

Progress Report: Discussion in Lithuania?

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The “Regular Report from the Commission on Lithuania’s Progress Towards Accession,” issued at the beginning of November together with analogous reports about other candidate countries preparing for European Union (EU) membership, was received in Lithuania with much greater resonance than last year’s official Opinion of the European Commission about the country after it applied to join the EU. This must be mentioned and one can feel happy that questions about integrating into the EU are gradually becoming a matter of broader public interest.

In judging the event, I would like to present and substantiate several general assertions: (a) we are overestimating the importance of the start of the negotiations, (b) the invitation to start negotiations depends primarily on ourselves, (c) the European Commission has its own assessment peculiarities and we have to take them into consideration, and (d) the keys to Europe’s door are within the EU.

The issue of the start of the negotiations has lost part of its significance. The EU summit meeting in Luxembourg in December 1997 decided “to launch an accession process comprising ten Central and East European applicant states and Cyprus.” Thus, Lithuania has been taking part in the EU enlargement process as a participant of the European conference since March 12, 1998 and it has taken part since March 30, 1998 in the process of accession to the EU (the participants are 15 European Union states, 11 candidate countries, with Malta probably joining in 1999). Five Central and Eastern European countries, as well as Cyprus, have already sat down at the negotiations table (on March 31, 1998), but the process of accession will be “evolutive and inclusive”, and, thus, the remaining countries will also be invited to start bilateral negotiations when they have satisfied the same criteria as the invited countries. Thus, as the Commission’s Composite paper on the progress of the candidate countries declares: “... when, at the appropriate moment, the European Union decides to extend the negotiations to new candidate countries they will not have great difficulty in integrating into the ongoing negotiations at a comparable level of preparation”.¹

Thus, after the decision of the Luxembourg Council the “status” of the negotiations question changed: it became but one of the stages of the “accession process.” The negotiations are no longer the beginning of the accession process. The process of our accession to the EU has already begun, now it is possible either to speed up or slow down the process (up to complete ruin); however, it is impossible to ask - should we join the EU or not, will we be accepted or not. Now the question can only be phrased: *Is Lithuania able or not able to speed up its journey to EU membership?*

The negotiations themselves, of course, have retained their political “weight”, but only as a very important stage of EU accession and not as the start of the entry process. Increasing the number of stages, without doubt, prolongs the whole process of accession,

¹ *Composite paper. Reports on progress towards accession by each of the candidate countries* (Brussels: European Commission, 1998), p. 30.

however, this is unavoidable - nobody can dispel the carefulness of the EU in preparing to admit countries that were from behind the “iron curtain...”

The formulation that Lithuania’s primary objective is to be invited to begin negotiations at the end of 1998 (now the same is likely to be said about 1999) is not precise. It is, of course, important for us to begin the negotiations as soon as possible and to make sure that important this message is communicated to the appropriate addressee. However, the essence of the negotiations is quite different: it is more important than anything else to end the negotiations as soon as possible, that is, to become a member of the EU as quickly as possible. And this means that the most important thing is to prepare for the negotiations very well because they are not real negotiations, but a taking of inventory. It is necessary to point out in which sectors we are already functioning in accordance with the legal norms of the EU and in which sectors we are not, and how far are we now from the end of the reorganization. If we somehow managed to begin negotiations earlier, they would take a longer time to complete than they are now when we have not yet started them - for the simple reason that in all the possible formulations of the negotiations we have to do the same - to implement the whole legal body of the European Community (the primary and secondary law, called *acquis communautaire*) into our legal system.

In my opinion, this is the essence - by stressing the invitation to start negotiations we undervalue to some extent our own work in making the negotiations as successful as possible, that is to have them as brief as possible. There are still wide gaps in our integration activities, neglected fields which have long been “marked” by impossible promises. We can mention the never ending preparation of the national energy strategy, the too long on-going formation of the regional policy (only its outline has been approved so far), the work in preparing (and the lack of preparation) to implement a joint fishery policy, the still unrealized proposal of the Commission to have a jointly agreed document on medium term economic policies, and the delay in carrying out many other smaller measures.

Our economic indices are not far behind those of many candidate states, we really have the right to be proud of them, everyone - the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the economic councils of the EU - praise the development of our economy. But this is simply not enough. To prepare for the negotiations means merely to become similar to the European Community and the EU states in many respects. To have similar laws, guidelines of economic and social policies, systems of internal affairs and justice, a similar abundance of monitoring, measuring, and certifying institutions, laboratories, agencies with numerous standards, and so on. To put it briefly - in everything, except national culture. Speaking more cynically, accession to the EU is like a “beauty contest” in which points are awarded to contestants for dressing and combing their hair the same way.

For example, in some important parameters of economic liberalism we even surpass the European Community. Lithuania’s economy is more open to trade (our average rate of customs tariffs on manufactured goods is 2.4 percent, whereas in the EU it is 3.6 percent). Taxes and social contributions are much lower in our country (this results in a considerably smaller share of the income being centralized and redistributed through state and municipal budgets). The system of welfare guarantees, which are major concerns for many modern states, is less expanded in our country. However, this is not a

necessity because it does not comply with the model of a market economy of the European Community on the whole, nor with some of the legal norms of the Community, in particular.

In Lithuania (apparently, even in the ruling coalition) there are different attitudes towards the speed-maximum or optimal-of preparation for the negotiations. A comprehensive strategy of Lithuania's accession to the EU, approved at the highest level, would really prove useful, but it does not exist.

On the one hand, we are in a hurry. Our aim is to enter into the negotiations as soon as possible and to end them as soon as possible, to become a member of the EU as quickly as possible. We cannot fall behind. In such a case, the planning of all integration activities must be expanded in an extraordinary manner - from the strategy to detailed sector and function plans with careful control of activities. However, all the deadlines and terms have to be realistic. Too high a speed is not a positive thing in the sense of efficiency - in hurrying too fast, in allotting many funds to it, we will make mistakes, we will do many things in an unqualified manner. (We need tens and hundreds of millions of litai to reorganize according to EU requirements border control, veterinary and plant protection services, customs, standardization, accreditation and metrology agencies, to establish new institutions with new officials and equipment, to carry out investment projects for modernizing the infrastructure; the EU, as well as individual EU states, provide many millions for this purpose). A consistent implementation of EU legal acts into our legal system breaks down. They are ignored, too much is put into plans and projects, and the subsequent failure to implement them compromises the government and the state. At the beginning of his term of office, President of the Republic of Lithuania Valdas Adamkus who directs Lithuania's foreign policy, said: "The decision on integrating into the European Union will be taken in Vilnius." This, by the way, also means that the tasks of integration have to become an integral part of every institution in our state. This has not yet happened. Seimas deputy Romualdas Ozolas has already grasped the problem of the feverish rush and suggested "... to change the style of our entry into the European Union from forcing our way in to walking in at a normal pace."² Maybe this is already the introduction to a discussion?

On the other hand, we are late in many things. We are two years behind the Estonians in normalizing the banking sector, one year behind the Latvians; there is a very similar situation in the sphere of privatization. Both the Government and the Seimas understand this very well. All this shows that it is only at the end of 1998 that we shall start to get ready for serious negotiations with the EU. Soon both politicians and the general public will start discussing these issues - at the beginning, apparently because the number of civil servants and departments engaged in (and overwhelmed by) the integration work and procedures will keep increasing, and later due to the fact that the amount of the capital coming into the country and the troubles and novelties accompanying this capital will also increase. An important reason for the delay was the fact that integration into the European Union was exclusively a foreign policy matter for a long time. Even today there are still some departments left which regard the work of

² Romualdas Ozolas, "Lietuvos kvietimas á ES tikrai atidėtas" (Lithuania's Invitation to the EU Is Really Postponed), *Atgimimas*, 40 (November 13, 1998), 5.

preparing for the negotiations as an additional load, which only interferes with their work in modernizing Lithuania.

The publication of the Regular Report provides a good opportunity to have a look at the very methodology of assessment and generalization and its characteristic features. One must say at once, that the Commission can hardly be reproached for being partial or having made serious mistakes. True, there are inaccuracies and in many countries a certain delay, the incomplete use of the material submitted by the countries will be noticed in generalizing the situation in one or another sector. However, this is more a “technicality” arising from the large workload in the Commission services rather than the conceptual side of preparing the documents. (Perhaps the only very risky, to say the least, statement of the Commission is the following one: “Latvia, and to a lesser extent, Lithuania, are approaching the situation of Estonia in 1997, but in a number of areas, the implementation of economic policy and reforms are too recent to allow the Commission to conclude today that they can already be considered as functioning market economies.”³ We simply have to forgive the Commission for making a statement which simply cannot be proved).

First, let us look at some of the peculiarities of the assessment:

(a) the European Commission evaluates the progress according to “the last ship in the convoy” principle: having recorded a wide gap in the work front and the failure to complete one or several items, it does not compensate for them by the rapid progress made in other spheres. An assessment according to the weakest chains is a common approach where one is afraid of making a mistake. Those who satisfy most of the criteria and fail to satisfy only a few of them, have to pay a high price.

(b) the trust that the Commission has in a country plays an important role. The European Commission, perhaps unconsciously, places more trust in economically stronger partners, countries whose perspective for development is clearer and more comprehensible. For example, Slovenia lags behind Lithuania on a very wide front (the process of privatizing large objects is hardly proceeding, the system of subsidizing producers is still functioning, taxes have not been reformed - even the Value Added Tax (VAT) has not yet been introduced, there are many problems with administrative capabilities). But, a comparatively high level of economic development, the stable, reliable and foreseeable development of the economy in the eyes of the Commission so far “compensates for” even grave shortcomings in the implementation of the *acquis*. Estonia’s case may also at least in part be understood by the same trust in the country and its perspectives: a small Baltic state situated in the vicinity of Finland and being under its total economic influence is a much more acceptable choice than a not so well promoted country located somewhere between a suspicious nuclear power plant and the fortified Kaliningrad region;

(c) while Lithuania attaches vital importance to the annual reports, prepared for Brussels, the Commission behaves in a different way: it forms its opinion on the basis of continuously accumulated information about the country. Therefore, all the data and facts which form the perception of the country on the basis of such a cumulative principle, --

³ *Composite paper*, p.7.

from the data on macroeconomics to the data on professional ethics, are significant. If an official, speaking the foreign language poorly arrived at a business meeting without an interpreter, or if an official missed a workshop in the Netherlands organized by the Commission because she was “tempted” by the shops of Amsterdam, this can be equated to, say, an increase by two points in Lithuania’s inflation rate or the break down of an agreement on privatizing a large object;

(d) difficulties await those who want to understand fully how the Commission assesses the candidate countries in each field. He will only find the reports of the Commission filled with inconsistent facts and rebukes which are assessed on the basis of different criteria. For example, in evaluating the liberalization of prices, one of the main proofs of a functioning market economy, the Commission establishes that in Estonia only 26 percent of the prices of the “basket” of commodities and services used to calculate the consumer price index is still regulated by the state, in Latvia this figure is 19 percent, in Lithuania - 16 percent; and what is the situation in Czech Republic, Hungary, or Slovenia? No answer. The reports contain no such data about other countries; the Commission assesses the degree of price liberalization in these countries according to other criteria. Reports are, in essence, written on the principle of deduction.

Second, the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant posed a separate problem. The peculiarity of the issue is that positions of different sides on it vary greatly (this is probably the only issue where this is the case). Both the EU and Lithuania can render it insoluble. Making the disagreement deeper and going away from the concordance, would make the dispute lose its sense and logic: if the plant is dangerous to Europe, postponing Lithuania’s accession to the EU would not decrease the potential danger of the plant (Lithuania’s earlier acceptance to the EU would even make it easier to resolve the problem sooner and faster). But, this is not the essence of the dispute. The European Commission has been waiting for quite a long time for Lithuania’s energy development strategy, which would reflect the country’s position on the issue of the nuclear power plant. The Commission would like to know it many years in advance both in planning the EU common energy policy and in discussing this issue with the strong opposition to nuclear plants (the oil and gas lobby in Europe is as strong as everywhere else in the world). Our unwillingness to submit a clear perspective harmed both the Commission and ourselves. Currently the Commission tries to turn the dispute into a matter of “principle” (I have in mind the Commission’s letter containing the statement that the international examination of the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant does not have to be carried out). The problem was created by Lithuania when it assumed a kind of responsibility by signing the Nuclear Safety Account Agreement without clearly defining its energy policy even when asked by the Commission to do so. But, of course, the dates for running or closing down the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant rest with experts. The only thing that Lithuanian politicians can state is that it is in our interest, like that of the French, Belgians and British, to remain the producers of safe nuclear electric energy because this guarantees a stable, inexpensive and ecologically irreproachable supply of power. Or that our interest in the future is to get rid of the nuclear power plant and to produce electricity in more traditional ways. Our politicians, apparently, will invite the Commission to explain the political motives of its proposals.

The open debate about the question of the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant shows that this is one of those cases which the European Commission can use to show its constant

concern about the safety of nuclear power plants and especially the need to have very strict requirements for the sake of the health of the residents of Western Europe. We were left with the analogous opportunity to show our own people that we are not going to exchange our national economy interests for EU political requirements. Without the conclusive opinion and decision of experts such a discussion would be only a vainly casuistic exercise.

There are few sentiments in international politics. It is our own problem that we were crossed out of the map of Europe and its politics for 50 years (Foreign Minister Algirdas Saudargas is absolutely correct in saying that if it were not for those years, Lithuania would be a member of the European Union and all other organizations - NATO, WTO, OECD, etc.⁴). True, we are neither forgotten nor ignored. However, during the time when we were “absent”, Europe itself (its larger and not sovietized part) formed a “club” and drew up appropriate “regulations”.

A club with its own rules is a normal thing, however, in this case the characteristic feature is that the club, figuratively speaking, did not only take the name of Europe; but also “patented” it. It seriously declares itself - and is treated - as the only representative of Europe, simply as Europe. In the eyes of the world the club - the European Union - is actually Europe: the wealthy, civilized, influential Europe, remaining one of the leaders of global life. And the more the EU enlarges, the more grounds it has to speak in that manner. Today, only one large and several small steps are needed to make it really identical to Europe. It will certainly make these steps, at least the large one. However, when the EU calls itself “Europe” and when the world accepts this even more, Lithuania and its colleagues find themselves, in fact, in a really awkward situation - to be treated as European countries they have to be members of the EU, and to become members of the EU, they have to do their “homework” and “pass the examinations”. (And to overcome the veto right when the issue of their admission is discussed). Because “bodyguards” stand at the door and they do not allow one to enter Europe without passing tests; neither geography, nor the crowns of Kings Mindaugas and Vytautas nor Christianity, nor anything else will help. Czech Republic Parliament Chairman Vaclav Klaus is only partly right, in calling the EU an “elite club”, which does not admit everybody. It is even worse - it bears the name of our identity, it is us, Europe, and, therefore, we cannot be left behind its door for a long time.

The coming 1999 year will be marked by extraordinary work and changes in the EU. This will be the last year in office for the present EU. The new financial framework of the Community for the year 2000-2006 will have to be approved. The elections to the European Parliament will be held. A new President of the European Commission will be appointed. Efforts will be made to convene in the year 2000 an Intergovernmental Conference to resolve the issues of EU institutional reform. The Economic and Monetary Union will begin operations – the euro will already be in circulation for settling accounts. The Treaty of Amsterdam will come into effect upon completion of the ratification procedures, introducing one more package of legal acts into the *acquis communautaire* of

⁴ Artūras Raèas, “Okupacija nenutraukė Lietuvos diplomatijos veiklos,” *Lietuvos rytas*, 258 (November 4, 1998), 2.

the Community (first of all - the documents of the Schengen Agreement). In general, that will be the final year for decisions by the current Commission...

There is no doubt that by the end of 1999, two years after the announcement of the Opinions, the five countries which were not invited to start negotiations, will have advanced greatly – perhaps even all the countries will be fulfilling the criteria for beginning negotiations set in 1997. Then the last word will rest with the EU- it will have to prove that the enlargement process is “global and inclusive” for all the applying countries.

However, the decision will mostly depend on the candidates themselves. Consistent work will bring each country to its objective. We must not be impatient. Impatience sometimes blinds. Lithuania has the status of an associate EU country, the Free Trade Agreement is in effect, and all the transitional periods in it will come to an end after two years. This is a serious and weighty asset of Lithuania in international activities. Will we exploit this somewhat privileged position in our relations with close and even very distant neighbors? More than one investor in the world would be glad to learn about the possibility to sell his manufactured goods in the huge EU market free of tariffs if these goods are produced in Lithuania - have we done enough to inform investors about this?

The integration activities already demand a lot of additional resources today (workforce, funds, premises, equipment). Soon the demand will grow even more. This should not be treated as simple growth in state government expenses, its nature is quite different. This input is an investment in the future (let's say, analogous to the construction of a large plant). It will assure faster economic development, better welfare, as well as much greater economic and political security for the state.

Joining the EU- taking over the *acquis*, etc.- is nothing but the modernization of the economic, legal, and social system according to the pattern of the present day organized Europe. Practically there are no alternatives in Europe (not to be confused with Eurasia) to the legal system of the EU. By creating our legal system according to the model used - and frequently developed - by the EU, we are not doing any additional work, we are simply rapidly creating a modern legal structure for our state.

All this attests that the road we have chosen - membership in the European Union is a natural one.

OPINION

NATO's Next Round: Why Geostrategy Matters for Lithuania

Daniel P. Fata

In less than six months, leaders of the most successful collective defense alliance in history, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), will gather in Washington to honor the 50th anniversary of its founding. At the Washington Summit in April, 1999, NATO officials will unveil the Alliance's new Strategic Concept which will serve as the guiding framework and blueprint for NATO operations and policies in the post-Cold War era. In addition, NATO will formally integrate the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland - the first new members to join the Alliance since the collapse of the Soviet Union - into its ranks. Both events are historically significant for the Alliance and demonstrate that NATO is adapting to the new international security situation that has emerged since 1991.

In addition to the ceremonies and speeches at the Washington Summit, there will be pressure on NATO leaders to announce when the next round of enlargement will occur. This pressure will be coming undoubtedly from aspirant states in Central and Eastern Europe. Possibly, the new entrants may also exert some pressure on the other 16 member-states to offer a timetable on when additional members may be invited to join. To expect the Alliance to make such a pronouncement in April, however, is both unrealistic and out of touch with the political realities in Washington and other NATO member-state capitals.

The "naming of names" or announcement of a "timetable" for when the next round of invitations may be extended most likely will not be declared at the Washington Summit for the following reasons: U.S. and European officials are suffering from, what one senior Baltic official called, "NATO fatigue." This fatigue, not to be misinterpreted as opposition to further enlargement, stems from the fact that a significant amount of political capital was exerted in the latest round of enlargement, both between Alliance member-state governments and within each country's respective domestic government. The political capital was expended in order to ensure that there was both consensus on the candidates being invited and that the enlargement treaty would be ratified in each member-states' respective legislature. The need for such an effort is evidenced by the numerous amendments proposed and ultimately defeated in the U.S. Senate attempting to ensure that open-ended enlargement of the Alliance did not occur. In addition, the decision to invite only three candidate countries instead of four or five required arguably some political wrangling and convincing between U.S. and European officials.

Another significant reason for why NATO leaders probably will not announce the next round of enlargement in April is the need to evaluate how well and at what cost the three new countries integrate into existing NATO structures. This, possibly more than any other factor, may determine whether there will even be another round of enlargement in the next decade. If the three new countries integrate quickly with moderate cost to the Alliance and demonstrate that they are willing to share the burdens associated with membership, i.e. costs, peacekeeping operations, and out of area operations, then the outlook for future rounds of enlargement is promising. If, however, one or more of the new entrants fails to meet NATO's standard requirements or cannot shoulder the burdens of being a full member, the future for

additional membership, at least in the near term, for any aspirant country will be seriously reexamined.

The other major reason for why NATO leaders are unlikely to extend additional invitations in April is the desire to have NATO remain a collective defense and not a collective security alliance. Created in the tumultuous early years of the Cold War, NATO and its member-states proved dedicated to the cause of guaranteeing stability and security for all free people living in Western Europe and North America. Unquestionably, the bedrock on which the Alliance earned its reputation and justified its existence was Article 5 of the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty which states that “an armed attack against one or more of (signatory parties) in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all; and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith such action as it deems necessary to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.” To move the Alliance away from the mission of collective defense to that of collective security a term which is devoid of a military component for the defense of common territory or the privilege of collective offensive action against an aggressor would represent a fundamental transformation of NATO.

For many members of the U.S. Congress who lived through the darkest days of the Cold War, NATO symbolized the commitment and sacrifice the United States and its European allies were willing to make to defend their freedoms and values. At the center of this symbol was the pledge by all signatories that, if attacked by an outside aggressor most likely the Soviet Union a country’s allies would come to its aid in unity. The respect that developed over the decades for NATO has been transferred to a younger generation of incumbent and emerging leaders and opinion makers. For them, honoring the same pledges of defense, security, and stability is what NATO is all about.

Another indicator of this can be seen in the final vote in the U.S. Senate to ratify the enlargement treaty. Although it passed by an overwhelming margin (80-19), the fact that the defeated amendment proposed by Senator John Warner (R-VA), the incoming chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, received more than 40 votes, albeit most votes were from Senators who were not well-versed on the issue, indicates that fundamentally transforming NATO from a mission of collective defense to collective security is not in the U.S. national interest.

So, what does this mean for future rounds of NATO enlargement? Arguably, the next round of NATO enlargement will be very complicated; many pressures will be facing NATO leaders, in particular Washington, in the next round. The United States will have to be promoter and chief advocate for a next round. None of Europe’s major powers have declared a strategic interest in enlarging the Alliance to include other Central and Eastern European states. Germany’s primary interest in agreeing to enlarge NATO in this round was to ensure that its eastern border was protected by having Poland as the new front line state in the security vacuum that exists in Eastern Europe. France agreed because it wanted to ensure that Germany remained committed to the European Monetary Union and the introduction of a single European currency a way to tie Germany to Europe. Britain agreed because, like the rest of the NATO member-states with the possible exception of Turkey it could not produce a legitimate argument against enlarging NATO.

Thus, the only real debate about NATO in Europe during the past few years was how many countries would be invited to join in the first round. In the end, the

decision to invite the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland was based more on a geopolitical than on a geostrategic basis. This phenomenon will not be repeated again. Western policy-makers, especially those in the U.S. Congress, are going to need to be convinced that a further round of NATO enlargement is in their own country's national and NATO's overall security interests.

Geopolitical refers to the influence of physical factors such as geography, economics, and demography on the decisions and foreign policies of an international state or actor. Geostrategic, on the other hand, recognizes the influence of physical factors such as land and demographics and places a value on these factors based on their importance in initiating, conducting, complementing or completing a military objective. In simplest terms, geostrategic means the value of a physical position required for the conduct of war.

Foremost on the minds of policy-makers in determining whether there will be another round of NATO enlargement will be to assess the geostrategic importance of the candidate countries to NATO's security in relation to the new Strategic Concept, to evaluate the ability of first three new countries to absorb membership costs and integrate successfully into Alliance structures, and to assess Russian attitudes towards further enlargement. In retrospect, the debate that occurred during the latest round of NATO enlargement will be seen as non-existent as compared to the debate that will take place on some countries in the next round.

Another factor to consider for the next round is the likelihood of a larger and more competitive field of candidates. In addition to the applications of the aspirant countries from this latest round competing for Alliance membership, e.g. Romania, Slovenia, the three Baltic states, and Slovakia, there quite possibly may be a few newcomers such as Bulgaria, Sweden, Finland, Austria, and Switzerland. With the exception of Bulgaria, these potential candidates bring not only established ties with Euroatlantic institutions such as the European Union, they also bring well financed militaries, modern weapons systems, and the ability to pay for increased modernization and interoperability costs. Moreover, they border existing NATO member-states, thus, allowing each country to make a geostrategic argument for why they should be awarded membership into the Alliance. While the previous candidate countries may be able to make a few of these same arguments, none of them can make them all.

It is interesting to note that none of the last round's candidate countries with the exception of Poland could be said to be net contributors to the enhancement of NATO area security (note: Hungary does not border a single NATO member-state). These countries can, however, provide strategic value to the Alliance by complementing existing organizational structures. For example, Hungary's military installation in Taszar continues to serve as the intermediate staging base (ISB) for NATO operations in Bosnia. Aspirant countries may follow Hungary's example and demonstrate their strategic value by developing some regional material/technical assets that NATO may lack, e.g. a Baltic air and sea surveillance system or a Baltic air and sea rescue squadron.

What does this mean for Lithuanian aspirations to join NATO? Simply, it means that Vilnius needs to be realistic in its understanding of the Alliance's *raison d'être* and, just as important, of NATO's requirements in accordance with its new Strategic Concept. NATO leaders, themselves, clearly recognize the need to enlarge the Alliance to include the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, however, they also understand that any future enlargement can only be consummated if it brings

tangible benefits to the organization itself. For Vilnius, this means that it must accept it cannot consider or advocate itself to be a net contributor to the security of the transatlantic area. Instead, it should promote itself as being able to provide crucial strategic assets that will complement greater NATO-area security. With the focus of next year's Washington Summit more on the new Strategic Concept than on announcing new members, Lithuanian officials have the opportunity to not only develop a strong rationale and campaign for why their country belongs in NATO but also to continue to reform and enhance the country's military capabilities that will demonstrate Lithuania to be a "strategic asset" to the Alliance.

How should Vilnius best take advantage of this new "opportunity"? It needs to change its argument for why it deserves NATO membership. The standard argument has rested on the pillars of wanting to be part of the transatlantic institutions and western society which Lithuania was unjustly deprived of in 1940, to be a contributor to stability and prosperity of this area, to be part of an indivisible transatlantic security architecture, i.e. NATO, which does not seek to establish dividing lines in Europe, and to maintain good neighborly relations with Russia and all of the countries in the Baltic Sea region. While seemingly valid, this argument is tired, outdated, and ineffective. This argumentation combined with the need for reforming, refocusing, and rebuilding national defense capabilities failed to convince Western policy-makers of the benefits of Lithuanian (or Baltic) membership in the Alliance, and, as a result, NATO leaders decided not to extend an invitation to Lithuania to join the Alliance in Madrid in July, 1997.

What then should Vilnius' new argument be? While recognizing the need to influence the geopolitics of Alliance decision-making, Vilnius' argument emphasize how Lithuanian membership in NATO benefits is geostrategically valuable for the enhancement of NATO member-states' security. The argument should be based on the premise that Lithuania seeks to become a greater contributor in the advancement of the zone of Euroatlantic stability. It seeks to do this by pursuing the following:

- Strengthening relations with Euroatlantic institutions and their respective participating member nations as a means of demonstrating Lithuania's commitment to improving the economic, political, and security structures which have proven to be vital for maintaining peace, prosperity, and stability in Europe.

- Increasing transparency in relations with Russia as a means of showing Moscow that Lithuania seeks to maintain good neighborly relations and advocates the involvement, not isolation, of Russia into Euroatlantic economic, political, and security institutions. This policy has already yielded some success when, in June, 1998, then-Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov stated that Lithuania has the best relations with Moscow of all the Baltic states and that the Estonia and Latvia should follow Vilnius' example.

- Conducting constructive dialogue with respect to Kaliningrad with Russia and Poland over the best approach to address the economic, political and security issues. By Lithuania and Poland advocating greater economic development of Kaliningrad, it demonstrates to Russia and Lithuania and NATO recognize the strategic sensitivities of Kaliningrad to Russia and is actively attempting to involve, not isolate, this region. With NATO's decision to invite Poland to become a full member in the Alliance, Lithuania seeks to improve its own relationship with Kaliningrad and does not believe that the status of Kaliningrad should be used or cited as a reason for withholding an invitation to join the Alliance.

