



Hundreds of memorials throughout Belarus are dedicated to the desperate struggle against the Nazi invaders

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Our project *Belarusian Statehood* tells about all three state symbols — the flag, coat of arms and anthem

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A flower-laying ceremony at the monument to fallen soldiers in Grodno. Centre: Great Patriotic War veteran Valentina Baranova.

May there always be peace!

Belarus celebrated the 78th anniversary of the Great Victory on May 9th. This is a sacred holiday for the people of our country. The war lasted 1418 days and nights, more than 1.3 million Belarusians and natives of Belarus took part in it. About 200,000 of them were awarded orders, medals and the title of Hero of the Soviet Union for their courage and heroism. On this day, solemn rallies were held throughout the country, during which the inhabitants of Belarus remembered the soldiers, home front workers, partisans and underground fighters who brought this Victory closer and gave their lives for the Motherland and future generations.

On the eve of Victory Day, the President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, presented state awards to distinguished people from various fields. Among them was a 99-year-old veteran of the Great Patriotic War, member of the regional organisation of veterans of the Leninsky District of Grodno of the Belarusian Public Association of Veterans Valentina Baranova, who was awarded the Order of Honour. → 2



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On May 5th, in the run-up to the Victory Day celebrations, the President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, presented state awards to distinguished people from various fields

Heroes of our time

The Head of State often says that there would be no sovereign Belarus now without the victorious May 1945, without the heroic and labour deeds of our grandfathers and great-grandfathers. And this time, Aleksandr Lukashenko reminded that in those days of May, people greeted the Great Victory with jubilation and assumed increased labour obligations,

“We have kept this sacred tradition. Thus, on the eve of Victory Day state awards are presented to those who, like the heroic fathers, mothers and grandfathers, have not spared energy, talent, time and sometimes life to conquer professional heights for the benefit of Belarus.”

According to the President, Victory Day is the most esteemed holiday for all Belarusians, especially for the older generation. 78 years ago (on May 2nd, 1945) Berlin was defeated, and the main role in this was played by the 1st Belorussian Front under command of Marshal Zhukov.

Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised that on the eve of Victory Day state awards are presented to those who, like the heroic fathers, mothers and grandfathers of Belarusians, have not spared energy, talent, time and sometimes life to conquer professional heights for the benefit of their native country. “I am very glad that today in this hall we have this wonderful woman who belongs to the war generation. This is Valentina Baranova. A front-line soldier who reached Prague, a telegraph operator, an athlete. Valentina Petrovna, you turn 5 times 20 in November. One can only dream!

“People like you are now worth their weight in gold. You are the guardians of the truth. You are a counterbalance to those who deny the genocide of the Belarusian people, who whitewash Nazism, no matter what guise it takes,” Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

Valentina Baranova participates in the work of the Grodno Veterans Council, leads an active life. In her person, the President thanked all veterans and participants of the war, “I bow low to those who fought at the front, who fought the enemy in the occupied territory, survived concentration camps, worked selflessly in the rear... I have a big request for you, even a combat task: live as long as possible, being an example to our youth. It



A member of the regional organisation of veterans of the Leninsky District of Grodno of the Belarusian Public Association of Veterans Valentina Baranova was awarded the Order of Honour

will be very difficult for us without you.”

Valentina Baranova, in turn, admitted that she was glad to see the President not on the screen, but live, “Thank you very much for the fact that our Belarus has become a strong and free, independent, prosperous and peacemaking country during your presidency. This is the most important thing!” she emphasised. Addressing the participants of the solemn ceremony, Valentina Baranova added, “My dear, thank you very much! After all, you are the generation that has replaced our generations — participants in the war. We will pass away, you will stay. Together with Aleksandr Grigorievich, you will continue to build our peaceful, happy life.”

Several dozens of people were invited to the ceremony at the Palace of Independence. Most of them have experienced the joy of labour victories and represent the most peaceful professions, the President said. State awards and honorary titles were bestowed upon a dairy company, teachers and doctors, cultural workers and scientists, construction workers and industrialists, equipment manufacturers, transport workers and economists, inventors and lawyers. Among the awardees are also those who have chosen the sky as their career, dedicated themselves to the art, preserved the Belarusian nature and created the beauty with jewellery accuracy.

The awardees included representatives of the Operational and Analytical Centre under the Aegis of the President of the Republic of Belarus and the State Forensic

Examination Committee, employees of the State Security Committee, internal affairs bodies and the border service.

“These people are those who have recently been neutralising infiltrators who have been sneaking into our territory. As you can see, history is repeating itself. Thank you for your excellent service. What you do is a daily victory over our enemy, an unscrupulous and ruthless one. But we are stronger. Because the truth is with us. Just like in the Great Patriotic War, we defend our homes and our children,” the Head of State stressed.

Aleksandr Lukashenko bestowed the Order of Honour upon Vasily Korzhov, Director General of the Narochansky National Park, and Valentina Baranova, member of the regional organisation of veterans of the Leninsky District of Grodno of the Belarusian Public Association of Veterans. The award was also given to Mikhail Kovalev, Deputy Head of the Department of State Prosecution of

About 1,500 veterans of the Great Patriotic War and about 8,500 citizens who suffered from the consequences of the war (mostly former prisoners of concentration camps) live in Belarus today. Unfortunately, every year the ranks of veterans are thinning out — those who fought and emerged victorious. The youngest participants in the war are now 96 years old. Honouring veterans related to the payment of material assistance, rallies, laying flowers were held throughout the country during the holidays. According to the decision of the President, financial assistance is paid by May 9th every year in Belarus. This year, its size was increased — from Br850 (for persons affected by the consequences of the war) to Br2,000 (for participants and invalids of the war). About 10 thousand people received it.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

The Belarus Segodnya Publishing House and Alfa Radio launched an Internet radio called Radio Pobeda for the holiday of May 9th



Radio Pobeda

Victory Day is a common holiday for everyone, something for everybody. By tradition, the broadcasts of all domestic TV channels and radio stations are dedicated to the Feat of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War on May 9th. The Belarus Segodnya Publishing House was one of the first to join the festive marathon. Journalists from Alfa Radio, which is part of the publishing house, presented a new special project — Radio Pobeda [Victory]. Songs of the war years, front-line reports, voiced by the voice of the legendary Yuri Levitan, and the stories of people who courageously fought, lived, hoped and eventually won the Great Victory — a heroic victory, which took millions of human lives, are available for listening at www.radiopobeda.by. The broadcast is also accessible in high quality on the first national radio player.

As the Head of the Radio Broadcasting Department of Alfa Radio Vadim Shepet notes, in fact, Radio Pobeda is a kind of musical prompt, a reminder for those who meet the holiday on a high note. Now there are about a hundred songs in rotation, alternating with releases of Alfa Radio special projects dedicated to the

Great Patriotic War. Serious work has been done: some materials had to be collected again, some of the songs were digitised.

“It’s a complete playlist. Radio Pobeda is convenient to listen to anywhere in the world. We hope that our project will allow these songs to be heard in countries where they are trying to erase Victory Day

from history. Let the radio station become an outlet for those who do not live on the territory of our country, but have remained faithful to all memorable dates. We want as many people as possible to hear Radio Pobeda, so we urge you to turn it on in schools, public transport, shopping centres... The memory of the heroic past of our country must live on,” Vadim Shepet is convinced.

The President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko traditionally took part in festivities on the occasion of Victory Day on May 9th

In Minsk the Head of State laid a wreath at the Victory Monument. Aleksandr Lukashenko was accompanied by his three sons.

Wreaths and flowers were also laid at the monument by top officials of central government agencies, the parliament, the judge corps, defence, security, and law enforcement agencies, representatives of public associations, the diplomatic corps, veterans, and the clergy.

Aleksandr Lukashenko and all those present in Pobedy Square held a minute of silence to honour the memory of the fallen heroes.

During the ceremony upon the President's instruction Defence Minister Viktor Khrenin presented the stance of the people in uniform on the significance of the Great Victory and described the military and political situation around Belarus.

"A global military confrontation had been unleashed between the Western civilisation and the Eastern Slavonic one. Battles are taking place on all the fronts. A massive

The truth of victory and the energy of creation



war by proxy is in progress, with the West using Ukrainians to secure its own interests and ensure the ability to continue enforcing its order upon the world. Ukraine is being pumped full of weapons. The countries that border on Belarus brazenly engage in Anti-Russian sentiment and are ready to throw their nations into the grinder of the war in

the second echelon. We see how the militarisation of Poland and the Baltic states is gaining pace. The massive multinational military exercise Defender Europe with an unprecedented number of participants began literally the other day. The goals are obvious. With such actions individual Western politicians only push the planet

into the abyss, trying to light the fire of World War III in Europe's territory. Our army is ready to repulse anyone, who tries to violate the sacred borders of the Belarusian state. We will do everything so that no one would dare tell Belarusians how they should live in their own land," Viktor Khrenin said in particular.

