

Belarus Propaganda Update

Monthly overview over Belarusian propaganda and Russian propaganda aimed at Belarus

#14. November 2024

Executive summary:**I. BELARUS AND THE “UNION STATE”**

- The presidential election, scheduled for January 26, 2025, became the dominant factor influencing the agenda of the Belarusian media.
- The election campaign of only one candidate – the “president” of Belarus – is well underway. Lukashenka is receiving flattery and gratitude from the state media.
- All registered candidates support the incumbent government and have nominated their candidacies only to create an appearance of competition with Lukashenka, thus giving the election quasi-legitimacy.
- Lukashenka's main fear is the recurrence of mass protests after the 2020 election, which is why the “president” demands that the election be held perfectly. All the forces of the regime are mobilized for the task of preventing new upheavals.
- The “president” declares “eternal union” with Russia, while showing cautious signs of dissatisfaction with the Kremlin and the desire to pursue an independent policy. The propagandists echo him, from time to time declaring about the “identity of the Belarusian language and culture,” etc.
- The so-called “Union State” is holding more and more youth “patriotic” events, involving young people in government projects.
- Belarusian media use visits of celebrities to Belarus to legitimize the regime, and the “stars” then have to justify themselves. Such a story happened with Til Schweiger.

II. BELARUS’ DEMOCRATIC FORCES

- Like four years ago, the Lukashenka regime considers the Belarusian democratic movement its worst enemy.
- On the one hand, propaganda intimidates political emigrants with terrible punishments that await them upon their return to Belarus, on the other hand, it tries to lure them back with false claims and promises.
- Lukashenka threatens students to shut down the internet in the country if protests during the election recur.

- After the long detention of well-known political prisoner Maria Kalesnikava in complete information isolation, she was finally allowed to meet with her father in prison. The state media accused the opposition of preferring the image of Kalesnikava the martyr.

III. THE “COLLECTIVE WEST”

- The Belarusian propaganda showed restrained satisfaction with Donald Trump's victory in the U.S. presidential election. Most pro-government commentators tend to be skeptical about the prospects for improving relations between the U.S. and Belarus under Trump, as well as his ability to stop Russia's war against Ukraine in the near future.
- The propaganda generally maintains a belligerently aggressive tone towards Western countries, using threats, including with nuclear weapons. However, there are periodic calls for a return to previous relations and for “business as if nothing happened.”
- Poland and the Baltic states remain the main target of criticism by the Belarusian propaganda because of their fundamentally firm position towards the Lukashenka regime.
- The parliamentary election in Lithuania held in November, as a result of which the Social Democratic Party won the majority in the Seimas, was called “unfree” and “Russophobic” by the Belarusian state-controlled media.
- The new Western media figure of anti-Western propaganda is Davide Carbonaro, who fled to Belarus because of accusations of tax evasion. Now he criticizes the West from the pages of the state media.

IV. UKRAINE

- Belarus does not want to be involved in Russia's war against Ukraine and is increasingly resisting it.
- The U.S. authorization for Ukraine to strike its missiles deep into the territory of Russia (within Kursk region) and Russia's retaliatory demonstrative strike with the medium-range Oreshnik missile on Dnipro means a new escalation of the war, which breaks Lukashenka's hopes to appear before the voters in the image of a “peacemaker.”
- Ukraine is no longer the “main target” of propaganda, but aggressive rhetoric towards the top leadership and the Armed Forces of Ukraine persists. Propagandists are silent about Russian attacks on homes and civilian facilities in Ukraine, while loudly condemning the Ukrainian Armed Forces' retaliatory strikes on military and energy facilities.
- Lukashenka and his propagandists try to justify their complicity in the Russian aggression against Ukraine, put the blame for unleashing the conflict on Ukraine and Western countries, and claim that Belarus has always sought peace talks. Lukashenka remains the main source of statements on the Ukrainian issue.

V. GEORGIA

- In November, the state-controlled Belarusian media actively commented on the events in Georgia, where large-scale protests broke out after the statements of the ruling party about the freezing of the country's accession to the EU. The propagandists approved the actions of law enforcers in suppressing peaceful rallies.

