About iSANS

**iSANS** is an international expert initiative aimed at detecting, analysing and countering hybrid threats against democracy, rule of law and sovereignty of states in Western, Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia.

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Throughout the last decade, the Belarusian authorities have managed to restore and develop a system of military training and military education which in many ways can be seen as a continuation of the Soviet tradition.

In fact, this system is rather typical of militaristic societies which require outstanding operating proficiency, appropriate ideological orientation and mobilisation against external as well as internal enemies.

The system of military education is made up of several levels, including pre-draft training, specialised military secondary education, military education at civilian higher educational institutions as well as specialised military education at higher military educational institutions.

Importantly, the system exceeds the needs and expectations of today’s Belarusian society and instead serves the interests of the incumbent regime, which uses the military education system for obtrusive propaganda and as an ideological influence on students and military cadets at all stages of the education system. Undoubtedly, under the conditions in which the Belarusian society has become intensely digitally connected, ideologization and propaganda have not brought the desired results. Nevertheless, this process continues to play an important role in ensuring political loyalty among security, defence and law enforcement personnel.

Moreover, the Belarusian Armed Forces play a vital political role in ensuring the stability of the authoritarian system and is one of the main pillars of the Lukashenko regime.

In general, the system is built in such a way as to nurture certain political and ideological dispositions in citizens.

Adherence to the old Soviet methods and attitudes as well as maintaining close ties with the Russian military educational system underpin the structure, content and ideological substance of the Belarusian military educational system (this does not refer to technical military skills). Therefore, military personnel involved in military education have a highly Russified and Sovietised mindset and worldview.

That said, it is important to note that the Belarusian authorities have made some attempts to arrange their own, autonomous training of military technical staff and senior officers in order to limit Belarusian dependence on the Russian Federation. This task is fulfilled by a number of civilian higher educational institutions that have so-called ‘military faculties’ as well as specialised military education institutions such as the Military Academy and Border Guard Service Institute. Nevertheless, Russia remains the main basis for specialised military education offered to Belarusian officers.
Structure of the foundations of (preliminary) military education in Belarus within the system of general and military education

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1. MILITARY AND MILITARY/IDEOLOGICAL TRAINING IN CIVILIAN (GENERAL SECONDARY) EDUCATION

Since military conscription is universal for all 18 year-old men in Belarus, pre-draft training plays an important role in framing the mindset and behaviour of young men. This training takes place in secondary schools and is compulsory for students in grades 8 to 11. Students are taught military basics. However, one of the main objectives of these courses is to nurture the ‘proper’ ideological dispositions in the students. It is also noteworthy that the Belarusian model of the militarisation of education draws on the tradition of the military-patriotic approach from the Soviet times.

1.1. Military-patriotic guidance

Since 2003, general schools in Belarus have undertaken the implementation of a curriculum of meant for patriotic guidance for the students as part of a special project which is titled ‘The State Ideology of the Belarusian State’. This process is related to the attempts by Alexander Lukashenko and his regime to fully reinstate a comprehensive system of state ideological control and propaganda in schools and institutions of higher education, as well as to develop more political mobilisation around his regime. The development of the ideological guidance has been entrusted to both the ideologists and government-organised civil organisations such as the Belarusian Republican Pioneer Organisation (BRPO) and the Belarusian Republican Youth Union (BRSM).

‘One of the main objectives of the state youth policy has clearly been defined by the President of the Republic of Belarus: to bring up the citizen, the patriot, inspired by the ideals of goodness and social justice, capable of constructing and building for the sake of their Fatherland’.

Belarusian schools quickly turned into a place of indoctrination. The educators themselves assess their work as follows: ‘contemporary school is meant to handle the vital task of forming value-based fundamentals for education, with ideology being one of the key pillars. Today, special attention is devoted to youth associations in the Republic of Belarus. The educator’s task is to plan work in such a way that children and teenagers become interested in it, and join the BRPO and BRSM of their own free will’.

In 2010, an additional curriculum of military-patriotic guidance was introduced by the state as a part of the general ideological guidance programme.

1 Игнатенко В.А., Формирование гражданственности и патриотизма в молодежной среде, Министерство здравоохранения Республики Беларусь, Учреждение образования «Белорусский государственный медицинский университет», Отдел воспитательной работы с молодежью, Минск (методический материал для внутреннего пользования) [Ignatenko V.A., Formation of civil-mindedness and patriotism among youth, Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus, 'Belarusian State Medical University' education institution, Department of Youth Education, Minsk (teaching guide for internal use)], www.dogmon.org/ministerstvo-zdavno-oohraneniya-respubliki-belaruse.html (5.12.2020).
Military-patriotic guidance is defined as the following:

“A continuous, targeted process of developing in students the high moral qualities necessary for the successful defence of their Fatherland. The goal of the military-patriotic guidance of students is to form a continuous desire to contribute to the prosperity of the Republic of Belarus and defend it against its enemies.

The implementation of this objective depends on the fulfilment of certain tasks including, in particular, the cultivation of respect for the State Coat of Arms and State Flag of the Republic of Belarus; the deployment of defence and sports facilities and establishing defence and sports targets; fostering respect for the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus and defenders of the Fatherland; developing in young men moral, psychological and physical preparedness to fulfil the constitutional duty of defending the Republic of Belarus”.

It is important to note that an abstract image of the ENEMY which threatens the peace and prosperity of Belarus is already being created in the minds of children. Although teaching aids do not specifically name this enemy, it becomes clear throughout the process of ideological education, information and propaganda policy that the West best personifies this enemy. This, in principle, corresponds with the neo-Soviet image of the world which the Belarusian regime is trying to create.

Military-patriotic guidance (MPG) is made up of a series of compulsory events and courses. These include pre-draft training courses, ‘homeroom periods’ devoted to the events of the Great Patriotic War (GPW) and the history of the USSR, regular meetings with GPW veterans and servicemen who took part in the Soviet-Afghan War, visits to memorial sites related to war history, compulsory participation in marches and parades (i.e., on May 9th and July 3rd) and the commemoration of the events of May 9th and July 3rd. In general, the MPG syllabus is quite standard. The main focus is on the Soviet past, primarily the events of the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) and the Soviet-Afghan War.

This is what a school’s annual curriculum might look like (from the secondary school in Velikaya Gat’):

Workplan for military-patriotic guidance of students

- Organise and conduct mass events during the month of defence associated with the Defender of the Fatherland Day;
- Organise a meeting with Great Patriotic War veterans;
- Organise a book exhibition on the heroism of the Soviet people in their fight for the Fatherland in a school library;
- Organise a tour of halls of military fame;
- Organise a School Olympics dedicated to Defender of the Fatherland Day;

• Hold talks on the Victory of the Soviet people over the Nazis during the Great Patriotic War;
• Prepare for and organise a festivity dedicated to Victory Day;
• Homeroom periods on the topic ‘Your defenders’. Literary-musical piece ‘Stalingrad in a soldier’s coat’;
• Issue a school bulletin-board newspaper about the life of the first cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin ‘Off we go!’

During the education process, children are aggressively militarised. They are dressed in GPW military uniforms, given (mock) weapons, and taught historical re-enactments which include episodes of violence and death⁵. According to psychologists, this ‘gives rise to an aggressive “community” of people’⁶. This form of guidance is called ‘aggressive patriotism’⁷. The problem is that ‘patriotic guidance’ does not only take place in upper secondary schools, but also affects pre-school children and primary school students.

By communicating their aggressive view of patriotism, adults force the topic onto the children. The child is surrounded by aggression and intolerance towards a given part of the world. And the child learns and becomes used to the fact that it is normal because that is how their mum and dad behaved. They ‘threatened someone, tried to prove something. The child gets the message: war is great, it is right, it is a celebration, because it ends with our victory, we are proud of it’⁸.

In general, these aspects of indoctrination in Belarusian schools are a continuation of the militarisation of education in Russia where the phenomenon can be found in mass and even grotesque forms.

Bearing in mind that each school implements the curriculum to a varying degree, MPG is still based exclusively on Soviet history and the heroic past of the Soviet people. In fact it is part of the broader policy of denationalisation.

Gradually, the MPG has taken on a more structured form. Compulsory pre-draft training classes for upper secondary school grades 10-11 are included in the general education curriculum. These changes were introduced to the education system in 2009, in accordance with Order No. 675 of the Ministry of Education of 29 May 2009.

‘The analysis of the military and geopolitical situation indicates the increased urgency of ensuring the national security of the Republic of Belarus in the military and information fields. Patriotic guidance is of particular importance in this regard. The course ‘Pre-draft military and medical training’ makes it possible to effectively instil patriotism, desired moral qualities and ideological beliefs in youth.

⁵ The militarisation of Belarusian children and Belarusian schools is a topic for a separate political and psychological analysis.
⁷ Ibid.
⁸ Ibid.
The Law of the Republic of Belarus ‘On Universal Military Duty and Military Service’ introduces mandatory training of citizens for military service, including pre-draft training in general education institutions (...) The model of parallel pre-draft training for boys and medical training for girls is optimal and organisationally reasonable, it reflects society’s social needs.

In other words, the introduction of pre-draft training has been the result of some serious geopolitical challenges and threats to the state and society. The response to these threats has been the greater militarisation of education and the rallying of citizens around the regime. Obviously, this situation has led to the further ideologization of the system of education and intensified efforts aimed at the creating an image of the enemy as personified by the West.

1.2. Pre-draft training

The objectives and tasks of the pre-draft training correspond to the ‘aggressive patriotism’ programme:

*Shaping the moral and psychological readiness of young men for military service and providing them with the knowledge and skills necessary to master the duties of defender of the Fatherland (...).*

**Objectives of the course**

- Expand students’ knowledge of the heroism and courage of our ancestors in defending our Fatherland;
- Foster students’ civic-mindedness and patriotism and a sense of personal responsibility for fulfilling the constitutional duty of defending the Republic of Belarus;
- Acquaint students with the defensive nature of the military doctrine of the Republic of Belarus, the history and current state of the country’s Armed Forces, active service and service in the reserves;
- Raise students in the spirit of comradeship, collectivism, mutual support, humanism, morality and communication standards;
- Teach students the rights, obligations and responsibilities of a conscript and present them with military basics;
- Train students in shooting, unarmed combat, operation under extreme conditions and on a training battlefield, and introduce drills;
- Form conscious motivation and prepare students for service in the Armed Forces and encourage them to undertake studies in military higher education institutions.