As long as the Eternal Fire burns, stressed the Defence Minister of Belarus, we Belarusians will remember the feat of those who stopped genocide, and cleansed Europe from the fascist regime that left the bloodiest trace in history, "We will take good care of the truth about that war. We will remember frontline soldiers, who were wounded and tired, and yet they returned and rebuilt scorched cities and villages within a record short period of time. We will always follow their example of genuine eagerness for peace and creation. This is our strength and the meaning of the historical way of Belarusians, who know how to win, create, and protect peace in the native land."



FOCUS

The President of Belarus, together with the leaders of the CIS countries, took part in Victory Day festivities in Moscow

The parade was organised in Red Square in Moscow in honour of the 78th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War. The leaders of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States were invited as guests. Aleksandr Lukashenko arrived in the Russian capital on a working visit on the evening of May 8th. The Presidents of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Prime Minister of Armenia also arrived in Moscow to participate in the celebrations on

the occasion of Victory Day. However, this is very symbolic, because for almost 80 years the peoples of the former USSR fought side by side on the fronts of the Great Patriotic War and contributed to our common Victory over fascism.

Before the start of the parade, Vladimir Putin greeted Aleksandr Lukashenko and other Heads of State in the Kremlin. The President of Belarus watched the parade from the podium together with the leaders of the CIS countries and veterans. As part of the foot column, 30 ceremonial

regiments, 125 units of weapons and military equipment passed through Red Square. The honorary guests of the Victory Parade in Moscow were also Belarusian cadets, who had won the Cadet of the Year 2022 contest.

A moment of silence was declared in memory of the fallen during the Great Patriotic War.

At the end of the parade, the leaders of the countries laid a wreath and flowers at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in the Alexander Garden near the Kremlin Wall.

Victory Day congratulations sent to Lukashenko and Belarusian people

As reported by the Belarusian leader's press service, President Aleksandr Lukashenko and the Belarusian people have received numerous congratulations on the 78th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War



Wishes of peace, well-being and prosperity to the Belarusian people were sent by foreign leaders, heads of integration associations, well-known persons in various fields.

In his congratulatory message, President of Russia Vladimir Putin stressed that Victory Day has always been and will remain a symbol of courage and heroism, dedication and mutual assistance in the hearts of Russians and Belarusians, "Our peoples will never forget the unparalleled feats of front-line soldiers, partisans and underground workers — just as they will not forget the monstrous atrocities committed by the Nazi invaders during the Great Patriotic War. Almost eight decades have passed since our parents and grandparents put an end to the 'brown plague' at the cost of huge sacrifices and hardships. However, today we have to confront the ideological heirs of the Nazis

— neo-Nazis and their accomplices who ruined thousands of human lives."

"Russia highly appreciates an active participation of Belarusian friends in ensuring the security of the Union State. I am sure that — by joining efforts and relying on the good traditions of fraternal friendship and mutual assistance — Russians and Belarusians, who were hardened in the harsh war years, will be able to overcome any challenges," the Russian leader noted. He asked to convey the words of sincere gratitude, as well as wishes of good health, well-being and longevity to all veterans who live in Belarus.

President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon is convinced that the time-tested Tajik-Belarusian relations of friendship and multifaceted co-operation will continue to develop steadily for the benefit of our peoples and countries. "On this day, we celebrate the great feat, fortitude, patriotism and heroism of our peoples, we honour with gratitude the memory of those who brought the long-awaited Victory Day closer with their unparalleled courage and valour on the battlefields and in the rear," his congratulatory message reads. Emomali Rahmon wished Aleksandr Lukashenko good health and well-being, also wishing peace, tranquillity and sustainable prosperity to the brotherly people of Belarus.

In turn, President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov's congratulatory reads, "The day of May 9th is a glorious date in our common history. This significant date is a symbol of our enduring common memory of those who showed unparalleled heroism in the name of a free and happy life for future generations. With deep respect and pride we remember our fathers and grandfathers who fought shoulder to shoulder on the front, demonstrating high standards of courage, patriotism and indomitable will, together bringing the long-awaited Victory closer. I am convinced that the friendship and brotherhood of our peoples, which have passed through the hardest trials of the war years, will continue to contribute to the strengthening and development of fruitful relations between Turkmenistan and the Republic of Belarus." Serdar Berdimuhamedov wished health, happiness and well-being to the Great Patriotic War veterans and all the friendly people of Belarus.

In his congratulatory message, President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev stressed that May 9th is a sacred holiday for all of us, an unfading symbol of honour, valour, perseverance and great courage of our peoples, "On this day, we pay tribute to the fallen hero-liberators, pay homage to all those who forged Victory at the front and in the rear. Their great feat

will forever remain a high example of dedication and patriotism for present and future generations. I am convinced that the good traditions of growing friendship and mutual respect of our peoples will continue to contribute to the further development of the Uzbek-Belarusian multifaceted co-operation. I wish you good health and success in your state activities, and peace and prosperity to the Belarusian people."

The first President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, addressed words of gratitude to the valiant war veterans for the Victory, also extending heartfelt wishes of peace and prosperity to the friendly people of Belarus. "On this sacred day, we proudly remember the names of those who forged the Victory for us and future generations on the battlefields and in the rear, paving the way to freedom and a peaceful sky over our heads at the cost of their own lives. Great Victory Day will forever remain a symbol of heroism and unity of our peoples," he stressed.

In his congratulatory message, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro stressed the importance of the great feat forged by the courage and blood of the Great Patriotic War heroes.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

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2023

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To keep the skies peaceful

About the present and future of the Belarusian army

In the days of the celebration of the Great Victory in the war over Nazi Germany, we are talking about the

Armed Forces of Belarus. About soldiers, sergeants, warrant officers, officers and generals. About the patriots of their country. As well as about all those who defend our Motherland and its borders 24/7. Who, without waiting for the first call, is ready to join the ranks. About pilots and tankers, about special forces and infantry, about rocketmen and gunners, about anti-aircraft gunners and EW forces... About their work. About their merit. About what makes our army stronger and the state more secure.

By Dmitry Umpirovich

Learn constantly and quickly

How our Armed Forces are getting stronger is perhaps best seen with the help of the 'before/after' approach. It was very powerful. And it became even more powerful. **National security expert Aleksandr Tishchenko** emphasises: it is the army that is currently the most actively reformed and trained structure of national security. Moreover, in order to correspond to the realities of the time, it has to study continuously. Wars and methods of their conduct have gone beyond the old standards. Modern weapons, new tactics and strategy — all this requires an appropriate level of not only the equipment of the troops, but also their training.

The Suvorov principle applies here: to learn what is necessary in a war. Our country is undoubtedly ready to support any peace initiatives, but we also understand that if you want peace, prepare for war.



Defence Minister Viktor Khrenin on the return of tactical nuclear weapons to the territory of Belarus,

"Our task is to prepare to defend our country in such a way that it would never be possible to attack it... We do not threaten anyone, but simply want to live peacefully, work and raise children... If necessary, we will also have strategic nuclear weapons. And we are already engaged in the preparation of our existing sites. Moreover, if the hostile rhetoric continues, that will be the next step. We will respond to force only with force. Because the West does not understand the other policy."

Belarusian military industry: in line with the times

In 2022, the Armed Forces of Belarus received more than 500 units of new types of weapons, military and special equipment, as well as auxiliary equipment. Among the novelties are:

- strike unmanned aerial complex Loitering Pipe and Quadro-1400;
- mobile three-coordinate dual-band radar complex Vostok;
- combat and transport-loading vehicles of the upgraded Uragan-M multiple launch rocket system;
- VHF radio R-181-TR;
- software-defined portable VHF radio R-181-TP;
- mobile information complex PIK-2021.

The development of the Kvetka electronic warfare complex, which has unique characteristics, has been completed. Its sample was put into service at the beginning of this year.



State Secretary of the Security Council of Belarus Aleksandr Volfovich,

"The current generation of servicemen of all defence and law enforcement agencies of the military organisation of the state is able and ready to repulse any aggressor in the most difficult conditions of the military-political situation in the world, as well as around the Republic of Belarus. Be sure: today the servicemen are able to protect their people, their land."



The ability to perform tasks, to be ready for various scenarios, was described by the expert from different angles.

Extra credit questions

Military expert Nikolai Buzin speaks about the current tasks of our army and other defence and law enforcement agencies, their training, combat readiness and combat capability in the context of the National Security Concept being updated today.

"The main external sources of military threat for us are armed provocations from the territory of foreign states, calls for the use of military force against Belarus, the creation of non-state armed formations abroad for military activities on the territory of Belarus. In

addition, we cannot discount the destruction of the international military security architecture, the unleashing of an arms race, the militarisation of neighbouring states... We, adequately assessing everything that happens near our borders, formulate our own view on countering these threats," Nikolai Buzin specifies.

