Bendra

Sutraukti viską

Skelbimai

February 17. Foundations of the political and economic regime in Belarus

Please read the texts and prepare for a discussion on how and why this particular political and economic regime emerged in Belarus.

What explains Belarus's failure to follow a "democratization" path like the Baltic states and/or Poland?

What factors enabled Alyaksandr Lukashenka's rise?

How, and why, was he able to consolidate power, effectively usurp state authority, and retain control for so long?

How does the regime he created function in practice?

Identify the key events after Belarus gained independence that facilitated Lukashenka's entrenchment in power, focusing on the most important milestones in chronological order.

In addition, as you read, try to identify and note the most important concepts, terms, and definitions that capture the logic and operating principles of the Belarusian system. Explain these concepts to yourself in your own words, and be ready to discuss them during the seminar.

Frear (2024)-The Lukashenko Regime in Belarus PDF

Shraibman (2018) - The House that Lukashenko Built PDF

Belarus and the Theory of Acemoglu and Robinson PDF

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Belarus in 1996 (BELTA video)

February 24. Belarus's Political Economy: State Capitalism, Energy Rents, and Autocratic Control

Seminar's goal - to understand how does Belarus's state-dominant economic model generate resources, loyalty, and control—and how does the political regime shape (and depend on) economic policy choices?

Questions to be discussed:

- **How Belarusian economic policies operate, what drives them, what features it have?** *what causes what*: what is the input (policy/resource), what is the process (allocation/control), and what is the output (stability, loyalty, repression, growth, crisis).
- **How Belarusian economy is structured and what are the most important concepts/definitions, which explain it?** (1) *Economic structure* (SOEs, planning, soft budgets), (2) *rent/resources* (especially energy-related), (3) *political rule tools* (patronage, co-optation, selective enforcement).
- **Who benefits and who pays in Belarusian economy?** Which groups are rewarded (workers, managers, security elite, bureaucracy) and what the costs are (inefficiency, debt, dependency on Russia, vulnerability to shocks).
- **Distinguish social contract from coercion, then show how they interact.** Ask: when does the regime buy compliance (wages, cheap utilities, benefits), and when does it enforce it (regulation, punishment, repression)? Where do the two reinforce each other?
- **Interrogate the label "state capitalism."** Write one paragraph for yourself: what the term explains well in Belarus, and what it misses (e.g., planning legacies, discretionary rule, political objectives overriding efficiency).
- **How is the economic model of Belarus maintained and what is the cost of its maintenance?** How does reliance on Russia/energy arrangements shape the regime's policy choices and resilience? What happens to the model if rents shrink or Moscow changes the terms?

Kozarzewski, Papko (2023) - The Belarusian Development Path. From Command Economy to State Capitalism PDF

Balmaceda - Energy policy in Belarus - authoritarian resilience social contracts and patronage in a post Soviet environment PDF

Trantidis - The Political Economy of Autocratization. The Case of Belarus PDF

March 3. Belarus 2010–2019 — Why the Old Stability Toolkit Started to Fail

What this seminar is about? It aims at explaining what started breaking in Belarus between 2010 and 2019—economically, socially, and geopolitically—from the perspective of regime stability. We will trace how the regime's traditional tools (macroeconomic steering, state capitalism, and societal management) faced tightening constraints after the 2011 crisis, and why the post-2014 external environment (Russia's leverage and integration pressure) made those constraints sharper. It will also discuss how these pressures shaped the social contract: what the regime could still deliver, what it could no longer credibly deliver, and why society's expectations and behavior began to change before 2020.

1) What began to "jam" economically—and why?

- What made the 2009–2011 "success" a **delayed crisis** rather than a sustainable model?
- What explains the post-2011 period of **economic anemia** (weak productivity, misallocation, state capitalism traps)?

2) Why did problems intensify when domestic choices met external constraints?