I. BELARUS AND THE “UNION STATE”

Presidential election 2025

The presidential election scheduled for January 26, 2025, is becoming a dominant factor influencing the information agenda of the Belarusian media. Lukashenka's main fear is recurrence of the mass protests of 2020, so all the regime's forces are mobilized for the task of preventing new upheavals. The “president” himself [demands](#) to hold the next election perfectly.

Pro-government commentators glorify Lukashenka's achievements (real and imaginary), swear their love for Belarus, call to unite in the face of external and internal threats and glorify “the only one” who, in their opinion, is able to neutralize these threats.

Aliaksandr Shpakouski, pro-government and pro-Russian propagandist, Minister Counselor at the Embassy of the Republic of Belarus in Moscow:

“I am firmly convinced that in terms of legal culture and security of life, Belarus is one of the leading countries in the world. [...] When the EU states or the U.S. try to teach Minsk about human rights and law enforcement, it looks ridiculous to knowledgeable people.” (Personal Telegram [channel](#), November 11)

Ryhor Azaronak, TV presenter of STV TV channel:

“Batska. Enough with politeness and beautiful but empty phrases. He came out and confronted everyone. Toughly and clearly. This is the voice of Belarus – clear, loud and consistent. This is Batska Lukashenka. I am proud that he is our President.” ([Commentary](#) on Lukashenka's speech at the World Summit to Combat Climate Change in Baku, personal Telegram channel, November 12)

In his program, Azaronak also claims that the key positions in the country are now occupied by the “statesmen,” who have passed the period of “upheavals” of 2020, so “the power of Aliaksandr Lukashenka will stand, and will [stand](#) for centuries.”

Ihar Tur, TV presenter of ONT TV channel:

“President of the Republic of Belarus Aliaksandr Lukashenka is synonymous with power. In the U.S., the president does not have such influence on domestic politics and economy as in Russia and especially in Belarus. In our country, if the President says so – it will be so, and if it won't be so, they will punish those who couldn't, replace them with others.... and still it will happen.” (Propaganda [program](#), ONT, November 11)

Vadzim Hihin, deputy of the House of Representatives of Belarus (parliament), pro-government “expert”:

“Where our President is, there is truth. Where our President is, there is victory.” ([BelTA](#), November 16)

The fact that there is not a single alternative candidate among the participants of the election, and those who are, are supporters of the Lukashenka regime, is presented by propaganda not as a flaw indicating that the election is a sham, but as a sign of a “healthy” political process.

Aliaksandr Shpakouski, pro-government and pro-Russian “expert”:

“There is no doubt that most of the candidates are supporters of the incumbent authorities. **This indicates the formation of a political elite in Belarus, capable of civilized competition** within the basic value framework.” ([SB. Belarus Segodnya](#), November 14)

Kiryl Kazakou, commentator of Minsk Novosti:

“For the first time, no political clowns submitted documents to the CEC [...] This time the presidential election is a healthy process. There were no excesses, street protests or barricades. The conclusion is one: we’ve grown up, and the elections are held in a civilized format.” ([Minsk Novosti](#), November 15)

In mid-November, two out of seven candidates – Chairman of the Belarusian Union of Officers Siarhei Bobrykau and head of the Minsk branch of the state-controlled Belarusian Union of Women Volha Chamadanava – dropped out of the election. Aliaksandr Lukashenka [commented](#) on Chamadanava’s self-removal from the election with his usual understanding of the role of women in politics:

“God forbid a woman is elected in Belarus. This is the hardest work. You shouldn't burden a woman so much, it's not a ceremonial position. It is not a woman's style. A woman should also be a woman. Therefore, a woman should not be burdened with such powers” (November 14).

Chamadanava herself explained her decision to drop out of the election as follows:

“We have heard the request of our society to consolidate around our President. We understand perfectly well that nobody but our President Aliaksandr Rychoravich Lukashenka will be able to ensure the security we are in today and, of course, the progressive development of our state. We are the team of our President.” (quoted by: [Reform.news](#), November 13).

The “president’s” youngest son Mikalai Lukashenka actively participates in his father’s election campaign – he plays the piano at concerts in different cities of Belarus as part of the so-called “Marathon of Unity.” On November 30, in an [interview](#) with BelTA agency in Vitsiebsk, Mikalai called Lukashenka “a great man,” and himself – “his absolute copy:”

“My father as a young man also reacted very actively to some injustice, some controversial moments that exist in any society, in any state. The head of state is pragmatic, tough, he is the president of the country. **And I consider him an absolutely great man.** You and I see the fruits of his labor every day. And I see how they are actually created.”