When we talk about protecting our borders, we mean strategic deterrence. It is its elements, Nikolai Buzin emphasises, that are the basis of the Belarusian military policy, "This is the development of our own Armed Forces, and the preparation of the country to repel possible aggression, and the development of our own military-industrial complex, capable of fully providing itself with everything necessary, and joining unions, and the formation in the state of readiness to defend its country, the creation of a system for responding to crisis situations, as well as the preparation of territorial defence."

At the same time, Nikolai Buzin recalls that military security is only one of the elements of national security. If industry, agriculture, science, technology are not developed, if we do not have a society that is ready to repel threats, then military security will never be ensured, "In any case, the strength of the military organisation of our state lies in the fact that it stays ahead and aims for the future."

We have already made things as clear as a bell regarding hybrid war that is now going on in the world. How did our Armed Forces become stronger? Due to the serious attention from the state, sufficient funding for the relevant areas, targeted rearmament. In addition, in recent years we have managed to make sure that every government body knows what to do in a crisis situation, and society consolidates.

Reformatting of the Armed Forces

— The choice of brigade formation with an emphasis on mobility, where special operations and rapid reaction forces are key in modern warfare is an excellent example of military foresight.

Equipment

— The equipment of our Armed Forces has raised the level of combat readiness and readiness to repulse the most brazen attacks against Belarus to the maximum. This includes aviation, tanks, and missile systems of modern generations and modifications.

Polonezes, Iskanders and S-400s on combat duty are our military-political body armour.

Belarusian crews and squads are fully trained in their use. The domestic military industry in this situation also turned out to be on top. Our forte is the modification of armoured vehicles, air defence systems and salvo fire. Small arms are entering mass production, and ammunition tasks are being solved. The positions of electronic warfare and UAVs have proven themselves well.

Approaches to combat coordination

— They are constantly honed in the exercises of both the Belarusian army and within the framework of the regional grouping of troops of the Union State and the CSTO. Our task is to maintain a guaranteed level of security on the outer circuit. And the Belarusian side succeeds in this despite constant provocations on the border and near it.

Personnel and reserve

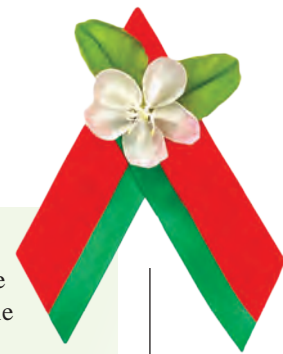
— We also took into account all the nuances of mobilisation activities in Russia and Ukraine. Indeed, we do not need mobilisation now, regular forces provide the country's military capabilities at the present stage, but the mechanism has been worked out. Our fighters and commanders are characterised by their readiness for self-giving and self-sacrifice for the sake of the Motherland, the high level of training, as well as the social security of servicemen and their families. The 'army with the people' principle has returned to life again.

Patriotism

— We are now preparing for service in the army and readiness to defend our country from school. Priority attention is paid to patriotic education based on historical memory. Patriotic classes are being opened in schools, specialised lyceums are being created. The leaders of military-patriotic education are back in business.



Places of glory



During the Great Patriotic War, Belarus showed a true example of an unbroken spirit. Hundreds of memorials throughout the country are dedicated to the desperate struggle against the Nazi invaders.



Pavel Bogush

By Sofia Arsenyeva

Brest Hero Fortress

At dawn on June 22nd, 1941, the Wehrmacht dealt a crushing blow to the garrison of the fortress. But the Nazis failed to take the citadel with a swoop — the defence lasted more than a month! The defenders repelled seven to eight enemy attacks per day in complete encirclement, without water and food, ammunition, unified command and external communications.

The fortress went down in history

as a symbol of courage and perseverance, and today it is one of the most impressive memorial complexes dedicated to the Great Patriotic War. On the territory there are several museum expositions and the Thirst and Courage majestic monuments. Thousands of reenactors annually come here to restore the events of that fateful morning in front of the audience at the Kobrin fortification. Smoke, shots and explosions, the rumble of engines and the howl of sirens — a realistic action leaves no one indifferent.



Buinichi Field

Until now, black spots can be seen on this piece of land near Mogilev — traces of equipment that burned here in the summer of 1941. One day, Soviet units knocked out 39 out of 70 German tanks. Can't you imagine that? Refer to the work of Konstantin Simonov. He saw the terrible inferno with his own eyes and described it in *The Living and the Dead* book. By the way, the courage of the local fighters and commanders

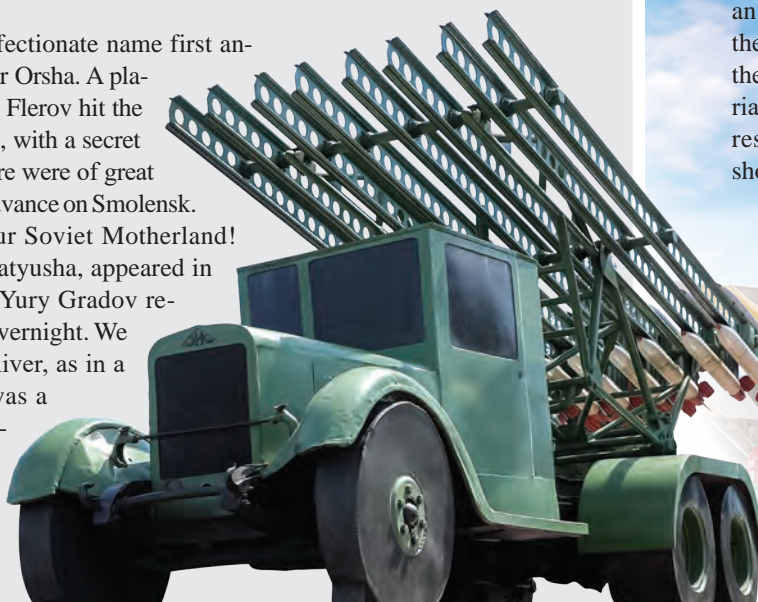
impressed the writer so much that many years after the war he bequeathed to scatter his ashes over the field.

An Orthodox chapel was built in the centre of the memorial complex. The walls inside the building were decorated with marble plates with hundreds of names of soldiers and people's militias who died during the defence of Mogilev. This list is updated every year.

Katyusha

The legendary jet mortar with an affectionate name first announced itself with a powerful volley near Orsha. A platoon under the command of Captain Ivan Flerov hit the station, which was occupied by the Nazis, with a secret weapon. Those few seconds of artillery fire were of great importance — they delayed the enemy's advance on Smolensk.

In honour of this event, the For Our Soviet Motherland! Memorial Complex, popularly called Katyusha, appeared in Orsha. Honoured Architect of Belarus Yury Gradov recalled, "The composition was invented overnight. We found a steep cliff above the Dnieper River, as in a famous song. And our main element was a real Katyusha, which was 'sealed' in metal and painted white. That's it. That's right — in white! This emphasised that the monument was not dedicated to any specific military equipment, but to a legendary image."

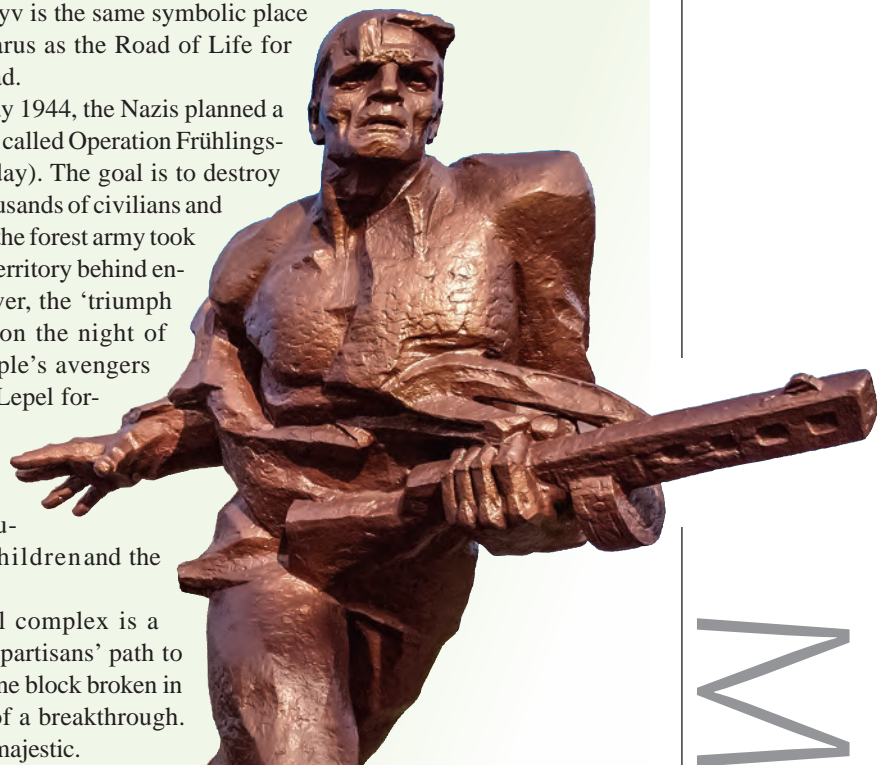


Proryv Memorial

"There were 17,185 against 60,000. The courage of the people finally won. Death has become immortality," the inscription at the entrance to this memorial complex in the Ushachi District says. Proryv is the same symbolic place for occupied Belarus as the Road of Life for besieged Leningrad.