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9 Order No. 675 of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus, 29.05.2009, Concept of a school course ‘Pre-draft military and medical training’.

10 Educational objectives of the school course ‘Pre-draft military and medical training’, approved by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus, 29.05.2009, No. 32.

The course ‘Pre-draft military and medical training’ for grades 10-11 covers 35 academic hours per grade (a total of 70 academic hours).

On the one hand, the school course on ‘pre-draft military and medical training’ is aimed at forming appropriate ideological attitudes (i.e. the West is the enemy; the USSR = Belarus = Great Victory; Belarus and Russia is a single and inviolable union which withstands destructive Western conspiracies, etc.). On the other hand, during the course, students are expected to master military basics: the basics of marching, weapon handling, handling of gas masks, hazmat suits, map reading, the recognition of military equipment, etc.

For example, as part of the topic on the Armed Forces of other states, a pre-draft training curriculum covers the following aspects: markings used by the Armed Forces of the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom and France; signature characteristics of military vehicles of other states; available means of destroying them and protection against them; and visual surveillance posts. In other words, the Armed Forces of Western countries are clearly perceived as potential enemies.

A series of teaching aids were developed specifically for this course. One of the most comprehensive coursebooks is titled: ‘Pre-draft training’ for grades 10-11 printed by the Petrus’ Brovka Belarusian Encyclopaedia publishing house. It contains 240 pages and was published in 2019 with a print run of more than 30,000 copies.12

The coursebook contains specific historical and ideological content, with the main emphasis on the heroic Soviet past. The first chapter of the coursebook entitled ‘The Belarusian Army in History and the present day’ opens with the following paragraph:

‘February 23rd, the Day of the Defenders of the Fatherland and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus, has been and remains one of the most memorable dates in our history. This date is associated with the birth of the Red Army in 1918 when, on February 23rd, its troops managed to stop the advance of the German invaders due to its heroic resistance near Narva and Pskov, and on the approaches to Polotsk, Borisov, Mogilyov, Osipovich, Gomel and Kalinkovichi (Fig. 1). It was the Soviet Army which was the main factor that prevented war, including nuclear missile warfare, in the second half of the 20th century’13.

As mentioned above, the ideological component of the pre-draft training curriculum is anti-national, pro-Soviet and pro-Russian. In the 2012 teacher’s edition by V. B. Varlamov, for example, only one page is devoted to the historic and military events which date back to the period of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In contrast, the Russian and Soviet past is discussed on 20 pages of the manual. Moreover, there is no mention whatsoever of the military pursuits by the troops of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania or the Kingdom of Poland.

against the Duchy of Moscow, the 1831 and 1863 uprisings or the Belarusian People's Republic.

In accordance with the core curriculum, students also receive practical skills as a result of pre-draft training. These include, for example:

**Firearms training (7 academic hours)**

- **Small arms.** Specifications of the AK-74 assault rifle, the Kalashnikov light machine gun, the 7.62mm Dragunov sniper rifle, the 7.62mm Kalashnikov general-purpose machine gun and the 9mm Makarov pistol.
- **Grenade launchers.** Specifications of the RPG-7V shoulder-launched anti-tank grenade launcher and the 30mm AGS-17 automatic grenade launcher.
- **Hand grenades.** Specifications of RGD-5, F-1, RGO, RGN grenades. The use of grenades in combat.
- **Shooting with an air rifle.** Safety requirements when shooting.
- **Shooting with a small-bore rifle.** Safety requirements when shooting. Shooting exercises No. 2a, 2b with a small-bore (air) rifle or on an electronic simulator (hands-on exercise).
- **Partial disassembly and assembly of the Kalashnikov assault rifle; learning to magazine the Kalashnikov assault rifle.**

**The basics of marching (2 hours)**


In 2019, the MPG curriculum was expanded to include an elective course for grades 8-9 entitled the ‘School of young defenders of the Fatherland’. *The educational objective of the elective course is to convey to students the basic knowledge and skills required to defend the sovereignty of the Republic of Belarus; and the respective worldview, informational and behavioural culture*.

The syllabus, structure and composition of the course correspond to those of the ‘Pre-draft training’ course, except that these classes are optional (in theory not mandatory) and offered to students aged 14-15.

In early 2020, a new teacher position was created and introduced in schools. This position is called the ‘Head of military-patriotic guidance’ and the person in this position is in charge of the whole process of MPG and achievements in terms of the military and ideological

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14 Варламов В.Б., Допризывная подготовка 10-11 класс, Минск, 2012. [Varlamov V.B., Pre-draft training, grades 10-11, Minsk, 2012.]
16 Уроки допризывной подготовки 10-11 класс, учебное пособие для учителей [Course of pre-draft training, grades 10-11, teaching guide], Minsk, 2014.
training of the students.

The head of MPG is responsible for the implementation of the ideology of the Belarusian State in the area of military security by means of the civic and patriotic education of children and youth in general secondary schools. He or she is also responsible for the development of patriotic awareness and the moral and psychological qualities necessary to defend the Fatherland in young men and women. Such education also includes compulsory preparation of citizens for military service, the acquiring of the knowledge and skills needed for participation in national military and patriotic contests and other events. The head of MPG ‘takes part in the civic and patriotic guidance of students’.

The head of military-patriotic guidance ‘coordinates issues related to the organisation of pre-draft training in general secondary educational institutions, including the interaction with commanders of military units, subunits, heads of military faculties (departments) of higher educational institutions, etc., in order to raise the prestige of military service among the students. He or she cooperates with military unit commanders, sub-units, heads of military faculties of higher educational institutions while organising field training camps for students and recreational camps with a military-patriotic, defence or sports profile’ 18.

1.3. Military-patriotic tutor groups

In terms of military-patriotic guidance and pre-draft training as part of the general education process, there are also specialised units with a stricter military focus in secondary schools. These are the so-called military-patriotic tutor groups (cadet tutor groups).

The main objective of this tutor groups is ‘to create an educational system (...) aimed at developing civic-mindedness, patriotic feelings and ethical-and-moral qualities among cadets, preparing them for the conscious choice of a profession related to serving the Fatherland in a military or civilian walk of life (...). The model of military-patriotic guidance in cadet tutor groups should be aimed at shaping a progressive worldview and stance on social, historical, moral, political and other issues, as well as preparing young people for military service and the choice of occupations in this field’ 19.

In recent years, these tutor groups have been formed in many schools in major Belarusian cities, including in Minsk, Gomel, Brest, Novopolotsk, Bobruisk and Pinsk. The students of these tutor groups dress in military uniforms for daily classes. In addition to general subjects, greater attention is paid to military training and military-patriotic activities. Close cooperation with the authorities has also been established, especially with the State Border Committee, the Ministry of Emergency Situations and the Military Academy of the Republic of Belarus.

Graduates who have studied in these tutor groups often enjoy preferential admission to

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military educational institutions such as the Lyceum of the Ministry of the Interior, the Minsk Suvorov Military School, the Academy of the Ministry of the Interior, etc.

Military-patriotic tutor groups are mainly formed in the senior years, grades 10-11, and develop the required ideological foundations to encourage students to select a military path for their future.

One of the border-guard tutor groups was formed at the secondary school No. 206 in Minsk. From the very beginning, a special curriculum has been created for this tutor group. ‘The character-building component will prevail in this tutor group (…). The emphasis is on the courses that need to be passed to be admitted to the Border Guard Service Institute’20.

There is a special focus on discipline and obedience:

An oath of a cadet of the military-patriotic tutor group of Bobruisk school No. 27

‘We, the students of the military-patriotic tutor group, solemnly swear to be honest, disciplined and scrupulous students; to strictly comply with the regulations of the military-patriotic tutor groups, and the orders and instructions of our commanders and teachers. We promise to be scrupulous in studying for the course and mastering the military arts, to improve our endurance, and to be devoted to our Fatherland - the Republic of Belarus’21.

The main ideological focus of these groups is how to shape the students’ worldview and create loyalty to the existing state system.

Celebratory assembly on September 1st 2020, 10th grade students, Minsk secondary school No. 20622.


Military-patriotic tutor group, secondary school No. 3, Gomel\textsuperscript{23}.

Students of the military-patriotic tutor group of Minsk school No. 134 on a trip to Moscow\textsuperscript{24}.

Students of the military-patriotic tutor group of Minsk school No. 134 on a trip to Moscow. Lenin’s Mausoleum\textsuperscript{25}.


\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
In order to coordinate and enhance efforts in terms of MPG and pre-draft training, interschool regional and district pre-draft training centres have been set up. These centres are often located within secondary schools. The interschool status means that children from different schools in a given district can be trained at the centre.

**Objectives and tasks of pre-draft training centres:**

- To convey in-depth knowledge to students on the subject of ‘Pre-draft military and medical training’;
- To prepare students for military service in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus, other troops and military formations of the Republic of Belarus;
- To carry out military-patriotic guidance of students;
- To offer vocational guidance to the students.

The example of the pre-draft training centre of the Pervomaysky district of the city of Minsk located at secondary school No. 203 illustrates the courses and activities of the staff of pre-draft training centres using.

Theoretical background: ‘The pre-draft military and medical training’ - 100 academic hours, including 30 hours devoted to a field training camp. The field training camp is hosted by the base of the 120th separate mechanised brigade. The periods when camping takes place at the military base is determined by the headmaster together with the local education authorities in agreement with the draft boards and the commander of the 120th separate mechanised brigade. The centres organise events, meetings and concerts dedicated to significant events in the history of the USSR and Russia.

The activities are carried out jointly with veterans representing the Armed Forces, veterans of the Great Patriotic War, veterans of international campaigns, officers of regional and municipal joint draft boards, military bases, representatives of the DOSAAF (the Voluntary Association for Assistance to the Army, Air Force, and Navy), employees of medical institutions, the Ministry of Emergency Situations, employees of penitentiary facilities, etc.26

Employees of the pre-draft training centre are mostly retired servicemen who used to serve in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

The centres conduct activities which are ideological in nature. The emphasis is on the Great Patriotic War, Soviet military symbols, etc.