- Advocating NATO membership of at least one Baltic state, preferably Lithuania, for the next round of Alliance enlargement. Lithuania is the only Baltic candidate which borders a NATO member-state (Poland), and, in strict geostrategic terms, would be a logical choice for extending NATO's Article 5 security guarantee. Also, by bordering a NATO member-state, NATO troops and materials can be deployed quickly in the event of a threat to Baltic regional security. Using examples such as the creation of the joint Lithuanian-Polish Battalion (LITPOLBAT) and Lithuanian participation in and hosting of Partnership for Peace exercises are important elements of this policy.

- Increasing defense expenditures as percentage of GDP over the next five years to enhance national military capabilities to meet NATO standards and interoperability requirements. The increase in defense expenditures is being prioritized to include the strengthening of regional materials that will complement existing NATO assets, i.e. the new Baltic air surveillance and radar coverage system based in Lithuania. With respect to costs, Lithuania does not seek to build a huge military but rather, it seeks to provide the assets that would complement and reinforce NATO structures. By stressing that it is both addressing "quality of life" concerns and purchasing anti-tank and anti-air defense systems, it sends the message, particularly to the United States, that Vilnius is pursuing a responsible defense policy plan that involves the improvement in the standards for its troops and the acquisition of basic armaments needed for its national defense.

- Discussing the issue of Lithuania inclusion in the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty which would provide for a limit on the development of Lithuanian national armed forces. Membership in CFE demonstrates to Western policy-makers and Moscow that Vilnius does not plan to engage in an irresponsible massive military build-up. In fact, Lithuanian membership in CFE would provide Vilnius with a comprehensive blueprint of framework for how its strategic policy and forces should develop, thus allowing Vilnius to prioritize its military requirements and acquisitions necessary for national and regional defense.

By immediately adopting a policy advocating its geostrategic value to the Alliance, Vilnius would be taking advantage of a new momentum which has emerged: the interest of some key Euroatlantic states in the development of Northern Europe. The United States, Sweden, and Denmark are the three main advocates of developing this region in all fields including political, economic, and security cooperation. A major tenet of this new momentum is to improve economic relations with Northwestern Russia and Kaliningrad. Politically, the flurry of Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs) that have been proposed by numerous Nordic and continental European countries is indicative of a desire for greater inclusion of the Baltic Sea region into the Euroatlantic institutions.

Militarily, the possibility of opening the CFE treaty to include the Baltic states is another significant indicator of the West's interest in demonstrating to Russia that the Baltic states are considered part of Europe and not part of a Russian sphere of influence. Moreover, the U.S.-initiatives such as the recent review by the Department of Defense to evaluate Baltic military capabilities and needs and the Baltic-U.S. Charter should be seen as indicators of the strong support that exists in Washington for seeing greater inclusion of Lithuania and its Baltic neighbors into the West. Finally, the continued improvement of bilateral relations with Russia should be seen as a "comparative advantage" and should be used by Lithuanian officials as proof that

Lithuania is employing and pursuing a “mature” and “national interest-centered” foreign policy.

By adopting this strategy and continuing to develop its national military capabilities and assets, Vilnius can dramatically increase its chances in being considered a serious contender for membership in the next round of NATO enlargement.

How can Security for the Three Baltic States be best achieved ?

Dietrich Genschel

“Small nations will count as much as large ones and gain their honour by their contribution to the common cause.”

Winston S. Churchill, Zurich, Sept.9.1946

U.S. Ambassador to NATO, Alexander Vershbow opened his statement at the Vilnius Conference 3 - 4 September 1998 by saying: “As foreign policy analysts, we are trained to think in terms of the most likely scenarios.” If in reality scenarios turns out to be of the less or least likely kind, those analysts and diplomats tend to turn to the military men, expecting that they are prepared to think in terms of such different scenarios. What follows are thoughts of a (former) military man.

The security of a state has domestic and external aspects. Modern jargon distinguishes in both areas between soft and hard-core security, some analysts add a third dimension: semi-soft security (e.g. Robert Dalsjö of the Swedish Defense Research Establishment (FOA) in Stockholm). Soft security domestically is a by-product of some key capabilities like political, legal and social stability, economic prosperity and ecological balancing whereas externally soft security can result from intense political cooperation and integration, trade and cultural relations with neighboring states and with the regional and global environment. Soft security implicitly assumes that the state is not exposed to existential, in particular military threats from outside. Semi-soft security is defined as being provided by well-functioning administration, police, customs and border guards. Hard security is mainly of external significance. It is provided by capabilities of a state to deter any external threats to the country and should this fail to defend the country’s territorial integrity successfully. The notion of hard security of course assumes the possibility not necessarily the probability of a serious risk.

Some see the Baltics as a security vacuum in Northeastern Europe. This notion is certainly misleading. Since the break-up of the communist empire the Baltic Sea Region has become a densely interwoven network of political, social, legal, economic and cultural relations between the littoral states and outside participants including the USA which are showing an increasing interest in north-eastern European affairs. Regional organizations like the CBSS, a new “Hanseatic League”, the Nordic Council, the Baltic Council as well as the U.S. Northern European Initiative form the structural framework for these activities. International organizations like the European Union, the OSCE and the Council of Europe are involved as well. All of these activities do provide that kind of soft and semi-soft security to the Baltics.

With a high degree of euphemism this is often regarded as sufficient given the present security environment in which allegedly soft security has even replaced the need for hard-core security. But all international organizations active in the region, with the exception of NATO have by their charter or declared intent expressly declined to deal with matters of hard security, deterrence and defense. None of them and no single state have ever openly pledged to come to the assistance of the Baltic States should they ever be exposed to severe outside pressure or threats to their existence. NATO-membership of Denmark and Germany, admission to NATO of Poland, the high state of Finish and Swedish national defense preparedness and Russian national defense precautions, although conventionally in a dire state, make the considerable lack of hard security for the Baltic States even more obvious. They do not enjoy equal security with all other European democracies, old and new.

Immediately EU and WEU as possible providers for hard security may spring to ones mind. In this respect, key elements are said to be a CFSP of the European Union members and the Brussels-treaty of the WEU, in particular its article V. Without going into any detail it needs to be

kept in mind, that an independent role of the EU/WEU- Europeans in security matters will for the foreseeable future be confined to crisis-management and not to defense proper. And it is agreed policy of both EU and NATO that any future European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) should be developed within the Atlantic Alliance. The WEU is developing into an institutionalized hinge between EU and NATO. Since the collective and individual military means at the disposal of Europeans are limited in scope and effectiveness, main emphasis in improving the WEU's military capabilities is laid on increased cooperation with NATO in order to avoid duplication of structures. And there should be no illusions, achieving progress in military operational capabilities will be possible only in close cooperation with NATO, the CJTF concept designed to be the main instrument. So it is quite clear that as in the past NATO will remain the central anchor for Europe's security in future, although with an increased responsibility of the European countries. Of course, Baltic membership in EU and partnership in the WEU are important but for their own specific political and economic benefits, which for a long time to come will have nothing to do with hard-core security. Both cannot and do not intend to be an alternative to NATO. Therefore the Baltic States as a sub-region are not in a security vacuum but they are faced with a remarkable security gap. The Baltic States do enjoy the benefits of international political and economic relations and cooperation which can take care of some immanent security as long as the international environment remains relatively stable. There is also intense support for the Baltic States in matters of domestic, semi-soft security. But the Baltic States are devoid of any hard security precautions as an indispensable complement in case of crisis from outside not to speak of conflict.

But what crises or conflicts are about? NATO member-states from the London Summit in 1990 onward unanimously insisted on keeping NATO intact although in a revised mode under a totally changed strategy and with a much broadened understanding of security because the world has not become a safe place yet, and not because of any specific threat scenarios. It is worth remembering the very careful wording used in the Strategic Concept: "In contrast with the predominant threat of the past, the risks to Allied security that remain are multifaceted in nature and multidirectional, which makes them hard to predict and assess. NATO must be capable of responding to such risks if stability in Europe and the security of Alliance members are to be preserved. These risks can arise in various ways...rather from the consequences of instabilities that may arise from serious economic, social and political difficulties which are faced by many countries in central and eastern Europe."¹

While this concept is presently under review in NATO I do not believe such formulations will be changed in substance. The strong will of NATO-members to retain the Alliance as an insurance against such unforeseen future events together with the Alliance' ability to take on new tasks in the field of peace support and the continuing involvement of the United States in European Security induced the will of the new democracies to apply for membership in NATO. It was not NATO recruiting the new democracies in order to enlarge eastward, but it was the new democracies who exercised their newly won sovereign right to choose the Alliance of their liking in order to close ranks with the family of democratic states to which they feel to belong.

The Baltics are interested and working towards good relations with their Russian neighbor and as President Meri in June in Warsaw pointed out, "the security environment in the Baltic Sea Region has improved considerably." He added that threat is not a rational behind the enlargement of NATO.² This is of course an expression of high level political correctness. When being in the Baltic countries, however one can observe that for the Baltics, being small, militarily still weak and geographically exposed, the possible risks stemming from instabilities in their immediate geographical neighborhood are of great concern. They are worried about a poor and chaotic

¹ *The Alliance Strategic Concept* (Brussels), para 8 ff (November 1991).

² Lennart Meri. *Address to NATO 15th Workshop* (Vienna), 22 June 1998).

neighbor Russia with bumbling, partly corrupt and so far rather unproductive democratic and economic reforms, coupled with big-power brazenness and an inability to pronounce a moral judgment on 74 years of Communist rule and unrepentant of more than 50 years of suppression of the Baltic states. For the Baltics the Chechenian disaster is still a call for vigilance. The interplay one could observe in Russia this summer between President, Duma, oligarchs and governments bear much more resemblance to a bizarre Machiavellian carnival than to predictable, reliable and trustworthy democratic processes. And the gross overreaction of the Russian leadership including severance of any Russian-Latvian dialogue which followed the clash of ethnic Russian protesters with the police in Riga in March do not bode well for future Baltic-Russian relations. And Russia's insistence on voluntary accession of the Baltics to the Soviet Union in 1940 adds insult to insecurity.

Dmitri Trenin of the Carnegie Moscow Center pointed out in late 1997: "Although there is absolutely no chance of actual restoration of Soviet conditions domestically or in the near abroad, a reversal of the current benign set of policies cannot be ruled out completely." And further "A revisionist policy... may become possible only if reforms utterly fail and nationalism emerges as the principle slogan in the struggle for power."

Even if it means violating "political correctness," reforms have utterly failed. At present and for the foreseeable future developments in Russia have become totally unpredictable. With all due hope and serious efforts for a positive outcome of the present crisis, sudden and unexpected moves to the contrary should not be ruled out. So it is quite understandable that in particular the Baltics want to come under the NATO umbrella. This is exactly the same reason why members of the Alliance want to remain in NATO. In President Meri's words: "We wish to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization for the same reason you wish to stay in: because through the Transatlantic link it provides the best hard-core security available in Europe today."³

Accession to NATO of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary will be approved by NATO members next April and has been reluctantly taken as a fact of life by the Russian Federation. The real test comes with the question of the who, when and how of a second opening round and whether or not the Baltic States will be included.

The three sovereign and democratic Baltic States are of great importance to the Euro-Atlantic community. They are the only now independent parts of the former Soviet Union which have successfully established functioning parliamentary democracies and market economies. Politically all structures and processes constituting a democratic regime and the rule of law are in place, including free media. In this respect they are equal to the three Central European states already invited to join both EU and NATO. In their economies the development of all macro-economic data steadily point in a positive direction. The Baltic States contribute politically to the stability of the Baltic Sea Region as a whole. They constitute an important gateway to commerce with Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and even the Far East. They secure a democratic coast line opposite the Swedish and Finish shores. Together with Poland the Baltics can support democratic developments and market economic endeavors in the Kalinigrad Oblast. Together with Finland the Baltics form a peaceful zone of stability and modernness on Russia's north-western border with possibly positive spillovers into western Russia. Geopolitically they reduce the democracy gap between Finland and Poland. In case of a today unlikely but for the future not to be discarded return of a strong but revisionist Russia the Baltics provide a chance of forward defense for the community of democratic states. Thus they contribute geostrategically to securing the Eastern flank of the Baltic Sea region. As a space for implementing agreed Confidence and Security Building Measures the Baltics can contribute to giving Russia an increased feeling of stability and security at her western borders. In case of admission to NATO this multifaceted role of the Baltic states would greatly add to the

³Lennart Meri, "The Security of Estonia: Lecture by HE Mr. Lennart Meri, President of the Republic of Estonia, 3 March 1998, Royal United Services Institute, London" (Tallinn: Presidential Chancellery, 1998).

strength of the Alliance in the North-eastern European space. To them rightfully should apply what Winston Churchill said in his famous speech in Zurich on September 19, 1946: "Small nations will count as much as large ones and gain their honor by their contribution to the common cause."

From decades of occupation and isolation the Baltics emerged weakened and beset with soviet legacies but liberated and determined to return to the western community of democratic states, full of hope to be welcomed there. They seem to be welcomed in the European Union, time will show how long it will take for them to attain full membership. I am increasingly afraid it may be different with NATO. There are a couple of recurring arguments against admitting the Baltics to NATO: They are said not to be eligible yet; their acceptance would over saturate the Alliance; their territory is not defensible; there is no threat to the Baltics; entry into the EU should have precedence; under post-communist conditions reliance on soft security is sufficient. Above all to get the Baltics in NATO was initially seen as upsetting the reform-process in Russia. Now as the reform process is upset, there the same people are saying, taking the Baltic's on board would be detrimental to Russia's return to the reform process. Whatever is the situation in Russia, the Baltics seem to have to wait anyway.

Most of the arguments lack validity. Only three of them will be commented below.

Doubts in the eligibility of the Baltics, in this case Estonia and Latvia are based partly on allegations of discriminating the large Russian - speaking components of the population. This indeed is a serious and complex problem. Those in the West who support the Russian pressure for speedy integration of the Russian-speakers into Estonian and Latvian societies are often the ones who at the same time concede much, much more time for Russia to adjust to new circumstances. They should have the same patience with the Baltics, in particular since there are serious efforts in Estonia and Latvia to speed up integration. The following points are worth to be kept in mind: Those Russian-speakers still in the countries do not wish to return to Russia. There is an obvious attraction to stay in the Baltics. All have a residence permit connected with a labor permit (with exception of former soviet officers in critical appointments). All are included equally in the respective social security systems, all are eligible to citizenship after fulfillment of certain requirements, Baltic languages in the first place and finally there are no ethnically based conflicts nor violence. An additional problem is posed by the Russian speakers themselves, many do not apply for citizenship, be it that they wish to avoid national service or passing a language exam, or to retain visa-free travel to the Russian Federation.

The other allegation is indefensibility of the Baltic's territory. This is a hollow argument as well. To begin with, under prevailing circumstances and for the foreseeable future the requirement is not to defend against all-out coordinated military aggression but rather and more realistically about aversion of limited interventions during a crisis, encroachment of local armed forces under loose and uncontrolled leadership, armed destabilization, spillover of unrest or upheaval in the Russian Federation, or blackmail by threatening use of violence. Contingencies like these should be solvable with indigenous Baltic means and limited reinforcements from outside. More importantly, the indefensibility in military operational terms of West-Berlin, the Baltic Approaches, Bornholm or Northern Norway during the Cold War never became acute a problem because of membership in the Atlantic Alliance and uncertainty on the part of a possible aggressor about the Alliance' response. Defensibility is primarily a question of political will of individual states or Alliances and appropriate preparation. And if indeed any large scale military aggression is not the main risk the Baltics are confronted with, planning and preparations in NATO for Baltic contingencies could concentrate on AMF-size reinforcements tailored to the actual crisis, as foreseen for new Alliance-members in the NATO-Russia Founding Act.

Final a remark with regard to concerns NATO may become overburdened should too many new members are being taken on board too soon. Despite the fact that NATO for a while needs digesting the first group of new members the argument loses its powers of persuasion when recalling how well the Alliance did cope with all the forces of NATO- and Non-NATO-countries

participating in the operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina including the successful political coordination and cooperation in NATO HQs Brussels.

The fact, that these and other arguments are used so frequently in western quarters is indication, that part of NATO-members themselves are not without problems in view of opening up the Alliance too quickly and for too many new members. But by far the biggest obstacle to Baltic membership is the Russian opposition. Accession of the three Visegrad countries is seen in Russia as bad enough but as something that needs to be tolerated. However, to keep the NATO-door open for the Baltics meets with unabated resistance. Nobody of the Russian political elite, from whatever quarter fails using an opportunity to underline Russia's strong disapproval over NATO's possible intention to take the Baltics on board. There are still threats of counteractions to re-deploy Russian military forces including tactical nuclear weapons forward, or establishing the Baltic's western borders as "red lines" which NATO is not allowed to cross and if it does to cancel cooperation in the NATO Russian Permanent Joint Council. Nobody is more blunt and outspoken on this than the new Prime Minister Primakov. There are some non-governmental studies produced over the last couple of months in Moscow, recommending a more flexible Russian approach towards the Baltics. But there is also a book of 400 pages titled "Russia's Revenge, Overcoming" (Revanche Rossii, Preodolenie) by a certain Swyatoslav Rossich, published by Citadel in Moscow, 1997 which develops a frightening scenario how to regain the Baltics by force in the 1992 to 2006 timeframe as a "possible variant of a historic process that could take place in the coming 10 to 15 years." Such thoughts may fall on fertile ground one day.

The main reasons for the Russian intransigence is her obvious determination vis a vis the Baltic States to leave all future options open. This represents old imperialistic thinking of its purest kind. It shows Russia's inability to mentally and politically cope with independence of former Soviet Republics with all related consequences. Only the definitive fact of inclusion of the Baltic States into the NATO fold could make clear to the Russians, that there is no longer any opportunity to deal with independent neighboring states in terms of Russian domestic politics and that there is no danger to their security emanating from NATO. But this is not so obvious to all those in the West, for whom Russia and her problems are of higher concern than abiding by the OSCE-rules of the right of nations to freely choose their security arrangements. There is a clear danger that Russian opposition and western concerns, sometimes camouflaged with Russian arguments, combine to become a forceful impediment against the continuation of the accession process beyond the first round. Already in 1997 Flora Lewis, the famous American journalist, wrote in the IHT: "It is wrong, bad for all countries involved, to make the whole issue of NATO dependent on Russia's obsessions. Europe needs reliable collective security, which only NATO can provide, if it is to escape repetition of its tragic history. That would be true, even if Russia didn't exist. Russia does exist with terrible internal problems, but they are not reason to keep the rest of the continent from collective security."⁴

NATO has taken Russian concerns extremely serious. The accession process has been designed in a slow, gradual, well considered and transparent way. In parallel to the process of admitting new members NATO and Russia have forged a new kind of special partnership manifested in the Founding Act and in the establishment of the Permanent Joint Council. This meanwhile is meeting on all political and military levels of the Alliance' machinery with the inherent risk of giving Russia a chance to exercise a veto-power which was never conceded to her. Russia is also participating in all the new activities of NATO, from EAPC through PfP to the PCC, has a diplomatic representation at NATO HQs and is preserving peace in Bosnia alongside NATO. Contrary to allegations of Russia's exclusion, quite the contrary is the case.

On the other hand, however, NATO Heads of States and Governments at their Madrid meeting last year alluded to the "states in the Baltic region" as aspiring members. The new

⁴ Flora Lewis, "...," *International Herald Tribune*, 8-9 February, 1997.

mechanisms in NATO like the intensified dialogue, EAPC, PfP and PARP do offer opportunities to increase cooperation and improve preparation for the applicant countries not yet invited. President Clinton and his administration are staunch verbal supporters of the Baltics wish to accede to NATO as expressed in the U.S.-Baltic Charter. Through this charter the U.S. have declared their strategic interest in the independence of the Baltic States, creating a kind of counterweight to the Russian policy of keeping all options open. At the same time neither the president and his administration nor NATO have made any definitive promises as to when the Baltics will be invited to cross the threshold of the NATO-door.

So far to the gap in the present Baltic security status. For filling that gap one has to look at actors external and internal to the Baltic States. What should the Baltics themselves contribute to fill the hard security void.

All Baltic efforts made towards NATO in political and defense terms should be made in a tightly coordinated tri-Baltic way. The Baltics are being looked at in NATO as a sub-regional entity. Weak performance of one Baltic State has negative repercussions for all. Inter-Baltic cooperation and coordination, combined with inter-Baltic support by the strong for the weak is imperative for success in striving for NATO membership. Such cooperation and solidarity is imperative also for withstanding present and future attempts from outside to drive wedges between the Baltics as well as for future unforeseen crises and conflicts.

The Baltics need to foster western understanding for the need to give financial priorities to social, economic and legal developments in the Baltic states, which may slow the speed of increase in defense spending. All the more important will it be to prove, that available defense resources are spent in the most economic way, with emphasis on appropriate mid term development of defense budgets in the direction of approximately 2 percent of GDP, medium term financial forecasts to make rational longer term planning possible, most economic use of available funds concentrating on areas with force-multiplying effects. At the same time it should be made clear, that through National Service the human resource is fully committed including the best and the brightest of Baltic youth and that all efforts are made, to muster unquestionable public support.

All PfP related activities but also bi- and multilateral cooperation offers should be evaluated whether they contribute also to the development of national defense forces. An all-round trained light infantry company can easily be turned into a peacekeeping formation, but not the other way round. Each fully paid national peacekeeping unit costs several times more than a normal light infantry unit at home. Therefore contribution to SFOR-like operations should be kept to the politically affordable minimum. The Baltic states have convincingly shown their willingness and capability to support NATO in Bosnia. Continued unit level contribution should suffice also in future and not be increased.

That leads to the future role of the first rather successful example of practical inter-Baltic military cooperation, the Baltic Peacekeeping Battalion, BALTBAT. At present it is positioned outside the normal Baltic defense forces mainly by having fully professional and excessively high paid personnel. Soldier have got used to the latter, resist transfer to normal Defense Force units and wait for the next well paid deployment. If employed otherwise many tend to leave the military, which is legally permitted. Therefore the Armed Forces cannot profit from their experience. Another problem is the future of this formation. For lack of imagination or political consensus no role for the Battalion within the Baltic States was foreseen but only one in peacekeeping "out of the Baltic area." The role of BALTBAT should be expanded to make it the nucleus of an all-Baltic Reaction Force. The size could over time be expanded to a Baltic Light Infantry Reaction Brigade. Personnel could then be the normal mix of 50 percent regulars (officers, NCO, specialists) and 50 percent national service men. The Battalion or Brigade could at the same time be home and support base for the small Baltic peacekeeping contingents to be provided to NATO, OSCE or United Nations as long and whenever the requirement occurs. In order to alleviate theses shortcomings changes in the conceptual and legal foundations should be made.

The Baltic States would be well advised if they establish a common Baltic military procurement agency. Based on a common weapons procurement concept, in line with common force development plans and NATO interoperability requirements such agency could carefully select what is really needed and financially affordable. Such a common approach could provide for most economic use of scarce resources and interoperability if not standardization.

To push the issue even a bit further, the most effective Baltic contribution to the development of hard security and preparation for NATO membership could be the set-up of a Baltic Defense Community. What proved unsuccessful between the Baltic Republics in the inter-war period should be possible under modern conditions of international relations governed by constant coordination, cooperation and integration as the basic rules of the game. With access to almost all NATO standards and procedures, with experience gained from participating in PfP and NATO peacekeeping, with western/north-western partners assistance it should be possible to develop a NATO compatible, higher degree of sub-regional defense cooperation, if not integration which is at the heart of NATO-life.

Some important pillars of integration are already in the making: BALTNET, BALTRON, BALTBAT and most importantly BALTDEFCOL. A Military Committee links the three Baltic Chiefs of Defense together. Baltic National Security Concepts and even National Defense concepts have very much in common and could easily be coordinated. Under the assumption of political will missing elements could well be developed like a common risk assessment, an integrated Baltic Crisis Management Center, coordinated operational plans and preparations for reinforcements. Such an integrated approach, with southward extensions toward Poland and possibly northward towards Sweden and Finland would give hard security credibility and deterrent impact. In particular it would enable the Baltics to lump their resources together, make maximum use of them and provide interoperability if not standardization through common planning, procedures, training, procurement and funding - all important prerequisites for NATO-membership.

Finally to Western contributions in filling the security gap in the Baltics.

In Foreign- and Security Policy perceptions are often more important than facts. Responsible political decision making has to take account of such perception even if they are misguided. This applies to present day Russia as well. NATO members and other western nations try this with unending forbearance. But if Russian perceptions are fully recognized, Baltic perceptions of their security environment should meet with the same understanding. If there are "legitimate" security concerns on the Russian side about the opening of NATO, Baltic apprehensions of things in Russia possibly going awry need also to be recognized.

The West should abandon wishful thinking about the time-span needed for Russia to develop into something that could at least resemble a democracy or market economy. One should face up to the fact, that this is a task for the next generation of the Russian people themselves and many setbacks are likely to occur on the way. Precautionary policy has to take such possibilities into account and specifically so for the Baltics, since they more than any other Russian neighbor would have to suffer from such setbacks. Let me underline: that need not be the case, but it cannot be totally ruled out. And if it does occur, the Baltics are the only ones in the Baltic Sea region with little to no means to withstand.

With the U.S.-Baltic Charter the U.S. made the politically most far-reaching bilateral offer of assistance to the Baltic States short of security guarantees or guaranteeing Baltic invitation to join NATO. Insofar the charter belongs to the realm of soft security as well. The in-depth assessment of the Baltic armed forces made this Spring by a group of Pentagon Officers is a very welcome outflow of the charter. It will hopefully be followed by increased support with military soft- and hardware. Insofar the charter may turn into a contribution to hard security. On the invitation issue there will obviously not be a particular U.S. leadership role in NATO. As Richard Holbrooke pointed out recently in the Wallstreet Journal: "The U.S. cannot bring the Baltic countries into NATO if our Allies object. All NATO members must be convinced that their inclusion serves the

overall strategic interests of the Alliance and the security of Europe.” Of course the U.S. could, as was proven on many instances in the past, when NATO’s strategic interests had been at stake. Bosnia is the most recent example. With the air of crisis surrounding the U.S. President however, the chances for drastic U.S. initiatives in favor of the Baltics may be slimmer at the moment than one would like. Therefore certainly the European NATO-members will have an important role to play in supporting the start of a second round with inclusion of the Baltics. And they should. Otherwise the Baltics need to be told. It cannot be in the Alliance’ interest to conduct a continuous discussion about opening the Alliance to them without giving them a clear perspective and getting used to an ambivalent situation instead. There is unending noncommittal talk of western and NATO officials along the lines: the door is kept open, you have come a long way, the Baltic Region is champion of integration, of course a lot remains to be done, everybody will be evaluated on his own merits, we will assist you to cross the threshold one day, but you must understand that Russia needs time to adjust and therefore (implicitly) you have to wait. Such talk must come to an end lest the Baltics should feel ridiculed and virtually rejected in their quest for equal security.

For the coming NATO summit one should not hope for an invitation to the Baltics. One should hope however, that at the minimum there is no new invitation at all to leave the chances of the Baltics equal to those of the other applicants. One should also hope for a favorable assessment of progress made in the Baltics in preparation for membership. And lastly one should urge for a declaration which moves the Madrid-language further and gives Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania a clear perspective of when an invitation can be expected. But the Baltics need true advocates among the Europeans who are willing to move the membership issue forward in NATO, those Europeans who are not deterred by Russian blackmail, those who are willing to support Russia but not unconditionally and at the expense of her neighbors security, those who recognize their own interest in a stable and secure northeastern Europe and those sensitive to the moral obligations incurred by all of us having lived in freedom and under the rule of law while our northeastern brothers had to bear the yoke of soviet suppression for many decades. The credibility of NATO as a value-based community of free nations is at stake.

