**Russia’s Future with the**

**Post-Soviet States**

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**Representing the nation of Belarus**

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Introduction

As of 2015, a century has nearly passed since the establishment of the Soviet Union in 1922. In 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed hence the post-Soviet states gained their independence from Russia; one of those following states includes the country of Belarus. We have experienced problems and conflicts after gaining independence, nonetheless we are capable of sustaining ourselves with what we obtain from our partners as well as from within our borders. Essentially, as every delegation would like, we would like to achieve in seeking solutions for our urgent issues. With this being said, we would also be willing to put forward both our sincere advice and utmost opinion to any committee at their disposal.

Key Points

• Belarus hopes to strengthen its sovereign entity

• Belarus wants to improve its political stability

• Belarus would like to better the level of social protection of its citizens

• Belarus is committed to the progressive advancement of its national economy

• Belarus plans to reevaluate its immigration process

• Belarus plans to reevaluate its criminal code

• Belarus would like to improve its presence in the global economy

Background

Belarus has a history of being affiliated with a multitude of powers. Through the 13th and 16th century The Grand Duchy of Lithuania was an influential power that expanded to Belarus, Lithuania, and areas of Ukraine. Under Mindaugas reign The Grand Duchy spread toward the Black Sea and into Russian territory. He had Livonian knights and Lithuanian tribes at his command. There were many successors after Mindaugas allowing The Grand of Lithuania to expand in land while building alliances. Due to funding numerous wars the Grand Duchy needed financial aid. Bringing about the Union of Lublin between the Grand Duchy and the Kingdom of Poland. Through the union they were united and labeled as a federate state. Belarus’s history was then intertwined with Rzecz Pospolita.

Rzecz Pospolita was the name of the combined Poland-Lithuanian state. From 1569-1795 this state was involved in two major wars. The first war was against Russia and Cossacks. Battles proved to be over bearing to the state, until Sweden joined the fight. Religion played a major factor in this alliance. Poland was predominately Catholic and Sweden Protestant causing tensions. Swedish soldiers lost the will to give support toward the Catholics, causing Poland to react accordingly. A common fear of Sweden was shared with Russia; which lead to Rzecz Pospolita and Russia allying against Sweden. This new found trust lasted no longer than 2 years, for the war had restarted. Poland- Lithuania could not win the war and decided to negotiate peace.1700-1721 was the North War. The North War was how Russia gained territory; they gained land up to the Baltic Sea including Belarus. That allowed Belarus to transfer from one power to another.

The Russian Empire was the power Belarus had become aligned with. During this time period the history of Belarus is exact to the history of Russia. What happened affected the Empire as whole and not individual states. There were revolts under leaders, revolts lead by ethnic groups, and revolts lead by rebels. These changes affected Belarus as well as the Empire.

World War I followed and tensions were at a high. Germans and Russians had numerous bloody battles. Until 1918 Germans occupied Belarus’s territory putting fear in the citizens. The people of Belarus demanded for independence. The Treaty of Brest- Litovisk exited Belarus from World War One and months later the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic was created. One year after World War One and the same year Belarus had become a Soviet Republic, Russia was in another war. It is significant to Belarus because some territory was divided. In 1919-1921 there was a war between Russia and Poland the leaders of Poland and Ukraine overran Ukraine. Russia sent in the Soviet Red Army they wanted Ukraine to remain a Soviet Republic. The Soviet forces advanced through Poland and the Polish army retaliated which forced Russian troops to retreat. The Treaty of Riga allowed Ukraine to remain a Soviet Republic, but portions of Belarus and Ukraine ceded to Poland. The year following Belarus became a part of the Union Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

World War II began in 1932 and more battles were fought on Belarusian soil. The Great Patriotic War lasted four years and started in Belarus. Germany began to attack the USSR. The Soviet Union did not expect or prepare for these attacks. The Germans almost put an end to the USSR.

The German army occupied Belarus’s territory completely. They tried to terrify the citizens by starting a new order that threatened the lives of the Belarusian civilians and, in fact, German soldiers executed many Belarusian citizens. After three years, the Red Army removed the invaders from the state. By 1945 the Great Patriotic War ended.