The centres also organise rallies and trips to memorial sites related to the Great Patriotic War. The pre-draft training centre of the Oktyabrsky district in Mogilev, for example, regularly sends its top students on international camping trips as part of the Battalion named after Yuri Dvuzhilny, Hero of the Soviet Union and Vera Voloshina, Hero of Russia to the sites where these heroes lived during peacetime and during wartime. The students feel honoured to represent the Republic of Belarus during these trips. The trips take place on

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the territory of Belarus and Russia\textsuperscript{27}. When it comes to the events organised by the Mogilev pre-draft training centre, they are done so in close cooperation with Russian educational and patriotic centres, such as the Moscow state budgetary professional education institution ‘The South-West educational facility’\textsuperscript{28}. The involvement of Russian establishments in military-patriotic training expands the influence and presence of Russia’s soft power in Belarus, and weakens the impact of the national factors on Belarusian students.

As a rule, pre-draft training centres organise military camps for teenagers called ‘The Patriot’. Students can become acquainted with the basics of military life there. Officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) of the Belarusian Armed Forces, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and special operations units (Spetsnaz) provide physical and military training for students.

A number of the skills that taught in the pre-draft military and medical training (for instance: first aid) can certainly be useful in everyday life. Nevertheless, the excessive ideologization and militarism of the military-patriotic guidance as well as the pre-draft training is more likely to have a detrimental impact on students than a positive one.


2. SPECIALISED MILITARY-CIVILIAN SECONDARY EDUCATION

This segment is an important milestone in military education in Belarus and is a continuation of the Soviet tradition of developing servicemen. Both symbolically and ideologically, primary and secondary specialised education is intertwined with the Russian military education system. The ideological image of the world which is being formed in students of specialised military educational institutions is also noteworthy.

Specialised military education in Belarus is rather well-structured and well-developed, and is a continuation of the policy of militarisation of education and society. The structure of primary and secondary specialised military education is represented by two types of education institutions, namely the Suvorov and cadet schools.

2.1. Cadet schools

A cadet school is a general secondary educational institution for students in grades 8 to 11 where training and education are provided at the 2nd and 3rd stages of general secondary education. The aim of the cadet school is to prepare citizens for service in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus, other troops and military formations of the Republic of Belarus, law enforcement agencies, the Investigative Committee of the Republic of Belarus, the State Forensics Committee of the Republic of Belarus and the emergency services and units of the Republic of Belarus. Cadet schools implement a programme of guidance for children at risk of social exclusion while protecting their rights and legal interests. Cadet schools provide conditions for military training, accommodation, meals and protection of the lives and health of the students. Cadet schools can also provide a specialised curriculum equivalent to the level of general secondary education, a guidance programme for children in need of recuperation from illness, supplementary education for children and youth, and creating conditions for an educational and training programme for the sports reserve and (or) competitive sportsmen.

The length of a cadet school is four years of study. This is a boarding school with accommodation in barracks and an emphasis on military order and discipline. The cadet schools are under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus. The cadets are divided into groups or platoons. ‘The cadet is responsible for the accurate and timely performance of his duties and assigned tasks, as well as for the good and undamaged condition of the property entrusted to him. He reports to the squad leader’.

The platoon is divided into squads. The number of squads depends on the size of the platoon. If the platoon has up to 9 cadets, there is one squad; if it has 10 to 18 cadets, then there are two squads; if there are 19 or more cadets, then there are three squads. The cadets are evenly divided and certain positions are established in the platoons, including: cadet;

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30 Internal regulations for cadets of the ‘Vitebsk Cadet School’ state education institution.
squad commander; and deputy platoon commander. The functions and responsibilities of both cadets and commanders are fully in line with those of military personnel. The management staff of the schools are former servicemen, many of whom used to serve in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

There are 8 municipal and regional cadet schools in Belarus:

- Minsk City Cadet School (Minsk);
- Minsk Regional Cadet School (Slutsk);
- Gomel Regional Cadet School;
- Mogilev Regional Cadet School named after Yevgeny Nikolayenko, Hero of the Soviet Union (Mogilev);
- Vitebsk Regional Cadet School (suburb of Luzhesno);
- Polotsk City Cadet School (Polotsk);
- Grodno Regional Cadet School (Grodno);
- Brest Regional Cadet School (township of Yastrembl').

Between 200 and 300 cadets study at each cadet school. For example, 70 children were admitted to the Vitebsk Cadet School for the 2020/21 academic year. Cadets are provided with all the necessary material supplies: uniforms, meals, etc., which can be considered substantial assistance to many parents and underprivileged families. It is also important to note that active servicemen are also keen to send their children to such schools.

Although national symbols can be seen in the attributes of the cadet schools, the overall content of the educational process and ideological education remains strongly Sovietised and Russified.

There is a standard ideological approach to the teaching which includes a constant reference to historic events such as the Great Patriotic War or the Soviet-Afghan War. This also enhances the denationalisation of the students’ awareness. For example, there was an incident and a significant scandal in 2015 when several cadets of the Brest Regional Cadet School posted their photos on social media wearing t-shirts with the Belarusian ‘Pahonia’

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31 Ibid.
coat of arms. As a result, the cadets were punished and faced psychological pressure, including the threat of being expelled from the school.

However, this was an isolated case and was rather the exception rather than the rule in Belarusian cadet schools.

Government-organised NGOs also play an important role in the educational and ideological process. These include the BRPO (the Belarusian Republican Pioneer Organisation), BRSM (the Belarusian Republican Youth Union), and forces of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (including OMON) which promote a certain worldview. ‘The efficiency of civil and patriotic guidance will be promoted by closer cooperation with the Belarusian Republican Pioneer Organisation (BRPO) and the Belarusian Republican Youth Union (BRSM). It would be advisable to hold seminars for teachers of general secondary educational institutions on assistance to civil organisations for children and youth which would be provided in the form of information-sharing and instructions. Encouraging students to take an active part in national activities, projects and competitions organised by BRSM and BRPO civil organisations will contribute to the formation of their active civic stance’.

Cadets are also called upon to police the streets. This was especially the case in the aftermath of the August 2020 presidential election and subsequent protests.

32 Real patriots: Brest cadets are wearing T-shirts with ‘Pahonia’ under their uniforms, posted in the ‘Maya Kraina Belarus’ online community in the VKontakte social media outlet, www.belaruspartisan.by/life/321304/ (30.09.2020).
'On 29 September, Polotsk celebrated the centenary of the police patrol and checkpoint service in Svoboda Square. The best Belarusian police officers from the Vitebsk region came to our town. There was a small concert, our cadets staged a performance with flags. A uniformed police officer came on stage with a patrol dog and OMON officers demonstrated their skills. The best officers were awarded certificates and medals.

On 29 September 2020, the first special cadet flying squad was established. Its duties include law enforcement and ensuring the safety of citizens, as well as preventing misdemeanours in public places. A century has passed since such a service was first established, and now these mobile units respond promptly when the alarm is raised. Today, the police patrol and checkpoint service is not only staffed with tough guys, but also with strong girls.'

Compared to general secondary schools, the Orthodox Church plays a stronger role in the cadet schools. Orthodox clergymen actively participate in cadet school celebrations, while asperges is one of the main rituals during the ceremony of taking the oath of allegiance by the cadets.

The cadets are likely brainwashed into showing full obedience to their superiors. An excerpt from the Brest Regional Cadet School's internal code of conduct demonstrates a clear example why: ‘Never criticise a superior’s action in general and in somebody else’s presence.
in particular. Any instruction given by a superior, in whatever form (a suggestion, a request, a piece of advice), is an order. Behave in an official manner with your superior. Remember that a superior is always a superior”.  

2.2. Minsk Suvorov Military School and the Lyceum of the Ministry of Emergency Situations

The Minsk Suvorov Military School (or Suvorov military school) and the Lyceum of the Ministry of Emergency Situations play a key role in Belarus's specialised military education. Unlike the cadet schools, students study at the Suvorov military school from grades 7 to 11, i.e. starting from the age of 13.

“The Suvorov military school is a general secondary educational institution which offers a number of specialised courses for students in grades 7 to 11 where education and guidance are provided at the 2nd and 3rd stages of general secondary education. Moreover, education and training are aimed at developing the sports reserve and (or) competitive sportsmen. The Suvorov military school also prepares male citizens of the Republic of Belarus who are minors for entering educational institutions that offer military and sports subjects to students with the aim of their prospective service in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus, other troops, and military formations of the Republic of Belarus as well as law enforcement agencies of the Republic of Belarus, the Investigative Committee of the Republic of Belarus, the State Forensics Committee of the Republic of Belarus and the emergency services and units of the Republic of Belarus. The Suvorov military school prepares students for entering other educational institutions. The school delivers a programme of guidance for children at risk of social exclusion while protecting their rights and legal interests. The Suvorov military school provides accommodation and meals. It is also able to deliver a specialised curriculum equivalent to the level of general secondary education, a programme of guidance for children in need of recuperation from poor health and a programme of supplementary education for children and youth”.

The Minsk Suvorov Military School was established in 1952 during Soviet times and was tasked with providing specialised education and training for the personnel of the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union. The name of the school's patron conveys a certain ideological meaning, given that Suvorov is a seminal military figure in Russian history. He waged wars against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and contributed to the seizure and annexation of Belarusian lands by the Russian Empire. Thus, the school is an element and symbol of Russian-Soviet imperialism. The biased teaching of young students of the Suvorov military school testifies to that. There are nearly 13,000 alumni of the Suvorov military school. Approximately 600 cadets study at the school a year. A number of today’s high-ranking officers of the Belarusian Army are alumni of the Minsk Suvorov Military School, including State Secretary of the Security Council of the Republic of Belarus, Doctor of Military Sciences,

To understand the focus of the school’s efforts, it is worth paying attention to the ideological, patriotic and awareness-raising activities defined in more detail in comparison to their description in other paramilitary educational institutions. In the definition, there is a special emphasis on the formation of a desired ideological and political attitude, in line with the expectations of the country’s leadership. This work is systematic in nature and involves not only military ideologists, but also government-organised civil organisations.

‘Ideological work at the school forms part of a concerted effort on behalf of the school’s command management, officers and teaching staff, the school associations and organisations, aimed at forming a system of ideals, values and reference points in the minds of military personnel, students and civilian staff of the school that can be applied in the interest of the state’s military security’.38

Ideological activities with the students at the Suvorov military school includes education, awareness-raising, psychological exercises, socio-legal and sociocultural activities, the formation of civic-mindedness, patriotism and national self-awareness on the basis of the state ideology.