In the meantime bilateral support rendered by many western countries, the Nordics in particular should continue and if at all possible be increased but also better coordinated. Unfortunately a separate coordinating body, BALTSEA has been established among donor states. So far not all too much of substantive coordination has occurred beyond a useful exchange of views. It would be much more effective for donors and recipients, if such coordination took place in the framework of the PfP using established clearing house structures in NATO-Hqs.

In conclusion: the Baltic States are not abandoned and do not live in a security vacuum. They are almost full-fledged members in the family of democratic states which enjoy both soft and hard core security. The crucial exception for the Baltics is: they alone suffer from a severe hard-core security gap. Accession to NATO is the only honest way, to fill that gap. It will take time mainly because of unfounded Russian concerns but also because NATO needs to digest new members. But western democracies should do their utmost to keep this timespan at a minimum. And in the meantime there is a lot to prepare for that moment, when Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia eventually will share with us equal security in the North Atlantic Alliance, which they so richly deserve already today.

FROM THE PAST

*The Soviet Union, Lithuania and the Establishment of the Baltic Entente**

Magnus Ilmjärv

The problem concerning the attitude of the Soviet Government towards the establishment of the Baltic Entente, i.e. the agreement of mutual assistance concluded between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, in Geneva on September 12, 1934, has so far been dealt with slightly. There is not much known about the reasons that forced Lithuania to change its earlier negative attitude towards Baltic cooperation. In this respect, the lack of knowledge can be explained by the inaccessibility of Eastern archives, especially the Archive of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The official Soviet interpretation, cited in the history books, was that in 1934, the Soviet Government approved of cooperation between the Baltic States because the Baltic Entente was looked upon as a possibility to strengthen the independence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and to prevent German expansion in the Baltics. The real reasons and Soviet intentions were not mentioned.

The objectives of this article are to explain Soviet policy toward the Baltic States in 1933-1934, during the period when major political changes took place in Europe. These changes include the coming to power of the Nazis in Germany, the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between Poland and Germany and the end of the Rapallo policy; to answer the question why the Soviet Union began to support Baltic cooperation that it had so far opposed. Another question regarding Baltic cooperation is whether cooperation was seriously looked upon by the three states as a means of safeguarding their independence, or, was it simply a move by the three authoritarian regimes to mislead public opinion. Information contained in the reports and memoranda of Soviet diplomats found in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the former Soviet Union has to be used with caution. Fortunately, additional information concerning the same problem may also be found in other archives. The course of events itself also provides important evidence. The reliability of reports of the Soviet mission in Kaunas may be questioned because similar accounts can not be found in the reports of the Soviet missions in Riga, Tallinn or Helsinki.

The Lithuanian memorandum

The rapidly changing international situation in the first half of 1934 caused Lithuania to change its foreign policy and its previous attitude towards Baltic cooperation. On February 20, Dovas Zaunius, the Lithuanian Foreign Minister, in his conversation with Mihail Karski, the Soviet Minister in Kaunas, ruled out the possibility of Baltic cooperation: "It is absolutely impossible to do business with the Balts, especially with the Latvians."¹ At the same time, Johan Leppik, the Estonian Minister in Kaunas, wrote that the Lithuanian Foreign Minister was afraid that the proposal to establish a Baltic league may originate from Riga, which the Lithuanian Government could not have opposed, bearing in mind public opinion.² Some time later, Karski was informed by Lithuanian

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¹ The diary of Karski. Kaunas, February 27, 1934. AVPR (*Archiv Vneshnei politiki Rossii*, Moscow) 0154-24-48-7, 35.

² Leppik from Kaunas. February 19, 1934. ERA (*Eesti Riigiarhiiv*, Tallinn) 957-13-744, 41.

President Antanas Smetona, that there could be no talk about founding a Baltic league. According to Smetona, Poland used the idea of Baltic cooperation in their anti-Lithuanian policy.³ Nevertheless, some changes could be observed in the attitude of Lithuania towards its northern neighbors. For example, on 24 February, the anniversary of Estonian independence was grandiosely celebrated in Lithuania. Initially this shift in attitude had no effect on Estonian and Latvian diplomatic representatives.⁴

On 25 April 1934, Lithuanian Foreign Minister, Zaunius, sent the ambassadors of Estonia and Latvia, a memorandum aimed at rapprochement of the Baltic States. The first clause of the memorandum declared that every problem which either positively or negatively affects any one of the three Baltic States has the same effect on the other two as well. The second clause stated that any danger aimed at one of the Baltic countries also concerns the vital interests of the others. In the third clause it was said that the governments of all the Baltic States are obliged to take every possible step domestically, to strengthen the solidarity of the Baltic States. The fourth clause stated that there existed no points of conflict between the Baltic States and that future disputes should be settled through negotiations. The fifth clause declared that any of the Baltic States could still have specific problems due to its own geopolitical position or historical background in which case solidarity could not be achieved and that the other two Baltic States should refrain from all acts which could have a negative effect on the state concerned.⁵ This clause referred to the Vilna and Memel questions.

The Vilna question and the strained Lithuanian-Polish relations had previously hindered the Baltic States from reaching a mutual agreement. In this form, the fifth clause prevented Estonia and Latvia from supporting Poland and Germany against Lithuania and gave Lithuania the possibility to decide the questions of Vilna and Memel according to its own discretion. Thus, one question was deliberately excluded, allowing one party to act without hindrance and not having to take into account the views and interests of the others. The latter was problematic for Estonian-Polish relations.

Considering Lithuania's attitude towards the establishment of a Baltic Entente so far, the question of Lithuanian motives arises. In the Rapallo era, Lithuania formed a bridge between Germany and the Soviet Union. The tilt of both Lithuanian and German foreign policy towards the Soviet Union disappeared as Soviet-German relations turned hostile. The conclusion of the non-aggression pact between Poland and Germany created a situation where the mutual interests of Germany and Lithuania towards Poland faded. Germany had demanded a corridor from Poland; Lithuania had demanded Vilna. The Weimar Republic, and at first also Nazi Germany, had looked upon Lithuania as a defense for Eastern Prussia against a Polish attack. So far, Germany had also encouraged the rapprochement of Lithuania and the Soviet Union, which was to impede a Polish-Lithuanian agreement and to block the establishment of a greater Baltic Entente reaching from Helsinki to the Balkans.⁶ Thus, the common policy of Germany and Lithuania towards Poland ceased to exist. It must be added that immediately after the conclusion of the Polish-German non-aggression pact, the situation in Memel grew more critical.

³ Karski's conversation with Smetona. Kaunas, March 19 and 30, 1934. AVPR 0151-24-48-7, 41-40; On the attitude of the Lithuanian authorities towards Baltic cooperation (see also Rodgers, H.I., *Search for Security. A Study in Baltic Diplomacy, 1920-1934*. Archon Books, 1975.)

⁴ The diary of Karski. Kaunas, February 27, 1934. AVPR 0154-24-48-7, 33.

⁵ The text of the Lithuanian memorandum. *Documents on British Foreign Policy* (DBFP) Second Series, Vol. VII, 683-684; See also: Karski's diary. Kaunas, April 28, 1934. AVPR 0154-24-48-7, 52.

⁶ See: Menning from Berlin. June 9, 1926. ERA 957-12-380, 11p; Zehlin from Kaunas, December 12, 1933. *Documents on German Foreign Policy* (DGFP) Ser. C Vol. II, 216.

German economic policy started to ignore Lithuania. In May 1934, Britain, which had so far supported Lithuania in the question of Memel, also changed its attitude due to German pressure and ceased to back Lithuania in the League of Nations. Relations between Lithuania and the Soviet Union were also complicated. Kaunas demanded that the Soviet Union equalize the balance of trade, i.e. increase its purchase of Lithuanian goods. On the other hand, Lithuania was afraid that the Soviets could come to an agreement with Poland at the expense of Lithuania. Soviet-Polish negotiations on prolonging the non-aggression pact⁷ inspired serious doubts in Kaunas concerning Moscow. In connection with the negotiations regarding the protraction of the non-aggression pact, Jozef Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister, directed the Soviet Government's attention towards the fact that the non-aggression pact concluded between the Soviet Union and Lithuania contained a clause which had been interpreted by Lithuania as inconsistent with the Soviet-Polish non-aggression pact.⁸ On the day of the conclusion of the Soviet-Lithuanian non-aggression pact, the Polish Government brought forward a question concerning the note by Georgi Tchicherin, the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, which declared Vilna to be an occupied territory. The Poles asked Moscow to annul Tchicherin's note and stop supporting Lithuania concerning the problem of Vilna, i.e. to declare publicly that it did not support Lithuania.

In his conversation with Litvinov on 11 April, Jurgis Baltrušaitis, the Lithuanian Minister in Moscow, said that Poland had brought forward the Soviet renouncement of Soviet-Lithuanian relations as a precondition to the prolongation of the non-aggression pact, and the delay concerning the signing of the Polish-Soviet non-aggression pact was conditioned namely by that. On 21 April, Baltrušaitis again raised the question of the renouncement of Tchicherin's note.⁹ He was told that the rumors of Tchicherin's renouncement of the note were unfounded. However, by that time, the Baltic States had already prolonged the validity of the non-aggression pacts. The Soviets' proposal to Poland, to prolong the validity of the non-aggression pact and the resulting rumors of the Soviet Union's intention to renounce the note by Tchicherin, were the immediate cause of the 25 April memorandum. This is confirmed in statement made by Eduard Palin, the Finnish minister in Riga, that the decision concerning the memorandum had been taken before 23 April, when the Baltic capitals learned about the planned Baltic protocol.¹⁰

The memorandum of 25 April, was a maneuver by the Lithuanian government to show Moscow that Lithuania would change its foreign policy provided that Moscow renounced Tchicherin's note. On the other hand, it was an attempt to calm down Lithuanian public opinion. Several foreign representatives in Kaunas, including the Estonian Minister, Leppik, were inclined to look upon the Soviet proposal of a Baltic protocol and Germany's refusal as the cause for the Lithuanian memorandum.¹¹ A fairly logical conclusion could be drawn: Berlin's refusal to give any guarantees for the Baltic

⁷ The Non-aggression Pact was signed on May 5, 1934.

⁸ See: The Stomonjakov Memorandum. April 25, 1934. *Dokumenty vneshnei politiki SSSR* (DVP SSSR). Tom XVII, 207; Beck's instructions to Lukasiewicz March 3, 1934 and Litvinov's memorandum of April 2, 1934. *Dokumenty i materialy po istorii sovetsko-polskich otnoshenii* Tom VI, 188-189.

⁹ DVP SSSR Tom. XVII, 252; The Minister of Lithuania received by Stomonjakov. April 21, 1934. AVPR 05-14-99-52. 47.

¹⁰ Palin from Riga. April 28, 1934. UM (*Ulkoasiainministeriön Arkisto*, Helsinki) 5C/16; the same statement can also be found in the report by Torr, the British Minister in Latvia. See: Torr from Riga. May 5, 1934. DBFP Second Series Vol. VII, 685.

¹¹ See: Preston from Kaunas. May 2, 1934. DBFP Second Series Vol. VII, 682; Torr from Riga. 2 May, 1934 DBFP Second Series Vol. VII, 685; Eero Medijainen. *Eesti välispoliitika Balti suund 1926-1934*. Tartu 1991, 40.

States again demonstrated her aggressive intentions and the need for the Baltic States to cooperate in matters of common security. Nevertheless, the Baltic protocol and the 25 April, memorandum had no connection whatsoever.

The fact that the 25 April, memorandum was meant as a political maneuver is also proved by the conversation between Minister Baltrušaitis and the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Stomonjakov, on 14 March. The Lithuanian Minister raised the question of Baltic cooperation and asked for the support of the Soviet Government in minimizing Polish influence in the Baltic States. The Minister was of the opinion that the Soviet Union and Lithuania had similar interests concerning Latvia and Estonia; Lithuanian foreign policy helped to prevent her northern neighbors from approaching Poland. With the help of Stomonjakov's memorandum, Baltrušaitis' standpoints can be quoted as follows, "It should be of importance for us... that Lithuania coordinates its activities with us... Lithuania would like, with our assistance, "to bring Latvia and Estonia to Moscow." If it were possible to achieve this, it would mean that Latvia and Estonia would renounce any official and unofficial ties with Poland." Baltrušaitis added that Lithuania's participation in the Baltic Entente was impossible for the time being and he repeated what had already been said, "Lithuania's position will really change only, if as a result of joint efforts, Latvia and Estonia could be shifted away from Poland towards Moscow."¹² Thus, the Government of Lithuania wanted Moscow to oppose Poland.

The relations between Lithuania and Poland had become aggravated. The Polish-German non-aggression pact enabled Warsaw to exert more political and economic pressure than earlier. The situation in Vilna also became more acute. The country suffered from a foreign policy crisis. In his conversation with Karski on 19 March, President Smetona asked the Soviet Union to take decisive steps in order to demonstrate its interest in Lithuania. He admitted that the enemies of Lithuania stressed the isolation of the country and alarmed public opinion who, in its turn, forced the Government to change its foreign policy orientation. He said, "It is important to show that Lithuania is not isolated, that it can count on Soviet friendship; it should be demonstrated in a way the neighbors could also feel... You should not forget that we cannot hold out without being helped at critical moments." Smetona warned the Russians explicitly of an anti-Soviet government, "Different forces could come to power who would give up real or nominal independence if you refuse to support us. I think that is not in your interests. I am addressing you because the Soviet Union is the only country who does not demand our independence as the price for support." When Smetona raised the question of Vilna and asked the Soviet Minister to express his opinion the answer must have disappointed him. Karski announced that the Soviet Government had no reason to change its passive policy concerning Lithuania and Vilna. He said, "... Our policy towards Poland is aimed at strengthening peace in Eastern Europe where Lithuania is the one to gain most ... Lithuania should demand nothing from us that could damage this policy."¹³ Moscow was afraid that by supporting Lithuania, Poland would be pushed even closer to Germany, which would have led to the formation of a Polish-German bloc. This was the reason why the Russians were not interested in confrontation with Poland.

Thus, Lithuania appeared to be in political isolation and in order to change the situation it began to approach Latvia and Estonia. Because of disagreements with

¹² The Ambassador of Lithuania received by Stomonjakov. March 4, 1934. AVPR 05-14-99-52, 26-29.

¹³ Conversation with Smetona. Karski from Kaunas. March 30, 1934. AVPR 0151-24-48-7, 44-42.

Germany and Poland, Kaunas now regarded a Baltic policy as useful. The Baltic policy was also looked upon as a means of disarming the opposition in foreign policy questions.

Baltic Cooperation and the Soviet Union, 1933

What was the Soviet Union's attitude towards the formation of the Baltic Entente? The attitude of the Soviet Government as well as that of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs towards the formation of a large, as well as, a small Baltic Entente had been negative since 1920. The mutual political agreements between the border states were treated by the Soviet government as if directed against the Soviet Union. One of the objectives of the Soviet Baltic policy, similar to that of Germany, had been to impede Baltic cooperation. Moscow was afraid that unity between the smaller Baltic States would lead to the formation of a larger Baltic Entente directed by Poland. In January, 1932, Karski wrote, "The influence that Poland has in Estonia and Latvia should not leave any doubt that "a small Baltic bloc" would only hide the establishment of Polish supremacy in the Baltics, or, even a step towards the formation of a "greater Baltic Entente"."¹⁴ In the opinion of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, Lithuania and its foreign policy constituted a factor that prevented Poland from strengthening its influence in the Baltics. The other Baltic States had to be prevented from interfering with Polish-Lithuanian relations and Lithuania had to stay isolated from her northern neighbors.

In the records of the Council of People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of 28 December 1929, it is stated, "To recommend Comrade Sviderski to imply to the Latvian Government that we disapprove of any kind of interference with Polish-Lithuanian relations, especially the influencing of Lithuania by the Latvian Government." To exert pressure upon the northern neighbor of Lithuania, an economic agreement was used. It was declared that in the occurrence of anti-Soviet combinations, the Soviet Union was ready to denounce the favorable agreement signed in 1927.¹⁵ The Council of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs recommended to Sviderski, the Minister in Riga, to warn the Latvians that the taking up of the post of foreign minister by the former social democratic Prime Minister, M. Skujenieks, who favored Baltic cooperation, would be considered in Moscow as a step towards worsening Latvian-Soviet relations.¹⁶ Visiting Riga in January 1931, the Lithuanian Prime Minister, Jonas Tūbelis, was warned by the Soviet Minister in Kaunas that close relations between Lithuania and Latvia were not recommended.¹⁷

True enough, from the hints made earlier by the Soviet diplomats, it could be understood that the Soviet Government had begun to support the idea of the establishment of a Baltic Entente. While leaving Moscow on 5 May 1933, Julius Seljamaa, the Estonian Minister in Moscow, was asked by the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, who alluded to the German threat, whether the Baltic Entente would not be necessary to oppose German aggression.¹⁸ In his conversation with the Soviet Minister, Feodor Raskolnikov, in September 1933, during the latter's farewell visit, Foreign Minister

¹⁴ Karski to Raivid. Kaunas, January 21, 1932. AVPR 030-11-12-15, 52.

¹⁵ See also Romuald J. Misiunas, "The Role of the Baltic States in Soviet Relations with the West During the Interwar Period." *Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis. Studia Baltica Stockholmiensia* 3. 1988, 175; AVPR 030-10-10-6, 1.

¹⁶ Protocol No. 2 of the Council of People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. January 30, 1930. AVPR 030-10-10-6.

¹⁷ Edgar Anderson. "Toward the Baltic League 1927-1934." *Lituanus* 1967, No. 1, 14.

¹⁸ ERA 957-13-532. 7-8.

Seljamaa admitted that the Baltic States represented a barrier which defended the Soviet Union from a possible German attack. Seljamaa thought it regrettable that Moscow did not understand the importance of the Baltic States and that there were circles who dreamed of reoccupying the Baltic States. The Estonian Foreign Minister made the Soviet Minister admit that the attitude of the Soviet Government towards the Baltic States had changed. He said, "... now the role that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania play in the present balance of power in Europe is clear to all leading politicians. Moscow is aware of the danger from the Nazis, and the nice phrases that are from time to time pronounced by Berlin, cannot make non-existent, Hitler's or, Rosenberg's intentions towards the Baltic States." At the same time, Raskolnikov did not exclude the possibility that Berlin would return to the Rapallo policy.¹⁹

In 1933, the Soviet Government did not yet support the establishment of an Entente. Litvinov's report was mainly an attempt to force the other party to express his attitude towards Baltic cooperation. Raskolnikov's talk about supporting the Baltic cooperation was not sincere. It is important to remember that with the Nazis' rise to power, the question of Baltic cooperation became especially topical in Estonia, Latvia and also in Lithuanian oppositional circles. In March-April 1933, the problem appeared in the press. At the same time, rumours surfaced about increasing collaboration between Germany and the Soviet Union at the expense of the Baltic States. In spring 1933, the newspaper of the Latvian army, *Latvijas Kareivis*, published a notice from the influential French paper, *Le Figaro*, about a military agreement between the Soviet Union and Germany that also included division of the Baltic States, between the two countries. This was to become reality seven years later, in August 1939. Although the information agency TASS, called it Polish-French "sabotage", sensible people were quite alarmed by it. The possibility of the division of the Baltic States was used in Latvia as one of the main arguments for the necessity of the Baltic cooperation.²⁰ It also influenced the Lithuanian opposition. The Soviet Union was afraid that the Government of Lithuania, which had thus hindered Baltic cooperation could, under the pressure from the opposition, normalize its relations with Poland and approve the establishment of a small Baltic Entente. In April 1933, Stomonjakov, the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, expressed himself clearly on the question of the Baltic Entente, "In the given situation, our practical line is clear. On the one hand, we have to back the negative stance of the Lithuanian Government towards even the small Baltic League... but on the other hand, we also have to carry out a much more active struggle than earlier in Latvia against the formation of the bloc."²¹

Analyzing the Baltic policy of the Soviet Union in 1933, we must also pay attention to the proposal made by the former Latvian Foreign Minister, Felix Cielēns. On 8 April 1933, Cielēns made a suggestion to the Soviet Government via the Soviet Minister, Sviderski, in Riga, to summon a conference of foreign ministers from Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and the Soviet Union in order to discuss the political situation in Eastern Europe. The agenda of the conference was to include questions concerning German foreign policy, possible intervention through Germany in order to help third countries and, naturally, the question of the Baltic cooperation. According to Cielēns, the Soviet Government's policy was two-faced which was expressed in its wish to make an approach to the democracies and its unwillingness to put an end to the Rapallo policy.

¹⁹ A summary from Seljamaa's conversation with Raskolnikov. ERA 957-13-643, 144; Foreign political information of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the ambassadors. September 8, 1933 ERA 957-13-769.

²⁰ See: Morshtyn from Riga. March 30, 1933. AVPR 030-12-15-17, 22.

²¹ Stomonjakov to Sviderski. April 7, 1933. AVPR 05-13-92-40, 2.

Cielēns told the Soviet Minister about his conviction that the security problem of Eastern Europe could only be solved with the help of the Soviet Union. Sviderski wrote about Cielēns' position, "If we let the moment pass we cause damage not only to the possible anti-Hitler front but first of all to ourselves." As to the establishment of the Baltic Entente, the attitude of the Soviet Minister was negative: "The Baltic bloc could be a good idea but in the interests of peace, it would have a negative meaning if, as a result, the Baltic States appeared to be drawn into "great power politics"... The Baltic bloc is the concern of the Baltic States. But in a critical situation where forces are positioned for war, it could appear as a cause for the breach of neutrality."²² It is, however, not clear whether the proposal made by Cielēns was a personal initiative or was backed by the Latvian Government.

Of the three states, the Baltic Entente was propagated most in Latvia. Therefore, the Soviet Union had to be especially active in Latvia in its struggle against the formation of the Baltic Entente. The eastern neighbor was helped by some Latvian social democrats. These individuals were used by the Soviet Union in the struggle against Baltic cooperation. Some of the leaders of the social democrats, such as Fricis Menders, Ansis Bushevics, and Brūno Kalniņš, worked hand in hand with the Soviet Embassy. During the conference of social democrats in April 1933, Bushevics said that the Baltic bloc would draw the country into military adventurism and therefore, in the case that Latvia decided in favor of the formation of the Baltic Entente, the social democratic party would lead armed workers against those who were driving Latvia towards a breach of neutrality. However, Bushevics made a mistake and exposed those who had inspired him: he announced that the Soviet Union would give up its neutral Baltic policy and intervene in Latvian politics. To Sviderski, who had provoked that speech, it seemed a big mistake. The Soviet Minister was of the opinion that the speech showed the Soviet Union as a country hostile to Latvia.²³

According to the instructions given by Stomonjakov, Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Sviderski had to suggest that the Latvian social democrats also oppose the Baltic League in the press: "If, for example, *Socialdemokrāts* would expose in some issues that, making use of the present anti-Hitler mood, some influential circles in Latvia, of whom the most colorful representative in the Bļodnieks cabinet is Salnais,²⁴ are preparing behind the back of the parliament, important international agreements which in the present dangerous situation in Europe, bind Latvia and drag it into larger conflicts - such exposures... would force Salnais and especially Bļodnieks to be very careful and to keep from taking concrete measures.

Simultaneously, the social democrats should be systematically influenced in order to make them more active against Latvia being dragged into the Baltic Entente and falling under Polish influence, and contacts with Ulmanis should be strengthened in order to encourage him to greater activity against the Baltic Entente..."²⁵ Latvia was also offered a new favorable economic agreement, as an incentive not to join the Baltic Entente. By this time, the attitude of the Soviet Government in 1933, towards the formation of the Baltic Entente was absolutely negative, and democracy in Latvia was an obstacle to the formation of the union.

The authoritarian takeover in Latvia and Estonia in the spring of 1934, put an end to the control of the parliament over foreign policy. From that point onwards, foreign policy

²² Sviderski's diary. Riga 20, April 1933. AVPR 05-13-93-41, 44-58.

²³ Sviderski's diary. Riga April 20, 1933. AVPR 05-13-93-41, 60-61.

²⁴ Woldemars Salnais, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Latvia from March 1933 to the coup in 1934.

²⁵ Stomonjakov to Sviderski. April 7, 1933. AVPR 05-13-92-40, 2-5.

decisions were made by a limited circle of people. Freedom of the press was also restricted. The Soviet Government lost its possibility to use the Estonian and Latvian press, and different political forces, to hinder Baltic cooperation. The Embassies in Riga and Tallinn were in great difficulties. Actually, the Soviet Government should have protested against the termination of democratic order, but this was made impossible by the fact the coups were justified by threat from the radical right. The advent of authoritarian regimes was one of the factors which enabled the conclusion of the Baltic Entente.

Proceeding from the fact that at the moment Cielēns made his suggestion, the attitude of the Lithuanian Government and of a number of Latvian social democrats towards the formation of the Baltic Entente was negative, Moscow had no reason to be apprehensive about the Baltic Entente.²⁶ Nevertheless, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs decided to support Cielēns' suggestion. It was obvious that a joint conference of the Baltic States, Poland and the Soviet Union was impossible to convene. If, by some miracle it had happened, there would still have been no results concerning Baltic cooperation. The approval was a political maneuver. The People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs counted on the possibility that the news about Moscow's approval of Baltic cooperation would make Poland and Germany take steps against the establishment of the Baltic Entente. This was in the interest of the Soviet Union. The People's Commissariat was of the opinion that Polish and French diplomacy promoted the rapprochement of Estonia and Latvia with Lithuania, and, of Lithuania with Poland, with the aim of the establishment of a Baltic Entente directed against Germany and the Soviet Union.²⁷ In addition, Cielēns' proposal had its use for European policy - as a counter step taken by the Soviet Government against the planned Pact of Four²⁸, to demonstrate to Germany that on renouncement of the Rapallo policy, an anti-German bloc could be formed in Eastern Europe under the leadership of the Soviet Union.²⁹ This scheme would include Litvinov's and Raskolnikov's announcements to Seljamaa.

What was the Lithuanian attitude towards Cielēns' proposal? The approval of Cielēns' suggestion by the People's Commissariat gave rise to disaffection in Kaunas. Foreign Minister Zaunius informed Karski, the Soviet Minister, that he could not accept Baltic cooperation and there was no reason for Lithuania to change its foreign policy: "To form a union to oppose whom? Germany? Lithuania would not do it. Shall Latvia and Estonia secure Lithuania's ownership of Memel? It is even ludicrous... The activities of Lithuania on the international level are mainly directed against Poland and here Latvia and Estonia have not so far shown themselves as allies... After all, Lithuania cannot have any close contacts with states who are strongly connected with Poland." Zaunius did not understand why the Soviet Union wanted to move against the Pact of Four using the Baltic card. Karski, the Soviet Minister, writing in his letter to Stomonjakov, also criticized the People's Commissariat's approval of Cielēns' proposal, "Participation in the conference suggested by Cielēns, even if by that a maneuver has been kept in mind to hinder a closer approach of Poland towards Latvia and Lithuania, cannot be accepted by

²⁶ See: Sviderski to Stomonjakov. Riga April 20, 1934. AVPR 05-13-93-41, 76-78.

²⁷ Beshanov's memorandum to Litvinov, Krestinski and Karski. March 22, 1933. AVPR 030-12-15-17, 13.

²⁸ The negotiations concerning the formation of the Pact had begun in March 1933. The Pact between four countries - Italy, France, Germany and England - was signed on 15 July 1933 in Rome. It established the political and economic cooperation of the four states. Germany got equal rights with the others to equip itself with arms. The Pact restored Germany's position as one of the four great powers of Europe. At the same time it accepted the leading role of the four states in the European matters. The Soviet Union as a great power was ignored.