Lukashenka Sr. actively travels around the country, meets with labor teams, speaks at conferences and telethons, and even teaches journalists how to chop logs at the “Championship on chopping logs among the media,” which the journalists themselves enthusiastically [tell](#) about. All this happens in the complete absence of campaign materials and campaigns of other presidential candidates in the media space.

Lukashenka’s loud pre-election statements include, for example, his [promise](#) to “deal with hobos and slackers” [*the homeless and unemployed – ed.*]:

“Get ready. There will be no hobos, no slackers in the country. Everyone must move, work, earn money for themselves and their families. We will help, we will provide workplaces, just go to work. Those who disturb people’s lives, we will seriously deal with you guys.”

“Union State”

On November 4, Belarusian propagandists congratulated Russia on National Unity Day. The most famous Belarusian propagandist Ryhor Azaronak [reminded](#) in his stream that once on this day, “Polish occupants were kicked out of the Kremlin.” Ksenia Lebiadziewa, host of the information and analytical column *Eto Drugoye* on the Belarus 1 state TV channel, in her congratulatory message began to [reflect](#) on historical events, which “remind us about who is a friend, who is an enemy, who should never be trusted.” In her opinion, after centuries, “nothing has changed,” and now it is necessary to “stand up for faith, for truth, for traditions and the future.”

Lukashenka himself, publicly emphasizing his “friendship forever” with Russia, gently but persistently tries to draw “lines of demarcation.” First of all, it concerns the issue of his own independence in decision-making, as well as the issue of Belarusian sovereignty. As the date of the election is coming, Lukashenka more and more often raises an out-of-nowhere topic about the allegedly possible merger of Belarus with Russia and asserts that there can be

no such merger. For example, in mid-November, at a meeting with the governor of Smolensk region of Russia, he spoke not for the first time about the “coexistence of the two states.”

“There are two states, there is a common Fatherland. Russians don't object to it. It is from Brest to Vladivostok. [...] I have never once heard the President of Russia say: **“Listen, tomorrow we must live in one state!”** There has never been such a thing. There is no need for that.”

“Our cooperation – Belarus with Russia – is closer than if we lived in one state” ([BelTA](#), November 18)

Lukashenka's cautious statements about independence from Russia give “green light” to propagandists to act in the same direction. On November 21, on the air of the *Skazhiniemolchi* program of the Belarus 1 state TV channel, deputy of the House of Representatives and pro-government historian Ihar Marzalyuk [said](#) that although Belarusians, Russians, and Ukrainians are “peoples of the Eastern European, Eastern Christian civilization,” he is “irritated by the mantra” that “we have a common history, we have a common language.”

“We have a distinctive Belarusian history, we have a distinctive Belarusian language, which as a result of unfavorable conditions, when they wanted to make more Poles out of us than Poles themselves, and then more Great Russians than Great Russians themselves, has lost some of its positions.”

And pro-government “political scientist” Vadzim Baravik on the air of STV TV channel, unexpectedly spoke out against the use of “Sovietized” names of independent countries in colloquial speech:

“There is no ‘Moldavia’ and there is no ‘Belorussia’. There is ‘Moldova’, ‘Belarus’, ‘Turkmenistan’. [...] I want to name all countries according to the Constitution. When you speak with the narratives of certain Z-patriots, you will have the wrong terminology, and we will educate young people in the wrong way.” (Record of live broadcast – in Baravik’s personal Telegram [channel](#), November 5).

On November 7, Lukashenka congratulated the country's residents on the “Day of the October Socialist Revolution,” which resulted in the Bolsheviks seizing power in Russia in 1917. Belarus remains the only one of the former Soviet Union countries that officially celebrates this Soviet holiday.

In his congratulatory message, Lukashenka [noted](#) that although Belarus has chosen an independent path of development in the 21st century, it has preserved **“the enduring landmarks of the Soviet era:** from the ideals of social equality and humanism to the values of peace and friendship of peoples.”

This topic was adopted by propagandists.