The main tasks of the ideological work are as follows:

- To implement the state policy of the Republic of Belarus at the school and ensure the fulfilment of the requirements of the country’s leadership and Armed Forces;
- To foster in the servicemen, civilian staff and students of the Suvorov military school patriotic awareness, love of their Fatherland, their people and develop personal responsibility for ensuring their security;
- To build moral and psychological resilience of the military personnel and students of the Suvorov military school, and raise their immunity to destructive ideologies;

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To raise awareness among military personnel, civilian staff and students of the Suvorov military school about Belarusian statehood, the Belarusian political system and socio-economic model, its national traditions and its religious and moral values.

Grassroots organisations representing the Belarusian Republican Youth Union may also participate in the patriotic guidance.

Cooperation with the Belarusian Republican Youth Union and civil organisations focused on patriotic initiatives are carried out at the school as set out in Belarusian law.

Awareness-raising is a targeted activity carried out by the school’s officials and aimed at the implementation of the state ideology, timely dissemination and interpretation of politically significant information, and the development and implementation of anti-propaganda measures to counteract the negative impact of information.

The Belarusian Orthodox Church has a strong presence at the Suvorov military school and is included in the system of religious and moral guidance of the students. The school has been home to the Orthodox temple of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian for 11 years now.

Lyceum of the Ministry of Emergency Situations

The Lyceum of the Ministry of Emergency Situations is a specialised military secondary school which was established in 2004 to educate future employees of the Ministry of Emergency Situations. Although it is a specialised educational institution which primarily focuses on identifying and developing the future staff of the Ministry of Emergency Situations, the lyceum also prepares cadets for enrolment in other military formations.

‘The “Specialised Lyceum of the University of Civilian Protection of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Belarus” is a general secondary educational institution which offers training and education during the 2nd and 3rd stages of general secondary education and includes a number of advanced courses. The lyceum prepares future staff of the emergency services and units of the Republic of Belarus, offers military courses to the future personnel of the Armed Forces, other troops and military formations, as well as future law enforcement officers of the Republic of Belarus, and for entering other educational institutions.’

From 2004 to May 2020, 501 alumni of the Lyceum of the Ministry of Emergency Situations received a ‘start in life’.

The structure and content of education and training process (including military-ideological training) corresponds to the process that is implemented at the Suvorov military school.

To a large extent, the secondary and specialised military education obtained at the Suvorov military school involves ideological education related not only to the formation of a students’ desire to serve in the Armed Forces and other uniformed services of Belarus, but

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39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 About the school, see the site of the Ministry of Defence of Belarus, www.mil.by/ru/education/msvu/about (30.09.2020).
43 Ibid.
also to the development of an ideologically approved position and attitude towards the
country’s incumbent authorities, including its domestic and foreign policies. The Belarusian
Ministry of Education oversees the content of the curricula and has official control over
these educational institutions.
3. MILITARY EDUCATION IN CIVILIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

3.1. Military faculties

The Belarusian authorities have maintained the Soviet model of training military specialists and junior officers. In other words, Belarusian higher educational institutions (HEIs) train the technical staff of the Armed Forces as well as junior officers with no specialised technical training.

There are a number of civilian HEIs in Belarus that have military faculties and/or departments that offer courses both to prospective junior officers who will serve in designated corps and technical specialists who will serve in the Armed Forces.

Unlike the above-described educational institutions which offer basic military training, military faculties and departments within civilian universities are directly supervised by the Ministry of Defence and aim to train future servicemen based on ministerial requirements. The Directorate of Military Education of the MoD is responsible for the curriculum. The main task of the Directorate is to implement a unified state policy of military education which applies to all subdivisions of the Ministry of Defence, the General Staff of the Armed Forces and the Armed Forces, the commands of the Air Force and Air Defence Forces and the special operations forces of the Armed Forces. 44

Importantly, male students studying at higher educational institutions are not exempt from military service. Compulsory military service after graduation from an HEI lasts one year. In 2019, the deferment law 45 was adopted. According to this law:

‘Educational deferment from the universal draft and service in the reserves is granted for the period of study to the following categories of citizens:

• Students of general secondary schools;  
• Intramural students of vocational technical schools, specialised secondary schools, 1st stage HEIs;  
• Intramural students studying at HEIs abroad, including students delegated by the Belarusian state administrative bodies (public agencies) as part of state programmes.

Educational deferment from the universal draft and service in the reserves, as stipulated in paragraphs three and four, chapter three of this article of the law, is granted only once. This rule does not apply to citizens delegated to study abroad by state administrative bodies (public agencies) as part of state programmes. 46

46 Ibid.
In other words, ‘as a secondary school graduate, a young person can enter an HEI, secondary specialised education institution or college. Next, a graduate of the secondary specialised education institution first has to serve in the army and he can then go to the HEI. If a young man goes to the HEI after having graduated from secondary school, he will have to serve in the army before obtaining his Master’s degree’ 47.

The military faculty offers intramural, full-time courses to university cadets who receive military and specialised military education of 4-5 years. University cadets are obliged to wear their uniforms in school and regularly take part in military training camps.

Upon completion of the courses within military faculties, the graduates are awarded the rank of reservist officer and are exempt from military conscription. Moreover, they are also able to begin their military career. Universities with specialised military faculties usually also have military departments where all persons eligible for compulsory military service are allowed to study.

A military (combined arms) department is a separate academic unit found within an HEI where students can undergo one year of specialised training in military basics. To be admitted to the military department, a student has to have academic achievements and receive a recommendation from the Dean of the Faculty or his supervisor. The curriculum covers 250-350 academic hours (1-2 academic years). The courses at the military department are usually divided into two stages.

To be promoted to the rank of Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO), a student has to complete stage 1 (junior leadership training) of education, pass an exam or end-of-term test, participate in military training camps and graduate from the university. Additionally, the duration of his military conscription is reduced to six months.

To be promoted to the rank of Lieutenant, a student has to complete stage 2 (if there is such an option available), take the full two-year course, pass an exam and participate in military training camps.

The process of enrolment, training and education at military departments and faculties of higher educational institutions is regulated by ‘The rules of procedure for the functioning of military faculties (departments) that deliver curricula covering the training of citizens of the Republic of Belarus in the capacity of junior commanders and reservist officers’, approved by Resolution No. 22/21 of the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus on March 5th 2008.

Standard ideological and military-patriotic guidance is offered by all the departments and faculties. The Soviet heroic past and state ideology remain at its core teaching. This includes:

- Awareness-raising classes held on a regular basis. During these classes, ideologists explain the key articles of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus, the provisions of the Laws of the Republic of Belarus on the development of military capabilities, mi-

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Military doctrine and state youth policy. The purpose of these classes is to form a system of political values, ideals and norms, foster knowledge and experience accumulated in society, and nurture a sense of patriotism in the students.

- The officers lecturing at a military department assist the rectorate, BRSM bureau and veterans’ organisation in carrying out military-patriotic activities.
- Displays with information about the heroic (Soviet) past which are produced and installed.
- A number of events dedicated to Victory Day of the Great Patriotic War (1941-1944) are held at military faculties and departments. Every year, students meet veterans, participants, veterans of other international campaigns and military unit commanders.

The following HEIs currently have military faculties

- Belarusian State University (BSU);
- Belarusian State University of Transport, Gomel;
- Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno;
- Belarusian State Medical University;
- Belarusian National Technical University;
- Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radio-Electronics;
- Belarusian State Academy of Aviation;
- BSU military faculty

THE MILITARY FACULTY AT BELARUSIAN STATE UNIVERSITY (BSU)

Based on the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus No. 775, dated June 11, 2003, the BSU military department was reorganised into a military faculty which has been training the country’s best military personnel since. The BSU military faculty trains military personnel of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus, staff of the border services of the State Border Committee, Committee for State Security and internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus.

Currently, the BSU military faculty is made up of the following departments:

- The Department of the Use of Artillery in Combat;
- The Air Defence Department;
- The Combined Arms (Military) Department; and
- The Department of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) Protection.

Graduates of the BSU military faculty are appointed as officers to first rung positions in the uniformed services of the Republic of Belarus.

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48 Social educational activities at the Grodno State Medical University, - www.grsmu.by/ru/university/structure/chairs/cafedry_10/ideology (30.09.2020).
The two-year training at the BSU military department is divided into two stages:

- Students who have completed the first year of training are promoted to the rank of NCO (period of military conscription – six months);
- 40-50% of students move on to the second year. Graduates of the two-year course are promoted to the rank of reservist officer (lieutenant). The duration of the military training camps is one month.
- Upon graduation from the two-year course at the department, students receive a military qualification (‘artilleryman’) in addition to their civilian qualification;
- Students can continue to serve in the uniformed services.

THE MILITARY TRANSPORT FACULTY (MTF) OF THE BELARUSIAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF TRANSPORT (BELSUT) IN GOMEL

This faculty provides training to prospective officers of the Armed Forces and the State Border Committee.

There are two departments within the faculty:

- The Combined Arms Department;
- The Department of Advanced Military Training.

The Department of Advanced Military Training offers graduate courses. It trains career officers for the Belarusian Transport Troops. Students are trained in ‘Transport Troop Subunit Management’ in four fields of study and three areas of specialisation. They are also allowed to choose among eight military occupational qualifications for junior commanders and five military occupational qualifications for reservist officers.

The department offers 36 academic disciplines: 19 courses for cadets, 6 for reservist officers and 10 for junior commanders. From 1974 to 2003, there were nearly 6,000 reservist officers among the department’s alumni, and from 2004 to date more than 500 reservist officers and 800 junior commanders have graduated from the department. The first commissioned officers graduated in 2008. There are a total of 95 officers among the department’s alumni.

The faculty has six specialised lecture halls for courses such as railway bridge reconstruction, railroad construction, military railway transportation, special technology and vehicles used by transport troops, track inspection, and railroad transportation. All specialised lecture halls are equipped with models, visual aids and specialised teaching aids.

Prospective junior officers can obtain the following qualifications:

- Head of a power plant (power and lighting units);
- Small arms and close-quarter weapons repair technician;
- Artillery ammunition repair and storage technician;

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• Technician (repair and storage of engineering, road-building, bridge-building, logging, airfield engineering equipment and assets);
• Technician (repair and storage of motor vehicles);
• Head of operations control centre of the traffic control service;
• Squad commander (track works);
• Squad commander (bridge building and assembly);
• Squad commander (assembly and fitting of steelwork bridges);
• Technician (road and airfield construction and repair).