²⁹ See: Stomonjakov to Sviderski. April 13, 1933 and April 29, 1933. AVPR 05-13-92-40, 6-11.

Lithuania and it would neither participate in it nor play the role you have planned for it. The Lithuanian Government shall not join our maneuver and our position (in case the Government accepts the suggestion of the Council) would arouse mistrust of our policy.” According to Karski, the maneuver could only please the Lithuanian opposition who was not satisfied with the Government’s policy, and force Kaunas to revise its policy towards Poland.³⁰ The People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs did not agree with Karski’s criticism. Stomonjakov wrote to Karski, “... our decision had been directed by the need not to allow the formation of a Polish-Baltic bloc, the existence of which would contradict not only the interests of the Soviet Union but also those of Lithuania.”³¹

Baltic Cooperation and the Soviet Union, 1934

In February 1934, when the Lithuanian Minister of War, Balys Giedraitis, had in his conversation with Karski already hinted at the possibility of approaching Estonia and Latvia, the latter announced that in case Lithuania joined the Baltic bloc it should count with the positions of Latvia and Estonia which would place constraints on Lithuanian foreign policy.³² In the spring of 1934, Moscow’s attitude towards the formation of the Baltic bloc changed. A memorandum by the People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs concerning the Baltic States admitted: “Our attitude towards the formation of the Baltic bloc had been negative from the beginning of 1934, until May, the same year. In the spring of 1934, our diplomats were of the opinion that the rapprochement of the Baltic States could be useful for us only in such case that if we maintained our influence on one of them (Lithuania). This would enable us to influence the policy of all the Baltic States. German influence in Latvia was strong, while in Estonia, the influence of Poland was strong. Thus, only Lithuania was left for us, where we had to maintain and strengthen our influence.”³³

In approving the formation of the Baltic Entente, the Soviet Union demanded that Lithuania coordinate its Baltic policy with the USSR. This is vividly illustrated by Stomonjakov’s letter of 7 May 1934, to Karski, “In your talks with Lithuanian leaders it is important to confirm that we proceed on the condition that the rapprochement of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia also concerns Lithuanian-Soviet relations, that Lithuania should maintain contact with us regarding all the Baltic questions which concern our interests. The course of the future negotiations between Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia depends on the positive attitude of your conversation partners to our statement.”³⁴ With this, Moscow clearly declared that it would not hinder Baltic cooperation provided that Lithuania informed the Soviet Government. The Russians were afraid that a totally negative position of the Baltic question would essentially impair relations with Kaunas and Lithuania would normalize its relations with Poland.

The question is whether the Soviet Government, who in the spring of 1934, was supporting Baltic cooperation, encouraged its “little friend” to join a Baltic bloc. It was surprising that in the spring of 1934, the basis for Baltic cooperation was laid by a Lithuanian memorandum - the same Lithuania whose government had so far been hostile towards any joint activities. During the visit of Estonian and Latvian journalists to the Soviet Union in the beginning of May 1934, it was announced by Julian Rosenblatt, the

³⁰ Karski to Stomonjakov. Kaunas April 19, 1933. AVPR 05-13-93-41, 40-42.

³¹ Stomonjakov to Karski. April 29, 1933. AVPR 05-13-93-42, 3.

³² Karski’s diary. Kaunas February 28, 1934. AVPR 0151-24-48-7, 34-33.

³³ A Report On the Formation and Activities of the Baltic Entente (dateless). AVPR 154-25-36-15, 1-13.

³⁴ AVPR 05-14-99-52, 52.

editor of *Izvestija's* internal affairs department that on 25 April, under Moscow's encouragement, Lithuania had submitted a memorandum to Estonia and Latvia and had recommended a positive stance towards Lithuania's proposal, despite the questions of Vilna and Memel.³⁵

The documentary materials from the archive of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs do not confirm this statement. A memorandum concerning Baltic cooperation states that the Lithuanian memorandum of 25 April, resulted from Lithuania's distrust in the Soviet Union, "At that time our relations with Lithuania were complicated due to our economic relations... Furthermore, the Lithuanians were afraid that ... the Soviet Union could grant Poland concessions at the expense of Lithuania, i.e. would accept the Polish amendments to our demarche..."³⁶ In the latter case, the negotiations concerning the prolongation of the Soviet-Polish non-aggression pact and Tchicherin's note were kept in mind. It should be mentioned that in the course of the negotiations, Poland demanded that the Soviet Union no longer support Lithuania in the Vilna question. Rosenblatt's statement was made at a time when Moscow had no firm stand yet on the question of Baltic cooperation. Most probably it was meant to activate Poland and Germany against Baltic cooperation. The statement included another piece of false information - the wish of the Soviet Government to conclude defensive treaties with the Baltic States.

True enough, on 25 April, even before Tallinn and Riga learned about the memorandum, Foreign Minister Zaunius handed a copy of it to the Soviet Minister, Karski. The latter wrote about his conversation with Zaunius, "Nobody is as yet acquainted with the content of the memorandum except the Soviet Union and Lithuania." This was a game. The same day, the memorandum was also submitted to the British representative to Kaunas. It is possible that the Soviet Minister had been informed some hours earlier. To Karski's question whether by the memorandum, Lithuania sought rapprochement of the Baltic States, or, even the formation of an alliance, Zaunius answered in the negative, "This would only be possible in a couple of years provided real solidarity and mutual interests exist."

Thomas Preston, the British representative to Kaunas, also writes that he could not make Zaunius admit that the memorandum had been the first step towards the formation of the Baltic Entente.³⁷ By the memorandum of 25 April, Baltic cooperation was not yet kept in mind. For example, president Smetona's talk with Karski on 19 March. The memorandum was a maneuver by Kaunas in order to make the Soviet Government declare its support for Lithuania and its opposition to Poland. Eduard Palin, the Finnish Ambassador in Riga at that time, wrote, "...it is not entirely impossible that - as the skeptics think - Lithuania has submitted the memorandum as a purely tactical maneuver without bearing Baltic cooperation in mind. However, it is difficult to state the aims of the maneuver that could actually be useful for Lithuania."³⁸

The wish to find support from the Soviet Government against Poland was not fulfilled. On 5 May, the Lithuanian Government was caught by an unpleasant surprise. That day, the protocol concerning the prolongation of the validity of the Soviet-Polish non-aggression pact was signed. An additional protocol was annexed to it by which the Soviet Government actually renounced Tchicherin's note. Karski described the reaction of

³⁵ Kirotar from Moscow. May 5, 1934. ERA 957-14-9, 10.

³⁶ A Report On the Formation and Activities of the Baltic Entente (dateless). AVPR 154-25-36-15, 4.

³⁷ Karski's diary. Kaunas April 28, 1934. AVPR 0154-24-48-7, 54-51; Preston from Kaunas. April 28, 1934. DBFP Second Series Vol. VII, 682.

³⁸ Palin from Riga. April 28, 1934. UM 5C/16.

the Lithuanian president, the prime minister and the foreign minister as follows: “Smetona ... thought that the protocol aggravated Lithuania’s position ... He considers the signing of the protocol to have negative consequences for Lithuania. Tūbelis said that the protocol was unfavorable for Lithuania; it restricts the interpretation of Tchicherin’s note, increases the imaginary picture of Lithuania’s isolation... Zaunius received me very coolly. Lithuania cannot be pleased with the protocol.”

At the same time, on 6 May, *Pravda* wrote that the Soviet Union would welcome an agreement between Lithuania and Poland. This was understood in Kaunas as the Soviet Government’s call to capitulate to Poland. Noel Charles, the British representative to Moscow and Thomas Preston, British representative to Kaunas, also took the protocol of 5 May, as an abrupt change in the Soviet Union policy towards Lithuania - leaving Lithuania to her fate.³⁹ The evaluation was correct. On 5 May 1934, the Soviet Union betrayed Lithuania for the first time. There was nothing the Lithuanian Government could do except carry out the memorandum initially meant only as a political maneuver.

Keeping in mind relations with Germany and Poland, Lithuania’s memorandum placed Estonia and Latvia in a difficult position. Though only a month earlier, Foreign Minister Seljamaa had supported Estonian-Lithuanian cooperation, on 10 March, he told Soviet Minister, Ustinov, that “Estonia would never engage itself with such a partner who faces problems like those of Vilna and Memel.”⁴⁰ Bronius Dailidė, the Lithuanian Minister in Tallinn, was of the same opinion as Seljamaa. According to the words of the Ambassador, Lithuania was not going to tie its hands by forming a Baltic bloc; “Lithuania is interested in developing economic relations with other Baltic States but has no intentions of joining a political bloc which would only cause losses...”⁴¹ Tallinn and Riga feared that in order to break out of its political isolation, Lithuania would move closer to the Soviet Union, or, even conclude a military alliance. Latvia and Estonia would in that case be cut off from the rest of the world.

Bearing in mind Soviet policy towards Germany and Poland, their apprehensions were unfounded. But they had not seen through the two-faced policy of the Soviet Union. In addition, the Latvians were afraid that if the 25 April memorandum were renounced, then Lithuania would seek a compromise with Poland. That would have meant a substantial growth of Polish influence in the Baltic States which did not coincide with Latvia’s interests.⁴² On the other hand, the pressure of public opinion also must have had some influence, as several historians have pointed out.⁴³ The Estonian and Latvian press often contained articles propagating Baltic solidarity. That was one of the reasons why Estonia and Latvia acquiesced with the Lithuanian memorandum.

In May and June 1934, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania negotiated the principles of establishment of the Baltic Entente. Lithuania’s memorandum was discussed on 7-8 May, by Heinrich Laretei, representative of Estonia and Wilhelms Munters, representative of Latvia. According to Seljamaa, the Latvians were ready to go much further in their cooperation with Lithuania than the Estonians. Estonia was not ready to let Lithuania join the Estonian-Latvian military alliance, whereas Latvia agreed to conclude an unconditional alliance with Lithuania. The Estonian Foreign Minister explained this by the Lithuanian orientation of Latvian society and newspaper articles in favor of the Baltic

³⁹ Karski to Stomonjakov. Kaunas May 11 and May 18, 1934. AVPR 05-14-99-53, 102-106 and 111-112; Charles from Moscow. May 8, 1934. DBFP, 686-687.

⁴⁰ Ustinov to Stomonjakov. Tallinn March 23, 1934. AVPR 05-14-109-102, 28.

⁴¹ Ustinov from Tallinn to Stomonjakov. March 23, 1934. AVPR 05-14-109-102, 18.

⁴² Palin from Riga. April 28, 1934. UM 5C/16.

⁴³ See: Arumäe, H. Kahe ilma piiril. Tallinn 1979, 79-81; Medijainen, 38.

Entente which also had an influence on members of the Government. Seljamaa was pessimistic about the formation of the Baltic Entente. He admitted to Ustinov that Estonia would never conclude an agreement that might drag her into the inevitable over the unsolved Vilna question.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, on 12 May, Estonia and Latvia submitted a joint reply to Lithuania whereby the parties proposed that Lithuania join the Estonian-Latvian alliance agreement signed on 17 February 1934. The latter was meant to supplement the Estonian-Latvian treaty of alliance concluded in November 1923. On 29 May, Lithuania submitted a counter memorandum asking to establish the date on which the representatives of the three states would start discussions on Baltic cooperation in Kaunas.⁴⁵ On 7-9 July, a conference took place in Kaunas. The Government of Lithuania set as its objective, the elaboration of the basic principles of the agreement of cooperation between Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia proceeding from the 25 April memorandum. Lithuania was represented by the new Foreign Minister, Stasys Lozoraitis; Latvia by the Secretary General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Munters and Estonia by Foreign Minister, Laretei. At this meeting, the main principles for the joint activities of the three Baltic States were worked out. But the conference did not fulfill expectations. The main point of disagreement was the question concerning "specific problems". Lithuania demanded solidarity from the other Contracting Parties on the question of Vilna and Memel and that in their domestic and foreign policy they should keep from any activities which could damage Lithuania's interests.

Munters and Laretei refused to accept the last demand stating that Lithuania which had "specific problems", had in its turn, no obligations with respect to Latvia and Estonia. The acceptance of the Lithuanian demand would have momentarily meant a rise in tension in the relations with Poland and Germany which could only be in the interests of the Soviet Union. Laretei and Munters made a suggestion to include a clause in the agreement, according to the provisions by which any Contracting Party would have had the right to denounce the agreement with one month's notice in case "specific problems" endangered the joint activities of the three Baltic States. The last formulation was not accepted by Lithuania. The agreement on the establishment of the Baltic Entente was not signed. The negotiations held at the conference showed the different attitudes of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia towards foreign policy. Lozoraitis informed Karski of the principles of cooperation that had been discussed at the conference. The position of Lithuania with respect to the cooperation of the Baltic States made Karski admit, "Lithuania in its Baltic rapprochement policy is operating objectively in compliance with our interests as far as it continues to fight against the influence of Poland and Germany."⁴⁶

After the conference, Estonia and Latvia decided that if it was impossible to leave out the question of Vilna, the negotiations had come to a deadlock. Neither Tallinn nor Riga wanted to bind themselves with obligations that would lead Estonia and Latvia into a conflict with Poland.⁴⁷ Dissatisfaction could be observed in Lithuania too. The reason for this was the presumed Polish and German orientation of the other Contracting Parties

⁴⁴ Ustinov's diary. Tallinn May 28, 1934. AVPR 0154-27-39-7, 36; See also: Leppik from Kaunas. September 7, 1934. ERA 957-13-747, 88.

⁴⁵ A weekly review by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to all Estonian ministers. June 1, 1934. ERA 957-14-13, 7.

⁴⁶ Karski's talks with Lozoraitis on 8, 9 and 12 July 1934. Kaunas July 17, 1934. AVPR 0151-24-48-7, 92-88.

⁴⁷ See: Ustinov's diary. Tallinn July 22, 1934. AVPR 0154-27-39-7, 57.

which threatened to terminate Baltic cooperation.⁴⁸ Notwithstanding these differences, the foundation of the Baltic Entente was still laid in Kaunas.

The “Agreement of Solidarity and Cooperation” between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania was initialed on 29 August 1934, in Riga and signed on 12 September 1934, in Geneva. The first Article of the agreement obligated the three Governments “to work together in foreign policy matters of mutual importance and to provide mutual assistance in political and diplomatic matters in their international relations.” The third Article of the agreement accepted the existence of specific problems which constituted an exception to the first Article. By that, Estonia and Latvia declared their neutrality in relation to the problems of Vilna and Memel. Thus, Lithuania had to solve the most important questions without the assistance of Estonia and Latvia. The seventh Article of the agreement announced that the agreement was also open for accession by the third states, but only with the approval of all the Contracting Parties.⁴⁹ In reality the said clause turned the agreement into a closed one. Estonia and Latvia would have liked in the future to have Poland and Finland as Contracting Parties but, in the opinion of the Lithuanian Government, as well as Karski, the Soviet Minister in Kaunas, the seventh clause prevented Estonia and Latvia from concluding a political treaty with Poland or Germany.⁵⁰

Taking into consideration the different interests in the foreign policy of the Contracting Parties, the Soviets were especially satisfied with the wording “specific problems” (non-interference of Estonia and Latvia in the problems of Vilna and Memel) and the possibility of accession to the agreement upon the approval by the Contracting Parties (an obstacle for Estonia and Latvia if they wanted to conclude an alliance with Poland or Germany). Despite Finland’s anti-Soviet orientation, it was not interested in joining the Baltic Entente; and although that was known in Moscow, it still caused apprehension.⁵¹

On 31 August, two days after the preliminary approval of the agreement on the Baltic cooperation, Foreign Minister Lozoraitis made a statement to Karski. It should be quoted word for word:

“The Government of Lithuania fully accepts the Soviet Government’s positive position on the question of the Baltic pact. This fact can only strengthen mutual understanding and cooperation between Lithuania and the Soviet Union. The Government of Lithuania considers it important to declare to the Soviet Government that Lithuanian-Soviet friendship shall continue to form the basis of Lithuanian policy. It is of greater importance than any other agreement. The rapprochement of Lithuania with Estonia and Latvia cannot harm Lithuanian-Soviet relations in any way. The Government of Lithuania shall in its relations with the Baltic States proceed from the same principles that formed the basis for our relations.”

Karski noted that, “In addition, Lozoraitis reaffirmed the Lithuanian Government’s commitment to our “gentlemen’s agreement.” He said in plain words that the confidential information we gave him not to make the agreement known to the other Baltic States without our approval, shall not be known to the others. At the same time the obligations of the Lithuanian Government under the gentlemen’s agreement shall be in force.”⁵²

⁴⁸ Karski to Stomonjakov. Kaunas September 9, 1934. AVPR 05-14-99-54, 51.

⁴⁹ Eesti lepingud välisriikidega XII, 1933-1934. Tallinn 1935, 278. The Conference of the Baltic Ministers for Foreign Affairs in Tallinn 30 November to 1 December 1934. ERA 957-14-72, 29.

⁵⁰ Karski to Stomonjakov. Kaunas, September 9, 1934. AVPR 05-14-99-54, 51-52.

⁵¹ Karski to Stomonjakov (On the basis of the report of the Italian Ambassador to Helsinki). Kaunas April 7, 1933. AVPR 05-14-102-109, 68.

⁵² Karski to Stomonjakov. Kaunas September 9, 1934. AVPR 05-14-99-54, 52-53.

What agreement was kept in mind? In 1926 Lithuania and the Soviet Union had concluded a non-aggression pact. A secret so-called *gentleman's agreement* was added. Lithuania agreed to inform the Soviet Government about its neighbors' intentions. The *gentleman's agreement* was renewed in 1931.⁵³ The change in the Lithuanian attitude towards the Soviet Union took place in the spring of 1938, and that was due to the Polish ultimatum and the Vilna crisis. In 1934, however, the opposition of the Soviet Government to Baltic cooperation that had existed from 1920, came to an end. The Soviet press wrote after the establishment of the Baltic Entente, that Baltic cooperation would strengthen the independence of the Baltic States. At the same time the Baltic States were warned not to fall under the influence of some great imperialist powers.

Conclusion

The establishment of the Baltic Entente was possible due to the great changes in European politics in 1933-1934. One of the main reasons had been the political isolation of Lithuania and the renouncement of Tchicherin's note of 1926, by the Soviet Government. The role of the Soviet Union in, and its approval of, the formation of the Baltic Entente has been overestimated by a number of authors. The coming to power of the National Socialists and the resultant strengthening of revisionism, the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between Poland and Germany and the establishment of authoritarian regimes in Estonia and Latvia in the spring of 1934, deprived the Soviet Government of the possibility to interfere with Baltic cooperation. In 1934, the best way for Moscow was not to impede, but to approve Baltic cooperation which left a possibility for directing the political behavior of the Baltic States.

Moscow was afraid that the Lithuanian Government's negative stance regarding Baltic cooperation would force the latter to normalize its relations with Poland which could have formed a basis for a Polish-Baltic (German?) bloc. The territorial and economic problems of the Lithuanian Government, however, dictated its collaboration with the Soviet Union on the question of Baltic cooperation. But this did not determine the position of Estonia and Latvia regarding Baltic cooperation. The approval of Estonia and Latvia had been conditioned by the fear that Lithuania could move even closer to the Soviet Union. In Tallinn, as well as, in Riga, the Baltic Entente was mainly looked upon as a means for obliging Lithuania to consider the standpoints of the northern neighbors.

By approving Baltic cooperation, the Soviet Government wished to use Lithuania in imposing its influence upon Latvia and Estonia. Germany wanted to use Estonia with the same aim - to impose its influence upon Latvia and Lithuania. It would be a mistake to consider it as Moscow's wish to conclude any agreement with the border states or establish political cooperation. The Soviet Union and Germany looked upon the Baltic States as an object of agreement in lieu of solving the general political matters of Europe. Therefore, the statements of the Soviet Union concerning the Baltic States and its expressions of support for Baltic independence should be taken as a tactical maneuver, the aim of which was to convince Germany of the need to continue the Rapallo policy. Afraid of pushing Poland even closer to Germany and of damaging the Rapallo policy, the Soviet Government did not actually want to establish any closer political or military-political relations with the three Baltic States.

⁵³ See: Zenonas Butkus. Antilatviškas Lietuvos ir SSRS "džentelmenišką" susitarimą 1926 M. *Acta Baltica* 1994. Kaunas 1997, 127-128.

In the 1930s, Soviet diplomats made statements as if the Soviet Government wished to conclude some kind of pact of mutual assistance with the Baltic States. Up to the conclusion of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, such statements should be looked upon as political maneuvers which were meant for Berlin to pay attention to the possibility of an alternative to Rapallo. When any Baltic military or political officials proposed further negotiations on the question of cooperation, the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs terminated talks on that issue. Soviet foreign policy of the 1930s had two alternatives: orientation towards Germany or the states of the Versailles System.

The main aim of Soviet foreign policy was to prevent war on two fronts - with Germany in the West and Japan in the East. Therefore the first alternative was the inevitable one and any political maneuver that could jeopardize it was prohibited. Thus, each maneuver had its limits which could not have been exceeded. The Baltic question could have been solved by the Soviet Union and Germany only after solving the problem of Poland.

Lithuanian Public View on National Security in a Changing Environment

Rolandas Kačinskas

Introduction

During his recent visit in Vilnius where he presented the Lithuanian version of his book *People, States and Fear*, the well-known security theorist Barry Buzan, in answering the question of what kind of threats prevail today in Europe, said that while so-called “soft” security issues are predominant in the region of the European Union today, the periphery is more likely to be exhausted by regional conflicts, military threats, outbursts of nationalism and ethnic hostility. Although Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have just recently appeared on the blueprints of security analysts their security situation, as a rule, is described widely as an extremely complex matter. It has been suggested that the security risks facing these countries differ greatly from those facing the states of the European Union, which are, first and foremost, concerned about their stable and secure development.

The security analysis of countries in transition is not an easy task, especially if it has to do with public opinion. A general characteristic of all countries in transition is that, due to the rapidly changing environment they suddenly find themselves in, that is, the increasingly complex world around them, the lack of debate about security and the limited number of local security experts, the public at large finds it difficult to articulate clearly its security needs as well as its foreign and security policy goals.

The goal of this study is not to discuss the level of the Lithuanian public’s awareness of security matters, nor to suggest that the public clearly understands the impact of political changes in Lithuania, and elsewhere in Europe for the country’s security situation. In fact, one of the main problems appears to be that there is a relatively large proportion of people who have no opinion on security issues at all. The main task here is to emphasize that Lithuanian society does not perceive the state’s security situation as an “extremely complex” matter and to suggest that Lithuanian people, like their fellow inhabitants of this core of Europe, are preoccupied primarily with ensuring a quiet life today and a coherent and peaceful future. This is also an attempt to highlight the fact that foreign policy and national security interests are well formulated publicly, and that there has developed a rather coherent foreign policy identity.

These conclusions can be drawn from the findings of a major public opinion survey on security issues, conducted in Lithuania in March 1998 on behalf of NATO’s Office of Information and the Press and the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry. The survey, conducted in Lithuania in such an exhaustive manner for the first time, has provided experts and politicians with a unique possibility to get a deeper insight into the public’s attitudes on current security issues and the security choices that the public feels are possible in order to put an end to uncertainties concerning the country’s security. The main purpose of this study was to identify the level of public awareness on a number of national security issues, the level of support for Lithuania’s membership in the EU and NATO, to measure attitudes towards regional arrangements and international security systems, and to examine views on bilateral relationships, as well as to identify the public’s main sources of information on these issues.

The Concept of Security and Potential Threats

There is no data available on the public's understanding of security issues before the great political changes of the late 1980s and the transition period which followed. The issue of Lithuanian security was an internal affair of the Soviet political, military and ideological elite. One could perceive, moreover, that as a single ideological and military doctrine dominated daily life at that time, the understanding of what constituted security was based purely on the level of state power.

With the changes in the security landscape of the continent, and with new actors emerging as players in security matters, the understanding of the concept of security has presented an ever more perplexing picture. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that the Lithuanian understanding of security is increasingly departing from the traditional image of power relationships. On the one hand, the nature of the relationship between the state and the people has changed remarkably. The concept of security is increasingly linked with the concept of a free market economy, the development of a civil society, parliamentary democracy, obedience to the rule law, and the emphasis on individual liberty. On the other hand, diminished security threats in the Baltic sea region and Europe as a whole have paved the way for an increasing concern with issues of the environment, the economy and the nature of social relationships.

Society is in the process of understanding its new environment and distinguishing between immediate internal and long-term external security threats. There is a prevailing sense of a security situation in which the certain domestic developments and regional instability are seen as the biggest and most immediate threats. When asked what are the most dangerous threats to Lithuania, 45 percent of the respondents pointed to internal dangers. Residents of Lithuania were given a list of factors that might influence security and stability in their country. *Crime and corruption* was perceived by the majority of the population as the greatest threat to the country's stability: it was mentioned as a danger by 86 percent of respondents. The second most oft-mentioned problem and threatening phenomenon was the *ineffective control of borders* (69 percent). Two other threats were: the nuclear power station in Ignalina (64 percent) and instability in Russia (64 percent). Other concerns about Lithuania's stability and security mentioned by more than 50 percent of the population: the weakness of the Lithuanian army (52 percent), Russian military transit (52 percent) and the privatization of strategic enterprises in Lithuania (51 percent). Conflicts between Lithuanians and national minorities as well as ex-officers of the Russian armed forces living in Lithuania were not perceived as threatening to Lithuania's security and stability.

When asked to mention the most important threat to Lithuania's security and stability from all those listed in the survey, the most frequently mentioned dangers were crime, corruption and instability in Russia.

Most important threats to Lithuania	%
Crime and corruption	30.3
Instability in Russia	21.7
Nuclear power station in Ignalina	10.2
Absence of Lithuania's membership in a defense alliance	6.3
Privatization of strategic enterprises in Lithuania	5.9
Ineffective control of the borders	4.8
Weakness of the Lithuanian army	3.4
Conflicts between Lithuanians and national minorities	2.8
Russian military transit through Lithuania	1.9

Environmental pollution	1.3
Illegal immigration	0.8
Non-democratic political regime in Belarus	0.7
Former Russian officers living in Lithuania	0.4

Membership in NATO as a Means to Put an End to Uncertainty

Taken together, the integrated problems of social and political transformation as well as the historical legacy of fifty years of foreign occupation and the resulting absence of a coherent security structure in the region, both present a degree of uncertainty about the country's security situation. According to the opinion survey, Lithuanian citizens think that their security is not sufficiently protected. Such an opinion was expressed by 69 percent of Lithuania's inhabitants. For Lithuania, and probably for the other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the fragility of domestic political and economic reforms and the regional security situation make integration with the West the only alternative to domestic and regional instability.

In Lithuania, more people believe that NATO membership is the best way (26 percent) to guarantee security and stability. The next option favored: NATO and EU membership together (23 percent) or neutrality (23 percent). Only 3 percent of Lithuania's population believe that EU membership without NATO can guarantee security and stability for Lithuania. Ethnicity is a factor differentiating the preferences on this issue: ethnic Lithuanians choose NATO membership first (28 percent), followed by neutrality (23 percent) and joint NATO+EU membership (23 percent), while non-Lithuanians prefer NATO+EU membership (26 percent) or neutrality (24 percent) versus NATO membership (11 percent).

