RUSSIA & EURASIA STUDIES CENTRE

Weaponisation of Refugees In Putin's Long-Standing Hybrid War Against the West

By Taras Kuzio

Executive Summary

The Russian state has seen itself as being in conflict with the West since President Vladimir Putin's speech to the February 2007 Munich Security Conference. The current migrant crisis on the Belarusian border constitutes yet another episode in this conflict, with a combined Russian–Belarusian mobilisation of the tools of hybrid warfare.

The sight of cold and hungry refugees, flown into Minsk and directed to the Polish border by Belarusian state officials, triggers a natural desire to resolve the crisis. At the same time, it is important to consider how any such resolution could affect future use of refugees as weapons of hybrid warfare, and to ensure that it reflects the cause and motivations that underlie the crisis.

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenka is not an independent foreign and security policy actor. He heads a Russian proxy state which, like the Kremlin, considers itself to be at war with the West. The aim of the Belarusian state in driving this crisis – and accordingly that of Moscow – is to stoke division in the European Union, undermine NATO, and attain legitimacy through Lukashenka being seen to negotiate with other heads of state.

It is important to remember that the build-up of migrants at the Polish border is completely artificial and has been caused by the Kremlin as part of its campaign of hybrid warfare against the West. The Kremlin's claim that it has nothing to do with the migrant crisis is as much Russian disinformation as its long-standing denial that Russian security forces are operating in Ukraine.[1]

In addressing the crisis, the EU therefore should not negotiate directly with Lukashenka or offer financial compensation for migrants along the lines of that given to Turkey. Full-scale borders on the Schengen Zone should be established to deter future hybrid war crises and strengthen the prevention of the infiltration of terrorists.

Through consultation under article 4, NATO should send special forces, paramilitary and engineering units to the Polish, Lithuanian and Latvian borders with Belarus to assist with their protection.

Finally, while attention is focused on Belarus, Ukraine should not be neglected. This is unfinished business for Putin and further escalations in Russia's war against Ukraine could occur at any point.[2]

The remainder of this briefing note discusses the background to the current crisis, the strategic goals pursued by Belarus and Russia, the motives underlying them, the relationship between the two states, and our policy recommendations for Europe.

The Current Crisis, its Implications, and its Background

The sight of cold, wet and hungry refugees on the Belarusian border with EU and NATO member states Poland, Lithuania and Latvia is the latest example of Russia's hybrid warfare (Soviet active measures[3]) against the West. Edward Lucas includes within this campaign of hybrid warfare "assassinations, corruption, cyberattacks, diplomatic and economic pressure, dirty money, disinformation, espionage, organised crime and propaganda."[4]

This long list of methods can now be expanded to include the weaponisation of refugees.[5] An EU Commission spokesman described the current crisis as "part of the inhuman and really gangster-style approach of the Lukashenko regime".[6] *The Economist* wrote that Lukashenka's foreign policy has "increasingly resembled that of a mafia boss since 2020."[7]

Lucas, in the same vein, wrote: "The Kremlin and its Belarusian satellite state are in effect running a protection racket: statecraft on the lines of the Sopranos."[8] Newly released airline schedules promised 55 weekly flights from the Greater Middle East to Minsk with most migrants only receiving their visas upon arrival in Minsk.[9]

German Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesman Steffen Seibert has accused the "Belarusian regime" of "acting as a human trafficker."[10] Other countries further away should be concerned about this development, and the consequences of failing to properly handle it. As Elisabeth Braw writes, we should "Consider the consequences for the United States should a Latin American government decide to weaponize migration."[11]

This concern is particularly relevant given the origins of today's crisis in the 2020 fraudulent Belarusian presidential elections. The development of migration as a weapon against states with generous refugee policies, or internal divisions, would give potential autocrats a potent tool to use against Western states attempting to encourage democratic development.

Belarus and Russia are using this hybrid warfare as retaliation against Western sanctions imposed on Lukashenka in the wake of his regime's brutal repression of protests against election fraud by the opposition. The first four rounds of EU sanctions targeted 166 people and 15 entities in Belarus;[12] and a fifth round of sanctions is being discussed.[13]

The Russian and Belarusian governments see these sanctions and the hosting of opposition leaders and media in countries such as Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine as a direct threat to their ability to retain power, and a base from which colour revolutions could lead to regime change. The weaponisation of refugees is their answer – it is a counterattack against EU sanctions, drawing on traditional xenophobia towards neighbouring Poland,

and also helps with their longstanding objectives of undermining the EU and NATO.