In April — May 1944, the Nazis planned a punitive operation called Operation Frühlingsfest (Spring Holiday). The goal is to destroy several tens of thousands of civilians and partisans because the forest army took control of a large territory behind enemy lines. However, the 'triumph of death' failed: on the night of May 5th, the people's avengers from the Polotsk-Lepel formation broke out of the encirclement themselves and took 15 thousand women, children and the elderly out of it.

The memorial complex is a partially restored partisans' path to freedom, and a stone block broken in half is a symbol of a breakthrough. Monumental and majestic.



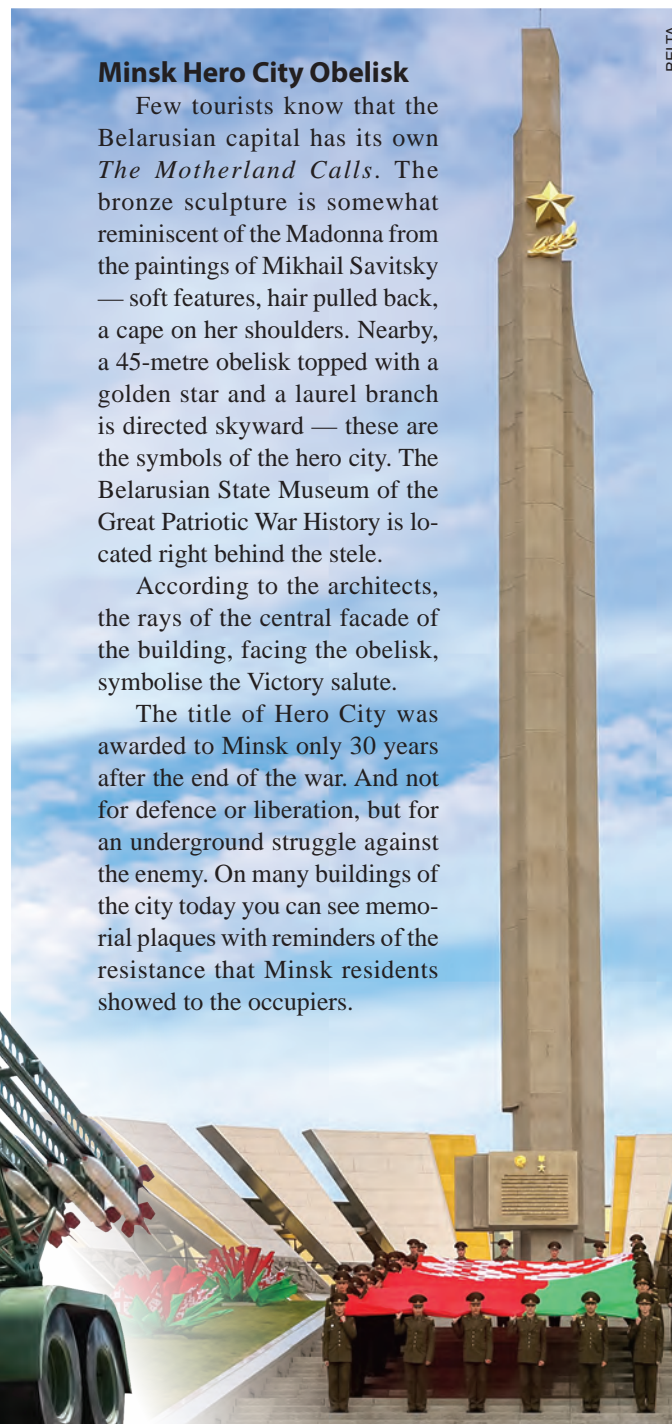
Andrey Sazonov

Minsk Hero City Obelisk

Few tourists know that the Belarusian capital has its own *The Motherland Calls*. The bronze sculpture is somewhat reminiscent of the Madonna from the paintings of Mikhail Savitsky — soft features, hair pulled back, a cape on her shoulders. Nearby, a 45-metre obelisk topped with a golden star and a laurel branch is directed skyward — these are the symbols of the hero city. The Belarusian State Museum of the Great Patriotic War History is located right behind the stele.

According to the architects, the rays of the central facade of the building, facing the obelisk, symbolise the Victory salute.

The title of Hero City was awarded to Minsk only 30 years after the end of the war. And not for defence or liberation, but for an underground struggle against the enemy. On many buildings of the city today you can see memorial plaques with reminders of the resistance that Minsk residents showed to the occupiers.



BELTA

MEMORY

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Our main symbols

Statehood is the most important value and testifies to the nation's ability to develop independently — the President of Belarus is convinced of this, and this point of view has found a warm resonance in the hearts of Belarusians. Belarusian statehood has its own history and foundations. As well as unique and unshakable symbols, institutions and traditions. *The Belarusian Statehood* project of *The MT* tells about the main ones.



Aleksandr Kushnir

The country will celebrate the Day of the State Flag, the State Emblem, and the State Anthem of the Republic of Belarus — second Sunday in May. Each modern state has symbols that express its political independence and sovereignty, the history of formation and development, and national identity. These main symbols are always three — the flag, emblem and anthem. These symbols of the Republic of Belarus reflect the historical, spiritual and moral features of the nation, the peculiarities of the culture and worldview of the Belarusian people, their desire for self-determination and independent development. Exactly a month ago, important news spread around the country. Aleksandr Lukashenko signed a decree on the basis of which the name of the state holiday was changed from Day of the State Emblem of the Republic of Belarus and the State Flag of the Republic of Belarus — second Sunday in May to Day of the State Flag, the State Emblem, and the State Anthem of the Republic of Belarus — second Sunday in May. The new name will allow paying tribute to all three state symbols of Belarus.

The State Anthem of the Republic of Belarus

The State Anthem of the Republic of Belarus is a work to music by Nestor Sokolovsky and lyrics by Mikhail Klimkovich and Vladimir Korizna.

The State Anthem of modern Belarus has retained the musical basis of the anthem of the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic. The music of Nestor Sokolovsky was popular and respected by people of different generations, therefore, when creating the anthem of independent Belarus, it was decided to preserve it. Then a competition was announced to create the text of the anthem.

The words of the State Anthem reflect the conditions for the development of the Republic of Belarus as a sovereign, peace-loving state, emphasise the patriotism and diligence of citizens, the fraternal relationship between representatives of all nationalities living in the country.

By the way, the *SB.Belarus Segodnya* newspaper also stood at the origins of the modern state anthem. On May 11th, 2002, it reported: 'The creation of state symbols continues. The competition for the creation of the country's anthem has reached the finish line. On May 8th, Aleksandr Lukashenko listened to five versions of a new song about the main thing proposed by the commission in the Big Hall of the Palace of the Republic... A casual discussion revealed a common, it seems, doubt. The conclusion was formulated by Aleksandr Lukashenko, "An impeccable text that meets all the requirements of the anthem does not yet exist. The words need to be improved, especially those that are proposed for the music of Nestor Sokolovsky. Available options should be broadcast on radio and television so that all citizens can form their own opinion about them."'

All versions of the state anthem — versions to music by Vasily Rainchik, Vladimir Olovnikov and an updated arrangement by Nestor Sokolovsky — were performed by the orchestra and choir on radio and television. Five versions of the text were published in *The SB* dated June 7th, 2002. Opinions and feedback on how the Belarusian anthem should be could be expressed by phone, as well as by letter or telegram to the Information Ministry.

In total, 119,000 people responded to the call. Citizens preferred the music of Nestor Sokolovsky.

On July 2nd, 2002, the President approved the text and music of the anthem. And on December 8th, the Let's Sing the Anthem Together campaign was held for the first time in the country at the initiative of the ONTTV channel, which was supported by the Head of State. It has replenished the treasury of wonderful traditions of independent Belarus.

An anthem is not just good words set to good music.

These words and music always pierce your heart if you are a citizen of your country. If you are a true patriot. If you agree with every syllable, with every note!

The anthem captures you from the first notes and the first phrase, captures you tightly and does not let go until the very final chords, and even after. It is necessary to participate in it, sometimes empathise to goosebumps in the body, to the most sincere tears. There are not only poetic words that stir the heart of every Belarusian, but also powerful music that calls and unites us. At the first sound, you proudly stand in the general ranks of fellow citizens and begin to hum well-known, simple and understandable words.