Prospective reservist officers can obtain the following qualifications:
• Involvement of military subunits and units in the restoration and construction of railway tracks;
• Involvement of military subunits and units in the restoration and construction of engineering structures on railways;
• Involvement of military subunits and units dealing with mechanical operations related to the restoration and construction of railways;
• Involvement of road construction subunits, units and formations;
• Involvement of traffic control subunits, units and formations;
• Organisation of military rail transportation and shipment;
• Handling and repair of small arms and close-quarter weapons;
• Storage and repair of ammunition, detonators, flares and signals.

The BelSUT closely cooperates with the St. Petersburg Military Transport University of Railway Troops.

THE MILITARY FACULTY OF THE YANKA KUPALA STATE UNIVERSITY OF GRODNO (YKSUG) was established in 2005

The faculty provides training to prospective military personnel of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus, the border services of the State Border Committee and interior troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus.

Notably, the military faculty trains officers who serve in different types of corps. This includes such units as motorised infantry, air defence and military intelligence. Throughout the entire training period the cadets participate in military training camps.

There are three departments located within the faculty: the combined arms department, the logistics department (established in July 2007) and the department of theory and practice of physical training of military personnel (established in August 2011).

Cadets can obtain the following qualifications:

Main subjects (and fields of study) for prospective commissioned officers:

- **The Department of Theory and Practice of Physical Training of Military Personnel** specialises in training prospective officers for qualifications in ‘Physical training of military personnel’ and ‘Logistics’.
- **The Logistics Department offers training to prospective officers in:** ‘Army logistics (food supplies)’ and ‘Army logistics (military uniforms and gear)’.

The Combined Arms Department offers training in the following fields of study:

Prospective junior commanders can obtain the following military occupational qualifications:

- Squad commander (motorised infantry);
- Squad commander (man-portable air-defence systems);
- Squad commander (tactical intelligence);
- Vehicle Commander (of the 9P149 anti-tank missile systems);
- Commander of the vehicle electrical equipment repair squad;
- Commander of the squad of vehicle diagnostics and routine maintenance;
- Commander of an anti-tank gun.

Prospective reservist officers can obtain the following military occupational qualifications:

- Deployment of motorised infantry subunits, units and formations using infantry fighting vehicles;
- Deployment of subunits armed with short-range air defence surface-to-air missile systems;
- Deployment of ground military intelligence subunits;
- Deployment of subunits and units armed with cannon-launched guided projectiles (CLGP);
- Deployment of anti-tank artillery subunits, units and formations.

Only the Department of Theory and Practice of Physical Training of Military Personnel has publicly available information on the content of the curriculum. The topics include:

- Theory and practice of physical training of military personnel;
- Military physical training;
- Physical training;
- Improving sports prowess (applied military sports);
- Construction and use of sports facilities.

At the same time, the general (non-specialised) classes and end-of-term exams are clearly ideologically oriented. These are courses in Political Science, Fundamentals of the Ideology of the Belarusian State and Ideological Work in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus.
BELARUSIAN STATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY (BSMU). FACULTY OF MILITARY MEDICINE (FMM)

The Faculty of Military Medicine of the Belarusian State Medical University was established based on the 1995 joint Order of the Minister of Defence and Minister of Health of the Republic of Belarus after consultation with the Minister of Education of the Republic of Belarus. The faculty is a part of the Belarusian State Medical University. At the same time, it is an autonomous administrative unit with its own administrative staff and is supervised by the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Belarus. The training period at the Faculty of Military Medicine is six years and the faculty plays a vital role in the system of specialised military education in Belarus. Students from other countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) also study here.

Graduates of the faculty are able to work in the Main Military Clinical Medical Centre No. 432, the Central Military Medical Commission or at the Military Medical Faculty. They can be appointed heads of medical services of military formations or deputy heads of medicine in military medical centres (MMC). The graduates are also able to work in military hospitals of the State Border Committee.

The Faculty’s training facilities take advantage of teaching hospitals and the facilities of various departments at the Belarusian State Medical University, Military Academy of the Republic of Belarus, Main Military Clinical Medical Centre No. 432, Sanitary-Epidemiological Centre No. 23 and the military medical subunits of military units.

The faculty offers training in the following departments:

- Military Field Surgery;
- Military Health Management Organisation and Emergency Medicine;
- Military Epidemiology and Military Hygiene.

The Department of Military Epidemiology and Military Hygiene offers courses in military hygiene and military epidemiology to students of faculties of general medicine, paediatrics and preventive medicine. Students of all the faculties study subjects related to healthcare provided in emergency situations. The departments’ courses are also addressed to the cadets and other students whose main subject is general medicine with a specialisation in ‘military medicine’. Graduates of the Faculty of Military Medicine can serve in the armed forces and be appointed to first rung positions, such as head of a medical corps in a military unit, head of a military unit aid station, or physician in a military unit.

The department offers the following courses:

- Military Hygiene;
- Military Epidemiology;
- Toxicology and Health Protection.

The Military Field Surgery Department

Key fields of study at this department include:

53 Belarusian State Medical University. Faculty of Military Medicine, official website: www.bsmu.by/page/3/118/ (30.09.2020).
• Military field surgery, which is taught to cadets and trainees of the FMM and students of the Minsk State Medical Institute (MSMI);
• Areas of specialisation such as surgery and anaesthesiology taught to prospective officers in the medical corps;
• Areas of specialisation for prospective operating theatre nurses and nurse anaesthetists;
• Advanced training for surgical nurses and anaesthetists; and
• Training of medical officers in a clinical surgical residency programme54.

Guidance and ideological work are considered to be provided at a fairly high level at the Faculty of Military Medicine. Moreover, prospective university students are ideologically vetted upon enrolment. They are interviewed by draft board members who assess the applicant’s loyalty to the political leadership55.

‘Additional information about prospective students is collected based on the analysis of their documents. Personal interactions between the teaching staff and the students in the classroom and within military research groups unlock and develop the moral potential of future officers, and the process of improvement continues throughout the course of education’56.

In practice, ideological guidance at the faculty aims to shape the ‘proper’ ideological attitudes and prevent political activism. This is one of the main activities of the teaching staff.

The main objective of the ideological work in the department is to ensure that the university’s military and civilian community supports the domestic and foreign policy of the Republic of Belarus57.

‘Today’s young cadets differ considerably from their peers from previous years when it comes to social, moral and psychological attitudes. A certain number of cadets are infected with ‘the virus of consumerism’, rally spirit, apathy or indifference (...). Given that, personal guidance comes to the fore, and its role is growing’58.

The faculty offers a more traditional type of patriotic guidance. In other words, the cadets and other students visit museums, learn about the heroic deeds of fellow countrymen during the Great Patriotic War and during local conflicts in peacetime, are presented with stories about the history of Belarus, and are taught about combat traditions.

The departments participate in the celebration of the Day of the Defenders of the Fatherland and the Armed Forces, Victory Day, Independence Day (Republic Day), and Remembrance Day of Warriors-Internationalists59.
BELARUSIAN NATIONAL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY (BNTU), MILITARY AND TECHNICAL FACULTY

The BNTU Military Department was reorganised into the Military Technical Faculty as a result of a reform of the Belarusian Armed Forces in 2003. The faculty trains officers in a number of general and technical military fields of study. Due to the area of specialisation of the BNTU, the emphasis is placed on military-technical skills.

**The Armoured Vehicles Department offers training to:**

- Prospective career officers who specialise in 'Multipurpose Tracked and Wheeled Vehicles (in the field of Maintenance and Repair of Armoured Vehicles');
- Prospective reservist officers who specialise in the 'Arrangement of Maintenance and Repair of Armoured Vehicles';
- Prospective technicians who will occupy the position of a technician who specialises in the 'Repair and Storage of Tracked Armoured Vehicles and Chassis of Special-Purpose Armoured Vehicles' or 'Repair and Storage of Electric and Specialist Parts of Armoured Vehicles'.

The department has access to a fairly impressive set of military and technical facilities, namely training centres, training areas, training camps, firing ranges, training and combat vehicle fleets, simulation facilities, armour training area, and sites for drills aimed at achieving targets during field exercises that are made available by courtesy of the 72nd Joint Training Centre for warrant officers (praporshchiks) and junior specialists (in Pechi). Access to firing ranges is provided by the Military Academy and the 120th Individual Mechanised Brigade.

**The Department’s own facilities include:**

- A T-7260 tank assembly room (tank, training units and components, mock-up models, replicas, posters, graphs, etc.);
- A BMP-2 tank assembly room (a BMP-2 tank, training units and components, mock-up models, replicas, posters, graphs, etc.);
- Weaponry and maintenance laboratories;
- Instruction stands (IS-172);
- A TTV-172M simulator for developing driving skills; specialised training (computer class);
- A set of parking equipment and tank maintenance units, a garage for operational training and training-support vehicles, technical training aids, control and information facilities.

**The Military Wheeled Vehicles Department**

This department offers training to cadets based on the curriculum for prospective officers. It also delivers a curriculum for prospective reservist officers and junior commanders.

60 NB: The T-72 tank (T-72B3) is the main battle tank in service with the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus.
The Military Engineering Training Department

This department offers the following as a main subject to prospective officers serving as military engineers:

- Deployment of engineer (sapper) subunits and units;
- Maintenance and repair of engineering vehicles.

Prospective junior commanders can obtain the following military occupational qualifications:

- Squad commander (engineering troops);
- Squad commander (engineering intelligence).

Specialist course: Troop Financial Management

The story of the troop financial management course is quite interesting. The training of military financial experts of the Soviet Armed Forces was carried out by the Yaroslavl’ Higher Military Financial School until 1991. In accordance with the ‘Joint training programme for Belarusian military personnel trained in military education institutions run by the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation’ approved by Resolution of the Executive Committee of the Union State of Russia and Belarus No.2 of June 10th 1998, the enrolment of cadets in the Yaroslavl’ Higher Military Financial School was resumed in 1998 and continued through 2003. In 1997, a financial training cycle was introduced at the military department of the then Belarusian State Polytechnic Academy (now the BNTU), and it was transformed into a separate structural subdivision of the military department in 1999. In addition, training was introduced for prospective reservist officers studying ‘Finance and Military Economics’ as a main subject.\(^{61}\)

Since September 2003, prospective career officers of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus have been studying ‘Economics and enterprise management’ and ‘Financial management and economics of military and economic activities of troops’ at the Department of Finance (renamed the Troop Financial Management Department in 2006) at the BNTU Military Technical Faculty.