The October Revolution “**gave Belarus to us, Belarusians,**” columnist of *SB. Belarus Segodnya* Andrei Mukavozchyk wrote:

“We should keep trying to build a socially oriented country somewhere, taking all the best from the attempt to build a state of social justice. Our Belarusian leader speaks about it at the international level. We are building such a country here in Belarus.” ([SB. Belarus Segodnya](#), November 6).

The role of propaganda

In September 2024, at the request of Lithuania, the administration of the YouTube video hosting blocked Belarusian propaganda media channels on its territory. At that time, Minsk announced that it would respond by blocking YouTube itself on its territory, but this never happened. The reason is simple – the services of Western social networks and Internet platforms are used by Lukashenka’s media themselves, which was [confirmed](#) by Deputy Minister of Information of Belarus Andrei Kuntsevich on the air of STV TV channel on November 25:

“We are indeed not yet going to take any radical steps to block specific social networks entirely today, realizing perfectly well that today our state media are on these platforms, albeit with certain restrictions, which means that we have the opportunity to reach a fairly wide audience.”

According to Kuntsevich, in case international digital platforms do close, the response should be “mirrored:”

“We too can initiate these kinds of decisions [*to block Western Internet platforms*] together with our friendly countries through integration platforms such as the EAEU or the CSTO.”

On November 22, Lukashenka also discussed the importance of mass media at a meeting with students of humanitarian universities in Minsk State Linguistic University. According to him, only propaganda media can be trusted in the conditions of the “information warfare”:

“If you want to know the truth, read and watch the state media. [...] People became certain where the truth is. That's why, first of all, people trust the state media. And I advise you to be very attentive to it,” Lukashenka [advised](#) the students.

The “president” also [emphasized](#) the place and role of propaganda in the existence of the regime:

“All journalists, all politicians are propaganda, counter-propaganda and agitation. They all do it. Some from abroad say today, “Oh, please, that's a propagandist!” And what are you? We propagate our way of life, our culture, and so on. We agitate people for it. And who do you stand for? For those who give money.”

Ideologists of the “Union State” rely on young people, involving them in an increasing number of pro-state “patriotic” projects and events. In November, the “Week of Student Youth of the Union State” was held in Belarus. In his welcoming [address](#), Russian Ambassador to Minsk Boris Gryzlov said that the youth policy of the Union State is “one of the foundations of national sovereignty in the humanitarian sphere:”

“Western specialists, psychologists, political technologists are trying to work with our young men and women. Their goal is to make them turn from the right path, betray the history of their country, impose alien elements in the socio-humanitarian sphere on our society. In these conditions, it is necessary to respond in a timely manner and resist the destructive impact of the collective West on the young generation.”

In the [previous issue of Propaganda Update](#), we have already mentioned the potential damage that Western politicians, celebrities, businessmen, heads of large international organizations do to their reputation when they come to Belarus on official, commercial or private visits. Belarusian propaganda uses such visits for its own purposes – to legitimize or whitewash Lukashenka’s political regime, to create a false picture of “normality” and “openness” of the totalitarian state. After returning home, these people will almost certainly face condemnation, criticism, and the almost inevitable need to justify themselves.

In November, exactly this story happened to the famous German actor and director, Til Schweiger, who came to Minsk to shoot a promo video for a certain sports company. The BelTA state agency [published](#) a recording of Schweiger’s press conference, during which he praises Belarus:

“I like Belarusian food, people and relations between them. I was especially touched by the warm welcome I received here. [...] I have heard only the best things about your country.”

The reaction of the Western media was immediate. Bild [reproached](#) Schweiger for doing propaganda for “Putin’s friend.”

As a result, the actor had to justify himself on his Instagram page:

“I attended the press conference solely to talk about my involvement in the movie as part of the advertising campaign, and to share with the public the creative work behind it. I was promised that the event would focus entirely on the commercial and its content. Unfortunately, I must say that part of the press conference was taken out of context and used to support a message that is not in line with my beliefs or my intentions. **To be clear, I did not support any political or ideological position as stated in this article and I am distancing myself from it.**” (Quoted by: [Focus.de](#))

II. BELARUS' DEMOCRATIC FORCES

The political regime still sees the Belarusian democratic movement among its main enemies despite the fact that four years have passed since the suppression of the mass protests of 2020 and the subsequent destruction of civil society. The propaganda tries to discredit the supporters of democratic transit and intimidates the population with the “threat from outside,” in which the so-called “fugitives,” i.e. political emigrants, take center stage, allegedly just waiting for the moment to seize power.