- How did Russia's leverage after 2014 affected the situation in Belarus (energy, market access, trade restrictions, credits/loans, investment/privatization pressure)?
- How and Why Russia's pressure for deeper "integration" become a sharper political demand?
- Where do you see the clearest interaction between domestic vulnerability and external pressure (e.g., budget space, exchange rate stability, export dependence, energy pricing)?

3) What new challenges did the regime have to solve in 2010–2019 (before 2020)?

- How did the "old social contract" eroded and a "new social identity" began to form—what changed in society, and why is that threatening to the regime?
- What were the regime's emerging dilemmas by 2018–2019?
  - **Stability vs growth**
  - **Redistribution vs macro discipline**
  - **Sovereignty vs Russian support**
  - **Controlled liberalization vs fear of independent actors**
- If you were advising the regime in 2019, what would be the **least risky** way to maintain stability—and why might it still fail?

Kruk - Belarus Anti-Crisis Management. Success Story of Delayed Recession PDF

Rudy - State Capitalism in Belarus. Behind Economic Anemia PDF

Douglas — Belarus: From the Old Social Contract to a New Social Identity PDF

Astapenya and Balkunets - Belarus-Russia relations after the Ukraine Crisis PDF

(Case study) COVID-19 as the Worst Crisis of Lukashenko's Career PDF

(Case study) Liasheva - Belarus's Parasites PDF

March 10. Belarus 2020 as a Regime Turning Point: Elections, Protest, Repression, and the Making of a New Status Quo

This seminar examines the 2020 Belarusian election crisis as a decisive turning point in the evolution of Lukashenka's political regime. Building on what we have already covered about the erosion of Belarus's "stability toolkit" in 2010–2019, we focus on why society mobilized at an unprecedented scale in 2020, how the regime prepared to secure another electoral cycle, and why the familiar mechanisms of control did not work as they had in previous elections. We then analyze the logic of the state's response—how repression was deployed, normalized, and justified—and how these events reshaped the regime's political and economic trajectory, including its deeper dependence on Russia and the tightening of domestic control.

Essential questions for discussion

From 2010–2019 to 2020: why did society move?
How did the combination of economic stagnation, shrinking material "carrots," Russia-related pressures, and growing reliance on coercion reshape public expectations and willingness to participate in and contest the 2020 election outcome?

Regime expectations and preparation:
What instruments did the regime rely on to secure survival in 2020 (administrative control, coercive capacity, information management, elite discipline)? Which assumptions about society and control proved wrong?

Why did the old electoral-management script fail?
In what ways did 2020 differ from earlier election cycles in Belarus? Consider protest scale and composition, coordination, legitimacy collapse, and the (non-)defection of key institutions—especially the security apparatus.

Repression as strategy, not episode:
What explains the state's choice for a broad, escalating crackdown? How did repression function simultaneously as punishment, deterrence, and a tool to reconstitute regime authority?

International environment and regime survival:
How did Russia's role shape the regime's options and resilience during the crisis? Why were EU/US responses less decisive, and what did that mean for the outcome?

Aftermath: what changed in the regime's operating logic?
How did 2020 alter the relationship between state and society? To what extent did the regime shift from managing politics to *depoliticizing* it—and from selective coercion to a more systematic, normalized architecture of fear and control?

Political and economic consequences:
What were the key post-2020 consequences for governance and political economy (elite incentives, property/security dynamics, institutional redesign, and deeper external dependence)? Which changes look reversible, and which appear locked in?

Nikolayenko - Belarus—Civil Resistance and State Repression in an Autocracy PDF

Leukavets - Crisis in Belarus. Main phases and the role of Russia, EU and the US PDF

Lozka and Makarychev - Depoliticization and Necropolitics. A Critical Examination of Lukashenka s Regime PDF

(Recommended) The protest movement in Belarus: resistance and repression PDF

March 17. Practical task at home

BELARUS and CHINA.
Students must submit an essay of approximately 700–800 words by the end of Sunday, March 22, following the requirements outlined below. You have to upload your essay using the link (Belarus and China - Written Assingment) below.