The department has a staff of six people, which includes five members of the armed services. In the 2018/2019 academic year, 45 cadets were trained in the career officer programme and 12 students in the programme for reservist officers. The period of training for cadets is 4.5 years. Moreover, the department also trains prospective career officers who study ‘Economics and enterprise management’ as their main subject, with an area of specialisation in ‘Financial management and the economics of the military and economic activities of troops’. The length of study is four years. The curriculum is based primarily on the core curriculum for the first tier of higher education within the academic main subject of ‘Economics and enterprise management’. Each year, after passing their final exams, students are placed in an internship programme at leading enterprises and military units, institutions and organisations of the Armed Forces in Minsk. After the fourth-year of study, the students then embark on an internship in the army. Upon graduation, they are awar-

ded the degree of ‘Economist-manager’ and promoted to their first military rank as a ‘lieuten-
nant’.

**The main specialised military disciplines studied in the department are:**

- Funding of a military unit;
- Military personnel allowances;
- Remuneration of the civilian personnel of military units;
- Army economy;
- Troop financial management;
- Fundamentals of military legislation;
- Labour law;
- State budget; and
- State financial control.

The department’s graduates are awarded first rung positions in the Armed Forces and other uniformed services. They are allowed to hold the following positions:

- Head of the financial service of a battalion (division);
- Senior assistant (assistant) to the head of the financial service of a military base (brigade); and
- Assistant to the head of the financial service of a regiment.

**Department of Tactics and General Military Training**

This department was founded in February 2008. Since 2017, it has trained prospective ju-

ior commanders who are studying to be a military tank commander. Since 2018 prospec-
tive reservist officers can also study ‘Deployment of tank subunits, units and formations’ as a military main subject.

**The department offers three training cycles:**

- Tactics and firearms training;
- General military training; and
- Social sciences and humanities (training for military ideologists).
The military faculty at the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics provides training to prospective career officers of the Armed Forces and other uniformed formations and agencies in Belarus. Degrees are offered in the following subjects:

- Computers, systems and networks. Specialisation: Special-purpose computer systems and networks;
- Info-communication technologies (by field of study), with the main subject as Info-communication technologies (special-purpose telecommunication systems); and
- Radio engineering (by field of study). The main subject is radio engineering (special radar and radio navigation systems).

The key focus of this officer training is to prepare them to serve in the Belarusian Air Force and Air Defence Forces.

Training is provided by the following departments:

**The Department of Radio-Electronic Engineering for the Air Force and Air Defence Forces**

The department offers courses to prospective reservist officers and junior air defence commanders.

Students acquire knowledge in the following fields of study:

- General theory and the basic principles of construction of the most common radio-electronic devices used by air defence radar troops;
- Circuit designs and designs of radio-electronic systems;
- The nature of physical processes that occur in radio-electronic components, units and systems; the impact of major system adjustments on tactical and technical characteristics;
- Maintenance operations, methods of checking technical parameters and characteristics of individual radio-electronic systems and devices to assess their fitness for deployment.

**The Communications Department**

This department provides training to prospective career officers who serve in the Armed Forces and other uniformed agencies. Trainees can specialise in Info-communication technologies and special-purpose telecommunication systems.

**The Department of Tactical and General Military Training**

This department was established in 2003 and is based on the tactical and general military training cycle of the BSUIR Military Department, which was set up in March 1964. The main subjects offered to prospective junior specialists, reservist officers and career officers include: ‘Info-communication technologies’; ‘Radio-frequency engineering (special radar and radio location systems)’; and ‘Computers, computer systems and networks’.
BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMY OF AVIATION (BSAA), MILITARY FACULTY

The Minsk Civil Aviation Technical School was established in 1974, and was transformed into the Minsk Aviation Technical College (MATC) in 1991. In 2001, the then Minsk State Senior Flight Training and Technical College (MSSFTTC) was renamed as the Minsk State Senior Aviation College (MSHAC).

In 2003, upon the request of the Ministry of Defence, the college began training prospective military personnel of the Armed Forces at the military department established in 1993. In 2007, the department was transformed into the military faculty. The college itself was reorganised and transformed into the ‘Belarusian State Academy of Aviation’ 62.

The Military Faculty provides training in the tactical management and maintenance of combat aircraft. The faculty is divided into three departments:

The Department of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and Tactical Management

This department provides training in the following fields of study:

- Technological operation of UAVs (UAV operators and mission payload operators);
- Technical operation of UAVs.

Graduates serve in the armed forces as UAV operators, mission payload operators and UAV maintenance specialists 63.

The Department of Aircraft and Aviation Equipment

This department provides training to prospective aeronautical engineers who may serve in the Air Force and Air Defence Troops of Belarus. The Department offers 28 military occupational qualifications, namely:

- Operation and maintenance of aircraft and aircraft engines; Operation and maintenance of helicopters and aero engines; Operation and maintenance of electrical equipment in aircraft and helicopters, and electro automatics of power drive units; Operation and maintenance of cockpit automation technology, high-altitude and on-board flight data recording equipment in aircraft and helicopters; Operation and maintenance of aircraft and helicopter on-board radio navigation equipment; Operation and maintenance of aircraft and helicopter on-board radar equipment; Operation and maintenance of flight support radio-light equipment; Operation and maintenance of bombing and artillery armament; and Storage and maintenance of ammunition, detonators, flares and signalling devices 64.

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63 Ibid.
The Department of Ground Support of Flights

The department offers higher education and training to prospective officers to serve in the Air Force and Air Defence Forces as specialists in automotive, airfield engineering and electro-gas services.

The Department of Tactics and General Military Disciplines

This department dates back to December 2006 when the Military Department of the College of Aviation introduced military disciplines and a tactical management training programme.

3.2. Military departments

Separate military departments have been set up and operating in the following Belarusian universities:

Vitebsk State University named after P.M. Masherov (Vitebsk State University, VSU)

The military department of the Vitebsk State University named after P.M. Masherov was established with the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus of November 5th 2003. The military department is a structural subdivision of the university and is tasked with training citizens in accordance with the programme of study for junior commanders and reservist officers.

Intramural male students of all faculties of the university who are Belarusian citizens and fit for military service can be enrolled in the military training programmes. Second-year students are admitted to the university’s military department.

A student can study for a military occupational qualification to become a commander of armoured infantry, tactical intelligence, (anti-tank) artillery or engineer-sapper subunits. The training is divided into two stages:

- Stage 1: training of prospective junior commanders (NCOs); trainees are enrolled based on the results of the medical checks carried out by the military medical board and student’s overall performance;
- Stage 2: training of prospective reservist officers; trainees are enrolled based on military training performance among cadets who have completed the junior commander course.

At the end of the second stage, undergraduate training takes place in military units of the Armed Forces corresponding to a student’s qualification.

VITEBSK STATE ORDER OF PEOPLES’ FRIENDSHIP MEDICAL UNIVERSITY (VITEBSK STATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY, VSMU)

The Department of Military Medical Training at VSMU was established in 1947. The course begins at the start of the autumn semester of the second year of study and completes in

the fourth year with undergraduate training and the taking of the military oath.

The undergraduate training of fourth-year students takes the form of field training. Students gain the knowledge and skills of army medical officers. While practicing the deployment of medical service subunits, students refine their individual and collective practical skills obtained during university courses. These skills include loading of transport vehicles, placing injured in a vehicle and taking them out, triage, preparation of a site for casualty evacuation, putting up tents and deployment of equipment and vehicles, as well as shooting practice.

Training at the military department ends with a comprehensive exam, which includes three components: a computer-based test, a practical skills test and an interview testing student’s theoretical knowledge.

Graduates are promoted to the first officer rank, namely that of medical corps lieutenant in the reserves.

## GOMEL STATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY. MILITARY DEPARTMENT

The military department at Gomel State Medical University was established on March 18th 1993 at the then Gomel State Medical Institute. The department delivers training for reservist officers available to students of the Faculty of General Medicine and Faculty of Medical Diagnosis. The department trains highly qualified medical corps officers in the reserves capable of fulfilling wartime tasks in an efficient manner. The following military occupational qualifications are offered:

- General medicine in ground forces (general practice);
- Clinical physiology and functional tests;
- Radiology;
- Laboratory science in clinical laboratories.

The training camp's programme includes tactical and firearms training. During the training camp, students learn about NBC protection and general military regulations. They also take part in marching drills and military medical training and learn the basics of safety for service personnel. Cadets are accommodated in barracks in a military environment. They practice their daily routine from 'reveille' to 'lights out' and serve on 24-hour duty.

## BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMY OF COMMUNICATIONS

The military department at the Belarus State Academy of Communications was formed in 2017 and is tasked with training prospective junior commanders and reservist officers. The

68 Gomel State Medical University, Military Department www.gsmu.by/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=52 (30.09.2020).
69 Ibid.
junior commander curriculum covers 240 academic hours. The training of reservist officers for the military occupational qualification titled ‘Involvement of combined communications subunits, units and formations’ began in 2019 (the 2018/2019 academic year).

The department offers the following military occupational qualifications to prospective junior commanders:

- Head of control room (telephone exchange);
- Head of control room (wire communications);
- Head of radio (multi-channel) relay station;
- Head of radio (low-channel) relay station.

Admission to the Military Department is open to young men who are studying ‘Telecommunications networks,’ ‘Radiocommunications, radio and TV broadcasting systems,’ ‘Info-communication systems,’ ‘Info-communication technologies,’ ‘Economics and enterprise management’ and ‘Marketing.’ The length of study is 1.5 years.70

The following courses are offered as part of the curriculum:

- General military knowledge and basic teacher training;
- Marching drills;
- Firearms training;
- Basic military regulations of the Armed Forces;
- Tactical instruction, including:
  - Tactical training
  - NBC protection
  - Engineer training
  - Military topography
  - Military medical training;
- Tactical and special training;
- Technical training; and
- Specialised training.71

At the end of their training, trainees have to take a final exam and are drafted for six months of military service. Alternatively, instead of compulsory military service, graduates can sign a two-year contract with a military unit and serve in the rank of warrant officer (praporshchik).

BELARUSIAN STATE TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY (BSTU)

In 2019, news appeared about the opening of a military department at the BSTU72. However, there is no confirmation on the official website or in any other sources that the department has opened and is functioning.

71 Ibid.
**BREST STATE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY (BRSTU)**

In 2019, a commission from the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Belarus visited the university to examine its facilities and resources required to set up a military department that would offer the key technical subjects. It was decided that a department could be opened in the 2020 or 2021 academic years. The department has not yet been set up.