In his program, ONT TV channel presenter Ihar Tur [promotes](#) the line about “Western grants” plundered by the opposition (“It is still possible to plunder the money allocated for the fight against the Belarusian authorities in Warsaw and Vilnius”) and [intimidates](#) the population with his dire predictions that “the media attack of the fugitives will begin immediately the day after the main voting day.”

Pro-government military expert Aliaksandr Alesin [believes](#) that the West is preparing a hybrid operation after the election, in which the main role is assigned to “militants from the opposition.”

“It is obvious that there will be a hybrid operation: first the illegal armed formations of the Belarusian opposition will attack. [...] Then they will declare themselves independent from the central power, probably recognizing the jurisdiction of [Sviatlana] Tsikhanouskaya. And as such an 'independent' formed state, they will ask for help from the West.”

We have already mentioned above Lukashenka’s visit to Minsk State Linguistic University on November 22. This university is known for the fact that its students took an active part in the 2020 rallies. As a result, at a meeting with MSLU students, the “president” began to [threaten](#) that in case the protests repeat, he would **shut down the Internet** in order to “save the country” and “so that special services would not control our society from there [*from abroad*].”

Lukashenka also tried to [persuade](#) students to stay home and not to go abroad, where “no one is waiting for them,” the West does not need political emigrants, so they have no other way but to return to Belarus. According to him, “crowds” of critics of the regime allegedly “ask for return,” as Belarusian citizens are allegedly considered “second-class” people in Poland.

Pro-government political scientist Andrei Lazutkin agrees with Lukashenka:

“In four years, they played enough with these new people, tried different variants this way and that way, but it turned out that Russian liberal media are still more popular in the protest audience than Belarusian

ones, and nobody in Poland cares about Belarusian problems.”
([Minskaya Prauda](#), November 18).

In mid-November, Belarusian political prisoner Maria Kalesnikava, who had been incommunicado (i.e. in complete information isolation) for many months, was finally allowed to see her father. The propaganda media actively discussed this meeting. They decided to use this event in the interests of the regime and emphasized not on the hardships of Maria’s imprisonment, but on Lukashenka’s “humanity.” State-controlled commentators wrote and said that the opposition allegedly needed the image of Kalesnikava the martyr, so they benefit from her further imprisonment or even death.

Ryhor Azaronak:

“Masha in a [*coffin*], dead, blue, cold, beginning to rot – that’s how she would be very profitable for them. And a fat and happy one is no good at all.” ([recording](#) of a live broadcast in the *Azaryonok*. STV. Belarus Telegram channel)

III. THE “COLLECTIVE WEST”

Election in the U.S.

In November 2024, Lukashenka-controlled media and experts paid much attention to the presidential election in the U.S. Some of them cautiously rejoiced at Donald Trump's victory, while others expressed the opinion that the election of any candidate would not bring any improvement in relations between Belarus and the U.S. But sooner or later, all propagandists, when raising this topic, came to general criticism of the West.

Siarhei Klishevich, member of Parliament:

“As a deputy, as a citizen of Belarus, I don’t care who will win there. The most important thing is that I am sure and understand, knowing the American political system, how it works, that they have interfered and will continue to interfere in the affairs of other states until their internal political system collapses.” (In a [stream](#) with Ryhor Azaronak, November 5)

On November 6, even before the results of the U.S. election were announced, Lukashenka declared Trump “the winner” and later congratulated him officially, calling his victory [“the embodiment of a personal feat.”](#) He also called Trump a “mighty man,” as he was “shot at, pressured, wanted to be jailed,” but he still won. The Belarusian “leader” recalled the U.S. president-elect's campaign promise to end all wars and said that if he succeeded in doing so, he would **nominate Trump for the Nobel Prize.**

After Lukashenka’s statements, propagandists began to praise Trump more often, while not forgetting to give credit to their “president.”