For the preparation of your essay, use all available literature, including the useful sources attached below. Most importantly, however, complete the assignment through your own effort: do not simply reproduce other authors' arguments or ask a non-human brain to think and answer for you 😊

Assignment purpose

The aim of this written assignment is to assess your ability to analyze Belarus's political and economic reality under A.Lukashenka through the lens of foreign policy and external partnerships. In particular, you are expected to examine how Belarus has used relations with China in the broader context of its dependence on Russia, its search for autonomy, and the regime's effort to preserve power. Your essay should go beyond description. A strong paper will present a clear argument, engage critically with the assigned readings, and distinguish between **official rhetoric, tactical maneuvering, and structural realities**.

Length: **2–3 pages (700-800 words)**

Format:

- Academic essay format
- Clear introduction, analytical body, and conclusion
- Use evidence from the assigned readings

Question

What can Belarus's relationship with China tell us about the objectives, strategies, constraints, and inner logic of the Lukashenka regime? In your essay, examine why Minsk pursued closer ties with Beijing, how it sought to make itself valuable to China, what results this policy produced, where its limits became visible, and what this case reveals about the political and economic foundations of the Belarusian regime.

Your essay should show that you can:

- formulate a clear and defensible argument;
- interpret Belarus–China relations not in isolation, but in the broader context of Belarus's political and economic relations;
- distinguish between **short-term tactical gains** and **long-term strategic outcomes**;
- explain how foreign policy choices relate to the domestic logic of the Lukashenka regime.

Belarus and China - Written Assingment

Bilban - The Sino-Belarusian Relationship. Assymetric and Symbolic PDF

China as Belarus's "Strategic Hedge" under Russian Dominance_ The Role of the Great Stone Industrial Park PDF

Umarov - In Belarus, China Is Neither at Odds With Russia nor Wedded to Lukashenko PDF

Yeliseyeu, Alezhko - Belarus-China-2020-2022 PDF

Zhao - China and Belarus High Quality Cooperation PDF

Marin - Minsk-Beijing. What Kind of Strategic Partnership PDF

March 24. Belarus Foreign Policy

- **The historical evolution of Belarusian foreign policy**: identify its main phases, shifts, and continuities, especially in relations with Russia and the EU/West.
- **The logic and drivers of Belarusian foreign policy**: examine how domestic regime-survival interests, geopolitical pressures, economic dependence, and security considerations shaped foreign policy choices.
- **The role and limits of multi-vectorism**: consider when balancing between Russia and the West worked for the regime, and when this strategy reached its limits.
- **Dependence on Russia and constrained autonomy**: analyse how political, economic, and security dependence on Russia restricted Belarus's room for maneuver.
- **The impact of the 2020 events**: assess how and why the protests and their aftermath transformed the conditions, direction, and possibilities of Belarusian foreign policy.

Nizhnikau and Moshes - Belarus in search of a new foreign policy. Why is it so difficult PDF

Nizhnikau (2025) - Drive to survive. Lukashenkas foreign policy shifts from simulating multi-vectorism to stealthily bandwagoning with Russia s military adventurism PDF

Pierson-Lyzhina (2021)- Belarus s oscillating foreign policy toward the EU from engagement to retrenchment 1994 2021 PDF

Nice - Belarus between Russia and the EU PDF

March 31. Belarus between Dependence and Agency: Military Integration with Russia and Its Consequences

This seminar examines the structure and consequences of Belarus's military and security integration with Russia. It asks three main questions: how this integration works in practice, how much autonomy Lukashenka's regime still retains under conditions of deep dependence, and what the Belarusian *status quo* as of 2025 suggests for the future of the regime and for Belarus's relations with the EU, NATO, the United States, and its regional neighbours.

