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## Might Belarus become the next Syria?

*The Saker*

Okay, I admit it, the title is rather hyperbolic :-). But here is what I am trying to say: there are signs that Russia is intervening in the Belarusian crisis (finally!)

First and foremost, we can see a truly radical change in Lukashenko's policies: if his initial instinct was to unleash a brutal repression of both the violent rioters and the peaceful demonstrators, now he has made a 180 and the outcome is quite amazing: **on Sunday there were large anti-Lukashenko demonstrations yet not a single person was detained.** Not one. Even more amazing is this: the Polish-run Nexta Telegram channel (which is the main medium used by the Empire to overthrow Lukashenko) initially called for a peaceful protest, but at the end of the day a call was made to try to take over the main Presidential building. When the rioters (at this point we are dealing with an illegal, violent, attempt to overthrow the state – so I don't call these people demonstrators) got to the building they were faced with a real "wall" of riot cops in full gear: this (really scary) sight was enough to stop the rioters who stood for a while, and then had to leave.



***Lukashenko and son***

Second, Lukashenko did something rather weird, but which makes perfectly good sense in the Belarusian context: he dressed himself in full combat gear, grabbed an AKSU-74 assault rifle, dressed his (15 year old!) son also in full combat gear (helmet included) and flew in his helicopter over Minsk and then landed in the Presidential building. They then walked to the riot cops, where Lukashenko warmly thanked them and which resulted in the full police force giving him a standing ovation. To most of us this behavior might look rather outlandish if not outright silly. But in the

context of the Belarusian crisis, which is a crisis primarily fought in the informational realm, it makes perfectly good sense.

- Last week Lukashenko **said** that no other elections, nevermind a coup, will happen as long as he is alive.
- This time Lukashenko decided to **show**, symbolically, that he is in charge and that he will die fighting along his son if needed.

The message here is clear: **“I am no Ianukovich** and, if needed, I will die just like Allende died”.

Needless to say, the AngloZionist propaganda machine has immediately declared that seeing Lukashenko carrying a Kalashnikov is a clear sign that he has gone insane. In the western context, if this was, say, Luxembourg or Belgium this accusation of insanity would be spot on. But in the Belarusian context, these accusations get very little traction, chalk it up to cultural differences if you wish.

To understand how powerful this message is, we need to keep in mind the two key rumors that the Empire’s PSYOP operation was trying to convey to the people of Belarus:

- There are profound differences amongst and inside the ruling elites (especially the so-called “siloviki” – the “power ministries” if you want, like Internal Affairs or KGB).
- Lukashenko either has already fled the country or is about to flee it (each time a helicopter flies over Minsk, the western PSYOPs say that this is footage of Lukashenko “fleeing the country”).

I have a strong suspicion that what happened between Putin and Lukashenko is very similar to what happened between Putin and Assad: initially, both Assad and Lukashenko apparently thought that pure violence will solve the problem. That profoundly mistaken belief resulted in a situation in which the legitimate authorities were almost overthrown (and this is still possible in Belarus). In each case, the Russians clearly said something along the lines of “we will help you, but you have to radically change your methods”. Assad listened. Lukashenko apparently did too, at least to some degree (this process has just begun).

The truth is that the opposition is in a difficult situation: the vast majority of the

people of Belarus clearly do not want a violent coup, followed by a bloody civil war, a total deindustrialization of the country and a total submission to the Empire, i.e. they don't want to go down the "Ukie way". But how do you \*legally\* overthrow a government, especially if that government now sends the clear message "we will die before we allow you to seize power"?

Then there is the immense problem with Tikhanovskaia: while few believe that she got 10% and Lukashenko got 80% – nobody sincerely believes that she beat him. So while the West wants to paint Lukashenko as "*the next Maduro*", it is practically impossible to convince anybody "*that Tikhanovskaia is the next Guaido*".

So where do we go from here?