**The prospective department will provide military training in two stages:**

- **Stage one:** junior commander training courses which last one year. Graduates are promoted to the rank of NCO (the period of military conscription is reduced to six months);
- **Stage two:** training courses for reservist officers which last two years. Graduates are promoted to the rank of reservist officer (lieutenant) (and are not drafted).

Second- and third-year students pursuing technical main subjects will be enrolled.

**GRODNO STATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY (GSMU)**

The military department at GSMU was set up at the then Grodno State Medical Institute in accordance with Order No. 0173 of the USSR Minister of Defence and USSR Minister of Higher and Secondary Specialised Education on October 1st 1968.

The department offers the following courses to 2nd, 3rd and 4th-year students of all faculties, including in: ‘Emergency and disaster medicine’ (for students of faculties such as General Medicine, Paediatrics, Mental Health Medicine, Medical Diagnosis and Medical Faculty for International Students (in English and Russian)) and ‘Specialised military training’ (for male students of faculties such as General Medicine, Paediatrics, Mental Health Medicine and Medical Diagnosis).

The training of military specialists at civilian universities was a common practice during the Soviet period and was in line with the militarisation policy and accelerated training of military personnel, as the Soviet economy (“the people's economy”) was primarily oriented towards the state’s military efforts. In the course of 26 years following the fall of the Soviet Union, the Belarusian authorities have not only preserved but also expanded this system of military education provided by civilian universities. Belarus has no officer candidate schools of its own which could train military specialists in a number of fields. For the most part, Belarusian officers are still trained in Russia. Therefore, by expanding the range of military courses taught at civilian universities, the Belarusian authorities have attempted to compensate for the shortage of Belarus's own military personnel. Nevertheless, availability of certain preparatory military courses in Belarus does not completely resolve the issue of dependence on Russia when it comes to the training of military staff. Moreover, it does not help form a strong national awareness among Belarusian officers.

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74 Ibid.
Higher military education is addressed to candidates for service in the officer corps and command staff tasked with managing individual military subunits or troops. This is a critical step in the process of building a national army which must safeguard the interests of an independent state. Nevertheless, the curriculum and orientation of senior officer training does not fully correspond to the national interests of the Belarusian state; it is largely oriented towards strategic engagement with Russia.

Higher military education is provided by two specialised military HEIs: the Border Guard Service Institute and the Military Academy.

### 4.1. Border Guard Service Institute of Belarus

The Border Guard Service Institute of Belarus was established by Presidential Decree No. 237 of May 5th 2010. The institute is a successor of the Faculty of Border Troops at the Military Academy. It offers an academic degree in the field of border service. The institute also grants the possibility to continue scientific research at a postgraduate level.

Ideological work and military-patriotic guidance is an integral part of this institution’s activities. The pro-governmental BRSM (membership of which is presumably compulsory for cadets) plays a key role in this process. The BRSM grassroots organisation formed at the Border Guard Service Institute has over 300 members. Membership in the BRSM civil organisation contributes to uniting the cadets, promoting discipline and commitment to an active and healthy lifestyle. Currently, the institute has created favourable conditions for the vibrant activity of the BRSM primary organisation\(^76\).

The main objectives of the BRSM organisation at the Institute of the Border Guard Service are as follows:

- Playing an active role in the process of nurturing the qualities of citizen and patriot of their Fatherland in cadets;
- Fostering cadets’ loyalty to their military duty and oath of allegiance;
- Ensuring cadets’ excellence in discipline, study and service;
- Creating conditions for the cadets’ holistic development and unleashing their creative potential based on patriotic, ethical and moral values of the Belarusian people\(^77\).

**The institute has the following faculties:**

- Officer Candidate Training Faculty;
- Faculty of Advanced Training and Retraining; and
- Faculty of Border Guard Service Unit Management.

**The following main subjects are offered:**

- Border subunit management (management specialist);

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\(^77\) Ibid.
• Border control subunit management (management specialist);
• Operations of border service agencies (management specialist);
• Ideological work in border service agencies (management specialist);

The Border Guard Service Institute cooperates closely with educational institutions of the Russian military. These institutions and the competencies offered are outlined below.

KALININGRAD BORDER GUARD INSTITUTE OF THE FEDERAL SECURITY SERVICE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION (KALININGRAD)

• Special radio-frequency engineering systems
• Operation and maintenance of special-purpose automated systems

CHEREPOVETS HIGHER MILITARY ENGINEERING SCHOOL OF RADIOELECTRONICS OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION (CHEREPOVETS)

• Special radio-frequency engineering systems

4.2. Military Academy of the Republic of Belarus, Academy of the General Staff of the Armed Forces

The Belarusian Military Academy was established on the basis of Presidential Decree No.192 of May 17th 1995 and replaced two military schools: the Minsk Higher Military Engineering School and Minsk Higher Military Command School. The academy is the largest specialised military education institution in Belarus preparing candidates for military service. It also offers career development courses to the higher command of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus.

The merger of the two formerly separate military HEIs into the Military Academy was dictated by the need to be fully independent in training the Belarusian officer corps and other uniformed services. The Military Academy admits professional service personnel in contract service without the rank of officer, conscripts, reservists and civilian candidates for training as cadets. The academy has a teaching staff of over 700.

The academy has seven faculties:

The Combined Arms Faculty offers the following main subjects:
• Managing armoured infantry subunits;
• Managing tank subunits;

79 Admission requirements of the 'Military Academy of the Republic of Belarus' HEI in 2020.
80 Ibid.
• Army logistics (fuel and lubricants);
• Ideological work in the Armed Forces;
• Practical psychology in military practice.

The Faculty of Communications and Automated Control Systems:
• Telecommunications systems (operation);
• Operation of automated control systems;
• Operation of automated information processing systems.

The Air Defence Faculty:
• Operation of radio-frequency engineering systems (anti-aircraft missile troops, radar troops, military air defence).

The Military Intelligence Faculty:
• Managing subunits of special operations forces;
• Management of military intelligence subunits;
• Managing airborne subunits;
• Telecommunications systems (electronic warfare, electronic intelligence);
• Operation of radio signal analysis and processing facilities.

The Faculty of Aviation:
• Aircraft operation, air traffic control (frontline, army aviation);
• Air traffic control, air combat operations control;
• Operation and maintenance of electrical systems and aircraft navigation systems;
• Operation and maintenance of manned aircraft and their propulsion systems;
• Operation and maintenance of aircraft armaments;
• Aviation (on-board, ground-based) radio electronic systems.

The Internal Troops Faculty:
• Management of subunits of internal troops.

The Faculty of Missile Forces, Artillery and Missile-Artillery Armament:
• Operation of radio-frequency engineering systems (artillery);
• Operation of ground-based weapon systems.

A special Faculty of the General Staff was established in 2006

The main subject that this faculty offers is ‘State and Military Administration’. The faculty prepares candidates for officer positions at operations and strategic levels serving in the Armed Forces and other troops and military formations of Belarus. The faculty also trains candidates for positions of public officials in public administration and other agencies in the field of military security of the state and defence of Belarus. Advanced training is also provided to students from among public officials serving in public administration in the field of military security in accordance with the Belarusian law 81.

The faculty cooperates closely with the Military Academy of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.\(^{82}\)

In addition to organising the educational process, every faculty, including the Faculty of the General Staff, has a special focus on ideological work.

Ideological work is carried out based on the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus, legislative acts and legal acts of the Ministry of Defence, and the work is an integral part of the educational process carried out by the faculty.

The primary tasks of ideological work are:

• To implement state policy in the faculty, fulfilling the requirements of the president in the field of ideology of the Belarusian state;

• To nurture patriotic awareness, the love for the Fatherland and the Belarusian people and responsibility for ensuring people's safety in the faculty community;

• To maintain morale, discipline and order at a high level among the faculty community to ensure the fulfilment of their tasks; and

• To build moral and psychological resilience of the faculty and increase their immunity to destructive ideologies.\(^{83}\)

4.3. Cooperation with the Russian Federation in the field of military education

The Russian Federation is still the main training hub for Belarusian military specialists (missile, tank, armoured infantry and air defence troops, etc.) and senior officers. Each year, more than 400 officers and warrant officers (praporshchiks) undergo training at Russian military educational institutions, which naturally influence their values system and ideological beliefs, worldview and attitude towards Russia. By all accounts, the majority of officers of the Belarusian army have been trained in Russian institutions at some point, which calls into question their readiness to counter Russian influence in the Belarusian Armed Forces.

Intensive training of Belarusian service personnel at Russian educational institutions began immediately after the signing of the Treaty on the Union between Belarus and Russia in 1999. Extensive military educational cooperation became an element of the integration processes at the strategic level as well as the ideological and psychological influence on the command staff of the Belarusian Armed Forces.

In June 1998, within the framework of preparing the implementation of the Union State, a 10-year programme (1998-2008) was created and adopted which was called ‘Training of Belarusian service personnel in military education institutions of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation’. The main objectives of this programme were to provide quality training to military personnel to fulfil the tasks of ensuring the military security of the Union State, create conditions for joint measures taken to prevent threats to the sovereignty and independence of each of the Union State member states, and coordinate their activities in developing military capability and forces.

\(^{82}\) Ibid.  
\(^{83}\) Ibid.
The programme’s primary aims are to further deepen the integration of members of the Union State in the military sphere through training based on common curricula and syllabi in order to enhance the defence capabilities of the armed forces and build a pool of military talent, train military personnel who will serve in the Armed Forces in the most in-demand positions, and staff the regional Russian-Belarusian grouping of troops (corps) with highly qualified personnel.

The programme altered the status of trainees representing Belarusian forces who could study together with their Russian peers into mixed groups, rather than at special faculties. Funding was provided from the budget of the Union State of Russia and Belarus.

On September 1st 1998, 63 officers, 97 cadets and 11 trainees began their training in the Academy of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces under the new programme that had been adopted. In the 1997-1998 academic year, 13 cadets and six officers studied at the Academy of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. In 1999, 60 officers and 93 cadets enrolled in the Russian academy and 200 persons were studying there in the year 2000.

Thirty-eight HEIs supervised by the Russian Ministry of Defence, including 13 military academies, participated in the implementation of this programme.

Those participating military academies included: the Military Academy of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation; the Military Diplomatic Academy; the Military Air Force Academy; the Military Academy of Communications; the Military Engineering Academy; the Military Academy of NBC Protection; the Military Medical Academy; the Combined Arms Academy of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation; the Military Academy of Air Defence of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation; the Military Academy of Aerospace Defence; the Mikhailovskaya Military Artillery Academy; the Air Force Engineering Academy; and the Military Academy of Logistics and Transport.

