September 10, 2006;
http://www.naviny.by/rubrics/inter/2006/09/10/ic_news_259_258555/

12. Gazprom Confirms 21bln cubic meters of Gas to Belarus in 2006

On Friday the head of Gazprom confirmed that the Russian energy giant will ensure supplies of 21 billion cubic meters of natural gas to Belarus in 2006.

Gazprom is seeking a stake in Belarusian state pipeline company Beltransgaz, which owns pipelines leading to Europe - Gazprom's main customer. Gazprom supplies roughly one quarter of European gas needs.

Alexei Miller also discussed with Dmitry Kazakov, the Beltransgaz general director, natural gas cooperation in 2007 and the independent evaluation of the Belarusian gas transportation system.

After raising gas prices for several of its other ex-Soviet neighbors, Russian state-controlled gas monopoly Gazprom said it will also pursue a European price formula for Belarus as of 2007, and offered to partially compensate it for the price hikes if Beltransgaz agrees to sell the Russian energy giant its main gas routes.

The price of gas supplies to Belarus has not changed since 2004, and currently stands at \$46.68 per 1,000 cubic meters.

Gazprom deputy board chairman Alexander Ryazanov said earlier the energy giant raised the price from the current \$46.68 to \$200 per 1,000 cubic meters in its latest draft agreements sent to Belarus for consideration, a move expected to tear a hole of around \$2 billion in the Belarusian budget.

Source: *RIA Novosti*, September 8, 2006; <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20060908/53669597.html>

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13. Coop with China is Priority of Belarus Foreign Policy

Leonid Maltsev, Defense Minister Colonel-General, said the development of relations with China is one of the priorities of Belarus' foreign policy.

On Wednesday during his meeting with Cao Gangchuan, Chinese Defense Minister Colonel-General Maltsev said "Cooperation with China is one of the priorities of Belarus' foreign policy. Our relations are developing successfully on the base of mutual benefit and mutual respect."

"We are meeting not as officials and defense ministers but as old good friends," the Belarusian minister said. According to him, "the normal human relations always are the most solid base and guarantor for developing relations in other fields."

Maltsev said he is satisfied that a great number of Chinese specialists arrived in Minsk. Thus, "we have concrete talks on concrete matters," he stressed, *Kazinform* refers to *Itar-Tass*.

The Chinese delegation, which arrived in Minsk on Tuesday, will stay in Belarus till September 17. As part of the visit the delegation will meet with the Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko and will visit the Military Academy, the Dudutki museum, the Belovezhskaya Pushcha and the Brest fortress.

The Chinese military will be also awarded the Order of Friendship of Peoples.

Source: Kazinform; September, 13, 2006;
<http://www.inform.kz/showarticle.php?lang=eng&id=144588>

14. Venezuela Asks Belarus To Help Certify Oil Reserves

Venezuela has invited Belarus to help certify heavy crude reserves in its oil-rich Orinoco River basin, the government said in a statement Friday.

The two countries have signed a memorandum of understanding to certify reserves in the Junin 1 block of the Orinoco, the statement said.

Venezuela has been seeking the help of state oil companies from politically aligned nations, including China and Iran, to certify heavy, tar-like crude deposits in the basin, believed to be one of the largest oil deposits on the planet.

Meanwhile, President Hugo Chavez has sought to strengthen ties with his Belarus counterpart Alexander Lukashenko, who shares his anti-U.S. views.

Belarus has small oil and gas deposits, but imports most of its fuel from Russia.

Source: *The International Herald Tribune*; September 8, 2006;
http://www.ihf.com/articles/ap/2006/09/08/business/LA_FIN_Venezuela_Belarus_Oil.php

15. Belarus Voices Support for Iran's Nuclear Plan

Belarus supports Iran's development of a civil nuclear program, Foreign Minister Sergei Martynov said after talks with his Iranian counterpart Manouchehr Mottaki on Thursday, AFP reported.

"Belarus thinks that Iran has every right on every kind of peaceful nuclear activity, in accordance with the non-proliferation regime. We have no grounds to doubt the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program," Martynov said.

Mottaki insisted that Iran's program was "exclusively peaceful and transparent," welcoming upcoming talks with the European Union on Iran's response to an offer on its nuclear program from the five permanent UN Security Council members plus Germany.

Iran has refused to halt sensitive nuclear enrichment work as demanded in a Security Council resolution.

He also warned the United States and Britain "not to address Iran with their illegal offers and demands" pointing out that "the nuclear state that used nuclear weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki has no right to demand that other states have no nuclear technologies."

Iran has close relations with the impoverished former Soviet republic, shunned by the West for the authoritarian regime of Alexander Lukashenko. Despite fierce Western criticism, Belarus has sold Russian-made conventional military equipment and spare parts to Iran.

Source: *MosNews*; September 8, 2006;
<http://www.mosnews.com/news/2006/09/08/belarusiran.shtml>

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consultative status with the United Nations and the International Labor Organization. To send letters to the editor or to subscribe/unsubscribe please contact Maria Kabalina at cis@ilhr.org.

The Belarus project was established to support Belarusian citizens in making their case for the protection of civil society before the international community regarding Lukashenko's wholesale assault on human rights and the rule of law in Belarus.