While reading, pay particular attention to:

- the **main mechanisms of integration**: command structures, joint formations, air defence, training, arms supplies, military infrastructure, and defence-industrial ties;
- the **asymmetry of the relationship**: what Belarus provides to Russia, what Russia provides to Belarus, and which side sets the terms;
- the difference between **regime security and state sovereignty**: whether cooperation with Russia serves Belarus as a state or primarily Lukashenka's political survival;
- signs of **residual agency or resistance**: where Belarus still tries to hedge, delay, limit, or negotiate the terms of dependence;
- the question of **reversibility**: whether Belarus's dependence appears to be a temporary political condition or a deeper structural constraint with long-term consequences for its foreign and security policy.

Wilk - Russia's Belarusian Army. The Practical Aspects of Belarus and Russias Military Intergation PDF

Hansbury - Friends in Need. Belarusian Alliance Commitments to Russia and the Ukraine War PDF

Eberhardt - The Consolidation of Strategic Russian-Belarusian Dependence in 2022-2025 PDF

Topolski - Military Presence of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Belarus PDF

April 14. Belarus and the European Union: Regime Survival, Strategic Balancing, and the Limits of EU Policy

This seminar examines the evolution of Belarus–EU relations from the mid-1990s to the post-2020 and post-2022 period by combining four complementary perspectives. First, it traces the main phases of the relationship and the internal and external drivers behind shifts between confrontation and rapprochement. Second, it asks why the EU has so often acted inconsistently toward Belarus, oscillating between sanctions and pragmatic engagement without developing a stable long-term strategy. Third, it explores how the Lukashenka regime instrumentalized relations with the EU as part of a broader survival strategy, using selective openings, tactical cooperation, and "multi-vector" balancing to counter Russian pressure while preserving authoritarian control at home. Finally, it critically assesses how the EU's own approach could, in authoritarian settings, end up privileging state structures over society and unintentionally strengthening the regime rather than democratic agency.

Leukavets - Belarus-EU Relations (2025) PDF

Bosse - Policy-learning in EU democracy support. Strategic adaptation and (un)learning in the EU s response to authoritarian consolidation in Belarus PDF

Pierson-Lyzhina (2021)- Belarus s oscillating foreign policy toward the EU from engagement to retrenchment 1994-2021 PDF

Bosse and Vieira (2023) - Resilient states vs. resilient societies. EU relations with authoritarian regimes - a case study of Belarus PDF

April 21. Belarus case of weaponized migration

Reading at Home Day 😊

There will be no in-person meeting in the lecture hall today.
Read the provided texts and familiarize yourself with the history of the instrumentalization/criminalization of migration in Belarus.

Try to answer the following questions for yourself:

Why did this become possible?

What goals were pursued?

What does this say about the methods and principles of the Belarusian regime?

How did migration crisis has been used as an instrument of the political pressure and how - as a rent distribution method?

See you next week

Sari - Instrumentalized migration and the Belarus Crisis PDF

Muraszkiewicz and Piotrowicz - State-Sponsored Human Trafficking in Belarus The Weaponization of Migration and Exploitation PDF

Who could make millions of dollars on the migration crisis at the EU border, which claimed dozens of lives PDF

Baghdad to Lithuania - how Belarus opened new migration route to EU PDF

MILLIONS of dollars in ILLEGAL migration: a colleague of VIKTOR LUKASHENKO and other security officials are implicated in the case

April 28. Sanctions Against Belarus: Regime Survival, Adaptation, and Geopolitical Realignment

This seminar examines the role of Western sanctions in shaping Belarus's political, economic, and geopolitical trajectory since 2020. We focus on the relationship between sanctions and regime survival, the regime's adaptive responses, and the consequences for Belarus's domestic politics, its dependence on Russia, and its evolving relationship with the West — including the recent U.S. policy reversal under the Trump administration.

Key concepts to master. Targeted vs. comprehensive sanctions; Normative Power Europe vs. geopolitical actorness; the three triggering events of EU sanctions (2020 elections, 2021 Ryanair landing, 2022 invasion of Ukraine); the regime's three-pronged adaptation (information concealment, deepening Russian dependence, state interventionism); the Klaipėda transit shock and the Chinese pivot in potash; the buffer-state thesis.

Discussion questions.