Which of these would best guarantee Lithuanian security and stability?	%
NATO membership	26
EU membership	3
NATO+EU membership together	23
Neutrality	23
Other	1
DK/NA	24

The official Lithuanian goal of seeking increased integration and cooperation with the Euro-Atlantic security institutions is well reflected in the public's perception. The Lithuanian population is largely supportive of the country's efforts to join NATO: 55 percent of Lithuanians approve of the government's policy towards NATO and only 26 percent of the population disapproves of such efforts. In Lithuania, ethnicity is not the major differentiating factor in regard with the efforts to join NATO: among ethnic Lithuanians 57 percent support such efforts, 26 percent are against and 17 percent have no opinion. Among non-Lithuanian population, supporters are 45 percent, opponents are 31 percent and 23 percent have no opinion.

The attitudes towards Lithuanian efforts to join NATO are strongly related to the overall opinion on the necessity for Lithuania to join the Alliance and the public's view

of Lithuanian security. Lithuanian residents who believe that, at the moment, Lithuania's security is well assured, are less supportive of the efforts to join NATO (35 percent support such efforts and 30 percent do not) than those who consider Lithuanian security to be insufficiently protected (42 percent of such respondents support efforts to join NATO while 15 percent are against). At the same time, those who would vote in a referendum for Lithuania's joining NATO also usually support the country's efforts in this direction (60 percent support them and 3 percent do not) while those who would vote against the membership are split: 23 percent of them approve the efforts and 22 percent do not.

A number of motives underpin the population's positive view of NATO: first, the alliance is viewed as a functioning organization which holds the greatest promise for European security. In Lithuania the majority of respondents evaluated NATO as the organization which evoked the most confidence.

Level of confidence of the Lithuanian population in various international institutions and organizations	<i>Confident</i>	<i>Not confident</i>	<i>No opinion</i>
NATO	53	14	33
United Nations Organization (UNO)	49	9	42
European Union (EU)	48	16	36
Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)	34	11	55
Council of Europe (CE)	34	12	54
Baltic Council	33	10	57
Western European Union (WEU)	25	13	62
Nordic Council	22	13	65
Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)	14	47	39

Second, almost a third of the respondents, especially the young and those with higher education, are the ones with strong links to the West; for them, NATO constitutes the embodiment of liberal democratic values. Membership is thus seen not only as furthering the external interests of the country's security but as a vital factor in achieving and maintaining domestic stability and democracy. Nearly 33 percent of respondents agree that NATO membership would strengthen democracy in Lithuania. Lithuanians are quite optimistic about the overall positive influence of NATO membership on the country. In addition to exerting a positive influence on the nation's security situation, much good is also expected for Lithuania's economic development and its attractiveness to foreign investors (37 percent and 53 percent respectively); there is also the belief in benefits relating to the development of science and technology (43 percent), as well as increasing confidence in the Lithuanian government (31 percent).

Third, membership in NATO is identified as the only viable course by which Lithuania can balance the might of Russia. If democratic and economic reforms fail and if Western structures are not opened up, and if the security situation in the region deteriorates, it is feared that Russia may be tempted to assume its former role. As many as 58 percent of respondents agree that, considering the proximity of Russia, it would be better for Lithuania to join NATO than to be outside the Western alliance.

Finally, the survey shows that membership is sought because people have insufficient confidence in their own or, for that matter, the government's ability to solve their domestic and external problems. In sum, popular perceptions are that, without

Western engagement, the chances of creating a stable and secure environment in the region are slim.

At the same time, it is understood that membership in NATO is not an easily achieved goal and that much effort will be required in order to achieve it. For one thing, skepticism from the NATO side will have to be overcome. Between 20 percent and 22 percent of the Lithuanian population think that Russian influence and the unwillingness of NATO states to accept new members were the main reasons for not inviting the Baltic countries to join NATO during the first phase of expansion. On the other hand, 37 percent think that the main reason for not inviting Lithuania was the country's lack of readiness for NATO membership. When asked to specify what should be done about the problem of preparation, Lithuanians stress, first of all, the protection of borders and the country's international image. Only 5 percent of the people think that Lithuania is ready to join NATO now. About 25 percent think that it will be ready in two to three years.

What should be done first in order for our country to be prepared to join NATO? <i>(mean scores, 1 - the most important, 8 - the least important)</i>	Lithuania
Improve the protection of our borders	3,71
Improve our country's international image	3,86
Solve disagreements with neighboring countries on border issues	3,97
Adjust our army's standards to NATO standards	4,10
Equip our army with modern military equipment	4,74
Better inform the public about membership in NATO	4,83
Allocate a larger share of the national budget for the armed forces	5,01
Guarantee respect for the rights of ethnic minorities	5,78

Above all, Lithuania's efforts to join international security structures are determined by its security requirements. However, in the increasingly interdependent world, Lithuania's security is closely linked to global developments. Local disagreements and conflicts can have direct and indirect effects reaching far beyond the geographical region in question. Lithuanian defense leaders have repeatedly stated that their country would like to be not only a security consumer, but also a security producer within the European context. So far this idea has been accepted by politicians but without real substantive backing from the public. The survey has proved, however, that as much as 49 percent of the Lithuanian population approves of the participation of Lithuanian troops in joint peacekeeping operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Security and the Nation's Armed Forces

There is broad agreement concerning the security debate within Lithuanian society, a consensus that extends to the following propositions: (a) Lithuania cannot identify concrete enemies in the neighborhood; consequently, military preparations cannot be directed against any given country; (b) Lithuanian defense forces are not yet ready to defend the country in case of aggression.; (c) Lithuania should initiate military resistance if it is attacked by another country.

More than 95 percent of Lithuanians think that their country is not a threat to anyone. At the same time, the majority also think that none of the neighboring or other countries threaten Lithuania in a military sense. In most cases the political risks in

Lithuania's neighborhood have not developed into military threats. As in the case of the Russian crisis, threats may take the form of domestic instability and economic recession, carrying with them a danger of the international escalation of instability. National defense forces are viewed, first and foremost, as a deterrence to any possible threat in the future, and as a necessity for NATO membership.

However, only 17 percent of the Lithuanian population believes in the nation's army's ability to defend the country in case of aggression, while 72 percent of respondents do not believe in the ability of the armed forces. Such a negative stance has a strong influence on the attitude regarding the necessity of stronger defense systems. However, the majority of Lithuanians do not think that the Western countries would provide the necessary military assistance in the case of an attack on Lithuania. Despite this pessimistic view, the majority of the population would still support the idea of military resistance to aggression. But one out of three Lithuanians think that Lithuania should not resist militarily if another country attacks.

Another fundamental question relating to the national defense concerns the problem of the most appropriate size of the country's defense forces. In Lithuania, the most prevalent opinion is that the size of the army is right - 43 percent of Lithuanians think that the size of the defense forces should remain what it is now, but 21 percent of respondents would support an increase in the armed forces. Some 15 percent think that the number of troops is already too large and the army should be reduced. The number of the Lithuanian armed forces personnel permanently deployed in Lithuania is now approximately 10,000. In order to enhance their defense capabilities, Lithuanians also approve of the development of the voluntary armed organization known as SKAT. In the public's view, a combination of the regular army, civilian commitment to military resistance and the subsequent involvement of the populace in that resistance, as well as a well-trained voluntary force, are all factors which could make Lithuania unattractive to a potential aggression.

Concluding Remarks

There can be no doubt that a clearly formulated security concept has utmost importance for the future development of Lithuania. The coherent public perception of the security situation in Lithuania and agreement regarding the methods of ensuring security, as well as the domestic political situation, are factors which make it relatively easy to achieve a consensus in identifying national security interests that can be clearly communicated. Consequently, it helps Lithuania to send a clear signal about the country's security and foreign-policy interests. This is particularly the case regarding membership in NATO. None of the other international security organizations, especially the subregional or regional organizations, are seen by residents as a possible substitutes for real security. In Lithuania, these structures are clearly seen as secondary to achieving membership in both NATO and the EU. Since independence this aim has been the single most consistent foreign policy goal expressed by the population. In turn this goal has been met by equivocation on the part of these organizations. Nevertheless, the commitment of the Lithuanian people to future membership has been unwavering: there is no lack of will in the society to understand and support the basic goal of Euro-Atlantic integration.

One should not neglect, however, the substantial portion of society which finds the discussion of national security issues an insignificant matter. Almost a third of the citizens finds it difficult to articulate an opinion on national security issues. Therefore

one of the main goals of the government should be to bring debate over national security closer to the citizens by providing this debate with greater clarity and opening it up to the public at large.

The Baltic States in NATO's Enlargement Strategy

Klaus-Peter Klaiber*

Every time I come here I can witness firsthand the dynamics of change - positive change. The regeneration of the old town in Vilnius is indeed a marvel. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union the Baltic Sea region has become an ever more vibrant region - politically, socially and economically. New relationships have been forged not only with the littoral states of the Baltic Sea, but indeed between the Baltic states and the wider world. It is with no exaggeration that the area can be termed a model for regional cooperation. This intensifying regional cooperation testifies to the new dynamics, as does the U.S.-Baltic Charter, the involvement of the OSCE and the Council of Europe, and, of course, of the European Union and NATO.

In the case of Lithuania and the Baltic states generally the integration process has already progressed far. Their Europe Association agreements with the EU, their active participation in Partnership for Peace, their close association with the Western European Union, and their membership in the Council of Europe - all these are signs that the Baltic states are becoming a visible part of a successful and cooperative Euro-Atlantic area. In other words, the integration process is well underway. Today, the Baltic area is firmly linked to the dynamics of European integration.

While the speed of these developments is still surprising, the overall thrust is only logical. After all, the Baltic states are part of Europe. Their forced inclusion into the Soviet Union did not change this fact. We all remember that even before the final disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Baltic states were the first countries to successfully reassert their identity and independence. With such a strong attachment to the European values of freedom and independence, it was clear that the Baltic states would quickly re-establish political, cultural, and economic ties with all European countries, as befits their historic European heritage.

But Europe is more than a concept, or a geographic space. The Europe of today also expresses itself in the institutions it has created. Belonging to Europe, therefore, inevitably raises the question of membership in institutions - in the European Union, and, of course, in NATO.

This brings me to the main part of my remarks, NATO's enlargement process. I would like to focus on three aspects of this process: its rationale, its evolution, and the role of the Baltic states in it. In such an audience, I do not have to dwell at length on NATO's rationale for enlargement. Suffice it to say that enlargement and an enlarged alliance is an integral part of a new Europe. A Europe in which the ideological and military dividing lines have been removed will naturally grow together, and we see the admission of new members to NATO as part of this process. Indeed, not to enlarge would be to perpetuate an implicit division of Europe - between a self-confident, secure West, and an uncertain, insecure East. That would be a bad omen for Europe's future.

So much for the objectives. Now to the process. Again, you know the basic facts. At our Madrid Summit last year we invited the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to join. Ratification in our member parliaments is well underway, with only three outstanding ratifications. Next year, at our Washington Summit, we hope to formally welcome the three invitees into NATO.

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At this Summit we will also consider future direction. It is too early to speculate on the outcome. Yet a few things are clear.

First, NATO enlargement is an open process, not an overnight event. This means that enlargement will not “end” after the first three new members have joined. It also means that each country will be considered on its merits, regardless of its geographical location. And it means that the Individual Dialogue will continue.

Second, NATO enlargement does not take place without reference to other European developments.

The enlargement of the European Union is one such development. We have consistently said that the enlargement of the European Union and the enlargement of NATO are parallel and complementary processes. Not, perhaps, in exact timing or in how the decision-making processes work, but certainly in terms of overall objectives.

The NATO-Russia relationship is another critical development. We at NATO must continue to work with Russia to ensure that Russia understands the role we seek to play and to help Russia come to grips with its post-Soviet reality. Fortunately, after a long period of hesitation, we have moved in the direction we desired. The NATO-Russia Founding Act and the Permanent Joint Council have set the stage for a new era of NATO-Russia relations.

Russia is going through a daunting period of transition. Events over the last few days have demonstrated that once again with brutal reality. I do not believe, however, that the current changes should lead Russia away from its path of cooperation with the West. As far as NATO is concerned, we believe that cooperation is the only option to cope with the challenges we face.

Third, enlargement is only one part of NATO’s adaptation. By no means must it assume the role of a “single overriding issue.” Indeed, a look to the Balkans demonstrates the need for NATO and non-nations to act together in a concrete crisis situation. We thus have to develop the mechanisms that allow for such cooperation irrespective of membership. In other words, enlargement must and has been accompanied by a parallel strengthening of the PfP and the EAPC.

Finally, let me now turn to the role of the Baltic states in NATO’s enlargement process. Although they were not invited to join the Alliance at Madrid, the Summit Declaration noted the progress made towards greater stability and cooperation by the states in the Baltic region. Indeed, the steps that the Baltic States have taken are impressive:

First of all, the Baltic States remain committed to the Individual Dialogue with NATO. As a forum for providing high-quality enlargement related information to the Allies, on issues such as relations with neighbors and progress in defense reforms, it is invaluable. All three Baltic States have held intensified dialogue sessions this year with both a NATO Team led by myself and also with the North Atlantic Council.

Second, the Baltic States have improved their relations with the EU to the point of Estonia entering into accession negotiations. There can also be no doubt of their commitment to improving relations with Russia. And the Baltic States and their partners have set a model for multinational military cooperation through pioneering initiatives such as the Baltic Peacekeeping Battalion, BALTBAT. The formation of this Peacekeeping Battalion and the other important initiatives undertaken have been a demonstration that the Baltic states have made regional and international cooperation an integral part of their security policy. When we also consider the very active engagement of the Baltic States in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and Partnership for Peace, the record is impressive.

The Baltic States have also proved their commitment to wider security concerns through their contribution on the ground in Bosnia. The role of the Baltic states in the NATO enlargement process is thus a special one. The commitment of the Baltic states to European and Atlantic values and their commitment to continue on the path of ever closer cooperation, both regionally and internationally, is beyond doubt.

As promised at last year's Madrid Summit, NATO is committed to reviewing the enlargement process at next year's Washington Summit. All the factors that were mentioned will be carefully considered as part of that review process.

The three Baltic states are located at the northern edge of Europe. This location has brought many invasions and occupations over the course of history. But geography is no longer destiny. The Baltic States' journey is not yet complete. But the course is clear - and irreversible.

Development of the Lithuanian Armed Forces - an Important Step for Regional Security and Stability

Jonas Kronkaitis*

I am pleased to represent Lithuania's Ministry of Defense at this conference and to present to this distinguished audience a summary of the progress our young armed forces have made over the last year in building a credible defense force which will meet NATO standards.

Lithuania views NATO as the primary institution, which guarantees the security and stability of its member states as well as the European continent. Lithuania formally applied for NATO membership in January 1994. We were the second country to enter the Partnership for Peace program and have fully and enthusiastically participated in PFP activities.

At the same time Lithuania has pursued a balanced and comprehensive program of national security. In building our armed forces - the best defense forces we can create - we are devoting a substantial amount of our energy to fully training the young men and women who bear the burden of the defense of their country, and providing them with a talented leadership that will make wise judgments. To that end 490 of our military personnel have attended extended terms at various schools in the West and 135 at short-term training courses. We also have a moral obligation to provide them with the best equipment to do their job, while fulfilling our obligation to the taxpayers. We have procured and continue to field state of the art communications equipment, fully meeting all NATO requirements and an effective anti-tank weapon the Karl Gustaf, has been procured and fielded. As one of the smaller states, Lithuania cannot ensure its security only through the use of its armed forces. It must have a strong economy integrated into European and global markets. It must have highly skilled diplomats and political leaders who will steer Lithuania's defense and foreign policy through the rocky shoals of international crises. Our security strategy, national legislation, foreign and defense policy as well as the process of building our defense capability all reflect this "Realpolitik".

We support all processes and mechanisms which could contribute to our security. NATO membership is the most effective instrument because it is based on the principle of a collective defense, and has developed a capacity for crisis management and peace operations. NATO's values are Lithuania's values and the political leadership of Lithuania would be doing an injustice to its citizens if it did not seek membership in this western defense alliance.

The decision to aim for NATO membership has political advantages for the region and implications for our internal decisions in building our defense capability. First let me mention the three most important political advantages:

1. The accession of Lithuania and the other two Baltic States to the Alliance will enlarge the area of stability in Europe.

2. NATO integration helps to guarantee internal political stability and provides confidence for economic development for young democracies such as Lithuania.

3. Even the anticipation of NATO membership has improved relations between states in Central and Eastern Europe. For instance, since 1993 significant progress has been made in the Polish-Lithuanian relations. Poland and Lithuania now view

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each other as strategic partners and have created a combined Lithuanian-Polish Battalion.

While seeking NATO membership, Lithuania maintains good neighbor relations with Belarus and Russia as evidenced by Lithuania's treaties with these two countries on border demarcation and delineation, our national policy of guaranteeing the civil rights of all ethnic minorities, as well as our extensive economic relations with them.

Our aim is to create an armed forces based on the Western model, which can be integrated with NATO forces and also function independently in defense of the country. Two important tasks, required by NATO, have already been accomplished: the democratic, civilian control over the armed forces; and, the adoption of a comprehensive national security strategy which has led to the revision of the military strategy and the creation of a new force structure. In order to optimize command and control of combat units, strengthen their combat potential, improve interoperability with NATO command structures and operational procedures, as well as to assure independent capability to accomplish combat assignments, a Unified command and territorial defense concepts have been adopted creating three military regions. This territorial defense concept will provide a good framework for flexible defense. It will facilitate the integration of the National Defense Volunteer Force into the overall Military Defense Strategy as a component of a single force.

This is a long process, but the first steps have yielded tangible results. Lithuania's successful participation in the NATO led peace-enforcement and stabilization mission in Bosnia as well as the recent Baltic Challenge exercise and Cooperative Assembly exercise in Albania show that Lithuania's military units can effectively perform tasks under NATO command.

Now, I would like to turn to an evaluation of the military preparedness of Lithuania's armed forces. Lithuania has made significant progress in the development of infrastructure by: establishing a clear and effective chain of command; bringing order to the planning, programming and budgeting process; as well as improving military training and the quality of life of the soldiers and officers. Quality of life for our soldiers is at the top of our priorities. This summer we opened a battalion-sized installation, in the port city of Klaipėda, which fully meets western standards. In the first quarter of next year a second installation in Panevėžys will reach those standards. An entirely new installation will begin construction in the year 2000. All of our installations are undergoing some level of renovation. We care for our soldiers and will look after their welfare as much as their combat preparedness.

Training and education of soldiers and officers to assume their responsibilities is a critical component of preparedness. Therefore, we have established a Training and Doctrine Command which assumes the responsibility of planning, organizing and coordinating all aspects of military training to assure that resources are most effectively used to produce highly qualified officers and soldiers. A Basic Training Center is in the process of construction and will become operational in the first quarter of next year. Danish and British officers will introduce Western doctrine and training techniques when the Center becomes operational. Instructor training has already been initiated.

All of this institution building would be impossible without the assistance of partner countries. Danish and British officers have been providing training on a continuous basis for our officers in Western leadership principles, and just recently the British assumed major responsibility for training our cadets at the Military Academy. We highly appreciate all of the technical expertise and material

contributions by Denmark, Norway, the United States, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Germany and other states which participate in both Baltic regional and Lithuanian-based projects.

One might ask: "Can a small country like Lithuania afford an army?" The answer is "Yes", provided defense expenditures are planned taking into account major economic indicators. Because of the growth of Lithuania's GDP and government revenues Lithuania has increased its defense budget by 50 percent in the past year. Currently, it is 1.5 percent of GDP. With balanced growth, we expect to be spending 2 percent of GDP by 2001. This is the level of defense spending by most NATO members and which appears to satisfy the needs of a developing defense system. We continue to prepare our armed forces for NATO integration. This is why Lithuania has actively participated in the creation of Baltic regional defense structures such as the Baltic Peacekeeping Battalion (BALTBAT), the Baltic Naval Squadron (BALTRON), the Baltic Air Surveillance Network (BALTNET) and the Baltic Defense College (BALTDEFCOL). It is our hope that these projects will become an integral part of NATO's infrastructure in the future, and they will be part of our contribution to the military strength of the Alliance.

Our citizens support our efforts to build a credible armed force and recent public opinion polls have shown that over 56 percent of the population supports Lithuania's membership in NATO.

Foreign experts have favorably evaluated Lithuania's recent military progress. The U.S. military team led by General Kievenaar confirmed that we are on the right track in building a defense capability. Lithuania strongly supports the idea that at least one Baltic State should be invited to join when NATO begins the second round of enlargement. The Washington Summit next April should launch an accession process which would eventually admit the best-prepared candidates, including Lithuania.

The tragic events of 58 years ago reduced Lithuania's population by a third. A hard lesson has been learned: if Lithuania's statehood is threatened, we will defend ourselves, with or without NATO. We seek admission to NATO mainly because it would greatly reduce the likelihood of such a tragic event. An armed conflict in our sensitive region would seriously undermine the stability of Europe and would potentially spill over into other countries.

NATO is a defensive organization and no one can reasonably fear its enlargement to the Baltic region. On the contrary, such enlargement would enhance the stability and security not only of the Baltic countries, but also of their neighbors. It is not a secret that there are those who proclaim fear of NATO enlargement. To deny Lithuania NATO membership because of such voices would send a completely wrong signal. Rather than to appease, it would give credence to their view.

I would like to conclude with the observation that the integration process to NATO has already favorably affected security and stability in the region. However, it would be wrong to stop here and be content with only intensive cooperation within PfP. For us, there can be no substitute for NATO membership. We feel strongly that in taking the next step, the security, stability and prosperity of Europe and the Transatlantic community will be enhanced.

FROM VILNIUS CONFERENCE '98

Lithuania Before an Open Door

Vytautas Landsbergis*

The time has come to speak frankly. Signals from Western capitals are already telling us that we should not expect good news concerning Lithuania's security when Poland and two other Central European states are accepted into the North Atlantic Alliance next year. "Nothing is expected to be said in relation to you." This is how they are obliging us to adapt to our potential political exclusion from a frozen Euro-Atlantic security area, as well as to the post-occupation zone of uncertainty and risk.

Events are likely to take this course, although we hope that this will not transpire in the end.

Silence concerning the Baltic states in April 1999, or a failure to mention any one of them among the most likely applicants for NATO membership, would amount to a negative sign implying acceptance of the implementation of the Russian expansionist idea regarding its zone of special interests. At the same time it implies the acknowledgment of the de facto right of the powerful to determine the future of the Baltic states in one way or another. This would also mean a riskier future for the West, which is already capitulating. Thus, we will oppose this exclusion not only for our own sake.

On the other hand, this zone of interest, deriving from nearly sixty-year-old concepts and events, is very familiar to us.

In 1999, we shall commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Stalin-Hitler conspiracy, which marked the start of World War II, which was initiated by Germany and the Soviet Union. To Lithuania this meant hundreds of thousands of lives taken away and annihilation of the economy, nature, spiritual life and humanity lasting half a century. To date, none of the countries in question, the perpetrators of these crimes, has even offered an apology.

We have already won a part of our freedom - but not the whole of it. We are still unable to exercise, and in reality lack recognition, of the freedom to choose our place in an international security structure, such as the Atlantic Alliance. This means that the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, and the "zone" which it delimited, is still alive in the consciousness of politicians, even 60 years later. Our freedom is restricted by the will of Russia's political elite, which causes democratic European elites to step back.

At the beginning of 1999, we will be able to say that five years have passed since Lithuania submitted an official document requesting membership in the North Atlantic alliance. Have we received any reply yet? Most probably we have not. What can one say about an office which has failed to reply to an essential document for five years? It has failed to give an answer to a nation and state which contributed a great deal to bring about the collapse of the monster of red totalitarianism. As a result Russia had a chance to try out alternatives and thereby ease security concerns in democratic Europe. We are saying to the West: we have contributed to your security and you have been able to save billions, hundreds of billions; yet, when we ask for security for our small state, we find ourselves speaking to a brick wall.

After Poland's accession to NATO in April 1999, the area of peace and security should be further extended northward, and not eastward. If we are not provided any

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answer, no clearer sign of future membership, this in itself will serve as an answer pointing to the inability of the West to do what is justified and just, and avoid mistakes. Words about an open door were meaningful a few years ago. It is even uncomfortable to repeat them now, if they only convey vague phrases. However, who can say with any assurance that the politicians will not be repeating the same empty phrases in April of next year in Washington?

For example, words tell us that historically we have always been a real part of the family of Western civilization. However, when we knock on the door - "the open door!" - we are left outside in the yard. There you may be attacked and torn to pieces by a creature intent on fashioning for itself some gnawed-off satellite. Do the westerners know that Russia's laws in force today provide for special social guarantees for its officers in the event that they suffer injuries fighting in the Baltic countries? Please note that it is simply foreseen that some time in the future they will suffer injuries fighting on our land.

Has anybody noticed that a special military exercise was only recently held in the Pskov region? With the approval of the revised CFE treaty, the Russian army sallied forth towards the Estonian border. The exercise was code-named "Operation Comeback." The West permitted an increase in military forces stationed right in front of the Baltic states, and remains blind to everything. The Estonians are happily dreaming about the European Union, and the latter still does not know if it should invite Lithuania to open accession negotiations. Maybe it will wait a while, since a large exercise involving the firing of "strike missiles" was also recently held in the Kaliningrad region. One may ask, which neighbor is Kaliningrad preparing to strike? One may also wonder if the West will describe this Russian behavior in terms of "confidence building measures," though quite a number of such words have already been written and signed.

More questions of a similar nature arise. What would happen if a huge fire erupted in the East, just behind us? For anything can happen there, in fact, and it is not so difficult to imagine this. For instance, one such risk could be a hungry army, which is not under the control of any center. Shall we then see the West extending a helping hand, or will this hand be withdrawn for fear of getting it burnt?

When Stalin was demanding that the West not conclude a separate peace agreement with a nearly-defeated Germany, nobody reminded him that it was he who was the first to conclude similar "peace" agreements with allies - dictators aligned with Hitler. Nobody required a reasonable thing from Stalin; namely, that the Soviets should withdraw their armies from the occupied countries immediately after the war as a condition for being on the same side with the Western allies until the victory. Such demands were not raised. The Atlantic Charter went into the dustbin. Once again, we were the means of paying; such was the Yalta barter, which predetermined horrible misfortunes for nations, for which nobody assumes responsibility. No promises are being made to us in return to extend stronger security guarantees today. Moreover, the politicizing westerners sometimes tell us that the occupation we suffered is our drawback: we have already been sold, sacrificed and "Sovietized"; therefore, our restored existence is again creating problems and is annoying or irritating.

In particular, Russian politicians attached to yesterday's thinking are irritated by our wish to become secure; thus we hear advice from the West "do not irritate." The same advice was offered 60 years ago, when Lithuania was hit by consecutive ultimatums from three neighbors.

Lithuania, however, has no wish to once again find itself a commodity on a counter where the great traders bargain.

Anyway, if this should happen, we fail to understand why the West cannot be more straightforward with Russia. This unhappy and highly unbalanced country sometimes even experiences a shortage of borders; it has neither money, nor guarantees against the chaos, which is called “smuta” in Russian. Yet once again it receives donated funds to save itself and continue pressing its neighbors. Why is it impossible to say: “Here, you can have these billions again, but forget about your dominance in the Baltic states. They want to be with the West, and we will provide haven to them!”

Maybe this seems like the ransoming of hostages, yet it is better to ransom somebody, rather than give money out of fear and receive nothing.

The funniest thing is that in exchange for the money, the West receives orders from officials of its Russian partner: “We will not let the Baltics be accepted! Niet!” What could this mean? At best, states that are the most benevolent towards us translate it in a softer way: you see, Russia disagrees; thus, you are in for a long wait. This is how we come to experience the *de facto* recognized veto right of Russia. And when Western politicians claim that they do not recognize this right of Russia, these are only words, words, words. Another “confidence building measure,” which brings the West another humiliation.