*We, Belarusians, are peaceful people,
Wholeheartedly devoted to our Motherland.
We are faithful friends, growing up
Living in a hardworking and independent family...*

The State Emblem and the State Flag were adopted following the results of the first referendum in the history of sovereign Belarus, which took place at the initiative of the President on May 14th, 1995. 75.1 percent (3,622,851 people) voted for the adoption of the new flag and emblem, 20.47 percent (988,839 people) voted against, 211,792 ballots on this issue were declared invalid.

The State Emblem of the Republic of Belarus

The State Emblem of the Republic of Belarus is a golden outline of the State Border of the Republic of Belarus placed in a silver field, superimposed on the golden rays of the sun rising over the globe. At the top of the field is a five-pointed red star. The emblem is framed by a wreath of golden ears intertwined with clover flowers on the right and flax flowers on the left. The wreath is intertwined three times on each side with a red-green ribbon, in the middle part of which, at the base of the State Emblem of the Republic of Belarus,



Aleksandr Kulevsky

the words 'Republic of Belarus' are inscribed in two lines in gold.

The emblem reflects the best qualities and traits of the Belarusian national character: diligence, goodwill, striving for the best. The elements of the emblem are well thought out, carry a deep semantic load and are closely interconnected.



Yury Mozolevsky

The State Flag of the Republic of Belarus

The State Flag of the Republic of Belarus is a rectangular panel consisting of two horizontal coloured stripes: the top one is red, and the bottom one is green. The ratio of the width of the red and green stripes is 2:1. The ratio of the width of the State Flag of the Republic of Belarus to its length is 1:2. At the pole there is a Belarusian national ornament of red colour on a white field, which is 1/9 of the length of the State Flag of the Republic of Belarus.

The use of the national ornament as an element of state symbols is the most important feature and originality of the State Flag of the Republic of Belarus. Ornamentation is an unusually rare element, despite the fact that since ancient times (before the emblem and flag) ornamentation has been a characteristic sign or hallmark of all cultural peoples, decorating and marking dwellings, utensils, clothes, weapons, goods, religious things and buildings etc. The mastery of the ornament, has been and remains the most important feature of the Belarusian national culture, regardless of its scope, material and theme. The ornament on the Belarusian flag directly and directly testifies to ethnicity, points to the ancient origin of the Belarusian people, to the traditions of conscientious work and strict order.

The national flag of the Republic of Belarus is mounted on a staff (flag-pole), which is painted in golden (ochre) colour. The ratio of the width of the State Flag of the Republic of Belarus to the length of the staff is 1:3.

Story behind

- On January 3rd, 2002, — the commission for holding a competition for the creation of the text and music of the national anthem was approved;
- From June 6th to June 9th, 2002, — all versions of the anthem were submitted for the competition are broadcast on Belarusian television and radio;
- On June 7th, 2002, — five competitive texts of the anthem were published in SB;
- On June 10th, 2002, — the competition commission made a recommendation based on public opinion poll data;
- On July 2nd, 2002, — Presidential Decree No. 350 approved the text and musical version (notes) of the State Anthem of the Republic of Belarus.

The emblem, flag and anthem of our state are endowed with bright features that immediately remind of our native country. They are easily recognisable among all the state symbols of the world community, with the help of simple and understandable means reflect the glorious history of the people of Belarus, its centuries-old traditions, the ideological foundations of the state, goals and principles.

SYMBOLS

The Minsk Times
Friday
May 12
2023

What are the challenges and threats facing demographic security in Belarus today and how will we protect ourselves from them

According to the draft National Security Concept, demographic security is the state of protection of the individual, society and the state from the impact of demographic threats, ensuring the stabilisation of the population, the development of the country's human potential, the preservation of family and intergenerational ties. What does this mean in practice and what threats in this area exist for the Belarusian society today?

Every person matters

Special attention has always been paid to the issues of demographic security in our country.

Belarusians must increase in number in order to survive as a nation. To do this, there is a whole system of support for motherhood, childhood, as well as stimulating life expectancy.

In January 2021, a resolution of the Council of Ministers came into force, which approved the 'Health of the people and demographic security' State Programme for 2021-2025. The provisions of the programme affect almost every family and every citizen of our country. Its goal is to create conditions for improving the health of the population covering all stages of life, improving the quality and accessibility of health care services. The preamble to the programme says that the demographic situation in our country remains difficult. The population has declined, and there has been a downward trend in the birth rate (including due to a decrease in the number of women of reproductive age). That is why it is necessary to implement a set of measures aimed at creating conditions for improving the health of the population of all ages.

According to the programme, life expectancy will be 76.5 years in Belarus in 2025. At the same time, 95 percent of the country's population will have access to quality medical services.

The total fertility rate should be 1.32-1.46 births, which is not enough for the natural reproduction of the population. But this does not mean that there will be fewer citizens in the country. Together with the high quality of medical care and an increase in life expectancy, as well as migration policy, there will be a sufficient number of people in the country.

It is interesting that such trends (the value of the birth rate is less than 2) are typical today for most developed countries of the world. However, this is a process that never goes in a straight line.

In the world

According to a forecast by the University of Washington, published in *The Lancet* medical journal on July 14th, 2020, world population will peak in 2064 at about 9.73 billion and then decline to 8.79 billion by 2100. The global average total fertility rate in the world is projected to decline steadily to 1.66 in 2100. Then it will grow again.

FACT

In the total share of the population, people over 65 in Belarus make up 16 percent. By 2030, every fifth inhabitant of our country will reach this age.



HOWEVER

The main external source of threats to national security in the demographic aspect is the policy pursued by foreign states aimed at stimulating the emigration of the population of the Republic of Belarus.



Every 'I' matters



FIGURE

According to the National Statistical Committee, the population of Belarus as of January 1st, 2023, was **9,200,617** people (as of January 1st, 2022, the population was **9,228,071** people).



What measures are being taken in Belarus to support natural population growth?

Family

- family capital programme
- benefits and housing for large families
- benefits for mothers on maternity leave

Reproductive health

- citizens have the opportunity to receive a free IVF attempt
- low percentage of child and maternal mortality
- high level of medical care and its universal availability
- programmes for early diagnosis of diseases have been introduced to increase life expectancy

Support for childhood and motherhood

- the state provides material assistance to families raising children
- provision of paid sick leave for child care
- free education, health care and more

OPINION

Igor Zavalei, MP, member of the Standing Committee on Healthcare, Physical Education, Family and Youth Policy of the House of Representatives,

"The demographic issue is relevant for Belarus. Simply put, the number of citizens in the country should be much higher. Numbers are a stubborn thing, but the economy is a specific system, and people are needed for the coordinated work of this system. We have enough work, areas of activity that require the application of specialists, tasks and goals that are feasible with our work. There would only be people. Accordingly, it becomes obvious that demographic security must be considered in the context of modern challenges, risks and threats. After all, arguing over long time periods, you ask yourself the question: then who will live here, and where will our beloved and so reverently created Belarus be? Will we not become an absolute country of emigrants and migrants, strangers who will bring to us ideals and values that are unusual and alien to Belarusians? Solving the demographic problem today, we take care of ours and yours tomorrow. Therefore, measures to protect the demographic interests of the country are reflected at the highest level. As a father of two children, I still want to be sure that my children and grandchildren will live and work in their country and on their land."

The main national interests in the demographic aspect are:

- stabilisation of the population and creation of prerequisites for its sustainable growth based on a consistent increase in the birth rate and life expectancy, and a decrease in mortality;
- raising the general level of people's health, protecting the health of mother and child;
- strengthening the institution of the family as a social institution most favourable for the realisation of the need for children, their upbringing, the development of a support system for families with children and the improvement of their living conditions;
- optimisation of external migration flows, ensuring a positive balance of migration.

Internal sources of threats to national security in the demographic aspect are:

- disproportions in the sex and age structure of the population;
- decrease in reproductive attitudes of the population, their incomplete implementation;
- negative transformations of the family institution (decrease in the level of marriage, increase in the age of first marriage, an increase in the number of single-parent families, widowhood, etc.);
- decrease in the general level of health of the population, its individual sex and age groups;
- unfavourable epidemiological situation.

The main directions for neutralising internal sources of threats in the demographic aspect are:

- comprehensive stimulation of the birth rate, ensuring simple reproduction of the population, strengthening the institution of the family and preserving traditional spiritual and moral values;
- reducing mortality, increasing life expectancy, protecting the health of mother and child, maintaining the reproductive and general health of the population.



Dangers posed by AI

'Godfather of AI' Geoffrey Hinton quits Google and warns over dangers of misinformation

The neural network pioneer says dangers of chatbots were 'quite scary' and warns they could be exploited by 'bad actors'.