Within the same year Belarus had become a part of the Organization of the Incorporated Nations (United Nations). Belarus wanted to prosper independently as a nation leading them to join the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESO). Progressing forward, Belarus had moved toward a much more sovereign state by adopting the Declaration of Sovereignty in 1990. Shortly afterwards the Declaration of Sovereignty was appointed as the constitutional law. With this power Belarus proclaimed its Independence, and within one year’s time the Soviet Union dissolved. By 1994 Alexander Lukashenko was elected the first president of the Republic of Belarus. He still maintains control.

Throughout the late 20th and early 21st century Belarus has been developing into an independent state. Also Belarus is establishing a more unified government. Belarus is constructing more secure relations with other countries despite past opposition.

Committee on Sovereignty

Belarus seeks to move toward a more sovereign state. We want to secure our rights and protect them for our future. President Lukashenko suggested that pursuing our sovereignty as a nation will lead to improved foreign and domestic policies. Our Declaration of Sovereignty is the will of the people. Peoples of all nationalities have inalienable rights to self- determination, freedom of speech, and access of opportunities. Human rights, education, and medical services are all a part of the move towards a self-governing state.

The concern about a lack of freedom is an issue we are addressing. The people have questions, for example, about the lack of transparency or a lack of checks and balances for the government. The answer to their curiosity is that we offer protection for our citizens by censoring inappropriate media demonstration and rallies. The ethnic groups in our nation are free to practice the religion of their choice. Non- governmental organizations voice their opinions on human rights, male and female labor, and the economy. Although the government does not officially recognize these organizations we protect independence in Belarus. The citizens use popular vote to elect the president giving them an important role in the sovereign nation for which we are advocating for.

Protecting the rights of the greater population is how we describe political engagement and civil society. A percentage of the citizens expressed that their opinions are not heard enough, and their rights are being violated. As a nation we want our people to have a positive outlook on life in Belarus. We do that by monitoring activities with rallies especially on Freedom Day. Riots occur and we have to look out for the majority of Belarusians. Most importantly we want to push toward being a country with its own identity.

The Republic of Belarus’s powers are relegated to our president Alexander Lukashenko, as per the constitution. The president’s cabinet is a council of ministers. We also have a Prime Minister, Mikhail Myasnikovich who is head of the government. Our legislative branch is a bicameral council. There are exactly 64 seats in the Council of Republic and 110 seats in the Chamber of Representatives. The Supreme Court and lower courts are a part of the judicial branch.

Russia is one of Belarus’s most important allies. A flourishing relationship has been established between the two countries. Although there are ethnic Russians residing in post- Soviet states, we believe that Russia, nor any other country has the authority to intervene in another nation’s affairs. Belarus sides with Russia on many issues, but on this topic of we disagree. We do believe the borders of Russia and the other 15 post-Soviet states should be permanent. We firmly believe in the independence of states and that sovereignty should be protected.

Russia and Belarus share similar opinions on the issue of Crimea. The decision for Crimea to become part of the Russian Federation was executed by a vote in Crimea, and we firmly stand with the will of the people. Though our stand with Russia is solid, it should be stated that we do not stand against NATO. This conflict with Ukraine has created much controversy and, on this matter, we shall remain neutral. Ukraine would be dramatically affected by the annexation and we state we are against Russia entering to take over the country. Belarus is firm on our decision to work with Ukraine’s government and not let Russia enter Ukraine through our borders.

In spite of some differences of opinion, Belarus and Russia will continue to be close allies. Other countries may be beginning to think that Russian President Putin wants another USSR. To some, this may be an alarming thought and, in response, these countries may raise their defense systems. Belarus’s future will be glorified in perfect sovereignty; we want all post- Soviet states to attain this level of independence and see our relationships with other nations will continue to grow for the greater good.

Committee on Security

The government of Belarus is based on the republican model. In other words, we encourage people to use their voices to their advantage if they would like to inspire change. Our country is small, and although we have close ties with Russia, we make a deliberate effort to stay neutral in worldly affairs.

Due to the recent political and military actions taken by Russia, the Belarusian government has decided to keep a close watch in order to anticipate possible attacks. However, we believe our alliance with Russia will prevent such conflict.