In April 2021, the Russian and Belarusian security services announced the end of a six-month "investigation" into a military coup d'état against Lukashenka. Drawing on the Lukashenka regime's deeply ingrained Polonophobia, five leaders of the Union of Poles in Belarus were arrested and criminally charged with "inciting ethnic and religious hatred" and allegedly taking part in the "rehabilitation of Nazism".

In reality, anti-Western xenophobia against diasporas led to fears over their support for those Lukashenka described as "our fugitives and their companies", and "traitors and extremists" – in other words, the Belarusian opposition who had fled abroad. Lukashenka has also fumed at the continued influence of independent media, such as Nexta broadcasts from Warsaw which are available on Telegram in Belarus.[14]

In May 2021, Lukashenka threatened to push back against the West by unleashing migrants and narcotics into the EU. "We were stopping migrants and drugs – now you will catch them and eat them yourselves," Lukashenka warned.[15] That threat has now been followed through.

Alongside the political tensions caused and the direct disruption posed by the disorganised arrival of migrants, there are concerns that the crisis could feed into the Russian secret services' three-decade tradition of training extremist, separatist and proxy paramilitaries in the former USSR. Polish security forces have previously caught Belarusian "little green men" – soldiers operating without insignia on their uniforms in the style of the GRU (Russian military intelligence) *spetsnaz* (special forces) used in the initial invasion of Crimea in February 2014 – undertaking surveillance and collecting intelligence on Polish territory[16], and there are concerns that Afghan and Iraqi veterans have been trained by the Belarusian "Marjina Horeka" special forces brigade and Russian *spetsnaz* to mingle with migrants and lead violent attacks against the EU's Schengen Zone border.[17]

A second element is added to these tensions by Lukashenka's threat to cut gas deliveries running through the Yamal pipeline, which would threaten the delivery of 20% of Russia's gas to Europe. The use of energy to apply pressure to Western leaders has a long history, with Russia triggering major European gas crises in 2006 and 2009, and this latest threat should give the EU pause when considering whether to certify Nord Stream II.[18] As Prime Minister Boris Johnson has warned, the EU could be choosing between Nord Stream II or Ukraine's security.[19]

Belarusian (and Russian) Strategic Goals

Belarus and the Kremlin have four strategic goals in this crisis.

> 1.   Pressure the EU to negotiate directly with Russian proxy Lukashenka. As Polish Deputy Foreign Minister Piotr Wawrzyk has said, it is possible that in order to do this, Belarus will attempt to escalate the crisis by creating a "major incident, preferably with shots fired and casualties".[20] This is exactly the same tactic Russia has previously used in Ukraine, putting pressure on Kyiv to negotiate directly with Russian proxies in the so-called Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) which control Russian-occupied areas of the Donbas. In both cases, the Russian state pursues the same strategic goal of lobbying for direct negotiations between its enemies and its proxies in order to increase the legitimacy of the latter and to present Russia as a bystander, eager

to participate in negotiations to defuse crises the Kremlin has itself created.   .

2.   Allow Russia to insert itself into proceedings once direct negotiations are launched. Russia pretends to be a bystander in the current crisis in order that it can "assist" in resolving a dispute it has itself masterminded. This tactic was previously used in 2014, when Russia launched a hybrid war against and then invaded Ukraine, while at the same time becoming a member of the Minsk Group and the Normandy Format which were tasked with finding a peaceful outcome to the war.

3.   Remind Poland, Lithuania and the EU that Belarus and Russia have the capacity to push back against sanctions and secure the survival of the Lukashenka regime. The European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) has written that Lukashenka "is not afraid of deaths at the border. For him, this is about vengeance and is a matter of regime survival – meaning that he is ready to escalate further, and to seek Russia's backing in the process. Europeans will need to work together to stop his aggression and avert a humanitarian crisis on their doorstep."[21]

4.   Continue to undermine NATO by reducing its commitment to the security of its Eastern European members and increase divisions within the EU over how Brussels should respond to the migrant crisis. Germany has closed its border with Poland, thus breaking the Schengen Zone. Much will depend on how NATO responds to Poland, Lithuania and Latvia which are invoking article 4 of the NATO Treaty to consult on threats to their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Understanding Russian and Belarusian Motives