The man often touted as the godfather of AI has quit Google, citing concerns over the flood of misinformation, the possibility for AI to upend the job market, and the 'existential risk' posed by the creation of a true digital intelligence.

Dr. Geoffrey Hinton, who with two of his students at the University of Toronto built a neural net in 2012, quit Google last week, as first reported by *The New York Times*.

Hinton said he quit to speak freely about the dangers of AI, and in part regrets his contribution to the field. He was brought on by Google a decade ago to help develop the company's AI technology, and the approach he pioneered led the way for current systems such as ChatGPT.



He told *The New York Times* that until last year he believed Google had been a 'proper steward' of the technology, but that changed once Microsoft started incorporating a chatbot into its Bing search engine, and the company began becoming concerned about the risk to its search business.

Europe's next crisis: water

Politico: a study using satellite data confirmed earlier this year that Europe has been suffering from severe drought since 2018

More than a quarter of Europe is in drought as of April, and many countries are bracing for a repeat — or worse — of last year's bone-dry summer.

A study using satellite data confirmed earlier this year that Europe has been suffering from severe drought since 2018. Rising temperatures are making it difficult to recover from this deficit, leaving the continent stuck in a dangerous cycle where water becomes ever more precarious.

"A few years ago I would have said we have enough water in Europe," said Torsten Mayer-Gürr, a lead author of the satellite study. "Now it looks like we could face problems."

While wet conditions in coming weeks could replenish top soils and help agriculture, even a rainy spring can't fix Europe's ongoing groundwater shortage, experts warn.

With summer around the corner, governments are now scrambling to address both current and future shortages — while managing the tensions arising from growing competition over water.

Drought, said Spanish PM Pedro Sánchez, 'is going to be one of the central political and territorial debates of our country over the coming years'.

A report from Spanish farmers' association COAG stated that some cereals need to be 'written off' across four entire regions this year; one meteorologist told *El País* to 'say goodbye to almost the entire olive harvest'.

According to Ecological Transition Minister Teresa Ribera, water availability in Spain, much like in France, could drop up to 40 percent by 2050.

Drought is a complex phenomenon, and many factors — such as water mismanagement or overconsumption — can play a role. Yet rising temperatures are certain to put further pressure on Europe's water supply.



King Charles III's coronation

King Charles III has been crowned alongside Queen Camilla in ceremony steeped in splendour and tradition inside Westminster Abbey

A once-in-a-generation royal event was witnessed by hundreds of high-profile guests inside Westminster Abbey, as well as tens of thousands of well-wishers who gathered in central London despite the rain.

The service was a profoundly religious affair, reflecting the fact that aside from being head of state of the United Kingdom and 14 other countries, Charles is also the Supreme Governor of the Church of England.

In the most significant moment of the day, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby placed the 360-year-old St. Edward's Crown on Charles' head. The spiritual leader of the Anglican Church then declared, "God Save the King."

The intricate service lasted just over two hours — about an hour shorter than Elizabeth II's coronation in 1953 — and

followed a traditional template that has stayed much the same for more than 1,000 years.

Once the King was crowned, his wife, Queen Camilla, was crowned in her own, shorter ceremony with Queen Mary's Crown — marking the first time in recent history that a new crown wasn't made specifically for this occasion.

Music played a central part in the proceedings, and five new compositions were commissioned for the main part of the service, including an anthem by Lloyd Webber, who is better known for West End musicals.

After the ceremony, the newly crowned King and Queen rode back to Buckingham Palace in a much larger parade, featuring 4,000 members of the armed forces, 250 horses and 19 military bands.

EU to boost ammunition production

The European Commission has been drafting a package of documents to speed up the process of militarisation of the EU economy, making the arms industry one of the priorities of its economic development, several independent diplomatic sources in Brussels have told TASS

In line with the package, the weapons and ammunition industry will be named a priority area of the EU economic development, along with green energy and clean production.

The European Union's executive wants to set aside more than €500m (\$550m) to increase ammunition production to help Ukraine and replenish the stocks of EU member countries

Under a plan presented by the European Commission, the EU would give subsidies to European arms firms for investments that increase production of ammunition and missiles.

"When it comes to defence, our in-

dustry must now switch to war economy mode," Thierry Breton, the Commissioner for the EU's Internal Market, said in remarks released before the official announcement.

The plan needs approval from EU governments and the European Parliament to become reality.

Meanwhile, the EU must return its 2012 Nobel Peace Prize to the Nobel Prize Committee or hand it over to Vatican or Hungary, because only these two countries in Europe advocate peaceful settlement in Ukraine, says Hungarian lawmaker, ex-Defence Minister István Simicskó.



Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

Enemy that is always ready to attack

Biological security as the order of the day

With the United States losing its hegemon status and the formation of new centres of power, Washington is ready for any action in order to maintain its own political weight. Realising that direct influence on opponents is not always effective or extremely costly, the American establishment has paid close attention to hybrid confrontation, when all possible means are used from information to military. The COVID-19 pandemic, which has claimed millions of lives and disrupted the global economy, has forced us to take a closer look at another component of our security — biological.

By Nikolai Buzin, Doctor of Military Sciences, Professor

Historical background

In the National Security Concept of Belarus, the draft of which is now being actively discussed in the country, biological safety is defined as the state of protection of the population, animals and plants, the environment from the impact of hazardous biological factors, which ensures an acceptable level of biological risk. What is the reason for the need to expand the aspects of ensuring national security?

History knows many examples related to the threat of use or even the use of biological weapons.

The distribution of blankets infected with smallpox by the British in 1763 to the natives of America is documented. At the beginning of the 20th century, the American writer Jack London published *The Unparalleled Invasion* story, in which he called on the United States to unite with its allies in biological warfare against China in order to stop its rise.

Throughout the 20th century, Great Britain, Germany, the USSR, the USA, Japan and other countries worked on bacteriological weapons, achieving significant results. Moreover, this type of defeat has no equal by cost-effectiveness.

The realisation of the danger of such experiments for mankind resulted in the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (BTWC), which entered into force on March 26th, 1975. Today, 183 states, including the United States, are its participants and have pledged not to develop, produce, or stockpile biological weapons.

Mysterious virus

Despite this, the biological aspect has remained a priority for the United States and its military department for decades. Most of the programmes in this area are carried out through a system of grants by civilian research centres.

Professor Ralph Baric of the University of North Carolina was the first to synthesise the coronavirus in 2002. And in 2015, he created a hybrid virus based on SARS and SHC014 (carriers — bats), capable of rapidly replicating in human lung cells.

Since 2009, USAID has been running the Predict programme to collect and study coronavirus varieties in bats around the world, including Georgia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan. Its executor is Metabiota, a contractor associated with the US Democratic Party and J. Biden's son Hunter.

Analysts call the Johns Hopkins Institute in Baltimore an active participant in the programme, on the basis of which, on the eve of the COVID-19 pandemic, American military biologists conducted the Event-201 exercise to counter the spread of an unknown strain of coronavirus. Even more interesting is that the organisation has branches in Italy and China, where cases of biological infections have become world sensations.

Who calls the shots

A large amount of information for analysis and reflection was provided by Russia's special military operation

in Ukraine, during which information was obtained on the implementation of US biological projects.

According to released data, the Pentagon now has 330 biolabs around the world, funded by the DTRA military agency under a \$2.1 billion annual programme. 46 research facilities are located on the territory of Ukraine and about 30 are still functioning.

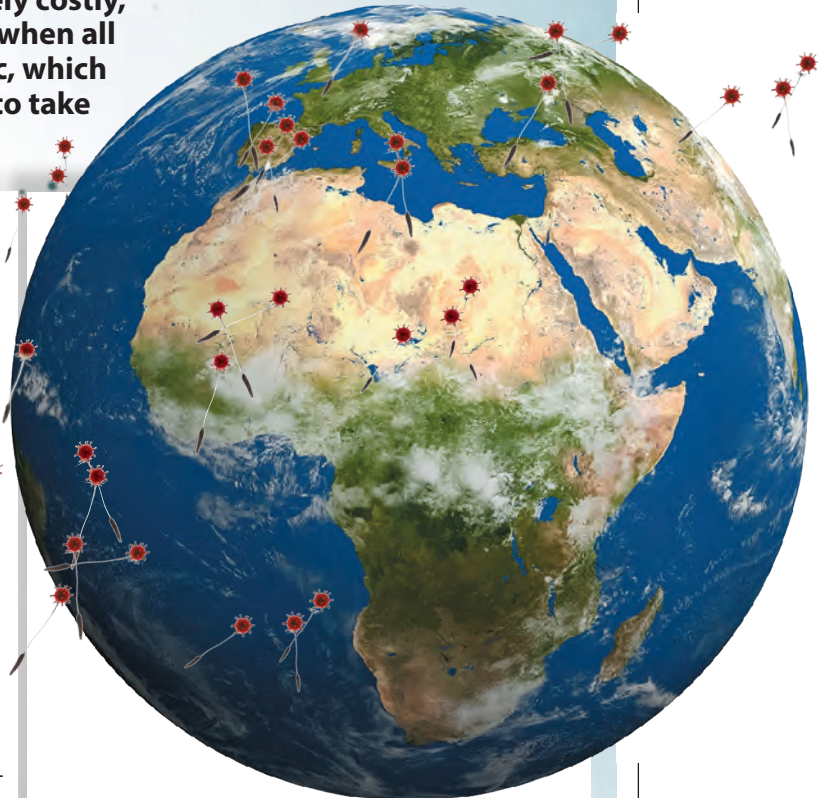
Furthermore, according to available information, more than 500 scientific projects were implemented from 2014 to 2022, including 'Development of Technologies for Modelling, Assessing and Forecasting the Impact of Conflicts and Threats of WMD Proliferation', 'Transfer of Ukrainian Technologies for the Production of Complex Dual-Use Materials to the European Union'.