The day is approaching when three Central European states will become NATO members. If on that day nothing is uttered about other states determined to seek membership, in particular about Poland’s neighbor and strategic partner, Lithuania, in other words, if empty phrases or a shameful silence follow the fanfare on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of NATO, we will bear witness to a moral and political catastrophe of the West.

Although Lithuania poses no danger either in the East or in the West, the West nevertheless is capable of creating disasters for itself as has happened in the past. For instance, it has been approaching disaster by tucking money into the quagmire where the red-starred explosives are rusting away, and by not insisting on the removal of the detonators in order to accomplish true changes. Western money, given away without proper control, has probably done more harm, while the talk about reforms in Russia has made it possible to avoid implementing them. Today everybody is reaping the harvest of political illusions.

Aside from everything that is happening in our neighborhood, the international situation could be destabilized to an even greater extent. This is what would result from an unfortunate decision of the West to halt the steady process of extending peace guarantees, such as the enlargement of the North Atlantic Alliance. If, by halting this process, the Western politicians destabilize the currently positive development of NATO and thus awaken the Eastern imperial appetite for former colonies and dominions - who will be responsible? Names will be entered here. On the other hand, the names of the brave people who did not stop NATO enlargement will also be recorded for ever.

It is important to be reminded of the following again and again: if the West gives away a certain part of itself, a part which is less valued, for example, a country or countries on the Eastern coast of the Baltic Sea, after that something else will have to be surrendered, in terms of morale and geopolitics.

There was the Baltic Way in 1989, and there is the Atlantic way now – but is it for everyone or not? There is also the Munich way - not yet abolished, not yet closed - but still looming. And the direction of the latter is very well known.

The situation of Lithuania is special. In defending itself against the West in the Middle Ages, it naturally halted the “Drang nach Osten.” In later centuries up until the end of the 20th century, it halted Russia’s “Drang nach Westen” by defending itself against Eastern imperialism. This country can be further employed for this purpose. “You, our partner Lithuania, endure the security vacuum, endure it for a long time without actual support from us, and later we will see whether you should be offered the Atlantic, or Munich way.” This is the stand of the West, not yet put in words, but felt in the forecast of events in 1999. A vacuum, however, does not last forever. Usually it is filled with air or something else that works its way into the vacuum from the side where the pressure is greater.

Until now Lithuania has not received the most important elements of armament it needs. Nevertheless, Lithuania will not follow the Munich way, it is a part of the West and will not abandon this position, even if it has to express regrets about the doubts of the Western ally.

A short while ago, the Lithuanian press published the remarks of the former commander of the German Army, Bundeswehr General Major Dietrich Genschel, about our path to NATO. I would like to quote a couple of ideas from that article: “Russia’s opposition and Western concern [about that] ... poses a powerful obstacle for the continuation of the accession process;” “The Baltic states are placed in an adverse position as a result of large gaps in the guarantees of firm security. Accession to NATO is the only way to fill in this gap.”

These two points are separated by a vast field where one can notice both newly ploughed areas of secure life as well as trenches of the old insecure life. That is the field where political diplomatic work is carried out and the moral political fight is waged.

The Process of NATO Enlargement and the Baltic States: A Russian Perspective

Dmitri Trenin*

It is fairly easy task to summarize the current Russian news on the issue of NATO enlargement insofar as it concerns the Baltic States. In official, political and academic discourse there has been a remarkable amount of agreement and consistency on the subject. Inclusion into the Atlantic alliance of any former Soviet state, it has been stated and restated, would be perceived by the bulk of the Russian political class as a most unfriendly step. Whereas a cool-headed analyst would read such step as an insurance policy against an unstable and potentially aggressive Russia, to the surviving Moscow liberals, this would amount to a vote of no confidence in Russia's struggling and imperfect democracy; and to the much more numerous convenient thinkers, an attempt at containing and pressuring Russia.

If Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia were to receive an invitation to begin accession talks, the Russians warn, Moscow could respond in several ways. The first victim would be the Russia-NATO Founding Act, likely to be suspended. Russia's overall relations with the West, and especially the United States, would press for a more robust nuclear posture to balance the perceived threat to national security. The Kaliningrad enclave would assume new strategic importance, not dissimilar from West Berlin or Danzig. The current relationship with Belarus would be upgraded to a regular military alliance.

It is not difficult to dismiss many of these steps as empty posturing. Even if implemented, which is not certain, they would be ineffective and probably do more harm to Russia than to anybody else. Wasn't Moscow's bluff called before? From the reunification of Germany to the Central European countries' joining NATO, Russia threatened, but eventually backed off. Are Russia's current resources sufficient even for a sham confrontation? The country's GDP, even according to the official statistics, and before the August financial collapse, is only 5 percent of the U.S. level, and if one listens to independent think-tankers, even that is twice the real figure in gross economic terms, Russia is just twice the size of Poland - and, unlike Poland, shrinking. Never before has Russia been so dependent on the West. In 1999, it faces debt repayment to the tune of 15-17 billion USD. With Yeltsin's powers waning, the Russian politicians and their oligarchic partners are busy scrambling for power and property rights. Society at large is atomized and disoriented. No strong leader has emerged so far. Zhirinovsky turned out to be little more than a blustering and thoroughly entertaining parliamentary orator. And, finally, after the defeat it suffered in Chechnya, who is any longer afraid of the Russian army? It would seem logical and perfectly safe then, to go along and ignore Russia. She is simultaneously more constrained than many have expected and is behaving more rationally - at least, abroad, - than many have feared. Pretending that Russia counts for more than it actually does, and babying a country which goes on nursing its wounded pride can't be a long-term policy.

From a long-term perspective, however, Russia remains Europe's main security problem. Until the relationship between Russia and the countries lying all the way to the west of its borders is fully demilitarized, lingering historical suspicions will not let the old continent feel completely free, at last, of the specter of a major confrontation.

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At this point, such demilitarization is not inevitable. It can be assisted or impeded, and it is the results, rather than intentions, that matter.

There is no reason to placate those in Russia who harbor nostalgia for the imperial or Communist past. It may be pathetic to listen to those who still believe that the West, the former Warsaw Pact countries and the Soviet republics owe Russia anything for the spectacular retreat, within two years, from Magdeburg to Smolensk. What is important, however, is to watch the evolution of the middle ground of Russian politics. So far, NATO enlargement Stage I has injected a dose of anti-Americanism into that group. If Stage II were to follow soon, or to hit the borders of mainland Russia, this could grow into a more pronounced alienation not only from the West, but from the immediate neighbors.

These relations are far from ideal now. The extremely slow pace of national consolidation in Latvia and Estonia has made those two nations the prime targets of opportunity for those who seek to monopolize Russian patriotism. Alarming, the Balt-baiters are gaining a following in the various strata of Russian society. A major effort is needed to reverse this trend and lay the foundation for a friendly constructive relationship.

The Russians need to realize that integration with Europe, which still remains their avowed goal, does not solely depend on relations with Germany, France and the rest of the European Union. Russia's new place and role on the continent will be defined to a significant degree by the sort of ties it will develop with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, including the three Baltic States.

On those relations, the process of NATO enlargement already does and will have an impact. Limiting that impact depends on the pace, scope and nature of the enlargement. While the promise of a future membership in the Alliance cannot be withdrawn, rushing it now would lead to a less, rather than more secure environment in the eastern Baltic region.

The goal of an eventual NATO membership should not obscure other policy options. Enhanced Partnership for Peace is not only a useful mechanism for progressively closer cooperation, but a form of reassurance. Security by means of membership in or association with the European Union appears to offer the Balts a chance of implied Western protection without paying the price of Russian hostility. All told, the ultimate guarantee of the Baltic States' security is a Russia at peace with itself and friendly toward its neighbors. Working toward resolution of outstanding issues with Moscow, while building bridges to the neighboring regions, from Kaliningrad to Karelia to Kola, and using their excellent trading niche, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia can seize upon what may be termed the "Baltic chance" to help bring about a greater Europe, thus escaping the fate of forming a front-line.

ARTICLES

From Solidarity to Partnership: Lithuanian-Polish Relations 1988-1998

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I. Introduction. The Context of Lithuanian and Polish Relations

The noted Lithuanian émigré historian, currently Lithuania's Ambassador to Israel, Romualdas Misiūnas declared "...Poland is Lithuania's closest neighbor psychologically."¹ Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus called Poland our "historically closest neighbor."² And indeed Lithuania is not tied with any other neighboring country as closely and with so many multifaceted relations as with Poland. Some people writing about the topic believe that one should not even call these relations as neighborly - they "resemble post-divorce bickering of wounded spouses."³ Up to now, for both Lithuanians and Poles an emotional evaluation of historical facts is the rule, the rewards for past victories and searches for culprits of failures are still being distributed.

The creation of a state system and the efforts to place this state in the region and in Europe shaped the relations between Lithuanians and Poles through the ages. All sorts of things, including conflicts and cordial cooperation, were met along this path. The young states of Lithuania and Poland encountered in both the East and West powerful and threatening forces which could be resisted only through joint efforts. In 1385 Lithuania and Poland in Krėva formed a personal union, which led to the introduction of Christianity into Lithuania in 1387. In 1410 the joint forces of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania defeated the Teutonic Knights at Grunwald – this triumph remains until today the symbol most uniting the two nations. In 1569 the Union of Lublin, uniting Lithuania and Poland into one state – Rzeczpospolita, was approved. During the Rzeczpospolita period the Polonization of Lithuania's nobility and higher culture which began with the coming of Christianity continued, resulting in the relegation of the Lithuanian language to the peasant class. In 1795 the weakened joint state of Lithuania and Poland disappeared from the map of Europe, divided up by Russia, Prussia, and Austria, but before the divisions it succeeded in leaving behind one of the most democratic constitutions of the period.

In the 19th century Lithuanians and Poles, fostering the ideas of national revival nurtured at the University of Vilnius during the period Adomas Mickevičius (Adam Mickiewicz) studied there, fought together in the uprisings of 1831 and 1863. Toward the end of the century the developing Lithuanian national consciousness (the formulators of this process were no longer the Polish speaking nobility, but Lithuanian intellectuals arising from the wealthy peasants of Western Lithuania) began to move away from Polish language and culture and toward a declaration for an independent statehood. For the greater share of Polish intellectuals, fostering the vision of restoring the Rzeczpospolita, these goals of the Lithuanians were not

¹Romuald J. Misiunas, "Lithuanian View of Poland and the Poles," *Talk Delivered at Polish Consulate-General* (New York, 25 May, 1994).

²Valdas Adamkus, "Litwa i Polska- przeszlosc i przyszlosc," (Lithuania and Poland – Past and Future) *Lithuania*, 1998, No. 3 (28), p. 13.

³Michael Szporer, "Politics of Intolerance in Europe's Center: Rhetoric of "Us" Against "Them" in Poland and Lithuania", *Presented at the 5th World Conference of Central and East European Studies*, Warsaw, August 6, 1995.

understandable and served only to break apart the unity. At the very same time, there was a search for ties, opportunities for cooperation, but unfortunately these efforts were not utilized - thwarted by both the games of the great neighbors and by the personal ambitions of the leaders from both nations. In 1918-1920 the Lithuanian nation had matured sufficiently to create an independent state, but in none of the various conceptions of reestablishing the Polish state - in the "confederation" of Josef Pilsudski (Lithuania reestablishes the historical borders of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and forms a union with Poland) or the "unitary state" of Roman Dmowski (the Lithuanian speaking districts form a separate territory within the borders of Poland) - was any place left for a Lithuanian national state.⁴ Lithuanian President Antanas Smetona after the beginning of World War II admitted that "the restoration of the Lithuanian state on narrow national foundations was a mistake."⁵ That was responsible for the conflicts between the two states (the "mutiny" of general Lucjan Żeligowski, the incorporation of the Vilnius region into the Polish state, the disputes in international tribunals) and the cessation of ties until March 1938. One could say that these ties were, in fact, restored only at the end of the eighties because neither in the period before World War II, nor during the war, nor even in the postwar period of the "family of socialist states" were there any conditions for a Lithuanian-Polish dialogue. The possibilities of closer ties between the two nations were shown when after the start of the war Lithuanians gave assistance to Polish officers by providing them with housing and helping them withdraw to the West. In the repatriations after the war the vast majority of Polish intellectuals withdrew from Lithuania to Poland - this fact had serious consequences in forming the national consciousness of the Poles in Lithuania and in shaping their social and cultural life.

Today, we have a time perspective that allows us to look also at the newest stage of relations between our countries. Looking at their development from a distance they appear in recent times to be balanced and consistent - in treaty after treaty the legal basis for cooperation was expanded, ties between the countries' leaders and institutions, free movement across the common border, and commercial exchanges were expanded. But to those better understanding the various shifts in Lithuanian-Polish relations, it is clear that this short road could not have been easy.

II. Poland's Role in Restoring Lithuania's Independence (1988-1991)

Contacts between Lithuania and Poland after the end of World War II and after the imposition of communist regimes in both countries were minimal: primarily consisting of visits of party delegations and pompous "cultural days." Seeking to limit the contacts of Lithuanian and Polish post-war resistance organizations, most but not all communications were steered through Moscow. However, exchanges of information could not be stopped completely: Polish television could be seen in the Western part of Lithuania, the Polish press and translations of books by Western authors - at the time for many this was the most important source of free information - were available in Lithuania. There were also exchanges of visits by scholars. The Polish internal and émigré press - the periodicals *Znak*, *Wież*, *Tygodnik Powszechny*

⁴*Akty i dokumenty dotyczące sprawy granic Polski na konferencji pokojowej w Paryżu* (Acts and Documents about the Polish Border at the Peace Conference in Paris), part 1, Paris, 1920, p. 131.

⁵ Raimundas Lopata, Kalba Lietuvos Respublikos Seimo iskilmingajame posėdyje, (Speech at a Formal Session of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania), *Seimo Kronika* (Chronicles of the Seimas), No. 5, February 23, 1998.

and especially the Paris based *Kultura* regularly published information about Lithuania, analyzed Lithuanian-Polish relations, and the possibilities of the two states drawing together. In 1981 in Krakow the periodical *Lithuania*, devoted to Lithuanian questions, began to be issued. But, nevertheless, all these things were known only in a narrow circle of intellectuals, “ideas about the necessity of drawing together the societies of both states smoldered only in the minds of the few opposition publicists.”⁶ (Bronislaw Geremek, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Jerzy Giedroyc, Adam Michnik, Leon Brodowski, Marek Karp, and others later became the most active supporters of closer Lithuanian-Polish relations). The greater part of both nations continued living in the so-called “informational vacuum,” nurtured by Soviet cliches and unhappy recollections of the two countries relations in the inter-war period. This “vacuum” froze and allowed many old stereotypes, which had considerable influence on the relations between both nations and states after the restoration of Lithuania’s independence, to survive.

In the period of the dissolution of Communist systems and the crumbling apart of the USSR (1988 to first half of 1991), the positive aspects of Lithuanian-Polish relations were frequently stressed, the Polish people showed sympathy for and supported the efforts of Lithuania in freeing itself from the clutches of the Soviet empire. The formation of Sąjūdis was viewed in Poland as the birth of a movement similar to Solidarność: Solidarność leaders, including the current Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Bronislaw Geremek, issued a letter, welcoming Sąjūdis and expressing the desire for cooperation. Sąjūdis leaders, in turn, sent a letter to Mazowiecki, congratulating him on gaining the post of prime minister and asking the Polish Government to support the right of the Lithuanian people to self-determination. Soon afterwards, the first contacts between society’s leaders and politicians were established, and the question of the possible restoration of relations between the two nations was raised. In October 1989 on the initiative of the All Poland Lithuanian Friends Club the first Lithuanian-Polish “round table” took place, in which representatives of Poland’s Sejm and Senate participated and one of the founders of Sąjūdis Česlovas Kudaba headed the social movements of Lithuania delegation. In December, a Lithuanian delegation, headed by Sąjūdis Chairman Vytautas Landsbergis met in Warsaw with the delegation of the Polish Parliament Citizens Club, headed by Geremek. In these meetings the Polish delegates supported the goals of Lithuanian independence and reaffirmed the inviolability of the Lithuanian-Polish borders.⁷

The declaration of March 11, 1991 on the restoration of Lithuania’s independence was welcomed enthusiastically in Poland, it was also supported by the Polish government and parliament (the first foreign visitor to address the Lithuanian Seimas was Polish Senator Tadeusz Kłopotowski). However, the formal establishment of interstate relations took place only a year and a half later. Lithuania’s gaining independence was part of the process of major changes in Europe: the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact organization and Comecom, the historical decisions accepting the unification of Germany and the confirmation of Poland’s western borders, negotiations were begun on the withdrawal of the Russian army from Poland.

⁶ Jacek Borkowicz, “Polska-Litwa: Ukryte bariery porozumienia”(Poland-Lithuania: Secret Barriers to Harmony), *Polska w Europie, Zeszyt dwunasty* (Poland in Europe, **(reikėtų duoti anglų vertimą)**) Warsaw, June-September 1993, p. 34.

⁷ *Lietuvos ir Lenkijos santykiai 1917-1994, Dokumentu rinkinys*, (The Relations between Poland and Lithuania 1917-1944, A Collection of Documents), Vilnius, 1998, pp. 173-174.

Western states observed these processes carefully and avoided making any sudden moves that could speed up the deterioration of the USSR. All these factors also influenced the careful position of the Polish government in recognizing Lithuania's independence and in establishing the diplomatic relations which Lithuania actively sought. At the end of 1990 (after the signing of a border treaty with Germany and the declarations of independence by Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus), the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs created the so-called "two track" concept, which provided for maintaining parallel contacts with USSR leaders in Moscow and with the independence seeking USSR republics. There were people in both Lithuania and Poland who criticized this position and urged the immediate establishment of diplomatic relations with Lithuania. There were also other voices, seeking to link support for Lithuania with large obligations in regard to the rights of the Polish minority in Lithuania.

After the declaration of Lithuania's independence, the Polish government on March 13 adopted a statement which recognized the right of national self-determination and declared the desire to foster good neighborly relations with the Lithuanian nation. There was, however, no formal recognition of Lithuania in the statement. On March 28, Premier Mazowiecki declared his willingness to be an intermediary in the negotiations between Lithuania and the USSR. Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Algirdas Saudargas visited Warsaw on May 11, Prime Minister Kazimiera Prunskienė and Deputy Prime Minister Romualdas Ozolas – on June 21. In October the first border post between Lithuania and Poland began operations. Discussions were begun on the possibilities of exchanging consulates and information bureaus, and drafts of interstate documents were prepared. Poland along with the Scandinavian nations and Czechoslovakia supported the efforts of Lithuania and the other Baltic states to gain observer status in the Committee for the Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

Poland reacted passionately to the January 1991 events in Vilnius: the Sejm and government adopted statements which condemned the use of force against peaceful citizens and urged that the conflicts between Vilnius and Moscow be resolved in negotiations. The speech of Lithuanian Supreme Council deputy Ėslovas Okinėicas (Czeslaw Okinczyc) in the Polish Sejm which in a highly emotional manner described the situation in Lithuania and its desire for independence, received considerable attention among the people. Activities supporting Lithuania were organized in Poland, there were pickets at the foreign embassies in Warsaw and a campaign for gathering humanitarian aid. During the January events Foreign Minister Saudargas arrived in Poland with the authorization if necessary to form a Lithuanian government in exile - the Polish government supported this mission.

After the bloody events in Vilnius it was important for Lithuania to open an information bureau in Warsaw. This bureau, which began operations in February and was maintained by donations from the Polish people, distributed information about events in Lithuania, maintained contacts with Polish institutions, organized visits to Poland by Lithuanian representatives. In February 1991 discussions began on the draft of the declaration of Lithuanian-Polish Friendly Relations and Neighborly Cooperation.

These contacts formed the basis for future interstate cooperation, which after the recognition of Lithuania's independence on August 26, 1991 and the reestablishment of diplomatic relations on September 5 continued without

interruptions - the first round of negotiations on the declaration of Lithuanian-Polish Friendly Relations and Neighborly Cooperation started already on September 5-6.

In 1990-1993 the Lithuanian press discussed by which road the newly independent Lithuania would go to Europe. It was asserted that the best road was through Scandinavia (the idea of a "Common Northern House"). At the same time the Lithuanian Government understood the importance of relations with Poland: "Poland - is traditionally an important country for Lithuania. The closest road to Western Europe for Lithuania will continue to be through Poland, and therefore good relations are important..."⁸ These discussions ended later - it became clear that Lithuania in promoting its national interests has to utilize all foreign relations possibilities and work in all areas.

III. From the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations to the Treaty (1991-1994)

The interval between the restoration of diplomatic relations in September 1991 and the signing of the Treaty on Friendly Relations and Good Neighborly Cooperation on April 26, 1994 was probably the most difficult period for Lithuanian-Polish relations (there were even assertions that relations in this period were "in some ways even worse than before the war"⁹ when the relations between the two states were darkened by territorial pretensions: Lithuania viewed the Vilnius area as occupied territory and the Lithuanian-Polish border as a demarcation line). The governments had to finish settling the "frozen" cases from the beginning of the century. First of all, to settle for all times the long lasting dispute over Vilnius and South-Eastern Lithuania, to end the "Lithuanian-Polish legal war" and to put down the foundations for cooperation between the two countries. The resolution of these questions was made more difficult by the complicated international situation at that time, the efforts to return Lithuania to the sphere of interest of its "great eastern neighbor." There was an effort to involve the Polish national minority, part of which for various reasons viewed the Lithuanian national awakening and the restoration of statehood with skepticism, (the two deputies of the Lithuanian Supreme Council who represented the Polish minority, abstained in the vote on the Declaration of Lithuanian Independence on March 11, 1990). The most important event inflaming bilateral relations was the dismissal in September 1991 of the local councils in the Vilnius and Ālėininkai districts, which in 1989-1991 "supported the Moscow political line"¹⁰ seeking to block the goals of Lithuanian independence, and demanding autonomy for East Lithuania as well as the reunion with the USSR. The Polish government viewed this action as a restriction of the rights of the Polish national minority. The Lithuanian government, in turn, declared that the members of the dismissed councils were "not Poles, but Bolsheviks." It was stressed that the "autonomy supporters" consciously acted against the statehood and territorial integrity of Lithuania, and that the firmly rooted nomenclature-collective farm system of the Soviet period created very favorable conditions for such activities. Direct rule was introduced in the Vilnius and Ālėininkai districts to help change this situation

⁸ "Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės užsienio politikos metmenys" (Outlines of the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Lithuania), October 5, 1990, In the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania.

⁹ Borkowicz, *Polska*, p.36

¹⁰ Borkowicz, *Polska*, p. 38.

and to help place the foundations for administrative reforms and for privatization processes. The Polish government did not support the declarations of the “autonomy supporters” (in any case the declarations were not addressed to Warsaw, but to Moscow and Minsk). The main Polish demand was the organization as quickly as possible of elections of the Vilnius and Ąalėininkai district councils. After their holding in November 1992 bilateral relations became noticeably warmer. Other questions discussed at this time (plans to expand the boundaries of the city of Vilnius, the registration of the Polish University in Vilnius and the Armia Krajowa Club) did not create such confrontations. The Lithuanian government, in turn, often brought up during the negotiations the demands of the Lithuanians in Poland (Lithuanian textbooks for schools, the use of the native language in public affairs, broadcasts of radio and television programs in the Lithuanian language) stressing that the Lithuanians in Poland had far fewer rights to keep and promote their national singularity than the Poles in Lithuania.

An important caesura in this period of Lithuanian-Polish relations was the Declaration on Friendly Relations and Good Neighborly Cooperation, signed on January 13, 1992 by Foreign Ministers Algirdas Saudargas and Krzysztof Skubiszewski. The most general principles of relations between the two states - the nonuse of force, the inviolability of the border, protection of the rights of national minorities based on the requirements of international documents - were reaffirmed in the declaration. The signing of the declaration showed that the governments of both countries despite the considerable pressure from radical internal forces were able to maintain balance and to open the way to further common steps. In 1992 treaties on economic cooperation and the protection of investments were signed, the railroad crossing at ĄeĄtokai began operations. In November, a scientific conference devoted to Lithuanian-Polish relations was organized in Vilnius. This was the first public discussion after the reestablishment of diplomatic relations on questions sensitive to both nations.

The points of the declaration, which was a political document, had to be expanded in the Treaty on Friendly Relations and Good Neighborly Cooperation, whose draft the Polish Foreign Ministry handed over in January 1993. From the reaction in both countries to the signing of the declaration (protest pickets and gathering of signatures in Vilnius, heated debates in the Polish Sejm), it was clear that the preparation of the treaty would not be easy.

Poland signed treaties for friendship and cooperation with her other neighbors who regained independence after the breaking apart of the USSR-Ukraine and Belarus - after relatively short negotiations (with Ukraine on May 18, 1992, with Belarus on June 23, 1993). In these negotiations there was no evaluation of past relations or debate about the protection of rights of national minorities. Discussions on these questions began only after the signing of the treaties (in May 1997 the presidents of Poland and Ukraine signed a “unity and reconciliation” declaration that evaluated their past relations).

The main demand from the Lithuanian side in the negotiations for the treaty was a condemnation of the 1920 aggression by Źeligowski and the annexation of the Vilnius region. The most important postulates of the Polish side, as in the negotiations on the declaration, were linked with the rights of national minorities. The Lithuanian negotiating team included representatives of the Foreign Ministry and Nationalities Department as well as historians. The first round of negotiations took place on July 19, 1993. The greater part of the treaty, relying on the usual points of such treaties:

the inviolability of the borders, the commitment to resolve all disagreements by negotiations, support for contacts between states and greater cooperation in various areas, etc. was quickly reconciled in negotiations. These points were later expanded in interdepartmental agreements.

More time was devoted to specific questions in Lithuanian-Polish relations: defining the rights of national minorities and the evaluation of events in the 1920s. The discussion of minority rights were based on international documents defining these rights, parts of which were at that time still being prepared. Thus a modern decision model for settling these questions was selected, in some cases even preceding the ongoing discussions in the Council of Europe and applying the “positive discrimination” principle to minorities. The resolution of these questions were often based on other international treaties, especially the historical Polish-German Treaty on Good Neighbors and Friendly Cooperation. Foreign Minister Geremek evaluated in a positive manner the definition of national minority rights in the document: “I believe that the Polish-Lithuanian treaty implements the standard of the rights of national minorities in the same way as they are defined in the main documents of the European Union. I consider that a major accomplishment.”¹¹ The responses by the representatives of the minorities were mixed, discussions on various questions on the protection of these rights continue to the present time, however, no longer in the context of political disagreements.

The question about the evaluation of the historical relations between Lithuania and Poland took the longest time to resolve. The Polish side refused to accept the Lithuanian proposed formulation in the Treaty text, arguing that statements of such a nature are not included in international treaties, and suggested that the issue could be covered in a separate declaration. This suggestion was subsequently not acted upon, and the Treaty’s preamble included assertions that stressed that both nations have the right to evaluate history in different ways, expressed regret for past conflicts, and recognized the integrity of the countries’ territories with the capitals in Vilnius and Warsaw. This was a compromise formulation whose aim was to end the discussions on the past relations of the two nations and to direct attention and energy toward the future.

The process of the two countries’ integration into Western structures shaped the atmosphere for and spurred on the Treaty negotiations. The establishment of normal relations with neighbors was one of the primary demands, which were required for our countries in this process. However, the essential factor, determining the change in the negotiations, was the conscious decision by both sides, based on the rational understanding of state interests and the well-learned lessons of history. As the Polish linguist Jan Karłowicz wrote more than a century ago about the possibilities of Lithuanian-Polish drawing together: “Only mutual understanding, two-sided concessions, on the path of friendship and unity can bring peace to two or more nations, which are destined to live together.”¹² A favorable atmosphere for the signing of the Treaty was created by the articles of historians and public figures, the statements about the necessity of Lithuanian-Polish drawing together by political

¹¹ “Spalio 31 d. prisakdinto Lenkijos užsienio reikalų ministro Bronislawo Geremeko pirmasis interviu- Lietuvos rytui” (The first interview to Lietuvos rytas by Polish Foreign Minister Bronislaw Geremek who was sworn in on October 31),” *Lietuvos rytas*, November 13, 1997.