Russia and Belarus are dictatorships built on militocratic regimes and run by the *siloviki* (security services) which are imbued with *Chekist*-operating culture[22] and conspiracy mindsets. Both regimes have long-term leaders (Lukashenka has been in power since 1994 and Putin since 2000) who do not plan to give up power.[23] Repression of the opposition in both countries is significant. In Russia, the FSB (Federal Bureau of Security, one of a number of successors to the Soviet KGB) and Ministry of Interior (MVD) are dominant forces, while in Belarus, the KGB remains in place.

As Warsaw-based Centre for Eastern Studies analyst Piotr Zochowski notes, "it is significant that the name of the main special service – the Committee for State Security (KGB) – was kept alive, and the name 'militia' was retained for the police. The Ministry for Internal Affairs, the State Control Committee, the State Border Committee and military intelligence are also based on Soviet models. Thus, the security system of Belarus was built on the basis of a totalitarian state system in which the basic segments of the BSSR security apparatus (the KGB, the Ministry for Internal Affairs with its internal troops) remained unchanged."[24,25]

The paranoia of Belarusian leadership over threats to its position translates into spending nearly three times more on internal security than on the armed forces.[26] Of particular importance to this mindset is concern over Polish threats to western Belarusian territory, and influence on regime change through colour revolutions.[27] Hand-picked "former" KGB officers run the Brest, Grodno and Minsk regions where it is believed Poland, the EU and NATO pose the greatest threats of destabilisation to the regime.

Moscow, meanwhile, views information, cyber and hybrid warfare as strategic tools to respond to what it sees as long-term Western support for regime change stretching back

to the disintegration of the USSR and colour revolutions in the Balkans, Eastern Europe and Eurasia. Putin has always held the view that the West deliberately kept Russia weak in the 1990s and therefore his goal since coming to power has been to revive Russia as a great power that will again command respect by the West.

The authoritarian political system created in Russia in order to achieve this goal needs an external enemy, and given these concerns over Western politics, the US, NATO, and more recently the EU and Poland have all been used to mobilise the Russian population. According to a recent poll by the independent Russian Levada Centre, over three-quarters of Russians (82%) are convinced their country has enemies; only 13% disagreed.[28] Asked to name these enemies, 70% said the US.[29] In their view, the onus for any improvement in relations lies with the West; Russia is an aggrieved party forced to defend itself against Western malfeasance.

These ideas have only grown in strength following the 2014 crisis as Russian media and information operations have fed them. Russian public opinion does not comprehend why their country has been punished with sanctions over Crimea and eastern Ukraine, and views Russia's annexation of the Crimea as resembling Western backing for Kosovo's independence. Russian disinformation claims, in the same vein, that EU sanctions against Belarus are illegitimate.

Putin views past colour revolutions in Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine as having been orchestrated by the CIA, or more recently the EU working alongside the USA to foment regime change in Russia's "zone of privileged interests"[30]. These colour revolutions are viewed by Moscow as the equivalent of Western soft power complementing the hard enlargement of NATO and the EU.

The Relationship Between Belarus and Russia

The Belarusian KGB closely cooperates with its Russian equivalent, the FSB. Because both countries' military forces are part of a single group, Belarusian military intelligence falls under the control of Russia's GRU. As Piotr Zochowski explains, "It is in the interest of the services to provide information, often false, about growing dangers, in order to ensure the ministries of state power retain their domination of the state system. The increasing influence of the message formulated by the KGB or the Ministry for Internal Affairs is evidenced by the language Lukashenka uses in public. He presents Belarus as a 'fortress under siege' and emphasises that the hostile actions of foreign governments (including Poland) are aimed at supporting circles interested in undermining Belarus, and bear traces of a hybrid war." [31]

This close cooperation between the Russian FSB and Belarusian KGB makes a mockery of Moscow's denial of involvement in the migrant crisis. Russian security services assisted Belarus in the forcing down of a Ryanair jet in Minsk, a brazen case of air piracy which not coincidentally took place in May 2021.[32] Close cooperation in political repression between the FSB and local proxies, whether in Belarus or Russian-occupied Donbas in eastern Ukraine, is an undisputed fact.[33] Russian secret service "advisers" have assisted the Belarusian government in the suppression of protests following the 2020 Belarusian elections.