Columnist of *SB. Belarus Segodnya* Anton Papou [praised](#) Lukashenka’s political acumen:

“The Belarusian leader called Trump ‘winner’ back in the morning after the vote – this reaffirmed the significance of the President’s tremendous international experience and his understanding of political processes, which allows Minsk to build a balanced policy in a multipolar world.”

Deputy and “political scientist” Vadzim Hihin [called](#) Lukashenka “the first politician to call things by their names,” and his assessment of the U.S. election results, according to Hihin, was echoed by “all world agencies.”

After the election, the “president” of Belarus himself [praised](#) the supporters of the U.S. Democratic Party for their restraint, because, despite the defeat, they did not call on their supporters to go out to protests or “go to the authorities with a pickaxe and an axe.”

Poland and the Baltic states

Belarus' closest neighbors, which have the strongest position towards the Lukashenka regime, are given the "honorable" place of the main enemies in the anti-Western propaganda narratives. These countries become the target of its criticism on any occasion. In November, propagandists vividly discussed the politics and fate of these countries due to Donald Trump's return to the U.S. presidency. Anton Papou, a "journalist" of *SB. Belarus Segodnya*, predicts a bleak future for Poland due to his election:

"Last time Trump actively supported Poland, including militarily, but now **Warsaw's aggressive inadequacy towards Belarus and Russia is not to his liking**: Polish militarists who live at the expense of fables about the threat from the East will put sticks in the wheels of his peace plan."

"The change of government [*in Poland*] last fall did nothing. They are trying to sell the remnants of sovereignty more cheaply, and **the country is being turned at a rapid pace into an analogue of Ukraine**, filling it with weapons and inviting foreign military personnel, who treat Poles as second-class people." (*SB. Belarus Segodnya*, November 12)

Propagandist of the same newspaper Raman Rud' writes in his [column](#) about the hard fate of Belarusian children in Polish schools, about how "young Poles mercilessly bully, humiliate, beat" them, and concludes that "we are second-class people for them:"

"The steamroller of Polish nationalism, with which it is unlikely to be possible to live in a good neighborly way, is only gaining momentum. Those who have already realized this sad fact are hurrying to return home, to the Belarusian legal field. The others are yet to find out on their own skin what the fierce hatred of pany [*a pejorative term for Poles – ed.*] is".

On November 11, Lukashenka congratulated Poland on Independence Day and expressed confidence that "people's diplomacy" would help to improve relations between the two countries. As a rule, in such appeals of the Belarusian "president" to neighboring countries, the [topic](#) of returning to "business as if nothing happened" dominates:

"Step by step, as more Poles come to our country under the visa-free regime, people's diplomacy is being strengthened and the need to return to normal relations at the interstate level is growing."

In November, Belarusian media actively commented on the parliamentary election in Lithuania, as a result of which the Social Democratic Party won the majority in the Seimas. Belarusian state-controlled media in their own manner called the election “unfree” and “Russophobic”. Anton Papou, *SB. Belarus Segodnya*:

“The election in Lithuania was held in an atmosphere of fear. A campaign of repression was launched against the politicians who advocate the restoration of ties with Belarus and Russia, access to the Belarusian media was blocked at the request of special services, and YouTube destroyed the channels of alternative forces.” ([SB. Belarus Segodnya](#), November 13)

On November 12, the Seimas of Lithuania denounced the agreement on customs cooperation with Belarus. There has been no customs cooperation between the two countries for a long time, nevertheless, this news was not left without caustic comments of propagandists.

Lyudmila Hladkaya, *SB. Belarus Segodnya*:

“Citizens of Lithuania, this is how your temporary [*officials*] in power ‘take care’ of your security and ‘establish’ economic and other ties with neighbors. And remember: they are doing all this solely in the ‘interests of the Lithuanian people’.” (*SB. Belarus Segodnya* Telegram [channel](#), November 12).

As before, one of the main anti-Western propaganda lines remains the claim that the West is filled with hatred towards Russia and Russians (and Belarus and Belarusians as well) and is waiting for the moment to attack / divide / weaken / destroy these two innocent countries. These motives serve to justify the thesis of the “encircled fortress” and to facilitate the task of rallying society around the dictator and justifying internal repression.