¹² M. Jagiello, “Polsko-litewskie karczowanie uprzedzien” (The Destruction of Polish-Lithuanian Stereotypes), *Przegląd powszechny*, 1998, No. 6, p. 331.

figures and intellectuals - Jerzy Giedroyc, Czeslaw Milosz, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Adam Michnik, Jan Nowak-Jezioranski, Tomas Venclova.

The negotiations on the Treaty were widely discussed in the press of both countries with representatives of the parliaments and political parties participating actively. At that time the public attention and pressure made the negotiations work of the delegations much more difficult, but looking at it from the perspective of the present day one has to stress the importance of public discussion. It determined that the adopted decisions did not become only a "summit conspiracy." After the signing of the Treaty accusations of reciprocal wrongs and the settling of accounts withdrew from the center of the relations between the two states. "The Good Neighbor Treaty signed in April 1994 is proof of the breaking of prejudices and stereotypes in bilateral relations."¹³ It is worth noting that the Treaty was ratified by both parliaments on the same day - October 13, unanimously in the Polish parliament and by a large majority in Lithuania. This showed that good neighbor and friendly relations became the most important priority of the political forces in Lithuania and Poland.

The discussions on the Treaty did not halt the expansion of bilateral relations: in 1993-1994 treaties on legal assistance, visa free travel, avoidance of double taxation on income and capital, cooperation in the area of health protection, cultural exchanges, and cooperation in television and radio, an agreement on the opening of the border crossing post at Kalvarija-Dipliðkës were signed. There were also visits and cooperation at international forums. Poland supported Lithuania's efforts to get the Russian army withdrawn from Lithuania's territory. The expansion of military cooperation: on June 15, 1993 (a year before the signing of the Treaty on Friendly Relations and Good Neighborly Cooperation) a treaty on cooperation in military affairs was signed, Poland's handing over to Lithuania its first shipment of military equipment in August had particular importance in strengthening open and mutual trust.

By signing the Treaty and successfully expanding cooperation, Lithuania and Poland refuted the "black scenarios" which some observers had foreseen in the development of relations. These, based on the models from the beginning of the century and on examples from other regions, predicted a strengthening of nationalism in Lithuania leading to ethnic conflicts and disagreements with Poland.¹⁴

IV. Expansion of Bilateral Relations in 1994-1996

The signing of the treaty was recognized in both countries as an event completing the important stage in forming bilateral relations, but another question arose at that time - what next? How to utilize in the societies of both countries the positive energy and favorable international opinion arising from the signing of the Treaty? How to use Lithuanian-Polish relations to reach the strategic foreign policy goal of both nations - EU and NATO membership? How to make sure that integration into Western structures would not choke bilateral relations? Evaluating the cooperation perspectives of Lithuanian-Polish cooperation after the signing of the Treaty it was predicted that "The Poles are so focused on NATO and the EU that

¹³ Robert Kupiecki, Krzysztof Szczepanik, *Polityka zagraniczna Polski 1918-1994* (Poland's Foreign Policy 1918-1944), Warsaw, 1995, p. 54.

¹⁴ Stephen R. Burant and Voytek Zubek, "Eastern Europe's Old Memories and New Realities: Resurrecting the Polish Lithuanian Union," *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 7, No. 2, spring 1993.

problems in the immediate neighborhood - including relations with Poland's eastern neighbors - have been relegated to the background."¹⁵

Declarations about reconciliation and the beginning of neighborly relations were not sufficient. It was necessary that the societies of both countries accept these ideas, that Lithuania and Poland become close partners in all fields of cooperation. Already in the year the Treaty was signed visits and meetings at various levels became more frequent: departments, districts exchanged delegations, the first closer contacts between the parliaments developed. A treaty on the reciprocal employment of citizens, cooperation protocols between the ministries of health and internal affairs, customs, prosecutors were signed.

The proposals for the signing of a Free Trade Treaty, the creation of joint peacekeeping battalion, and cooperation in the control of air space, made during the visit of President Algirdas Brazauskas to Poland on February 17-18, 1995, became an impulse for new cooperation. Lithuania expressed its desire to join the Central European Free Trade Organization (CEFTA). The Polish Sejm and Government supported these Lithuanian offers, although noting that their implementation could take some time. However, it turned out that the political goodwill of both countries could accomplish much. Soon afterwards the negotiations for the Free Trade Treaty were begun (the treaty was signed on June 6, 1996). Foreign Minister Povilas Gylys participated at the CEFTA summit meeting in Brno in the fall of 1996 during which Poland declared its support for Lithuania's joining CEFTA. In August the agreement on donations by the Polish military to the Lithuanian army and protocols for the training of officers at the Military Academies of both countries were signed. The creation of the joint battalion - LITPOLBAT - was begun.

The treaty on border cooperation, signed on September 15, 1995 during Premier Jyzef Oleksy's visit to Lithuania, opened a new area of activity. It created the possibilities for the realization of joint projects on the border infrastructure and direct cooperation between the border regions of both countries. During this period particular attention was devoted to the improvement of passage through the border crossing points, the expansion of the border infrastructure, cooperation between the border defense and customs services. The situation on the border improved significantly after the opening of the border crossing point at Kalvarija in September 1995 to all kinds of freight transport and the increasing of the permeability of the railroad crossing at Trakiškės-Dežtokai. The preconditions for further steps in this area, embodying the subsequently created vision of the Lithuanian-Polish border being a future European Union internal border, were created.

In 1995 regular meetings and consultations between the foreign ministries of both countries were begun on questions of regional cooperation and integration into Western structures, stressing that "Lithuania and Poland were talking, already sitting on the same side of the table." The outcome of these consultations was the ever-increasing attention given to questions concerning regional problems, integration into EU and NATO at the meetings of the countries' leaders. Political coordination on questions important to both countries, brought up by joint initiatives in the area of political dialogue with EU, was raised. "The grand opening of contacts with Poland

¹⁵ Stephen R. Burant, "Lithuania's Place in Poland's Foreign Policy," Prepared for delivery at the V World Congress for Central and East European Studies, Warsaw, August 6-11, 1995, p. 29

was begun, the previously so strongly felt lack of confidence and fear of Poland was forgotten.”¹⁶

The joint article of Lithuanian and Polish Foreign Ministers Povilas Gylys and Dariusz Rosati, published on September 5, 1996, the 5th anniversary of the restoration of diplomatic relations, and the declaration on September 19 signed by the Presidents noted that Lithuania and Poland would support each other in the process of integrating into NATO and hold consultations at all levels. The joint activities of the Lithuanian, Polish, and Ukrainian Presidents on the situation in Belarus in the fall of 1996 were viewed as an important and positively evaluated initiative.

In settling questions on the implementation of the Treaty, the greatest amount of attention had to be devoted to the problems of the rights of national minorities: “Great Vilnius” (the expansion of the boundaries of the city of Vilnius, which in the opinion of some of the leaders of the Polish minority threatened to change the national composition of the district by joining to the city some of the districts which had large Polish populations), the registration of a Polish university in Vilnius, teaching in the languages of national minorities, text books for Lithuanian schools in Poland, the representation of national minorities in the state administrative structures, the writing of last names in the native language, and other questions. These questions were discussed at meetings of the Treaty implementation inter-parliamentary control group, created by the parliaments of both countries. At these meetings the implementation of the points of the Treaty in both countries was evaluated in a positive manner. The relations between the two countries were improved by the registration of Polish War Veterans Club in February 1995 after which the question of the Armia Krajowa (a Polish military organization active during World War II in the pre-war territory of Poland which sought Poland’s freedom and the restoration of its pre-war borders) veterans was forgotten. Considerable attention was devoted to education questions: groups of children in kindergartens, classes with Polish as the language of instruction, the opening of Polish schools, the issuing of new textbooks, etc. The first Polonia Education Forum held in Poland in July 1995 recognized that the best organized Polish national minority education system in any foreign country was in Lithuania.

The visit of President Aleksander Kwaśniewski to Lithuania on March 5, 1996, during which the State Border Treaty and Joint Declaration on the Strengthening of Cooperation were signed, best exemplified mutual relations in this period. During the visit it was affirmed that the relations between Lithuania and Poland were the best ever in the history of the two countries, mutual cooperation was being developed in all areas, national minorities questions were no longer a barrier to Lithuanian-Polish relations. During the meeting of Presidents Brazauskas and Kwaśniewski on military ships in September 1996 it was declared that without a secure Poland there can not be a secure Lithuania, and without a secure Lithuania there cannot be a secure Poland. It was stressed that the Lithuania-Polish border can not become NATO’s eastern border.

The reconciliation of Lithuania and Poland was compared to similar processes taking place between Germany and France as well as Poland and Germany, and the relations of the two states were called a model of good neighborly relations. At the same time the two sides stressed that the expansion of Lithuanian-Polish relations was not an alternative to cooperation of the Baltic States, and that this cooperation was only an expansion in the direction of Central Europe.

¹⁶ Jan Widacki, “Stosunki polsko-litewskie” (Polish-Lithuanian Relations), *Kultura*, 1997, no. 11, p.66.

V. Strategic partnership and Institutional Cooperation (1997-1998)

A new stage of Lithuanian-Polish relations, called “strategic partnership” (this term was used for the first time by Foreign Minister Saudargas during his visit to Warsaw in January) began in 1997. During the meetings as well as in the documents of a political nature signed at the time it was declared that the strategic goals of Lithuania and Poland – membership in the EU and NATO - were the same and the two states would support each other in seeking these goals. Foreign Minister Geremek declared: “Lithuania can expect that when Poland becomes a member of NATO and the EU, she will become the motor pushing for Lithuania’s entry.”¹⁷ Polish leaders in meetings with partners in the West more than once stressed that Lithuania’s speedier inclusion in Western structures was a priority matter for Poland. The realization of the concept of strategic partnership was based on the vision of Lithuania and Poland drawing together as supported by Giedroyc (who was granted honorary Lithuanian citizenship in 1997) and his edited journal *Kultura*. Geremek emphasized: “I would like as long as I am working in the foreign relations ministry that the ideas, created by the Polish emigration, Jerzy Giedroyc and the journal *Kultura*, would remain alive and that the Polish Government would bring about their implementation.”¹⁸

The experiences of integrating into Western structures were shared during regularly held consultations between the foreign and defense ministries, and European integration institutes of the two countries. Practical cooperation was begun in the regional projects BALTNET, BALTSEA, and BALTRON. In September 1998 the first LITPOLBAT exercises, symbolically called the “Grunwald Wind” were held (The formation of LITPOLBAT has to be completed by February 1, 1999). Poland provides Lithuanian armed forces with significant technical and material support and there is an exchange of military school students.

Lithuania, on various occasions, has declared its support for the first round of NATO expansion, stressing that Poland’s membership in NATO also strengthens Lithuania’s security. The appeal by the USA Lithuanian Community on November 5, 1997 to the U.S. Senate, in which the Senate was urged to ratify as quickly as possible the protocol for the entry by Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic into NATO should be noted. Poland, in turn, has always supported the further expansion of NATO and the as swift as possible Lithuanian membership in NATO. As Polish Foreign Ministry representative Piotr Switalski said at the September 1998 conference held in Vilnius: “if some one attempts to close NATO’s doors, then Poland will be the first to stick its foot in the door”. The noted Polish émigré US representative Brzezinski stressed the necessity of maintaining “North-South” balance in the second round of NATO expansion, suggesting that Lithuania be included in this round.

Lithuania began the new stage of cooperation with Poland utilizing the positive experiences of cooperation and joint activities with Baltic and Nordic countries. Using this example joint Lithuanian-Polish institutions - Parliamentary Assembly, Government Cooperation Council and Presidential Consultative Committee - were created. This was an unprecedented step in Polish foreign policy. Lithuania, in turn, became the chain of cooperation linking Central Europe, Baltic, and Nordic countries. Without this tie it would be difficult to imagine the formation of a unified regional economic space, of strategic infrastructure projects (the VIA BALTICA highway and railroad, the Baltic Sea energy and gas ring). These projects are at the center of

¹⁷ *Lietuvos rytas*, November 13, 1997.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

attention of the Cooperation Council of the Lithuanian-Polish Governments, which at its first meeting in September 1997 foresaw concrete obligations for the next several years. In the program documents of the new Polish Government in 1997 Lithuanian-Polish relations are mentioned as being among Poland's most important priorities in the region. "We do not conceal that among the three Baltic countries Lithuania is the closest as a natural neighbor as well as a very important strategic partner" - Foreign Minister Geremek emphasized on the eve of his visit to Vilnius, which, by the way, was his first foreign visit.¹⁹ In the Lithuanian Government's foreign policy documents the importance of Poland is stressed in an analogous manner.

Poland is one of Lithuania's most important economic partners: Poland is in third place in the number joint ventures after Russia and Germany (until February 1998, 518 joint and 203 Polish capital enterprises were registered). In October 1997 the Polish bank Kredyt Bank, which was the first foreign bank in Lithuania, began operations in Vilnius. In 1997 Poland accounted for 4.4 percent of Lithuania's total foreign trade turnover and held 6th place (Lithuanian-Polish trade turnover reached 415.0 million USD, imports 325.1 million USD, exports - 89.9 million USD). As one can see from these figures, the most acute problem in Lithuanian-Polish economic relations is the vastly different rates of export and import growth - trade turnover between the states from 1995 grew (at a rate of 30-40 percent per year) with a significantly greater growth of imports from Poland to Lithuania.

The growth rate of Lithuanian exports was limited by unfavorable circumstances, which were created during the initial stage of liberalizing mutual trade. During the negotiations for the Free Trade Agreement the then in effect Lithuanian foreign trade system from which concessions were made, was significantly more liberal.²⁰ Evaluating the new circumstances and comprehending the importance of the Central European market, three Lithuanian firms (*Achema*, *Mapeikiø nafta* and *Alytaus tekstilė*), supported by the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists, in the summer of 1998 opened a trade office in Warsaw. It is believed that during this year the adjustments to the Free Trade Agreement as well as the active work of the mentioned office will ease the entry of Lithuanian goods into the Polish market. This process should also encourage the activities of common firms, the organization of joint production and the implementation of joint investment projects. In the parliamentary assembly meeting which took place in Vilnius this year attention was paid to the problems of Lithuanian-Polish economic cooperation, a common economic cooperation commission was established in the Cooperation Council of the Governments.

The on-going processes of decentralizing government and administrative reform in Lithuania and Poland opened the possibilities of direct contacts between cities, districts, and local governments in both countries. By April 1998 thirty Lithuanian

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ About 70% of the trade goods positions according to the EU harmonized trade coding and description system are completely tariff tax free (for the remaining goods the size of the tax varies from 5 to 30%). The average tariff by weight of imports into Lithuania was about 1%, while in Poland it was correspondingly about 7%. Poland had foreseen placing import duties on more than 2,800 industrial goods from Lithuania, Lithuania - only on 700 goods. It is believed that the trade situation between the countries will improve; from July 1 of this year with the coming in force of an additional protocol to the existing Free Trade Agreement. Poland now allows into its markets without duty Lithuanian chemical and pharmaceutical products, fertilizers, woolen and cotton yarns, some cloths, furniture, wood and its products as well as some other goods. Tariff taxes on other goods, except for agricultural goods, will be gradually abolished until the year 2000. [Information given by the 1st Secretary in Lithuania's embassy in Poland Dalia. Kadišienė.]

cities and districts had already signed cooperation treaties with partners in Poland.²¹ On April 1, a partnership treaty was signed between the two capitals - Vilnius and Warsaw.

An impressive event, reminiscent in its scope of the Lithuanian-Polish Sejm meetings during the Rzeczpospolita period, was the Local Governments of Lithuania and Poland Forum (held in Poland on March 30 - April 3, 1998) in which representatives of 150 local governments and local government organizations participated. The Forum held the opening session in Warsaw, and subsequently its members spread out to almost all the districts of Poland, sharing experiences in reforms and establishing direct ties. It was decided that meetings of the Forum would be organized on a regular basis.

The negative image of the Lithuanian-Polish border, formed at the beginning of the 1990's with long lines, corruption, contraband on the border, is slowly disappearing. The common border looks increasingly less like a "dead front line" with contacts between the regions and their inhabitants opening the way to greater cooperation. Utilizing the forms of regional cooperation widespread in Western Europe after World War II as well as the successful experience of the Euroregion activities along Poland's western border, the following border crossing cooperation structures were created - the Euroregion "Nemunas" created in June 1997 joining the border regions of Lithuania, Poland, and Belarus, the February 1998 created Euroregion "Baltija," in which representatives from regions of Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia (Kaliningrad oblast), and Sweden participate. Border infrastructure projects will be carried out using funds provided by the Euroregion states as well as support from the EU and other funds.

Gradually, although now primarily due to the work of individual initiatives and sacrifices of enthusiasts of the region, cultural ties are being restored. The theater and music of Lithuania (this year the director from Lithuania Oskaras Koržunovas presented a performance at the STUDIO theater in Warsaw) is already well known in Poland, Polish films have enjoyed great success in Lithuania. In May 1998 Lithuania was the guest of honor at the traditional international book fair in Warsaw - this was the first cultural presentation of Lithuanian culture in Poland on such a scale. Unfortunately, there is still no Lithuanian cultural center in Warsaw although the commitment to create it was provided in a declaration signed in 1992, and later reaffirmed in the Treaty. An analogous Polish center has been successfully operating in Vilnius for several years.

In June 1997 a forum patronized by Milosz and Venclova, bringing together noted culture and science persons from both states who discussed the widest possible questions about the relations between the two states and nations was held in Vygriai. In September 1998 a second such forum was held in Druskininkai. At these meeting the idea of creating the Social Forum of Lithuania and Poland, whose formation the Parliamentary Assembly promised to support, was born.

The partnership of Lithuania and Poland gave an impulse to form new regional initiatives: the presidents of the Baltic States, Ukraine, and Poland met in Tallinn in 1997, the Lithuanian President participated in the meeting of the presidents from Central European states with the Pope in Gniezno, the Presidents of Lithuania, Poland, and Ukraine met in Rzeszow in 1998, the Presidents of the Baltic States and Poland participated in the closing of the "Baltic Challenge" exercises in Klaipėda.

²¹ *Lenkijos ir Lietuvos miestų – partnerių bendradarbiavimas*, (The Cooperation of Polish and Lithuanian Cities – Partners) Poznan, 1998.

The experience of good neighborly relations was made general in the September 1997 international conference "Coexistence of Nations and Good Neighborly Relations: the Guarantee of Security and Stability in Europe" in Vilnius, attended by the presidents of eleven states in the region and the Russian premier. In September 1998 another conference, devoted to regional security questions was organized in Vilnius.

VI. The Horizons of the New Partnership

The forming of closer relations between Lithuania and Poland recent years was an objective process dependent on common geopolitical facts, common historical experience, and common interests. Looking at the relations between Lithuania and Poland in the context of the future unified Europe, their further expansion appears as a natural and unavoidable matter. Through this connection the Central European dimension, for several centuries an inseparable part of its history, is returned to Lithuania. Poland, in turn, obtains a dependable link with the Baltic and Nordic European regions.

Looking at the possibilities of future cooperation, one can distinguish these important directions:

- the expansion of relations at the public level, the intensification of cultural and informational exchanges, the inclusion of the national minorities in state and regional border cooperation;

- the further implementation of regional infrastructure projects (VIA BALTICA and the transportation corridor "Baltic-Black Sea "through Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine with possible extensions in both directions, and auxiliary routes, European gauge railroad from the border with Poland up to the eastern border of Lithuania, the Baltic energy ring;

- joint activities in the organizations and projects of the Baltic Sea region (Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS), BALTSEA, BALTRON, BALTNET, the Euroregion "Baltija" etc.), cooperation in regional security initiatives;

- the expansion of regional partnership cooperation with Ukraine, Belarus, Russia's North West regions and the Kaliningrad district (the Euroregions "Nemunas" and "Baltija," the utilization of the opportunities of CBSS and the establishment of ties between this organization and the Black Sea Economic Council);

- greater cooperation and mutual support in the processes of integration into NATO and EU (Poland's forthcoming membership in NATO opens new opportunities in this area).

Today the relations between Lithuania and Poland are part of the dynamic processes of European integration. However, their expansion is certainly important not only because it helps our states to seek their strategic goals - membership in EU and NATO. Lithuanian-Polish relations have a spontaneous value and can essentially help improve the quality of the new cooperation in the region. The strengthening of the security of either Lithuania or Poland will not end with membership in NATO, and the creation of prosperity of the states and citizens - with integration into the EU. "...in the current situation the interests of the Polish state can not be limited only to its own security interests, based on integration with the West, but must be linked with the security interests of its most immediate neighbors."²² Lithuania and Poland should seek that their integration into Western structures would also benefit the interests of the other states in the region. Partnership, open regional ties, and free contacts

²² Kupiecki, p. 86.

between people must become the denominator of the whole “Center-Baltic Europe” region.²³ Lithuania and Poland will truly be secure only in a secure and successfully developing region and will be able to spread prosperity to its citizens. This assertion reflects the priorities and initiated projects of Lithuania, as the chairman this year of the Council of Baltic Sea States. The Baltic Sea, gradually becoming a “mare interna” (internal sea) of the European Union, must become open to regional cooperation and new initiatives. The support given by the border districts of Lithuania and Poland to the Kaliningrad district in the fall of this year became a successful test for regional cooperation.

There are no major problems visible today in Lithuanian-Polish relations. However, the process of the drawing together and better knowledge of each other promoted by political and intellectual persons has only been begun in the societies of the two countries, we still know very little about each other. For a substantial part of the Polish population Lithuania remains a “terra incognita” (unknown territory) - “a small, unimportant land inhabited by strange persons and nationalists” outside of Poland’s eastern borders.²⁴ (In 1992 a special issue of *Znak* was devoted to Lithuania with the appropriate heading of “Unknown Lithuania”). In the consciousness of these people, “old Lithuania” can in no way be replaced by the current independent Lithuania which will form new relations with Poland. In Poland there are still individuals who believe that there is and can not be any kind of national Lithuanian culture and it is being created only to “tease” the Poles. Lithuanians, in turn, suspect the Poles of appropriating the old legacy of Lithuanian culture, making Mickiewicz and Milocz more Polish. For many Lithuanians Poland is only a “transit” country in which one can stop for a little while on the way to Europe. This stereotype thinking already has almost no influence on the state relations between Lithuania and Poland, but it thwarts the drawing together of the two nations and the opening of the cultures to each other. In this area the local governments, social organizations, and culture and art people should take the initiative from the governments because “politicians can not regulate by decrees the cooperation between Lithuanian and Polish societies.”²⁵

It is clear that the new relations between Lithuania and Poland alter the point of view and ways to resolve national minority problems. Frankness and joint work can help avoid emotions and political speculations. Additional opportunities in this area are provided by the expanding rights of local governments in both states, the possibility of national minorities to participate independently in regional economic and cultural projects. “I would like very much that the national minorities in both states would be an element strengthening this cooperation, a kind of cooperation bridge,” Polish Foreign Minister Geremek stressed.

The relations of Lithuania and Poland today do not any longer attract the attention of the press as in 1990 and 1991. Discussions and passions on “historical reconciliation” was replaced by quiet everyday work, and the discussions about questions of the past moved from the newspapers to academic journals and scientific conferences. Lithuania and Poland have entered a new stage: the partnership of common goals becomes the partnership of common works.

²³ Vytautas Landsbergis, *Wspolnota interesow. Polska w Europie* (Community of Interests. Poland in Europe), Warsaw, May 1997, p. 68.

²⁴ Borkowitz, p. 38.

²⁵ “Przesłanie do Zgromadzenia Poselskiego Sejmów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej i Republiki Litewskiej” (An Appeal to the Assembly of the Deputies of the Parliaments of the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Lithuania), *Lithuania*, 1998 3 (28), p. 67.

Translated by Saulius Girnius

The Eastern Baltic Subregion: Conflict and Cooperation

Egidijus Vareikis, Jūratė Žygelytė

With the passage of eight years since the states of the Eastern Baltic subregion (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) re-established their independence, it is now possible to make certain generalizations and conclusions about the character of their relations. Although from 1990, political leaders and press frequently declared their allegiance to cooperation among the three neighboring states, nevertheless after several years it became apparent that their relations were, and continue to be, based on the concept of prospective utility. Each state has been pursuing separate goals and utilizing different means in implementing them.

Cooperation among states is usually attended by greater or lesser disagreements. Hence, in discussing Lithuania's relations with its northern neighbors, it is impossible to ignore what political science parlance refers to as conflict. Most works dealing with the Baltic States examine only one aspect of their relations, namely cooperation. At the same time, the question of conflict within this subregion has not been subjected to comprehensive analysis (although its political-geographic aspect has received somewhat more attention).

By its nature cooperation is a political phenomenon which demands greater or lesser accommodation on the part of states vis a vis their partners' needs and interests.¹ The extent to which a state succeeds in satisfying this requirement determines the probability of conflict among partners.

Conflict arises when states encounter opposition to the realization of their goals. There is always a chance that a certain level of conflict will arise even among countries developing very friendly ties with each other. Thus signs of conflict among the Baltic states should not be seen as a danger to the region's stability or the prospect of pro-European development. Conflict is an entirely natural element in the political development of a state. Ignoring the existence of conflict can thus produce undesirable consequences for the planning and implementation of a country's foreign policy.

Interwar Relations Among the States of the Eastern Baltic Subregion

Historians believe that it is possible to speak of a united Baltic states region from 1914 on, for up to that period Lithuania was viewed in the context of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania, even after it was incorporated into the Russian empire. Latvia and Estonia were seen as parts of the former Livonia. Consequently, their political traditions differed. The Central European tradition dominated in Lithuania whereas its northern neighbors were under German influence. In addition, there were religious differences: Catholicism and the Lutheran faith.

Relations among the Baltic states grew stronger after they declared independence and began seeking international recognition. The border delimitation process played an important role in their mutual relation. The Estonian-Latvian border was the first to be delimited in 1917, when the provisional Russian government decreed the establishment of the provinces of Estland and Livland, which comprised

¹ J.E.Dougherty, R.L.Pfaltzgraff, *Contending theories of international relations* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1990), p.170.

ethnic Estonian and Latvian territories.² Disagreements arose in the course of delimiting the border regarding the town of Valga and a few islands. These differences were resolved in 1920 with the assistance of Great Britain. The date of the final resolution of this conflict should be fixed in 1923, which saw the signing of a military-political and economic cooperation treaty. Both countries signed a total of 20 agreements related to their common border.³ The delimitation of the Latvian-Lithuanian border was also a drawn-out affair. Attempts to solve this issue through bilateral negotiations ended unsuccessfully. Thus, both sides agreed to submit this question to third party arbitration. In September of 1920 both sides signed an agreement entrusting the border delimitation question to an arbitration commission headed by George Simpson. The 1920 agreement also recognized the ruling of the arbitration commission as binding.⁴ The March 1921 ruling was essentially concerned with the land border, for delimitation of maritime economic borders was not relevant at the time. The Baltic states' borders with Soviet Russia were established in 1920 with the signing of bilateral peace accords.