The FSB and KGB jointly protect the border of the budding Russian–Belarusian union, a common economic space which was launched on 4 November 2021. The 28 agreements ("road maps") were signed virtually by Putin on a visit to Russian-occupied Crimea.[34] In

sending his greetings to Crimeans, Lukashenka *de facto* for the first time recognised Russian sovereignty over the occupied peninsula.

Russia's FSB and the Belarusian KGB meet frequently and cooperate on intelligence and counter-intelligence questions. Russian agents are embedded in Belarusian state institutions, enterprises and the media. The Belarusian armed forces are members of a joint Russian–Belarusian military group which is in turn part of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, Putin's attempt to create a Warsaw Pact structure from former Soviet republics.[35] Given this history, is not credible that Belarus is provoking such a major crisis without at least tacit Russian approval.

Indeed, Polish security spokesman Stanislaw Zaryn has described the crisis as "A coordinated attempt to massively enter the territory of the Republic of Poland by migrants used by Belarus for hybrid attacks against Poland … fully controlled by the Belarusian secret services and army",[36] while Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki was more direct: he stated that the true power behind the attack was "in Moscow, the mastermind is President Putin."[37]

How Britain and Europe can Respond

Poland, Lithuania and Latvia are members of the EU and NATO and need their support in handling this crisis. Both international organisations have been slow to respond to the developing chaos.

This slowness belies the fact that the crisis is on the eastern border of both international organisations. There is a need for greater financial, security and intelligence support from the EU and NATO to these three countries which are *de facto* under attack from Russia, using Belarus as its proxy. Britain should play a driving role, using its diplomatic leverage as an interested friend and ally of the EU and a member of NATO to push both blocs to provide necessary support.

This crisis poses an existential threat to the Schengen Zone, one of the most important projects ever undertaken by the EU. Weak and porous frontiers which are vulnerable to large migrant flows – whether spontaneous or directed and weaponised by Europe's enemies – and which allow terrorists to slip into Europe undermine support for a borderless internal union. For the preservation of the European Union's own core freedoms, significant bolstering of the external borders is necessary. Britain should work with Europe to reduce the pull factor drawing migrants to the EU's borders. As the last few weeks have shown, many of those arriving in Europe subsequently make their way to France in order to attempt crossing the Channel. Reducing this draw by aggressively prosecuting people smugglers, cracking down on illegal working, and attempting where possible to return economic migrants to their country of origin would significantly assist our European allies.

During the 2015 refugee crisis, the EU criticised Hungary and Poland for blocking refugees and Hungary for building a border fence; today, the EU is funding the building of a Schengen Zone wall on Poland's, Lithuania's and Latvia's borders with Belarus. Also, unlike during the last crisis, the EU is supporting Poland in stemming the influx of refugees from Belarus and, on 10 November 2021, openly stated that Russia was behind their weaponisation.

The EU should not pay Belarus to keep migrants in the country until their applications have been processed. This would financially reward Minsk and undermine previous

sanctions. Further rounds of EU sanctions should also include Russian entities, based on the understanding that the Kremlin is the real puppet master of the migrant crisis. Failure to include Russian entities will reinforce the Kremlin's disinformation that it is not behind the migrant crisis and avoid putting pressure on the key player. The UK should stand with Europe in applying pressure to the Russian and Belarusian regimes.

The EU should also rule out direct negotiations with Lukashenka which would give him the perception of legitimacy he craves. As the ECFR writes, "As with any form of blackmail, it would be senseless and dangerous to make concessions – because the aggressor will only demand more. This would signal to other authoritarians that such tactics work."[38]

NATO, meanwhile, should provide full support to its Eastern members. Coming at a time when Russia has broken off its ties to NATO (as of October 2021),[39] showing a united front in the face of a more assertive and aggressive Russian state is vital. Poland's eastern border is also the eastern border of the EU and NATO. It is of significant strategic interest that it is secured. Consultations under article 4 of the Treaty should take place now, and NATO should dispatch special forces, paramilitary forces akin to Italy's *Carabinieri* and Spain's *Guardia Civil* (Civil Guard), and engineering units to the Polish, Lithuanian and Latvian borders with Belarus to assist with their security, and to counter attempts at infiltration. The UK has offered army engineers to assist at the border[40], and further such support should be offered when needed.