Under such ordinary names, work with the pathogens of plague, cholera, tularaemia, typhoid fever, bird flu, African swine fever was veiled, for which the US military allocated more than \$350 million.

At the same time, citizens of Ukraine were involved as experimental subjects and the impact of various dangerous infectious agents was studied. Local outbreaks of diseases in Ternopol (2009), Kharkov (2016), Nikolaev (2015, 2017), Zaporozhye (2017) passed without any publicity. And these are SARS, swine flu, cholera, botulism and hundreds of dead Ukrainians.

According to released data, the Pentagon now has 330 biolabs around the world, funded by the DTRA military agency under a \$2.1 billion annual programme. 46 research facilities are located on the territory of Ukraine and about 30 are still functioning.

Of particular interest is the information obtained during the special military operation about the transfer of more than a thousand samples of blood serum from residents from various regions of Ukraine, belonging exclusively to the Slavic ethnic group, to the Bernhard Nocht Institute for Tropical Medicine (Hamburg, Germany). It can be assumed that this is Washington's next step towards achieving the general goal — the creation of bioagents capable of selectively affecting various ethnic groups of the population.



Global threat

According to the UN, the global economy contracted by 4.3 percent due to COVID-19, which is more than 2.5 times more than during the 2009 financial crisis. As of May 31st, 2022, the number of officially registered victims of the pandemic in the world amounted to 6.9 million, and the number of deaths related to it exceeded 17.2 million people. From 115 to 125 million inhabitants of the Earth were below the poverty line. These are only the most general indicators of the two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, but they are comparable to the results of the world war. Belarus has not bypassed this trouble either.

There is no doubt that a threat of this magnitude requires the closest attention and the development of mechanisms to counter it. Moreover, COVID-19 is not the first case of a biological disaster. Over the past 20 years, the world has experienced the pandemics of SARS (2003), H1N1 swine flu (2009), Ebola in West Africa (2014-2016) and Dengue, and other local scourges.

In terms of the number of victims and the distribution area, COVID-19 significantly exceeds its predecessors. In terms of the nature of the course and the consequences, it is very reminiscent of a 'first effort' or a large-scale experiment on the use of biological weapons to solve geopolitical problems.

Such a hypothesis will be confirmed or refuted only by time, however, the elements of purposeful influence have pronounced signs. The results of the COVID-19 pandemic, the active work of the world's leading states on biological programmes, the approach of this threat to the borders of Belarus make it expedient to expand the area of security and consolidate these provisions in the National Security Concept of the country.

The old saying 'If you want peace, prepare for war' remains relevant today, even if this is a biological war and is waged by proxy without an official announcement.

Nor does the April 2023 forecast by the US news agency Bloomberg add to optimism, according to which 'there is a 27.5 percent chance of a pandemic as deadly as COVID-19 occurring in the next decade'.

We would like to get acquainted in more detail with the materials on the basis of which such conclusions are made, however, one of these, apparently, is the final report called 'NATO-2030: United for a New Era', a significant place in which is given to 'the development of artificial intelligence, quantum and biotechnologies'.

SECURITY

The Minsk Times
Friday
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2023

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By Sofia Arsenyeva

Central Botanical Garden

The local collection funds of living plants and the herbarium are considered the national treasure of Belarus. Scientists began to collect them from April 1932. The result of many years of efforts is more than fifteen thousand names of plants on 93 hectares. This is not just a botanical garden, but a blooming planet! The squares were planned according to the botanical and geographical principle — from the Far East and the countries of East Asia we walk through North America, Europe, Siberia to the Crimea and the Caucasus.

The greenhouse of fruit citrus plants is a special pride of botanists. Only lemons here are more than sixty varieties.

One can enjoy the flowering of daffodils and hyacinths in the capital's garden right now, and from day to day, a warm breeze will begin to spread the delicate aroma of magnolias and sakura.

**Where: Minsk,
Surganova Street, 2v.**

Banana grove and date plantations

In the Belarusian Gorki, the air is no worse than in the Alps. The fresh aromas of flowers and herbs cheer up tourists in the local botanical garden at the agricultural academy. The history of these lands is impressive: the garden was designed and laid by Academician Angelo Campioni and Associate Professor Eduard Rego in the first half of the 19th century. They cultivated not only local plants, but also brought from Moscow, Riga, Penza, Simferopol, Odessa and Bessarabia. At that time, it was the best botanical garden in Europe.

Indeed, there are a lot of curiosities here today — bananas are blooming, dates are ripening. There are even iron and sausage trees brought from distant Africa.

**Where: Gorki,
Michurina Street, 5.**

Spring decorates everything around with a bright palette. Let us tell you where you can enjoy incredible species of exotic plants and their wonderful aromas.



The most flourishing places in Belarus

Botanical Garden at Masherov Vitebsk State University

At the end of the 18th century, the Russian merchant Vorobyov planted roses and lilacs on the high bank of the Dvina River in memory of his mother. He chose outlandish varieties brought from Persia and Turkey. It was a true won-

der for the locals! Not only people like the green corner on the map of Vitebsk: squirrels, roe deer and even foxes look here from the river.

**Where: Vitebsk,
Uritskogo Street, 25.**

Prince Paskevich's greenhouse

In 1877, Fyodor Paskevich wished to set up a flower garden in an empty building of a former sugar factory. He spared neither time nor money for a good cause. Two Russian ovens were built for rare and exotic plants under the building, and natural minerals decorated the walls inside the halls.

Surprisingly, the Chamerops palm, which was planted in 1888 by the most illustrious prince, is still in bloom. Subtropical plants is the basis of the modern garden collection. Here you can admire rare fish and turtles, pet rabbits.

**Where: Gomel,
Lenina Street, 4.**

Brest Botanical Garden

It is the youngest in the country. From April to October, one can enjoy the beauty of the outdoor landscape and botanical exposition. On a small square in the city Brest-on-the-Bug, flowers of the Mediterranean and Far Eastern groups bloom.

Throughout the season, the patterns in the carpet beds are perfectly shaped, and along the perimeter of the garden there is a mixborder, in which the tiering of plants is observed, the colour of the foliage, the frequency of flowering and the rhythmic repetition of species are thought out. Everything is calculated to the smallest detail!

If this is not enough — welcome to the winter garden. Here you can plunge into the atmosphere of the tropics, subtropics and even the desert. Aquariums with fish and cages with birds hide among evergreen trees and bizarre cacti.

**Where: Brest,
Kosmonavtov Boulevard,
21, and Mitskevicha
Street, 28/1.**



The team of Minsk became the winner of the republican cross-country for the prizes of the Belarus Segodnya Publishing House

About 650 participants gathered in Minsk to take part in the open Cup of Belarus, the finals of the Victory All-Belarusian Cross-Country Track for the Prizes of Belarus Segodnya Publishing House, relay race competitions in memory of the honoured coach Aleksandr Kitsenko. The races that took place at the Republican Centre for Olympic Training in Athletics on Kalinovskogo Street turned out to be filled with struggle. Despite the rain and hail, the cross-country participants tried to do their best in order to be the first at the finish line.

Rain and hail are no problem



This time, not only athletes, but also students of universities and colleges came to the start of the cross-country

By Tatiana Pastushenko

When in 1998 our editorial board (then — *The Sovetskaya Belorussiya* [Soviet Belarus] newspaper, today — Belarus Segodnya Publishing House) decided to revive the glorious tradition of holding republican cross-country races, Boris Khrolovich was the head coach of the Minsk Region team. That year they won the competition, in 1999 they consolidated their success. Looking at the current cross-country participants, Boris Khrolovich said, “Now I root for the youth, for new talents to be found!”