Yury Uvarau, *Minskaya Prauda* newspaper:

“In political circles of Europe, the degree of Russophobia is not just off the scale, hatred of Russia has become a prerequisite for staying in power. The world has never been so close to a nuclear catastrophe. But in the current situation, there is a big plus. All the sensible forces of the world will unite even more in the face of the global threat. And Russia’s geopolitical role will only grow.” ([Minskaya Prauda](#), November 14).

The anti-Western propaganda has a new Western “media figure”. This is Davide Carbonaro, an Italian citizen, who lived in Poland for many years and fled to Belarus at the end of October – as investigative journalists found out,

because of the charges of fraud and tax evasion brought against him by Polish law enforcers. Now Carbonaro lives in Minsk, writes columns for the pro-government *SB. Belarus Segodnya* newspaper and appears on propaganda TV channels. His articles are written according to the traditional propaganda patterns, which necessarily include “bows” to Lukashenka and accusations against the West. On November 20, the newspaper published another article by Carbonaro on the migration crisis, which contains the following lines:

“President Aliaksandr Lukashenka is still offering an **olive branch** to his Western neighbors with a proposal to resume negotiations on resolving refugee issues. When did human life cease to have any value? Why do countries that boast of their advanced democracy actually play with people's fates, considering themselves superior and elitist? Why do they still organize terrible ghettos with real barbed wire for many unfortunate people – does this not remind of the Nazis’ actions in concentration camps during World War II?”

IV. UKRAINE

Lukashenka's threats and fears

In November, the departing administration of U.S. President Joe Biden finally allowed Ukraine to use U.S. long-range missiles against targets deep in Russia's territory, which the Ukrainian Armed Forces immediately took advantage of. In response, Russia struck an "empty" Oreshnik medium-range missile at a facility in the Ukrainian city of Dnipro, calling it a "test." The Lukashenka-controlled media enthusiastically joined the Russian propaganda operation to intimidate the world.

The *SB. Belarus Segodnya* newspaper called the launch of Oreshnik against Ukraine a "[warning shot.](#)" The head of the General Staff of the Belarusian Armed Forces, Pavel Muraveika, said in an interview with propagandist Lyudmila Hladkaya that the strike was "a goodwill gesture and a message that one should not joke with Russia."

Lukashenka immediately began planning the deployment of Oreshnik in Belarus. At the meeting of the CSTO member states, he [told](#) journalists with a smile on his face that he had addressed this issue to Putin:

"I made a joke to my older brother here [*about Putin*], I say: 'The places are ready for dislocation. When?' - 'We'll think about it' [*Putin replied*]."

(Later, in response to Lukashenka's publicly demonstrative question about when the possibility of deploying the missile in Belarus would arise, Putin replied that in the second half of 2025.)

And the propagandist, activist of the pro-government *Patriots of Belarus* society, Stanislau Yaskevich, immediately drew the routes of the Oreshnik and established that it would be more effective to deploy the missile in Belarus, because it would reach the European capitals much faster than from Russia.

"Belarusian land may well become a key factor in the global balance of power," Yaskevich summarizes. (Personal Telegram [channel](#), November 23)

Meanwhile, as experts note, Russia could also hurt Lukashenka's ambitions with its Oreshnik strike. The Belarusian "president" has long been peddling his image of a "peacemaker" who wants to bring the "conflicting parties" to the negotiating table, which would be especially important during the election period, and the new round of escalation breaks his plans to become a "conciliator."

Author of the independent Belarusian media outlet Reform.news Ihar Lenkevich wrote in his column on Oreshnik that Lukashenka is concerned about the prospects of [“elements of a global nature”](#) appearing in the Russian-Ukrainian war:

“The risks from the escalation of the conflict have become more than acceptable. [...] Especially after official Minsk has put a target on its own back by deploying Russian tactical nuclear weapons on the territory of Belarus. Our country seriously risks finding itself between the hammer and the anvil.

<...> It is one thing to count on the occupation of Ukraine in three days, Kyiv’s capitulation, after which the Belarusian regime, as the closest ally, will receive bonuses for complicity. It is quite another when the vortex of war created by Russia begins to draw deeper and deeper into itself the injured party, its allies, the aggressor itself, and the co-aggressor along with everyone else,” Lenkevich writes.