Consultations should also be held with Ukraine on security threats arising from the migrant crisis under the NATO Charter on a Distinctive Partnership, alongside the threat posed by Russian aggression. The build-up of Russian forces along the Ukrainian border could presage an invasion which would make the current dispute pale in comparison. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace analysts Eugene Rumer and Andrew S. Weiss write that "almost all of the requisite components and justifications for military intervention are either in—or moving into—place. Both the near- and long-term indicators suggest that Kyiv and Washington have good reasons to worry."[41] In seeking to resolve the current crisis, the West must not allow attention to be diverted from the existential threat faced by Kyiv.

1   Taras Kuzio, "Chapter 5: Russian Military Aggression or 'Civil War'?" in *Crisis in Russian Studies? Nationalism (Imperialism), Racism and War* (Bristol: E-IR Publishers, 2020), pp.106-132. https://www.e-ir.info/publication/crisis-in-russian-studies-nationalism-imperialism-racism-and-war/.

2   Eugene Rumer and Andrew S. Weiss, "Ukraine: Putin's Unfinished Business," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 12 November 2021. https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/11/12/ukraine-putin-s-unfinished-business-pub-85771.

3   Thomas Rid, *Active Measures. The Secret History of Disinformation & Political Warfare* (London: Profile Books, 2021).

4   Edward Lucas, "Vladimir Putin weaponises human misery in this new proxy battle in Belarus," *The Sunday Times*, 14 November 2021. https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/putin-weaponises-human-misery-in-this-new-proxy-battle-jztb885bb.

5   Mark Galeotti, "Crimintern: How the Kremlin uses Russia's criminal networks in Europe," European Council on Foreign Relations, 18 April 2017. https://ecfr.eu/publication/crimintern_how_the_kremlin_uses_russias_criminal_networks_in_europe/.

6   Alan Charlish and Felix Hoske, "EU accuses Belarus of 'gangster' methods as migrants shiver at Poland's border," Reuters, 9 November 2021. https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/hundreds-migrants-remain-poland-belarus-border-temperatures-drop-2021-11-09/.

7   "A scheme to use migrants to split the EU is likely to backfire," *The Economist*, 13 November 2021. https://www.economist.com/europe/2021/11/13/a-scheme-to-use-migrants-to-split-the-eu-is-likely-to-backfire.

8   Lucas, "Vladimir Putin weaponises human misery."

9   Elisabeth Braw, "Belarus's Weaponized Migrants Offer a Primer on Gray-Zone Warfare," *DefenseOne*, 3 November 2021. https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2021/11/belaruss-weaponized-migrants-offer-primer-gray-zone-warfare/186590/.

10   Monika Scislowska and Vanessa Gera, "Migrants aided by Belarus try to storm border into Poland," AP, 8 November 2021. https://apnews.com/article/europe-middle-east-poland-migration-warsaw-8cf4879019d24406dcca21922af48ff1.

11   Braw, "Belarus's Weaponized Migrants Offer a Primer on Gray-Zone Warfare."

12   "Restrictive measures against Belarus", European Council, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-belarus/.

13   Robin Emmott, "Exclusive: EU close to deal on new round of Belarus sanctions diplomats say", Reuters, 10 November 2021. https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/exclusive-eu-close-deal-new-round-belarus-sanctions-diplomats-say-2021-11-09/.

14   James Shotter, "Belarus strongman picks fight with Polish community," *Financial Times*, 7 April 2021. https://www.ft.com/content/cfc93283-32b9-4fa7-a769-44df294e7f19.

15   "Lithuanian PM calls Lukashenko 'migrants and drugs' threat absurd," *LRT*, 27 May 2021. https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1418870/lithuanian-pm-calls-lukashenko-migrants-and-drugs-threats-absurd.

16   Daniel Fried, Michal Baranowski and Ben Judah, "Belarus border crisis: Lukashenka weaponizes human misery," Atlantic Council, 9 November 2021. https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/belarusalert/belarus-border-crisis-lukashenka-weaponizes-human-misery/.