There were a lot of them on the track. Let us remember that this year the final of the All-Belarusian Cross-Country Track for the prizes of our publishing house was held according to a modified format. If in the past few years it has been attended mainly by professional athletes, this time students and college students were allowed to participate. It was university students who ran the distance first: boys and girls determined the



The competition ended with relay races

strongest in races of 1, 2 and 3 kilometres. Among the runners in this category, one could meet well-known athletes. One of these is biathlete Darya Kudayeva, who competed for Polesky State University. Although it was not possible to reach the podium, Dasha was satisfied, “In the summer we also run quite a lot, sometimes, depending on the load, we overcome 10-15 kilometres in training. It was unusual to run along such a route, but I liked it! Wow!”

This time, students from 24 universities and 12 colleges ran

in the cross-country. Pavel Shesteren, Deputy Director of the Republican Centre of Physical Education and Sport for Pupils and Students, however, had no doubt that there would be even more of them next time, “We see how important this event is for both students and representatives of teams from cities and regions. This time only representatives of institutions of secondary specialised education from Minsk and the Minsk Region participated in the races, but next season, I think, all regions will want to participate in the traditional cross-country

race dedicated to Victory Day.”

After the student starts, all attention was riveted on the main races — five kilometres. The girls were the first to leave. They were unlucky with the weather, to put it mildly. First it started raining. A few minutes later the hail began to fall. Entire patches of mud appeared on the track, it was especially difficult for the runners to overcome the turning meters. Anna Sparish from Minsk was the first to cross the finish line.

“For me, this is the first victory in the cross-country Cup of Belarus. The vagaries of the weather are not terrible. True, it was not very pleasant to run into the city, it even hurt, but it’s okay — this is the real cross-country! I did not set any special goals for myself. Taking into account the fact that I competed for my



The head coach of the Minsk national athletics team Nikolai Goman with the main competition cup

university and at a kilometre distance, I didn’t know how I would feel. But everything worked out — I won both races!” the runner believes.

In the men’s five-kilometre race, a classic duel took place between two runners from the Mogilev Region — Sergei Platonov and Vyacheslav Skudny. Three years ago, Platonov won it. Two years ago, in order to determine the winner, a photo finish was required — Skudny was the best. Last year, an injury prevented Vyacheslav from defending the championship title, but this time the guys again competed to death on the track. Sergei Platonov, who won, told, “The rivalry has been good. We fought until the very end, only 200 metres before the finish line I managed to escape from Slava!

In general, the competition went well. Perhaps the change of venue was even for the better. The track has changed, it was interesting. Another city — other emotions. The atmosphere today was reminiscent of the European cross-country championships: the same number of participants, the fight at a distance — everything is great!”

Minsk won in the team event. They managed to interrupt the triumphal series of runners from the Mogilev Region, which lasted six years, and now the main trophy — the cup, established by Belarus Segodnya Publishing House, will remain with the winners of this season for a year.

Our victory is at hand

The world No. 2 in tennis Belarusian Aryna Sabalenka became the winner of the WTA-1000 tournament in Madrid with a prize fund of \$7.6 million

In the decisive match, the Belarusian broke the resistance of Iga Swiatek from Poland (WTA: 1) — 6:3, 3:6, 6:3. The fight lasted for 2 hours 27 minutes.

The day before, Aryna Sabalenka turned 25. And she presented herself with an excellent gift in the form of the 13th title in the competition under the auspices of the WTA in singles.

The first set was marked by the advantage of the server over the receiver. However, viewers still saw one break. And it was made by Aryna Sabalenka, who scored at the reception in the eighth game.

At the start of the second game, the representative of the Belarusian tennis school began to make more mistakes, which affected the score — 0:3. Then the Belarusian was able to restore the status quo — 3:3, and in the seventh game she had two break points. However, she did not convert them, lost this game, and then, succumbing to emotions, gave up two more.

Nevertheless, this did not knock the Belarusian



athlete off balance. In the decisive third set, she took the lead — 3:0. She allowed her opponent to level the score — 3:3. But in the end, she took three games in a row and closed the match. It should be noted that in the ninth game the Belarusian missed three match points,



The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, congratulated Aryna Sabalenka on her victory in the tournament

“Dear Aryna! Congratulations on another triumph — a brilliant victory at the tournament in Madrid. Thank you for the joy you gave to millions of fans on the eve of Victory Day. You showed iron stamina and will in the hardest final match against the World No. 1. I am sure that many bright moments and high-profile victories in your performance await us ahead. I wish you confidence and good luck,” congratulations say.

but on the fourth attempt she put an end to the game and the tournament in general.

On the way to the final match, Sabalenka beat Romanian Sorana Cirstea (44) 6-4, 6-3, Colombian Camila Osorio (115) — 6-4, 7-5, Russian Mirra Andreeva (194) — 6-3, 6-1, Egyptian Mayar Sherif (59) — 2-6, 6-2, 6-1 and Greek Maria Sakkari (9) — 6-4, 6-1. Aryna Sabalenka claimed her first Madrid title in 2021.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

Photo of the week



Yelizaveta Kobelskaya

The author of the *Her Handiwork* exhibition in the Stolitsa Mall — a mother of many children Tatyana Zernova from Chashniki

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



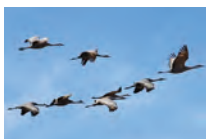
May 12th is International Nurses Day. It has been officially celebrated since 1971 on the birthday of Florence Nightingale (1820-1910), an English sister of mercy, the

organiser of the service of Sisters of Mercy and the training system for nurses and paramedical personnel in the UK.

On May 13th, 1933, Aleksandr Kishchenko was born (1933-1997), a Belarusian artist, Honoured Art Worker of Belarus, People's Artist of Belarus. He



worked in the field of easel and monumental painting, created murals, mosaics and tapestries. Among his works are: mosaic panels on the ends of residential buildings in the Voskhod-1 microdistrict and on the facade of the Tourist Hotel, monumental tapestries for the UN building in New York and others. He was the laureate of the State Prize of Belarus.



May 13th is World Migratory Bird Day. This is a global environmental campaign that aims to increase people's

knowledge of migratory birds, their habitats and travel routes. It is an effective tool to

help raise global awareness of the threats migratory birds face, their ecological importance and the need for international cooperation to save them.

May 13th is World Fair Trade Day. It is celebrated under the leadership of the World Fair Trade Organisation. Fair Trade is a social movement dedicated to advocating international standards and public policies regarding labelled and unlabelled goods. The focus is on goods exported from developing countries to developed ones. The main thing is that they should be produced without the use of slave and child labour.



On May 13th, 1754, Russia's first state-owned bank, the Nobles' Land Bank in St. Petersburg with a branch in Moscow, was established by decree of Empress Elizaveta Petrovna with the aim of issuing loans to



landlords secured by land. The first attempts to streamline and organise credit institutions came from the imperial government, which was the patron of the development of financial affairs in Russia. In subsequent years, banking actively developed, new banks were created in Russia.

On May 14th, 1905, a panorama created for the 50th anniversary of the Siege of Sevastopol was unveiled. Soon after the end of the Crimean War (1853-1856), a movement began in Russia to perpetuate the memory of the heroes of the defence. The *Siege of Sevastopol* panorama — a wonderful work of the master of Russian battle painting Franz Roubaud was opened on the former 4th bastion, which immediately became popular. This huge canvas, 115 metres long and 14 metres high, depicts the British and French troops, which were repulsed by Russians during the Allied assault on the Malakoff-Kurgan ridge and the fortifications of the Karabelnaya suburb on June 6th, 1855.



On May 15th, 1848, a Russian painter Viktor Vasnetsov was born (1848-1926). He created works on the themes

of national history, Russian epics and folk tales. He is the author of the *Alenushka*, *Ivan Tsarevich Riding the Gray Wolf*, *Bogatyr*, *Tsar Ivan the Terrible* paintings and others. Vasnetsov's paintings are in the National Art Museum of Belarus, among them are *Forest*, *The Edge of the Spruce Forest* (sketch for the *Alenushka* painting), *Three Princesses of the*

Underground Kingdom, *Portrait of the Son* and others. Streets in the cities of Brest, Minsk and Nesvizh are named after him.

May 15th is Family Day. The family is the most important environment for the preservation and transmission of cultural values, national traditions from generation to generation, it morally and financially supports children, the elderly and the disabled. Belarus has adopted the National Programme for Demographic Security, and such large-scale social programmes are being implemented as financial assistance from the state to large and young families in the construction of housing, the development of a system of free provision of food for children in the first two years of life, the provision of targeted social assistance, etc.



May 16th is Biographers Day. It is thanks to the meticulous and tireless work of biographers that information about the lives of great people of a particular era has reached our days. One of the first biographers can be called the ancient Greek philosopher Plutarch. The name of the first publisher and biographer of Alexander Pushkin, Pavel Annenkov, and the name of the biographer of Leo Tolstoy, Pavel Biryukov, are well known.