Lukashenka [speaks](#) quite directly about his fears. At the already mentioned meeting with students in MSLU, he described his feelings as follows:

“I don't want war on my land. But, unfortunately, the escalation continues. How should I behave in this situation? You can't get involved in this under any circumstances. And if Russia and NATO clash, it won't be easy for us either.”

Also at this meeting, Lukashenka said that he is “not asking for it,” but [wants and should](#) participate in the negotiations on the settlement of the situation in Ukraine:

“We are three Slavic peoples. No Americans, no Europeans – no one will do us any good and help us. We have to sit down and agree. Why in Belarus? Because it's near our fence, near our border. And our interests must be respected.”

At international forums, the “president” makes transparent hints about the lack of necessity of war. For example, on November 12, speaking at the climate summit in Baku, Lukashenka spoke about the damage wars cause to the environment, including [mentioning](#) Russia’s war against Ukraine.

Persistence of aggressive anti-Ukrainian rhetoric

In November, the discussion on Ukraine was once again revitalized due to the election of Donald Trump as the new U.S. president and his campaign statements that once he takes office, he will stop the war in 24 hours. Minsk propaganda, being on pro-Kremlin positions, questions Trump’s populism,

continues to spread aggressive anti-Ukrainian narratives and supports Russia's actions.

Yury Vaskrasenski, pro-government activist and propagandist:

“Trump says, I will stop the war within 24 hours. But for that he needs to be the president of Ukraine, not the president of the U.S. And then it can be stopped. I will tell you how. You [*about Ukrainians*] withdraw from the occupied territories to your borders, first. Four areas that are stipulated in the Russian Constitution. Second. Remove the course of joining NATO, European integration and so on from the Constitution of Ukraine. Third. Introduce Russian as a second state language, or as a language of interethnic communication.” (Stream [Azaryonok. Napriamuyu](#), November 15)

Propagandists are trying to whitewash Russia (and Belarus) by repeating Lukashenka's old trick of shifting the blame from the aggressor to the victim. Vadzim Baravik, pro-government “political scientist,” in the *Po Sushchestvu* program of the STV TV channel:

“A political decision has been made by Washington to do what? Destabilization of the European Union, maximal weakening of Russia up to its collapse and weakening of China. **For this purpose, Russia was provoked and forced to launch this special military operation.** They achieved the result, received economic dividends and so on.” (The recording saved in Baravik's personal Telegram [channel](#), November 14)

An employee of the ONT state TV channel, Maryna Karaman, uses another popular propaganda model – denying Ukraine's subjectivity:

“On the territory of Ukraine, with Zelensky's approval, the U.S. fought against Russia with the bodies of Ukrainians, and it is the U.S. and Russia that will negotiate peace, Ukraine is just a platform for war, who will ask it about anything?” (Personal Telegram [channel](#), November 18)

Vadzim Yelfimau, pro-government “political scientist”:

“When the attack of Ukraine, encouraged and armed by the States, on Russian Donbass and the entire Russia became inevitable, [Putin] struck first.” (Minskaya Prauda [newspaper](#), November 20)

V. GEORGIA

Last month, state-controlled media in Belarus actively commented on the events in Georgia, where thousands of people took to the streets for several weeks to protest after the ruling Georgian Dream party announced the freezing of negotiations on Georgia's accession to the European Union. The rallies and protests were brutally suppressed by the police. Lukashenka's propagandists supported the actions of the enforcers and compared the protests in Georgia to the Maidan "riots" in Kyiv in 2013 or the rallies in Belarus in 2020.

Yury Tserakh, *SB. Belarus Segodnya*:

"The harsh Georgian enforcers took the matter seriously, did not discuss it, and strangled it all at once and in the bud without any unnecessary sentimentality. The classic set of weapons: water cannons and tear gas. Everything was very beautiful and inspiring. But no one has canceled the methodology yet, and soon we will be hearing hundreds of stories about terrible atrocities and unmotivated brutality [*by the enforcers*]." (Personal Telegram [channel](#), November 29).

Ryhor Azaronak, a TV presenter of STV TV channel, [welcomed](#) the decision of Georgian Dream to abandon the course of European integration:

"There is no more European dream. There is only one choice – peace or war, life or death. Grants from the EU and the U.S. are investments in murder, grief, blood and tears. And nothing else."

iSANS will continue to analyze main propaganda trends in Belarus and Russia in 2025