Sanctions design. Has the EU regime remained meaningfully "targeted," or has it become comprehensive in effect? Do EU sanctions reflect normative or geopolitical motivations — and does the distinction still matter?

Regime survival. Which of Lvovskiy's three adaptation strategies has been most effective, and which carries the greatest long-term costs? How has the regime instrumentalized the sanctions narrative to consolidate domestic power? Why did the IT sector contract without being directly sanctioned?

Belarus and Russia. Has prolonged Western isolation accelerated Belarus's absorption into the Russian orbit, as Astapenia argues? At what point would Russian subsidies become insufficient to offset sanctions losses? Has the war made Belarus more valuable or more burdensome to Moscow?

The potash case. Was the collapse from 20% to 9% of global market share a sanctions success, failure, or both? Was Lithuania's termination of Klaipėda transit more consequential than the formal sanctions? Does sanctions-induced dependence on Russian logistics undermine the broader sanctions strategy?

Belarus and the West. Do you accept Boels's claim that EU policy has shifted from Normative Power Europe to geopolitical actorness? Is Astapenia's "buffer state" thesis realistic or naïve? How should sanctions be calibrated if the goal is no longer regime change but containing Russia's use of Belarusian territory?

The U.S. policy shift — does it make sense? Since mid-2025, envoy John Coale has secured the release of more than 500 political prisoners in exchange for lifting U.S. sanctions on Belavia, Belaruskali, the Belarusian Potash Company, and several major banks. Which rationale is most persuasive — humanitarian gains, Ukraine peace diplomacy, prying Belarus from Russia, or fertilizer supply-chain politics? Without resolving the Klaipėda logistics question, does the potash bargain produce real economic effect, or only symbolic value? Is the U.S. approach compatible with continued EU isolation, or does it create a transatlantic gap that Russia can exploit? From Vilnius's perspective — given balloon incursions, border closures, and stranded Lithuanian trucks — how should Lithuania position itself toward both strategies?

Boels - The Case of European Sanctions against Belarus PDF

Astapenya - Transforming Belarus from Russian Asset to a Buffer State in European Security PDF

Lvovskiy - The Belarusian Economy under Sanction since the Start of Russia's War in Ukraine PDF

Klisynskyi - Tough business in tough times. Belarusian exports of potash fertilisers PDF

May 5. Belarusian Democratic Opposition after 2020: Unity, Exile, Domestic Reach, and International Support

This seminar examines the transformation of the Belarusian democratic opposition after the disputed 2020 presidential election and the subsequent repression of mass protests. The main focus is not only on who represents the opposition, but also on how it functions under conditions of exile, repression, fragmentation, donor dependence, and geopolitical uncertainty.

The readings approach the Belarusian opposition as a complex and evolving ecosystem rather than a single unified actor. A key question is whether these different actors can maintain enough unity to remain politically credible while also allowing pluralism, debate, and strategic adaptation.

The seminar will explore three major tensions.

First, the opposition has gained international visibility but has lost much of its direct organizational capacity inside Belarus because of repression, criminalization, and forced exile.

Second, the opposition depends heavily on Western political, financial, and institutional support, but this dependence creates dilemmas of legitimacy, agenda-setting, and vulnerability to donor fatigue.

Third, the war in Ukraine has changed the strategic environment: some actors continue to emphasize non-violent democratic resistance, while others increasingly stress self-defense, armed preparation, or the military contribution of Belarusian volunteers fighting for Ukraine.

The seminar also considers how the opposition communicates with different external audiences. Is the different/ adaptive messaging a necessary strategy for survival, or does it risk ideological ambiguity and internal fragmentation?

Main topics and issues to examine

The seminar will focus on:

the post-2020 structure of the Belarusian democratic opposition;

the distinction between domestic and exiled opposition activity;

the survival of civil society and independent media;

the erosion of domestic reach;

relations between political leaders, civic actors, and militarized formations;

non-violent versus violent resistance strategies;

Western policy toward Belarus;

donor dependence and attention fatigue;

and the opposition's capacity to remain relevant in Belarus, in Europe, and in the context of Russia's war against Ukraine.