Well, Lukashenko has not fired Foreign Minister Makei or KGB Head Vakulchik. Truth be told, I tend to agree with [some Russian analysts who say that Makei is not really the problem](#), and that **the main russophobe in Minsk is Lukashenko himself** (just one example: he was the one who removed the four Russian Sukhois which Russia had sent to help Belarus control their airspace). It is quite true that Lukashenko runs all his ministries with an iron hand and that saying that Makei is all evil and black while Lukashenko is this white, innocent, victim is not very credible. However, even if Makei and Vakulchik were only executing Lukashenko's orders, then now need to fall in their swords as a sign of contrition and reparation towards Russia. Still, the Russians will probably indicate the Lukashenko that the Kremlin will not work with these turncoats.

Then there are the public statements of the Belarusian Minister of Defense, Viktor Khrenin, who says all the right things and who seems to take a very hard line against those western forces which are behind this latest attempt at a color revolution. It is well known in Russia that while Belarusian diplomats seem to, how shall I put it, prefer smiles to substantive collaboration with Russia. The case of the Belarusian military is quite different, not only do the Russian and Belarusian militaries train together, they also share intelligence on a reportedly continuous basis. Besides, without Russia the Belarusian military would find itself completely isolated, unable to procure technical support or parts, disconnected from the Russian early warning systems and removed from Russian intelligence support.

The Belarusian military is dramatically different from the Ukrainian military which had practically lost its combat readiness decades ago, which was then purged from all real patriots, and which was fantastically corrupt. In contrast, the comparatively small Belarusian military is, by all accounts, very well-trained, decently equipped and commanded by very competent officers. I think that it is a safe bet to say that

the armed forces are loyal to Lukashenko and that they would probably welcome a full reunification with Russia.

As for Lukashenko himself, he has, for the first time, allowed an openly pro-Russian party to register (in the past, pro-Russian movements, organizations and parties were systematically persecuted and shut down). He also declared on public TV that “his friend Putin” advised him on how to react to the demonstrators.

### **So will Belarus become the next Syria?**

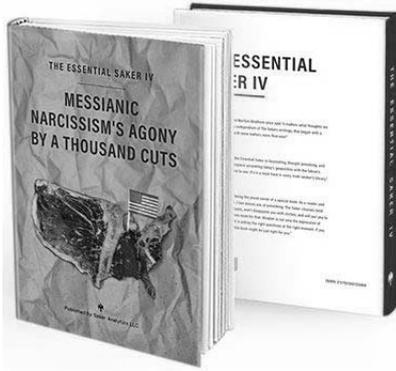
Well, no, of course not, the two countries are way too different. But in a different sense, what happened in Syria might happen in Belarus: Russia will provide her full support, but only in exchange for major reforms on all levels. And though Lukashenko now declares that the West only wants to destroy Belarus as a first phase of destroying all of Russia, I do not believe that there is any chance for a military conflict, unless one of three things happen:

1. Some nutcase on either side opens fire and triggers a military incident (and even that might not be enough)
2. The Poles get really desperate and do something fantastically dumb (Polish history demonstrates that this is a very real possibility)
3. Lukashenko is killed and chaos ensues (not very likely either)

We must remember that when Russia intervened in Syria, the Syrian military was in shambles and basically defeated. This is not at all the case in Belarus which has a superb military (of the “lean and mean” sort) and they can secure their own country, especially when backed by the KGB and the Ministry of Internal Affairs forces.

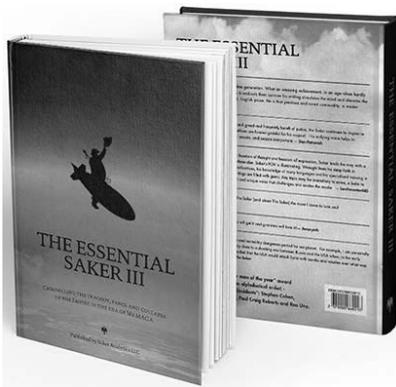
Still, while Lukashenko might be part of the solution in the short term, in the long term he must go and be replaced by a trustworthy leader whom the Belarusian people and the Kremlin could really trust and that leader’s main task will be to fully reintegrate Belarus into Russia. Again, a major difference with Syria.

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