The infrastructure of Belarus' military is built for defense. Even so, military is disadvantaged due to the fluctuating economy. Although Russia may be a threat to the region due to its recent actions, it is also currently the country with which we have our greatest alliances and our largest trade relationship.

Again, the policy of the military in Belarus is to focus on the defense of the homeland. Our military plays a key part as Russia's first line of defense. Our treaties with Russia make it so that in exchange for acting as Russia's buffer zone, Russia will supplies Belarus with troops if necessary.

With recent technological advances it is becoming more convenient for the government to make business transactions online. Unfortunately, this leaves Belarus vulnerable to cyber-attacks, such as in 2013 when branches of our government were hacked. In order to combat potential problems we have taken it upon ourselves to strengthen our defenses as well as create a program to alert us if we’re under cyber-attack in a timelier manner. But our security is not ensured if the only area we protect is that of Belarus, so we partook in a conference to decide how to combat cyber terrorism with surrounding countries.

The country of Belarus does not have many prominent internal security threats. Our police force is very active within our communities. Recent studies show that many of the security threats within Belarus originate from outside sources. Depending on the level of the threat we are facing we may take immediate action. A recent example would be when we recently had infamous members of the Russian mafia in Belarus. In order to protect the well-being of innocent people we saw fit to handle the matter as quickly as possible. However, if someone is convicted of a less violent crime within our country we ensure their right to a fair trial.

Organized crime in Belarus is low due to the responsiveness of our law enforcement. It is our belief that people should be allowed to live their lives without fear of being harmed in any way. Therefore, we make it our priority to protect our citizens from precarious situations. We believe that the best way to keep crime to a minimum in our country is to monitor the information our citizens receive and remove anything that can be viewed as potentially detrimental. We allow social media, but in return ask that that the citizens comply with our will to observe their actions in order to better protect their well-being. Also, Russia is the only country outside of Belarus that we allow to broadcast to our people because we believe that its message coincides with our Belarusian teachings.

In spite of the potential for conflict in the region, we believe we are able to protect both the country and its people. We are working on strengthening our defensive powers in order to surpass the current international standards. It is our belief that we are able to keep our citizens safe.

Committee on Terrorism

The Belarussian government has promoted the development of the internet as part of its economic strategy. The population of Belarus increases annually at a rate of 50,000 per year. Belarus is one of the top 20 countries in the world for the rate in internet take up.

In a world increasingly driven by digital technologies and information, cyber threat management is more than just a strategic imperative. Essential systems providing water, healthcare, finance, food, and transportation are now increasingly software dependent, distributed, and interconnected. The detrimental consequences of this growing dependence become apparent during times of political conflict, social instability, and other traumatic events. The internet has made information exchange easier and more efficient, but it has also created a new space in which criminals and terrorists can operate almost undetected. No longer is modern human conflict confined to the physical world. This has all spread to cyberspace.

Current anomaly detection models focus primarily on analyzing network traffic to prevent malicious activities, but it has been shown that such approaches fail to account for human behaviors behind the anomalies. Evidence is growing that more cyber-attacks are associated with social, political, economic, and cultural conflicts. It is also now known that cyber attackers' level of socio technological sophistication, their backgrounds, and their motivations, are essential component to predicting, preventing and tracing cyber-attacks. Thus spec factors have the potential to be early predictors or outbreak of anomalous activities, hostile attacks, and other security breaches in cyberspace.

Belarus military doctrine refers to cyber conflict or cyberwar fare as, “information confrontation.” According to national doctrine, one of the main external threats facing the state is the potential for informational influence used to the disadvantage of Belarus or its allies. The Belarussian approach to cyber defense is twofold. The military is developing cyber capabilities to provide early warning of a cyberattack.

The Belarus Armed Forces are responsible for ensuring data security, and are trained in informational confrontation and counteraction against enemy forces. Belarus is working diligently in protecting their people from any terrorist attacks and preparing for whatever shape or form it may come in. In order for preventions to be successful, it's absolutely important to make impenetrable firewalls with the data networks being used.