Key questions for discussion

Who can legitimately claim to represent the Belarusian democratic opposition after 2020?

Is the Belarusian opposition best understood as a movement, a government-in-exile, a diaspora network, a civil society ecosystem, or a coalition of competing actors?

How can opposition actors abroad maintain influence inside Belarus when contact with them may endanger people inside the country?

Does exile strengthen the opposition by giving it access to international platforms, funding, and security, or weaken it by distancing it from Belarusian society?

What are the main sources of fragmentation within the opposition: ideology, personality, organizational competition, donor structures, strategy, or attitudes toward violence?

Can the opposition preserve unity without suppressing internal pluralism and democratic debate?

How has Russia's war against Ukraine changed the strategic choices available to Belarusian opposition actors?

What explains the growing distinction between non-violent democratic resistance and more militarized forms of anti-regime struggle?

How should the opposition balance the release of political prisoners, pressure on the regime, sanctions, and possible channels of communication?

What do Western actors want from the Belarusian opposition — democratic representation, geopolitical alignment, civil society resilience, or pressure on Lukashenka?

How can the opposition avoid losing international attention as Ukraine, Russia, the Middle East, and domestic Western crises dominate foreign policy agendas?

Shraibman - How to Help Belarus Preserve Its Sovereignty and Democratic Resilience PDF

Chulitskaya - Belarusian Civil Society Inside and Outside of the Country PDF

Leukavets - It Is High Time for the West to Think About Belarus PDF

Pierson-Lyzhina - 'We No Longer Only Carry Flowers': Radicalization Processes Among the Belarusian Opposition-in-Exile PDF

Buyantueva and Pierson-Lyzhina - Normative Navigation: The Belarusian Opposition's Adaptive Strategies in International Engagement PDF

May 12. Nuclear Belarus: Energy Dependence, Regime Security, and Russian Nuclear Escalation

This seminar examines how Belarus has become the site of two parallel nuclear projects: the civilian Astravets Nuclear Power Plant and the deployment of Russian tactical nuclear weapons on Belarusian territory. Rather than treating these as separate developments, the seminar asks how civilian nuclear energy, military nuclear deterrence, authoritarian regime survival, and Russian escalation strategy intersect in one geopolitical space.

The central problem is not simply whether Belarus has "gone nuclear." Instead, the seminar explores how nuclear infrastructure can reorganize relations of dependency, sovereignty, and security. Astravets was presented by the Belarusian regime as a project of modernization and energy diversification, but it also deepened technological, financial, and strategic dependence on Russia. The later deployment of Russian nuclear-capable systems and reported nuclear weapons raises a different but related question: is Belarus being protected, instrumentalized, or absorbed into Russia's broader nuclear posture?

The seminar is organized around three analytical questions:

1. **Energy and dependence.** Did the Astravets Nuclear Power Plant reduce Belarus's dependence on Russia, or did it transform that dependence from oil and gas into nuclear technology, credit, fuel supply, and expertise?
2. **Nuclear weapons and strategic logic.** How should we explain Russia's nuclear deployment in Belarus: as reassurance of an ally, extended deterrence against Western interference, or power projection against NATO?
3. **Authoritarianism and nuclear governance.** How does authoritarian consolidation affect nuclear governance, public accountability, safety politics, and Belarus's relationship with international institutions?

By the end of the seminar, students should be able to:

- explain the political economy of the Astravets Nuclear Power Plant and assess whether it reduced or reconfigured Belarus's energy dependence on Russia;
- distinguish between three explanations for Russian nuclear deployments abroad: **assurance**, **extended deterrence**, and **power projection**;
- apply these theoretical frameworks to the Belarusian case;
- analyze how authoritarian regime security interacts with international nuclear governance;

- critically compare how different genres of writing frame the same strategic problem.