17   Andrew Rettman, "Belarus 'trained Afghan and Iraqi veterans' for EU border attacks," *EU Observer*, 10 November 2021. https://euobserver.com/world/153478.

18   Alan Riley, *Nord Stream 2: Myths, Illusions and Realities*, Henry Jackson Society, 24 June 2021. https://henryjacksonsociety.org/publications/nord-stream-2.

19   Laura Hughes and David Sheppard, "Boris Johnson warns EU to choose between Ukraine and Nord Stream 2," *Financial Times*, 15 November 2021.

20   Andrew Roth, "Belarus escorts 1,000 migrants towards Polish border," *The Guardian*, 8 November 2021. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/08/belarus-escorts-hundreds-of-migrants-towards-polish-border.

21   Gustav Gressel, Joanna Hosa and Pavel Slunkin, "No quiet on the eastern front: The migration crisis engineered by Belarus," European Council on Foreign Relations, 9 November 2021. https://ecfr.eu/article/no-quiet-on-the-eastern-front-the-migration-crisis-engineered-by-belarus/.

22   Mette Skak, "Russian strategic culture: the role of today's chekisty," *Contemporary Politics*, vol.32, no.3, pp.324-341.

23   Maria Domanska, "Changing the constitution in Russia: Putin forever?", Centre for Eastern Studies, 3 October 2021. https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2020-03-10/changing-constitution-russia-putin-forever.

24   Piotr Zochowski, "Lukashenka's last line of defence. The Belarusian security apparatus in a time of crisis," *OSW Commentary*, no.402 (Warsaw: Centre for Eastern Studies, 5 August 2021). https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2021-08-05/lukashenkas-last-line-defence-belarusian-security-apparatus-a.

25   Sofie Bedford, "The 2020 Presidential Election in Belarus: Erosion of Authoritarian Stability and Re-politicization of Society," *Nationalities Papers*, vol.49, no.5, pp.808-819.

26   Piotr Zochowski, "Lukashenka's last line of defence. The Belarusian security apparatus in a time of crisis," *OSW Commentary*, no.402 (Warsaw: Centre for Eastern Studies, 5 August 2021). https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2021-08-05/lukashenkas-last-line-defence-belarusian-security-apparatus-a.

27   Shotter, "Belarus strongman picks fight with Polish community."

28   Levada Center, 5 November 2020. https://www.levada.ru/en/2020/11/05/enemies-2/

29   ibid

30   Andrew E. Kramer, "Russia Claims Its Sphere of Influence in the World," *The New York Times*, 31 August 2008. https://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/01/world/europe/01russia.html

31   Zochowski, "Lukashenka's last line of defence."

32   Arseny Sivitsky, "The Hijacking of the Ryanair Flight Over Belarus: A Russian 'Reflexive Control' Operation?" *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, vol. 18, no. 95 (15 June 2021). https://jamestown.org/program/the-hijacking-of-the-ryanair-flight-over-belarus-a-russian-reflexive-control-operation/.

33   Halya Coynash, "'Chief butcher' at Izolyatsia secret Donetsk prison confirms key role of Russian FSB, but raises questions about Ukraine's reaction," Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, 15 November 2021. https://khpg.org/en/1608809734.

34   Grigory Ioffe, "Russia and Belarus Sign a Package of Union State Programs," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, vol. 18, no. 171 (10 November 2021). https://jamestown.org/program/russia-and-belarus-sign-a-package-of-union-state-programs/.

35   Zochowski, "Lukashenka's last line of defence."
36   Scislowska and Gera, "Migrants aided by Belarus try to storm border into Poland."
37   "Poland Accuses Russia of Backing Belarusian 'Attack' as Migrant Border Standoff Intensifies," *RFE/R*L, 9 November 2021. https://www.rferl.org/a/belarus-poland-border-closed/31552312.html.
38   Gressel, Hosa and Slunkin, "No quiet on the eastern front."
39   Dmitri Trenin, "Why Russia Officially Broke With NATO," Carnegie Moscow Center, 20 October 2021. https://carnegiemoscow.org/2021/10/20/why-russia-officially-broke-with-nato-pub-85611.
40   Jonathan Beale and Doug Faulkner, "Belarus migrant crisis: British army engineers to help at Polish border," BBC, 18 November 2021. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-59331828.
41   Rumer and Weiss, "Ukraine: Putin's Unfinished Business."