Committee on Human Rights

The Belarusian Republic has long established values which resonate throughout our beliefs and practices. Civil liberties are held to such a high esteem that we treat our citizens with dignity and respect, as any other nation should. Belarus does not permit minute concerns to become prevalent. Before an affair becomes malignant, we move swiftly to make the said issue benign or completely dissolve it. Our country currently faces minor insurrections which we surveil at our discretion. The status of human rights remains at a constant level of stability and we see no reason for reformation.

All aspects of an individual’s rights are emphasized and highly admired. As one of the begetters of the United Nations, just treatment of people is a desideratum. We effortlessly passed the Universal Periodical Review in May of 2010. The UN Human Rights Council uses the Review to accurately access the climate of humanitarian equity. Social rights are given in our constitution. Our people are assured health treatment, welfare for individuals unable to provide financial support, free education, and free technical training. Belarusian citizens are allotted equal opportunities for prosperity. Our policies positively reflect how Belarus is received.

Ethnic Belarusians are more than 80% of the population. Our top three minority groups are Russians at 8.2%, Poles at 3.1%, and Ukrainians at 1.7%. We are an ethnically varied republic with no contentious divisions. All citizens are entitled fair and equal treatment regardless of ethnic origin.

We do not face negative issues concerning migration from the post-Soviet Union states. Belarus has an unfluctuating current of outward and inward migration. Citizens are allowed to depart from the country pending their proper travel approvals. Noncitizens can attain proper status while they go through the appropriate governmental terms of pursuing documentation. Foreigners can immigrate by having Belarusian citizenship, marrying one of our citizens, being a specialist in areas of study we find pertinent, and by making investments. Minsk Registration is our website for applying for citizenship. We offer residence permits, temporary residence, and temporary stay of the Republic of Belarus.

Belarus does in fact encourage freedom of religion. Anyone who would like to practice their preferred religion must be authorized and registered by the state to do so. Registration is well organized and thoroughly examined.

About 80% of the Belarusian population identify as Eastern Orthodox, while the remaining 20% are either Roman Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, or Muslim. Due to the lack of reporting by minority groups, we have no exact statistical data in regards to religious affiliations. Our government has indicated active protection as well as preservation of Eastern Orthodoxy. The religious minority groups in Belarus do have rights, however they must go through a well-organized and thoroughly examined certification process in order to have authorization to practice religion. Failure to register will result in the castigation of corrupt and faulty religious officials. The groups are required to register, for we are unaware of their general motives and want to make sure their practices do not conflict with our ethics. We would like faith-based factions to be communicative about their activities with us. We understand that religious discontent may occur, but we will act upon it in a professional fashion. All we would like is for our people to be fully cognizant and feel secure.

The Belarusian Republic vehemently protests the mistreatment of religious minorities in other countries. We offer succor to those who adhere by our laws of religion, for religious acceptance is the foundation for a unified nation.

Our constitution includes freedom of speech and press. Belarus shall never advocate libel or slander from anyone. We also enforce multiple laws which enhance those freedoms as well as guides the public and the media. Governmental enrichments undergo rigorous procedures which take a considerable amount of time and attention. As for internet censorship, we tend to surveil and take notice of any possible threats which could harm our sovereignty. Youth are adequately protected from dangerous cyber-attacks. The protection of our people is our most urgent priority.

Ultimately, we do everything we can in order to maintain the human rights for our Belarusian citizens and visitors. Although with each decision comes with a solution, there will constantly be change. Belarus is a strong and dignified nation which forever entreaties all for the greater good.

Committee on Economics

As the conflict between Ukraine and Russia continues, the country of Belarus is experiencing an economic freefall within its borders. The Belarusian ruble has been devastatingly devalued, the Eurobonds of Belarus have reached a historic minimum, and the government is preparing for a possible recession. However, Belarus’ resilience and sustainability of their economy exhibits stupendous potentiality for economic improvement.

The Belarusian economy is primarily based on importing and exporting goods as well as receiving oil subsidies from Russia. Although other countries may find these methods satisfactory for our economy, to us however, they are unsatisfactory because we continue to experience difficulties. Ergo, Belarus would like to become an autarky as well as have strong relations amongst other countries.