Seminar Structure

1. What does "Nuclear Belarus" mean? Students begin by identifying the different meanings of the phrase: civilian nuclear energy, Russian tactical nuclear weapons, geopolitical dependence, regime security, and regional insecurity.

2. Astravets and the political economy of nuclear energy. The discussion then turns to whether nuclear energy served as diversification or as a new form of dependency. Particular attention is paid to technology, financing, fuel supply, expertise, and the symbolic value of nuclear power for an authoritarian regime.

3. Russian nuclear weapons in Belarus. The seminar then examines the logic of Russia's nuclear deployment. Students compare assurance, extended deterrence, and power projection, asking which explanation best fits the available evidence and whether these logics can operate simultaneously.

4. Belarusian sovereignty and regime survival. The class discusses whether Belarus should be seen as a Russian instrument, a dependent ally, a constrained sovereign actor, or a regime using dependence on Russia as a survival strategy.

5. Regional security and NATO's eastern flank. The final analytical section considers the implications for Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine, and NATO. The focus is on ambiguity, reduced warning time, dual-capable systems, and the difficulty of distinguishing conventional, nuclear, and political signals.

Students should come prepared to answer:

- What type of dependence is most important in the Belarusian nuclear case: energy, technological, financial, military, political, or symbolic?
- Who has agency in this case: Russia, Belarus, Lukashenka's regime, NATO, Lithuania, or international institutions?
- Which explanation of the Russian nuclear deployment is most convincing: assurance, extended deterrence, or power projection?
- Is Belarus becoming a protected ally, a forward operating platform, or a nuclear grey zone?

Stsiapanau - Geopolitics of Nuclear Transition. The Impact of the Astravets Nuclear Power Plant on Belarus' Energy Policy and Politics PDF

Sorg - Nuclear Belarus: Explaining Russian Security Guarantees PDF

CNA - When Nuclear Weapons Return to Belarus PDF

Belarus: Despite Chernobyl, Nuclear Dependence on Russia Is Rising

(Recommended) Stsiapanau - How Belarus deals with nuclear governance PDF

May 19. Belarus's Future: Scenarios, Drivers of Change, and Sovereignty under Pressure

Read the assigned texts and prepare for a scenario-based discussion on Belarus's possible political development. Your task is **not simply to summarize the readings**, but to identify the key factors that could drive change in Belarus and to develop your own argument about which scenarios are possible — and which one appears most probable.

As you read, focus on three levels of analysis. First, consider the **structural constraints** shaping Belarus's future: dependence on Russia, the Union State framework, economic integration, military cooperation, information policy, legal convergence, and the erosion of sovereignty. Pay attention to how dependence may develop not through dramatic annexation, but through gradual institutional integration in taxation, finance, energy, transport, industry, education, media, security, and law.

Second, consider the **political trigger points** that could open a new phase. The most important one is the eventual departure of Aliaksandr Lukashenka. Pay particular attention to the role of the Security Council, the All-Belarusian People's Assembly, the ruling nomenklatura, Russia, the opposition, and society.

Third, think about **agency**. Which actors still have room to shape Belarus's trajectory? Is Belarus merely being absorbed by Russia, or does the regime still retain limited bargaining capacity? Can society re-emerge as a political force? Could the West influence outcomes, or is Russia's leverage decisive? Avoid treating any scenario as automatic.

For the seminar, prepare brief notes answering the following questions:

1. What are the **five most important criteria** that could determine Belarus's future trajectory?
2. Which of these criteria are structural, and which are potential trigger events?
3. What scenarios are possible: deeper Russian absorption, authoritarian continuity, elite-managed transition, negotiated transformation, renewed social mobilization, or some hybrid outcome?
4. Which scenario do you consider **most probable**, and why?

5. What evidence from the readings supports your argument?

Belarus on Thin Ice PDF

Karbalevich - Transition through Crisis and De-Lukashenkoization PDF

Turarbekava - The Union State for Belarus PDF

Belarus and the world_ transformation of foreign policy views of Belarusians in 2023-2025 PDF

June 9 - EXAM

EXAM