

## II. Issues of security and defence

### STEPAN SUKHORENKO: «TODAY, THE THREAT COMES FROM ABROAD»

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*Interview with the Chairman of the Belarusian KGB*

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Additions and amendments in the Criminal Code and other legislative acts «on the issue of enhancement of liability for actions aimed against human beings and public security», presented by the Belarusian KGB Head General Stepan Sukhorenko to the Belarusian parliamentarians, caused a negative response by the global community. This new law is to go through two readings in the lower house and one in the upper house and, finally, should be signed by the Head of State.

*How fast will the new document pass through all stages of the Belarusian law-making process?*

- **S. S.** During the discussion of the bill, proposed on behalf of Aleksandr Lukashenko and coded in the parliamentary agenda as «urgent», one of the deputies began to reproach the security institutions for delay. He said that two years passed since the «rose revolution» in Georgia and one since the «orange revolution» in Ukraine. The deputy asked: «Why do we start to create the law domain so late in our country?» I answered him briefly: «I accept your reproach in full».

*When will, in your opinion, follow the next demonstrations of the opposition?*

- **S. S.** Possibly, you might have seen that before a storm it is always calm: to concentrate, to gain forces and get ready. Therefore, they are getting ready now, and getting ready seriously.

*Can you give, at least tentatively, more specific time of expected events?*

- **S. S.** I have already said in the Oval Hall (the place of sitting of the members of the lower house – V.G.) that such demonstrations are planned in the course of the presidential campaign and immediately after the election results are declared... A bill is a preventive measure. People who will go to the streets with explosives, combustion materials and metal bars will know what they are doing and what will be the consequences for them personally... This is not a minor hooliganism. This will be hooliganism with elements of terrorism which will entail respective criminal liability.

*What will be the liability?*

- S. S. So far, we propose to extend the term of imprisonment to seven years.

*In your opinion, how serious is the threat of destabilization of the society by the Belarusian opposition?*

- S. S. I want to note at once, that the Belarusian opposition by itself does not present any threat at all for the society, for destabilization of the society. Today, the threat, of course, comes from abroad. Financial, organizational, etc...

*Can you give any specific addresses from where the threat comes?*

- S. S. USA use resources and opportunities of international and foreign nongovernmental organizations so as to train special groups in Belarus, which they plan to use for organizing mass-scale street demonstrations. These are the American National Fund for support of democracy, the International Republican Institute, the Poland-based East-European Democratic Centre, the Stefan Batori Foundation, and the Polish-American Institute of Democracy in Eastern Europe.

*Do you think that the proposed changes in the legislation can prevent massive demonstrations?*

- S. S. We think that adoption of this law will help, in many respects, to put down the wave that is being prepared.

**FOR INFORMATION – THE CONTENT OF THE ADDITIONS AND AMENDMENTS IN THE LEGISLATIVE ACTS:**

Organization or leadership of a political party (other civil association, or a religious organization) whose activities are related to violence against people, or causing them bodily injurious, or other infringement upon rights, freedoms and legal interests of people, or to prevention them from execution of their state, public or family duties — shall be punishable with arrest up to 6 months, or deprivation of freedom up to 3 years.

Organization of activities or taking part in activities of organizations and foundations, in relation to which a decision on suspension of their activities or their liquidation has come into effect, shall be punishable with a fine or arrest up to six months, or deprivation of freedom up to two years.

Amnesty will be given to those who voluntarily terminate participation in such organization and declare about this to relevant state authorities. They will be relieved from criminal liability, if their actions do not include elements of another crime.

Arrest up to six months or deprivation of freedom up to three years can be applied for teaching or training of persons for taking part in massive riots, as well as for funding such actions. Arrest up to six months or deprivation of freedom up to two years are stipulated for teaching or training of persons for taking part in group actions that seriously violate public order, as well as for funding or other material support of such activities, if there are no elements of a more serious crime.

Liability is enhanced for public calls to take over state power or change violently the constitutional system — from six months of arrest to deprivation of freedom up to three years.

Calls to foreign states, to foreign or international organizations to commit actions detrimental to external security of Belarus, its sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as dis-

semination of materials containing such calls shall be punishable with arrest from six months to three years. If these calls are disseminated through mass media, the punishment increases and includes deprivation of freedom from two to five years.

The Criminal Code is also supplemented with a new article «Discrediting of the Republic of Belarus». It means *«giving to a foreign state, a foreign or international organization of knowingly false data about the political, social, military or international position of the Republic of Belarus, the legal status of citizens of the Republic of Belarus or its authorities»*. This stipulates arrest up to six months or deprivation of freedom up to two years.

*Vladimir Glod. 01.12.05.*

## **A DIRIGIBLE INSTEAD OF AN AWACS AIRPLANE**

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*Work is under way in Belarus to build a multi-purpose surveillance and reconnaissance aerostat*

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According to the opinions in the Military Academy of Belarus, the Army must make more active use of aerostats and dirigibles. According to specialists, aerostats and dirigibles that were used some time ago actively in the Soviet Union have become outdated by the modern jet aircraft. The military specialists are sure that aerostats and dirigibles have been forgotten undeservingly and that now there are real opportunities for their revival. Today, science has reached the level when it is possible to equip even a simplest anchored aerostat with modern communications facilities, as well as software allowing precise surveillance and reconnaissance. The shell of the aircraft can be made very strong, nonflammable, light and cheap.

The aerostat in itself is a means for carrying any cargo to a specified elevation. It is suggested that location of five-six aerostats at the elevation of 3000–4000 metres with specialized onboard equipment will allow reliable radio, telephone and mobile communication across the entire territory of Belarus as well as 24-h surveillance over movement of on-land and air equipment.

It cannot be excluded that in the future aerostats can occupy the niche between the terrestrial radars and surveillance satellites. At the same time, they are dozens of times cheaper in production and operation than long-range radar airplanes.

Retranslation equipment installed onboard these aerostats can ensure reliable two-way communication with crews of helicopters and airplanes during their flights. An aerostat can be used to lift to the air an observer who corrects and sends to the artillery battery the shooting results. According to military experts, the Military Academy of Belarus carries research to create a multi-purpose surveillance aerostat through the joint Belarusian-Russian programme. In opinions of specialists, such dirigible can be invaluable for defence of the western borders of Belarus and become a serious supplement to equipment and machinery available for the air force and air defence teams.

As it was explained in the Military Academy of Belarus, that the scientific team of this educational institution is developing an information surveillance platform which, by its ca-