Belarus’s significant trading partners in the region include Russia, Germany, China, Ukraine, and Poland. As for primary imported products, we mainly import crude and refined petroleum, petroleum gas, motor vehicles, and combustion engines. We primarily export refined petroleum, potash fertilizers, organic composite solvents, delivery trucks, and tractors. Recently, Belarus has planned to increase petrochemical, industrial, and agricultural exports with Iran. Although Russia is one of our most prominent trading partners of many, we have trade relations with more than 180 countries, worldwide. However, as the recession in Russia negatively escalates, contraction in demand for Russian exports to Belarus is occurring.

Western sanctions have yet to have a direct impact on Belarus. However, the sanctions imposed on Russia could likely have a detrimental effect on our economy. The effects of these sanctions includes decreasing our import/export rate, further devaluation of our ruble, and the potential straining in relations between Russia. The United States and Ukraine (as well as a plethora of other countries including Australia, Albania, Iceland, Canada, Lichtenstein, Norway, New Zealand, Montenegro, Switzerland, and Japan) sanctioned Russia. Although we are not against the Western sanctions, we strongly criticize them because they have a negative economic effect on Belarus.

In late 2014, Belarus faced serious challenges due to the global drop in oil prices. For example, the falling global prices for exported oil products occurred. This affects Belarus since we strive to maintain a stabilized export income. Since January 2014, the Belarusian ruble has been devalued by twenty percent compared to the U.S. dollar. The escalation of the Ukrainian crisis has an effect in Belarus, we cannot export as conveniently with Ukraine as we normally could. This year however, revenues from export payments on oil products helped maintain our gold and foreign exchange reserves. In fact, Latvia seeks to expand their shipment of oil products to Belarus as well as increase relations with us.

Since the end of the Soviet era, wealth inequality has definitely increased. Many of the post-Soviet countries wanted to and did change their socialistic and centrally planned economies to free-market economies. Belarus did not. Our economy had a delay due to slow development hence why we primarily depend on Russia’s economic aid.

Future plans to boost our economy are extremely vital, they possibly preclude indications of challenging, economic obstacles. Belarus plans to develop relations with other countries. In doing so, Belarus could forbear the necessity of being such a burden to our benefactor, Russia. Another plan is to gain an increased oil income from potential pipeline proposals. What we aim to achieve is to structurally reform our economy while reinvigorating competition within it.

Ultimately, although our situation does not exactly seem stable; especially with the crisis occurring in Ukraine, we would like to not only improve ourselves, but also possibly contribute modest suggestions to other countries in need. However, we would like to assure our people that this country shall not surrender to an economic defeat. No matter what it takes, we will persevere and not give in to the masses; we are Belarus.

Committee on Energy

Belarus is strictly an energy importer. We depend upon Russia’s crude oil and for much of our energy needs. Gazprom, a Russian gas company, provides natural gas to Belarus through Transgaz Belarus (formerly known as Beltransgaz), the Russian owned pipelines located in Minsk.

We acknowledge that a drop in global oil prices would translate into a severe decline in overall revenue for our sole gas provider, Russia. A drop of oil revenue for Russia would turn into an economic crisis and less financial resources and imports for us. A decline in oil price would mean consumers would be able to purchase the same amount of crude oil for a lower cost, which is ideal for the people but detrimental for the convenience between the consuming country and the providing one.

The development of pipelines is viewed as an opportunity for the improvement of our economy, job creation, and trade relations with countries that are to be connected. For example, Russia and China made a gas deal a year ago that will last for the next thirty years, this deal improved ties between Beijing and Moscow. Once the pipeline from Russia to China is completed in 2018, global gas prices will be integrated, and bring higher price efficiency. It would then develop into better relations with Russia that has a much larger market. Cooperation is a vital piece to the amicable relationship that Belarus and Russia share.

The energy situation in the Caspian Sea is that the littoral states surrounding it (Russia, Iran, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan) were disputing whether the Caspian Sea should be a sea or a lake. Since the Caspian Sea was confirmed a sea however, the resources are to be divided based on the length of the country’s coast.

A different situation that erupted in the Black Sea is that a Russian pipeline burst and spewed about 8.4 cubic meters of oil into the sea, near the port city of Tuapse, Russia. The pipeline was said to rupture due to a landslide. Since Transneft (the company responsible for the pipeline) is Russian owned, environmentalists have been speculating that the damage of the spill was 100 times greater than that claimed by Transneft.