Twenty-five Russian military universities, institutes and schools participated in programme implementation. These were: the Moscow Military Conservatory; the Military University of Finance and Economics; the Military University; the Military Transport University of Railway Troops; the Military Engineering-Technical University; the Tula Artillery Engineering Institute; the St. Petersburg Military Topography Institute; the Penza Artillery Engineering Institute; the Military Institute of Physical Culture; the Voskodovets Military Engineering Institute of Radioelectronics; the Voronezh Higher Military Engineering School of Aviation; the Novosibirsk Higher Military Command School; the Ryazan Higher Airborne Command School; the Novocherkassk Higher Military Command School of Communications; the Krasnodar Higher Military School; the Yaroslav’ Higher Anti-Aircraft Missile Defence School, Kostroma; the NBC Protection Higher Military Engineering Command School, Ulyanovsk; the Higher Military Technical School; the Centralised Advanced Training Courses for Intelligence Officers; the Central Institute for Advanced Medical Studies (Moscow); the Institute of Military Band Conductors of the

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Military University; the Military Institute (of the Engineering Troops) of the Combined Arms Academy of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation; the Faculty of Finance and Economics of the Military University; and the Military (Topography) Institute of the Military Space Academy.

In total, 842 individuals among the military personnel of the Belarusian Armed Forces underwent training during the programme period. Of these, 435 were trainees (including two postgraduate students and two doctoral candidates) and 407 were cadets.

Currently, Belarusian military personnel trained at Russian military HEIs has been carried out based on ‘The Agreement on the Training of Military Personnel for Member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, 2008’, signed in 2008. The aim of this agreement is to develop and expand a unified training system for military personnel who serve in the armed forces, other troops and military formations of CSTO member states in accordance with the curricula and main subjects agreed upon by the member states.

Another binding document that fosters cooperation in the field of military training is The Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus on Military Cooperation of 17 December 2019.

This treaty provides for ‘the training of service personnel in the military educational institutions of the Parties on equal terms, and joint training of military research and academic teaching staff’.

As noted above, Russian military institutions are actively involved in the training of military researchers as well as senior personnel of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus. Postgraduate and doctoral courses are available to Belarusian military personnel at the following military educational institutions which are supervised by the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation:

1. The Military Academy of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (Moscow);
2. The Military University (Moscow);
3. The Combined Arms Academy of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (Moscow);
4. The Air Defence Military Academy of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (Smolensk);
5. The Military Logistics Academy (St. Petersburg);
6. The Air Force Academy (Voronezh);
7. The Fleet Admiral of the Soviet Union, the N.G. Kuznetsov Naval Academy (St. Petersburg);
8. The Mikhailovskaya Military Artillery Academy (St. Petersburg);

85 Ibid.
86
9. The Military Academy of Aerospace Defence (Tver);
10. The Military Academy of NBC Protection (Kostroma);
11. The Military Academy of Communications (St. Petersburg);
12. The Military Institute of Physical Culture of the Military Medical Academy (St. Petersburg)\(^7\).

According to the Belarusian Ministry of Defence, about 400 military personnel from Belarus study at Russian universities annually\(^8\). This means, that during the years of cooperation between Belarus and the Russian Federation in the field of military education, about 10,000 Belarusian officers and military specialists have been trained in Russian military educational institutions. (This does not include training in the HEIs of Border Guard Troops which are supervised by the Federal Security Service of Russia).

Nearly 90% of the senior command staff of the Belarusian Armed Forces have studied or increased their qualifications at Russian educational institutions. Some of the most remarkable examples are provided below:

**Viktor Khrenin** – Minister of Defence of the Republic of Belarus; **Andrey Ravkov** – former Minister of Defence, State Secretary of the Security Council of the Republic of Belarus; **Alexander Volfovich** – Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus; **Sergey Potapenko** – Deputy Minister of Defence; **Sergey Simonenko** – Deputy Minister of Defence for Armaments, Chief of Armaments; **Andrey Burdyko** – Deputy Minister of Defence for Logistics, Chief of Logistics; **Sergey Trus** – First Deputy Chief of the Air Force and Air Defence Command; **Andrey Gurtsevich** – First Deputy Chief of the Air Force and Air Defence Command; **Viktor Gulevich** – Commander of the Western Operational Command; **Alexander Bas** – Deputy Chief of the Western Operational Command; **Andrey Zhuk** – Commander of the North-Western Operational Command; **Igor Demidenko** – Chief of Staff – First Deputy Chief of the North-Western Operational Command; **Vadim Denisenko** – Commander of the Special Operations Forces of the Armed Forces; **Igor Danilchik** – Head of the Electronic Warfare Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces; **Vyacheslav Starkov** – Head of the NBC and Environmental Protection Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces.

The informal educational and ideological influence that Russia has on Belarusian officers deserves special attention. This process is carried out through the work of the Belarusian regional branch of the Academy of Military Science of the Russian Federation, headed by Vyacheslav Grigorievich Shumilov, PhD in Military Science.

It is also worth noting that Belarus is the only post-Soviet country where the Russian Academy operates.

\(^7\) Admission requirements for postgraduate and doctoral students applying to postgraduate education institutions of military HEIs of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, [www.mil.by/ru/education/other/5.php](http://www.mil.by/ru/education/other/5.php) (30.09.2020).

The Academy of Military Science of the Russian Federation

The Academy of Military Science (AMS), an interregional public military research organisation of the Russian Federation, was established in 1994. Its governing bodies are the executive committee, academic council, audit commission and academy board. The academy has 13 scientific divisions: General problems of teaching about war and defence; Strategic and technological forecasting; National security; National defence management; Military art; Military history; Fortifications; Aerospace defence; Aviation and aeronautics; Navy; and Internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia.

The academy’s activity in Belarus pursues a number of strategic goals, including: finding a scientific rationale for strengthening bilateral relations between Belarus and the Russian Federation in the military sphere in a number of priority areas; broad coverage of positive examples of Russian-Belarusian relations; promotion of the concept of the need to combine efforts to protect the Union State; the establishment of a military research school on the theory of military strategy and theatre tactics; the effective use of military research potential, knowledge and experience of military research schools of the AMS to ensure the military security of the Union State; the constant monitoring and analysis of developments in the world in terms of escalation and evolution of military conflicts in order to identify regularities and laws in the development of modern military art; active participation in the implementation of the plan for building up and developing the Armed Forces.

The Belarusian regional branch of the AMS carries out close scientific and ideological cooperation with all military institutions in Belarus, military faculties and departments. Nearly all commanders of the Belarusian Armed Forces, including ministers of defence and chiefs of the General Staff, have been involved in the scientific activity of the AMS (i.e., meetings, sessions, etc.).

The merger of military education strengthens the psychological ties and positive attitude towards Russian service personnel and creates an opportunity for Russia to expand its presence in Belarus and the Belarusian Armed Forces.

4.4. Addendum, 72nd Training Centre (Pechi)

The activity of the 72nd Guards Joint Training Centre in Pechi, which trains candidates for positions as warrant officers (praporshchiks) and junior specialists, deserves special attention. The centre provides training to prospective warrant officers, junior commanders and the core group of ideologists to serve in subunits, and trained reservists to serve in military units of the Republic of Belarus. It is the main and only specialised training centre for conscripts and contractees (professional service personnel).

In other words, the centre provides training to conscripts during their compulsory military service (or after completing their duty and transferring to contract service). Trainees aspire to positions of specialists, junior commanders and warrant officers.

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91 Ibid.
The training centre has the following structure:

- Schools for training prospective warrant officers and food service specialists;
- Five schools for prospective specialists for different types of corps and special forces (air defence, communications, armoured troops);
- A logistics centre;
- The 495th Separate Material Supply Battalion; and
- The 197th Separate Security and Maintenance Battalion.

The centre offers training for the following positions: T-72 tank commanders, tank gunners and driver-mechanics (TKNT-3 B, TOPT-SAZ, TTV-172 simulators); self-propelled artillery vehicle driver-mechanics (TTV-SAУ simulator); commanders, gunners-operators and driver-mechanics of the BMP-2 infantry fighting vehicle (TV-675, TKNO-950, TNO-7 E simulators); specialists of armoured infantry subunits (SOKOL-M1 S, SOKOL-M1 P, SOKOL-PTUR simulators).

The organisational structure and staffing is sufficient enough to train the following annually:

- Prospective warrant officers in 23 qualifications, with a training period of five months; and
- Junior commanders and specialists in 81 qualifications, with training periods of four and three months, respectively.

The training centre includes training areas, barracks, classrooms and company training facilities. Specifically, it maintains:

- Five tactical training areas dedicated to the training of squad leaders (tanks, infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs)) and other specialists, an engineer training field and an NBC training wing;
- Two tank training grounds, including the tank training ground of the 227th combined arms training area, and a driving range and car-testing track designed to train driver-mechanics and drivers of wheeled and tracked vehicles. Firearms training sessions are conducted in the area of the tank mean line, moving target gunnery range, BMP-2 and BMP-1 IFVs range, on two sections of the military shooting range and in two firearms training wings of the 227th combined arms training area.
- Five computer-equipped classrooms with tutorials, training programmes, testing programmes and educational films on the main subjects for specialists of armoured infantry, tank and artillery subunits, specialists of communications troops, NBC protection, automotive and maintenance specialists. The training centre cooperates with Belarusian educational institutions in the field of developing up-to-date tutorials (171 tutorials) for the 72nd Guards Joint Training Centre for Warrant Officers and Junior Specialists92.

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Military education in Belarus is a comprehensive system which includes both specialised military and civilian educational institutions. Military education involves actions aimed not only at training military specialists and service and command personnel of the Armed Forces, but also exerts an intended psychological and ideological influence on the students at all tiers of the education system. This raises serious concerns that a process of militarisation of formal education has been taking place over the last decade and is indicative of an attempt of the Belarusian regime to form a submissive and obedient society.

One concern emerges when it comes to military education and guidance in Belarus. This is the fact that it is deprived of national content as well as national historical and cultural fundamentals and is heavily reliant on Soviet historical myths and traditions. As a result, the Belarusian service personnel are susceptible to Russian influence and information sources. This susceptibility is enhanced by the fact that the Belarusian system of higher military education remains closely integrated with Russian and the Belarusian officers are still trained in military HEIs and schools of the Russian Federation.