Although the situation in the Arctic Ocean has its similarities to the Caspian Sea dispute, they both contrast with the circumstance. Since the Arctic Ocean is melting, it may lead to the possibility of future oil drilling. United States-based oil company Arctic Oil & Gas Corp. is an exploration company that has claimed exclusive rights to develop oil reserves in the Arctic Ocean. Development rights are currently being disputed between the United States, Norway, Russia, and Canada.

Above all, our dependence on gas and oil may be changing. The future of the energy market not only looks hopeful, but promising. Our necessity for oil and gas has withstood the test of time, but Belarus has previously been vocal about their interest in nuclear power.

Belarusian president Alexander Lukashenko sees a future in nuclear power along with Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin. Lukashenko was quoted as saying, “We have determined that the development of our own nuclear energy industry is the only way to guarantee our national security.” President Lukashenko signed a message that was buried at the site of the first Belarusian nuclear power plant, "We are sure that we have taken the right decision in building a nuclear power plant, which embodies the best ideas and achievements of a scientific world, and which will ensure dynamic economic growth and improve the welfare of the people in the region."

Committee on Ukraine

Russia’s presence has been a great aid to Belarus, and we are grateful for such contributions. From our super-power ally, we have received economic aid through subsidies and the opportunity to trade as a part of the Eurasian Economic Union. Russian support is greatly appreciated. As a sovereign country, we must never abandon our rights, not for the purpose of opposing anyone. As a sovereign country, we have the right to defend sovereignty. Our current concern is the conflict in Ukraine.

Russia and Crimea have profound ties with one another as a once unified land. 60% of the Crimean population is Russian. Those that claim Crimea was seized by Russia always dismiss the fact that there was a peaceful diplomatic vote in which 97% of the voters supported joining the country. There was no seizure, simply a peaceful transfer of power.

Russia’s annexation of Crimea is the “reunion” that Putin wanted, but it is also a very strategic move. With Crimea under Russia’s control, the Black Sea is now predominately under Russian influence. Russia’s naval forces patrol the Black Sea. Russia now has the advantage to trade and protect, but also to divide and invade. If Pro-Russian rebels are being supported with Russian weapons, then Russia’s presence in Ukraine will be highly palpable. The Kremlin will be knocking at our Belarusian doorstep if Russia succeeds in regaining Ukraine with support from Crimea.

Belarus was prompted to help in the Ukrainian conflict. Belarus aided in the development of the Minsk Protocol, a twelve point peace deal, which moved into delayed effect with a ceasefire and the removing of heavy military artillery in the Ukraine. To provide military aid to either side would cause unnecessary violence and bloodshed. Any other country’s role in this conflict should be limited to humanitarian aid. Both sides are suffering immense casualties with over 5,000 people dead, many of them innocent civilians.

As to Russia’s role in the Ukrainian conflict, it is to respect the sovereignty of Ukraine. Russia respects the sovereignty of all nations. However, if the North Atlantic Treaty Organization interferes in the conflict, Russia will be forced to initiate a military response. During this conflict it would be unreasonable to assume every ethnic Russian is drawing arms; they remain civilians. Not only is their physical safety being threatened, but their rights to be proud of their native Russian culture as well. After the most recent Ukrainian governors were appointed by Kiev, the Ukrainian leaders changed the citizenship test so applicants must speak the country's official language, which is not Russian. Ethnic Russians are failing these citizenship tests because of these language barriers.

The Ukrainian government is currently in control of this unfortunate situation. However if the separatist movement continues to challenge the state, the chaos will continue. The possibility of separatists taking over Ukraine is not a distant theory. If the Ukrainian government is overthrown we will be ready to defend our land against anyone who threatens it. Just as our President Lukashenko stated, “No matter who comes to the Belarusian land, I will fight. Even if it is Putin.”

Five Issues

* Belarus hopes to further establish its sovereignty and independence
* Belarus would like to improve its military defense
* Belarus would like to increase internet and media protection to prevent cyber attacks
* Belarus seeks to improve and increase its relationships with other nations
* Belarus would like to invest in alternative energy programs