Another aspect of the relations between the Baltic states was the formation of the Baltic Entente. The first step towards establishment of a political-military union was the attempt to conduct jointly-organized peace negotiations with Soviet Russia. This effort failed on account of two reasons: the uneven effect of East-West tension on the Baltic states and their inability to find a common principle for their disengagement from the East.⁵

A variety of ideas and projects regarding formation of common institutions surfaced in the interwar period. One of them envisaged the Scandinavian countries, Finland and the Baltic states establishing a federation which would be joined by Poland. Another concept involved the unification of all states bordering Russia in the West. The possibility of putting these concepts into effect collapsed after Poland seized the Vilnius region, although the search for alternative unions continued. There were proposals to create a Finish-Estonian and a Latvian-Lithuanian federation as well as a Lithuanian union with Poland. A union of the three Baltic states was also put forward.⁶ The main cause of the failure of the latter idea was Lithuania's demand that the other two prospective partners support it in its struggle with Poland over the Vilnius region. In November of 1923, Estonia and Latvia signed economic-customs and military treaties. Lithuania was prepared to sign these agreements only on condition of Polish non-accession. The establishment of a three-way union was also hindered by the Lithuanian-Soviet Russian non-aggression pact of 1926, which obliged the parties to refrain from joining coalitions directed against either one of them.⁷ The rising German threat at the beginning of the fourth decade occasioned changes in Lithuania's foreign policy. In April of 1934, the Lithuanian government presented to its Baltic neighbors a memorandum on strengthening mutual relations.

² P.Joenniemi, J.Prikulis *The foreign policies of the Baltic countries: basic issues* (Riga: Centre of Baltic-Nordic history and political studies, 1994), p.120.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Zenonas Butkus, *Lietuvos ir Latvijos santykiai 1919 - 1929 metais* (Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 1993), p.49.

⁵ Česlovas Laurinavičius, "Baltijos valstybės tarp Rytø ir Vakarø 1918-1940 m.," *Politika ir diplomatija* (Kaunas: Naujasis lankas, 1997), p.227-237.

⁶ E.Anderson, "Pabaltijos sąjunga - realybė ar fantomas?," *Trimitas*, 11-12 (1993), 5.

⁷ Butkus, *Lietuvos ir Latvijos santykiai*, p.103.

The first part of this document declared that “the independence of all three states is in the vital interests of the other parties.”⁸

The official Latvian and Estonian reaction to this memorandum was favorable and at the same time cautious (because of Lithuania’s territorial problems). Disagreements arose when the states began discussing the concrete form of cooperation. The Latvians spoke out for a firm union while the Estonians did not support this idea. Nonetheless on September 12, 1934, the foreign ministers signed a treaty of concord and cooperation in which they promised “to consult regarding mutually-important foreign policy questions and render mutual political and diplomatic assistance in their international relations.”⁹ This formula was not applied with regard to any specific Lithuanian problems. The role of the Baltic states’ union was that of a coordinating and consultative body, which was to be put into effect during their foreign ministers’ conferences. In the defense sphere the Baltic states also declined to assume any obligations. Latvia demonstrated the strongest level of interest in the viability of the union and attempted to play a leading role in this process. Lithuania was not as active in this field mainly on account of its neighbors’ position concerning the Vilnius issue. Greater attention was devoted to relations with the Soviets. The Baltic Entente played an even lesser role in the foreign policy of Estonia. Its priorities were relations with Poland and Germany. The declaration of neutrality which the Baltic states passed in 1939 put an end to any kind of cooperation in the political, military and security spheres.

Relations Among the States of the Eastern Baltic Subregion Following the Restoration of Independence

The process of re-establishing the Baltic states’ independence and gaining international recognition showed that they are capable of cooperating successfully in fields which demand joint efforts (for example, in the security area). On the other hand, each state has specific interests which need to be dealt with as disagreements or even conflicts.

The Baltic states encountered problems associated with border delimitation immediately after the re-establishment of independence. In this process they tried to adhere to the 1940 boundaries as a basis, thereby stressing the principle of continuity. The treaty re-establishing the Estonian-Latvian border was signed in March of 1992. The process of restoring the land border did not provoke notable friction, although there remained one problematic question concerning the Valka-Valga situation. During the Soviet occupation this town functioned as an integral unit. Following the re-establishment of the Baltic states’ independence, however, the Latvian-Estonian state border divided the town into two parts. Some of the Latvian and Estonian residents ended up in foreign territory. Restoring the maritime boundary did occasion a conflict. In the spring of 1993, Estonia passed the Maritime Territory Act, which unilaterally fixed the boundary zone vis a vis Latvia. The latter never recognized this border, but it began protesting it only when the Estonians drove away Latvian vessels from its territory. The coastal zone of one of the islands in the Gulf of Riga became the cause of an international dispute. Latvia in the third decade granted the Estonians

⁸ Vytautas Paľys, *Baltijos Antantės susidarymas: Lietuvos TSR Mokslø Akademijos darbai* (Vilnius, 1988, A series, vol. 2), p.79.

⁹ *Svarbiausios Lietuvos Respublikos tarptautinės sutartys. 1918 - 1995*, (Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 1997), p.122.

possession of the island as an expression of gratitude for their assistance in the independence struggle and as a good will gesture to facilitate the establishment of the Baltic Entente. However, none of the documents which might have confirmed the changed juridical status of the island have survived. In 1995 Estonia rejected Latvia's proposal to consider the disputed zone as a common fishery zone pending the signing of a treaty. Estonia also rejected a proposal to adopt the pre-war sea boundary as an alternative.¹⁰ Nevertheless a maritime boundary agreement was signed in July of 1996 with the help of Swedish mediation.

In re-establishing the land border between Latvia and Lithuania, both sides adhered to the pre-1940 boundary as a basis. The delimitation of the sea border was held up by an international dispute. On October 31, 1995, the government of Latvia and two foreign oil companies signed a contract on exploration and exploitation of crude oil deposits in the Baltic Sea. This contract encompasses a disputed zone in which the two states have not yet agreed on a maritime boundary. A memorandum which the heads of state signed in May of 1995 in the town of Maišiagala set forth the following principles governing the demarcation of the maritime boundary: 1) regarding the 1958 Convention on the principle of equidistance and 2) regarding agreement to refrain from negotiating with third parties on exploitation of the continental shelf prior to delimitation of the maritime border.¹¹ On November 1 of the same year, the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs recalled for consultations the Lithuanian Ambassador in Latvia, Rimantas Karazija. The Latvian MFA received a diplomatic note which informed Riga that Lithuania had repudiated the agreements reached in negotiations up to that period.¹² Latvia set forth the following arguments before ratification of the agreement in its parliament: that the accord would create better conditions guaranteeing stability and security; it would strengthen Latvia's ability to resist Russian political influence and allow Riga to claim an appropriately large part of the profits ensuing from implementation of the agreement.¹³

The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania adopted an appeal to the Latvian parliament in which it pointed out that Latvia had "violated its international obligations and Lithuania's sovereign rights"¹⁴ by signing the agreement. In another declaration the Lithuanian parliament noted that Latvia had violated the principles of the 1982 UN Law of the Sea and the Baltic states' Treaty of Concord and Cooperation of 1934. It was emphasized that the agreement signed by Latvia was null and void from the moment it was signed, without regard to the conditions of its entry into force. Latvia was also urged to delimitate the seabed boundary between the two states as a first step.¹⁵ Seeking a solution to this disagreement, Latvia offered to request mediation by Norway, Denmark or some other third country, but Lithuania was opposed.

Lithuanian-Latvian disagreements surfaced not only in connection with demarcation of the maritime border, but also with regard to control of air space.

¹⁰ Lietuvos Respublikos užsienio reikalų ministerija [henceforth - LR URM] (Vilnius) Doc. no. 66 (Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania in Riga. Week Events' Review, 2 April, 1996).

¹¹ Artūras Račas, "Maišiagalos memorandumas: apsigavę Lietuvos vadovai ieško išeities," *Lietuvos rytas*, 27 May, 1995, 2.

¹² LR URM (Vilnius) Doc. no. 42 (Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania in Riga. Account of activities for 1995, 12 January, 1996).

¹³ *Lietuva ir jos kaimynai: Metinės konferencijos tekstai* (Vilnius: Pradai, 1997), p.154.

¹⁴ *Lietuvos Respublikos Seimo dokumentų rinkinys 9 (15)* (Vilnius: Seimo leidykla "Valstybės žinios", 1997), p.579.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 587.

During the Soviet occupation an air navigation station was built in the Riga military district, which included all three Baltic states. The old air space boundaries remained following the restoration of independence, although Latvia assumed control of the air space above the Baltic Sea. Negotiations on the former USSR air navigation region have now been continuing for several years. Wishing to avoid paying Latvia for navigational guidance for its aircraft flights over the Baltic Sea, Lithuania aims to obtain at least one air space corridor should agreement evade the two countries. In that case, the dispute could be submitted to the ICAO, which would divide the air space above the sea alongside the coastline of the two countries.

The sea oil terminal is another issue in Lithuanian-Latvian relations. After Lithuania announced that it would build the Būtingė oil terminal, Latvia began taking active political steps aimed at thwarting these plans. Latvia is offering to establish a common transit corridor along the line Mažeikiai-Ventspils or Biržai-Ventspils while the Lithuanians are building the Biržai-Mažeikiai-Būtingė project. On August 10, 1996, Latvian State Minister Indulis Ems joined his country's greens in staging a demonstration near the Latvian-Lithuanian border to protest the construction of the Būtingė terminal. The Latvian press began publishing numerous articles about this subject. Some of the publications even linked the sea terminal issue with the negotiations concerning the maritime border. I. Ems asserted that the construction of the terminal was based solely on political considerations and that Lithuania had violated the 1974 Helsinki Convention regarding protection of the Baltic Sea by failing to obtain Latvia's consent before commencing construction.¹⁶

On May 12, 1990, the three countries established the Baltic States Council, which embodied political cooperation between the Baltic states. The aim of most of the documents this body adopted was to consolidate the Baltic states' political and diplomatic efforts in defending their sovereign rights and expressing a common position vis a vis the USSR.

This trilateral institution encompassed both an inter-parliamentary and an inter-governmental level. The Baltic States Council ceased functioning in mid-1993, although there was no official act to this effect.

Parliamentary relations between the Baltic states were institutionalized with the establishment of the Baltic Assembly. This took place on November 8, 1991, and its first session was held in January of 1992. The Baltic Assembly serves as a consultative and coordinating body in relation to common issues and undertakings.¹⁷ One of the most important ideas proposed during the first session was the coordination of the Baltic states' legislation, although it was decided in 1997 that each state should adopt legislation individually in conformity with EU requirements with the exception of those laws which are directly related to relations between the Baltic states.¹⁸ Speaking at the 11th session of the Baltic Assembly, Mečys Laurinkus proposed that the individual delegations to the Assembly should obtain a higher status in the respective national parliaments as a way of raising the stature of the Assembly itself. He emphasized two aspects regarding the Assembly's status and functions: 1) the Baltic Assembly should have decision-making powers with regard to the national parliaments, and 2) the delegations' positions should be coordinated with the national

¹⁶ "Vilnius prašo, kad Ryga pasiaiškintų," *Lietuvos rytas*, 19 August, 1996, 2.

¹⁷ *Svarbiausios*, p.253.

¹⁸ The speech of the Chairman of the Baltic Assembly Prezidium Mr. M. Laurinkus in the 11th session of the Baltic Assembly. – Document text received from the archive of Lithuanian Republic parliamentary delegation secretariat in the Baltic Assembly.

parliaments.¹⁹ Of note is Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas' view expressed in 1994, that "the Assembly's adopted resolutions should be considered as its own and not as official views of the states, particularly concerning foreign policy questions."²⁰ The number of documents passed by Baltic Assembly sessions usually totaled ten or more. Quite sharp disagreements would arise in the process of adopting them. One could cite as an example the 5-th session, during which Estonian objections blocked passage of a resolution on the Baltic states desire to become NATO members.²¹ Moreover, a major dispute concerning a resolution on events in Russia flared up during the 8th session when Latvia held to a more cautious position than the Estonians and Lithuanians.²² The chief subjects of the documents formulated by the Baltic Assembly dealt with the following: relations with Russia; the Baltic states' defense and security; common action in international organizations; NATO and EU integration and practical relations with multilateral institutions (the Baltic Assembly's main partners are the Nordic Council, the Consultative Inter-parliamentary Council of the Benelux countries and the WEU Parliamentary Assembly).

Of note are the following two resolutions endorsed in 1995: "Concerning the Principles of Unity of the Baltic States" and "Concerning the Resolution of Disputes among the Baltic States." The first resolution provides for three principles of unity:

1. the failure or problem of one of the three states is a common concern of all three;
2. a threat aimed at one of the three states is a threat to all three;
3. the success of one of the three states is an achievement for all three."²³

In the second resolution the Assembly urges the governments of the Baltic states and the Baltic Council of Ministers to show good will and more of the spirit of neighborly harmony in addressing the problem of demarcating common borders and maritime economic zones.²⁴

One could point to April 12, 1990, as the beginning of relations between the governments of the Baltic states, when Kazimiera Prunskienė, Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania, V.E. Bres, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR and Edgar Saavisar, head of the government of the Estonian SSR, met in Vilnius. The heads of government signed an accord establishing a trilateral inter-governmental economic cooperation body - the Baltic Cooperation Council. Government-to-government meetings during 1993-1994 devoted considerable attention to institutionalizing cooperation. Work on developing the concept of a Council of Ministers of the Baltic States, modelled on the Scandinavian example, was initiated in the Foreign Ministry of the Lithuanian Republic. The chief function of this institution was to be coordination and control over activities of ministries and agencies. Certain differences in the positions of the states emerged during the preparatory work on the principles of the Baltic Council of Ministers. The Latvians sought to grant the BCM a maximum of executive powers by setting up a permanent secretariat and establishing

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ "Laiko penklai," *Lietuvos rytas*, 17 November, 1994, 4.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Kęstutis K. Girnius, "Baltijos dalių bendradarbiavimas," *Atgimimas*, 17 April, 1996, 5.

²³ *Baltic Assembly session documents 1995 - 1996* (Riga, 1996), p.25.

²⁴ Ibid, p.23.

a common budget. By contrast Estonia was firmly opposed to such ideas.²⁵ The articles of the BCM were passed on June 13, 1994. They set forth three levels of cooperation: heads of government, ministers of Baltic cooperation and ministers of specific spheres. The most important functions of the BCM are the following: 1) the adoption of decisions taking into account recommendations of the Baltic Assembly; 2) the implementation of agreements between the Baltic states over which it had responsibility; 3) the preparation of proposals and the implementation of measures which encourage cooperation between the Baltic states. Three themes dominated the political activity of the BCM during the past few years: the harmonization of policies regarding EU and NATO integration, the development of relations with the CIS and the coordination of activity in international organizations.

Cooperation at the presidential level commenced in the second half of 1993, by which time all three of the Baltic states had elected their heads of state. Their powers in the fields of domestic and foreign policy were set by the constitutions of the respective countries and differed markedly. Thus it is not surprising that the 1994 agreement governing the organization of summits of the Baltic states pointed out that summits of the Baltic presidents are to be held for consultations and coordination among the presidents of the republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in order to develop closer cooperation between the Baltic states and coordinate strategies concerning security and foreign policy questions.²⁶

Each year there have been at least two presidential summits since the start of trilateral meetings in 1993. The summits endorse joint statements, declarations and communiqués. The August 27, 1993 summit stressed that a precondition for the integration of the Baltic states in the European Community is their prior integration amongst themselves in economic, foreign and security policy and other fields.²⁷ On March 25, 1994, the presidents adopted a declaration regarding the encouragement of mutual and regional cooperation. The declaration asserted that the heads of state committed themselves to promote cooperation among the diplomatic missions of the Baltic states. The document also stressed the usefulness of cooperation between the Baltic states and the Visegrad countries in the course of integration into European structures.²⁸

In addition, the Presidents discussed coordination of actions in expanding ties with the EU and NATO. In September of 1995, Algirdas Brazauskas, Guntis Ulmans, and Lennart Meri adopted a joint communiqué which confirmed the aspirations of the Baltic states to become NATO members and agreed to coordinate their actions regarding the security of their Eastern borders.²⁹ The May 29, 1996 declaration "Concerning Partnership for Integration" reiterated the presidents' intention to pursue EU and NATO membership in concert and not in competition amongst each other.³⁰ The presidential communiqué of November 10, 1997 welcomed the recommendation of the European Commission to begin negotiations with Estonia regarding

²⁵ A. Semaðkienē, J. A. Semaðka, *Baltijos ðaliø regionalizacijos procesø analizė: Tarptautiniø santykiø specialybės diplominis darbas* (Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto Tarptautiniø santykiø ir politikos mokslø institutas, 1995).

²⁶ *Svarbiausios*, p.252.

²⁷ *Lietuvos Respublikos Seimo dokumentø rinkinys 3 (9)* (Vilnius: Lietuvos Respublikos Seimo leidykla, 1994), p.534.

²⁸ *Svarbiausios*, p.250.

²⁹ "Baltijos valstybiø vadovai tvirtai apsisprendæ stoti á NATO," *Lietuvos aidas*, 8 September, 1995, 1.

³⁰ *Lietuvos Respublikos Seimo dokumentø rinkinys 8 (14)* (Vilnius: Lietuvos Respublikos Seimo leidykla, 1994), p.1034.

membership in the EU and conclusion of preparations for the Charter of Partnership among the U.S. and the Baltic states.³¹

An important element in the relations between the Baltic states is cooperation among defense institutions and coordination of security policy. The states initiated military cooperation right after the re-establishment of independence. The main documents governing relations in this area are the following: 1) the June 2, 1992 protocol of agreement among the ministries of defense of the Baltic states on ensuring security cooperation, which provided for joint military exercises and unified control of air, sea and land borders;³² 2) the September 13, 1993 trilateral declaration regarding cooperation in the security and defense fields; 3) the February 27, 1995 agreement between the ministries of defense of the Baltic states concerning cooperation in the area of defense and military relations. In addition, there is an entire collection of joint declarations on the subject of security and defense by the Baltic states' presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers and the Baltic Assembly. The main subjects of these documents include the following: 1) withdrawal of the Russian army. The Baltic states undertook active efforts to solve this question as quickly as possible in all three countries. After Russia withdrew its military units from Lithuania, it was repeatedly emphasized that this represented only the first step in ensuring security in the region and that this must be followed by withdrawal of the army from the other two Baltic countries; 2) relations with NATO, the UN and the WEU; 3) participation in peace-keeping forces; 4) the drafting of coordinated security and defense concepts and others.

Baltic defense and security cooperation is continuing on the basis of consultations, exchanges of information and joint military exercises. The creation of a defense union was discussed as early as 1990, and the idea was especially intensively considered in 1994-95. The 5th session of the Baltic Assembly recommended preparation of a draft defense accord of the Baltic states and called for the signing of it as quickly as possible.³³ However, Lithuania's position in regard to this question is not positive. The government of Lithuania stresses the necessity of close cooperation, but does not seek the establishment of a defensive union. According to former Lithuanian Defense Minister Linas Linkevičius, a military alliance would gravely hamper the Baltic states' efforts to join NATO.³⁴ Estonian Minister of Defense Andrus Öövel believes that an alliance would be practical and meaningful only if the Baltic states' armies were capable of carrying out their functions in each other's territory.³⁵ Military cooperation at the subregional level is supplemented by participation in the Partnership for Peace program and in the Nordic-Baltic countries' military relations. Moreover, Lithuania and Poland agreed in May of 1995 to establish a joint peace keeping battalion.

Trilateral meetings at a variety of levels devote considerable attention to integration with the EU. One of the problems which Latvia and Lithuania faced in their efforts to be invited to negotiate EU membership was Estonia's attempts at demonstrating that it was best-prepared for membership among the Baltic states. This was especially apparent during the period of the "Isamaa" party's rule. In advertising

³¹ LR URM (Vilnius), Doc. no. 45. (Meeting of the presidents of the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania, 11 November, 1997).

³² A. Lejinš, P. Ozolina, *Small states in a turbulent environment: the Baltic perspective* (Riga: Latvian institute of International Affairs, 1997), p.170.

³³ *Baltic Assembly session documents 1991 - 1994* (Riga, 1996), p.64.

³⁴ A. Lejinš, P. Ozolina, *Small states*, p.171.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

Estonia's reformist changes, this party stressed as a contrast the Lithuanian government's indecisiveness, particularly during the rule of the LDDP. Former Prime Minister Mart Laar some times asserted that the Estonian economy surpasses Lithuania's in absolutely all respects. In the early part of March of 1998, Estonian diplomats disseminated an anonymous complaint concerning the privatization of the Lithuanian Telecom. The complaint included a critique of the general economic and political situation in Lithuania to lend weight to the document.

In June of 1995, the Baltic states signed association agreements with the EU, which in their contents are essentially similar. The chief difference is that transition periods are specified in the Lithuanian and Latvian agreements while these provisions are absent in the Estonian agreement.

In 1997, the Estonian Institute of International and Social Studies conducted a survey of Baltic government officials, parliamentary deputies, intellectuals and representatives of other fields in an effort to classify Baltic strategies regarding European integration. Among the questions the survey subjects were asked was the following: which should come first - EU or NATO membership - or should accession to both institutions be simultaneous? In the opinion of Estonians and Latvians, membership in NATO alone would not provide adequate security guarantees. Moreover, approximately one-third of them indicated that membership in the EU would remove the necessity of belonging to NATO. Only 13 percent of the surveyed Lithuanians supported this view.³⁶ Another question asked whether the Baltic states should join the EU together or individually. Only 6 percent of the Estonian respondents favored joint accession. 24 percent of the Latvians and 30 percent of the Lithuanians questioned supported this idea. The Estonians' individualistic view is further underscored by their skepticism regarding the EU's support for joint accession (only 22 percent think the EU is inclined in this direction). 43 percent of the Lithuanians and 48 percent of the Latvians queried did feel the EU was in favor of this proposition.³⁷ Aside from this, approximately 78 percent of those surveyed in Latvia and Lithuania desired cooperation in integrating into the EU, while 75 percent of those questioned in Estonia believed that this process should be carried out individually.³⁸ 61 percent of the Estonians in the survey backed cooperation exclusively on a formal basis. Only 6 percent of the Estonians considered cooperation as the foundation for the future. 10 percent of those queried in Latvia and 17 percent in Lithuania supported this idea.

The Development of Relations Among the States of the Eastern Baltic Sub-region: Analyzing Cooperation and Conflict

As is apparent from the factual material presented above, conflict among the Baltic states has both traditional components such as border delimitation and post-Soviet "imprints" such as the disagreements over the control of air space. However, there are also elements - such as the Būtingė terminal issue - which should be considered as new phenomena in the relations between these states.

The establishment of boundaries is a traditional source of international conflicts, and the Baltic states have been unable to evade this problem in their mutual relations.

³⁶ "Europe and the Baltic states: which way should be chosen for reunification," *Baltic Review*, 8 (1997), 11.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 12.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 12-13.

In discussing the Lithuanian-Latvian and Latvian-Estonian areas of conflicts, one may note that they belong to the category of economic disputes. Disagreement stems from division of resources. Thus, one may assume that the inter-state relations in the first instance would have developed in another directions, had there not existed the possibility of finding crude oil or (in the Estonian-Latvian case) had there not been significant supplies of fish.

Judging by their external qualities, both disputes should be considered as belonging to the “joint survival”, incidental and controllable category of conflicts. These three characteristics explain their non-coercive nature. One may also assume that, once borders are established, conflicts on these grounds should not arise in the future.

Individualistic and cooperative motives were also intertwined in the conflicts subject to discussion. The first motive might be symbolized in terms of the accentuation of national interests and charges directed against another party regarding the violation of sovereign rights. The second might be understood in terms of the parties’ desire to resolve disputes through negotiations and assistance of mediators.

One could assign the Lithuanian-Latvian dispute over airspace control to a specific category of international conflicts by referring to the scope of the problem. In this instance there was a collision between Latvia’s interest in maintaining control over as much of the airspace above the Baltic Sea as possible (thus ensuring considerable revenues) and Lithuania’s desire to have at least one air transport corridor (thereby avoiding payments to Latvia). The dispute was aggravated by Latvia’s passivity in seeking a mutually acceptable resolution (it rejected the Lithuanians’ proposals without submitting any of its own).

Using Karl W. Deutsch’s classification of international conflicts in accordance with their external qualities, the previously-discussed dispute may be characterized as a “joint survival,” incidental and controllable conflict. Realizing the inevitability of cooperation in the future, Lithuania as well as Latvia naturally chose the path of negotiations. This dispute may be termed incidental because its appearance was determined by external circumstances (the survival of the old system of airspace control following the collapse of the USSR). The fact that none of the countries concerned presented this as a “life or death” matter influenced its non-coercive nature.

An important element of the Būtingė terminal issue is the factor of mutual fear. One of the motivating factors in Lithuania’s position is its unwillingness and fear of depending on Russian oil supplies. The wishes of both states coincide in a political sense. From an economic perspective, however, Latvia’s proposed cooperation strategy is not in Lithuania’s interests because the greater part of the financial benefits would accrue to Latvia.³⁹ Cooperation regarding the construction of the oil terminal is prevented by the unwillingness of both states to accommodate each other’s interests. This situation creates favorable conditions for the development of conflict situations. Among the other factors promoting conflict is the core nature of the problem (countries which lack strategic resources consider oil supplies to be one of the most vital concerns from an economic as well as a security point of view) and Latvia’s one-sidedness (its constant charges that Lithuania was violating international conventions and creating ecological threats and even proposals to link this issue to the question of delimiting the maritime boundary). Conversely, this situation’s favorable aspects form

³⁹ But its important to note that Lithuanians did not pay any special attention and did not carefully analyze the plan proposed by their neighboring state.

Russia's point of view should encourage cooperation between Latvia and Lithuania. Russia has the opportunity to exploit the question of oil supplies as a means of pressure by threatening diversion of oil exports to another country in pursuit of political ends (for example, its interests regarding national minorities).

An analysis of institutional cooperation should begin with the Baltic States' Council. The orientation of the documents that this trilateral institution has adopted points to its obviously symbolic nature. The bylaws of the Baltic Assembly, which was established in 1991, grant this organization the status of a forum for the exchange of views and not that of decision-making body, although in a formal sense the Assembly has not been entirely eliminated from the decision-making process (its recommendations may serve as the basis for decisions by the Council of Baltic Ministers). In real life, however, this institution practically had no influence on decisions of national parliaments. An even wider gap existed between the Baltic Assembly and national governments as well as presidential institutions. For all of these reasons the Baltic Assembly became a trilateral institution of a purely declarative character.

Institutional cooperation rests on a rather flawed principle which favors the state that is lagging behind or in opposition to a decision (for example, the 5th session of the Assembly failed to pass a resolution concerning the Baltic states aspirations for NATO membership). The very first declaration "Regarding the Principles of the Unity of the Baltic States" gives a dissenting state favorable conditions to hinder individual action. All of this differs fundamentally from the structure of relations among the Visegrad countries, which allows all of the parties to act individually. The Visegrad countries act in unison only when a common stance is useful.

Trilateral cooperation which is based entirely on idealistic declarations by the Baltic Assembly would have been completely ineffectual. That is why the creation of the trilateral Council of Ministers represented a logical step in the development of institutional relations and one which strengthened the process itself. The Council of Ministers began to dominate institutional cooperation from the very start. Lithuania could be considered the initiator of the Council, for it was its Foreign Ministry which drafted the first version of this institution's bylaws.

Effective cooperation at the presidential level is hampered by differences in the kinds of constitutional powers that each of the three heads of state exercises. For this reason, and also because the presidents' influence on national institutions varies in each country, cooperation at the heads of state level is limited to symbolic gestures and declarative statements. Their regular summits serve only to underline the continuity of cooperation.

Taking into account that interstate institutions play the main role in promoting integration among states, one can maintain that purely cooperative forms dominate in the institutional relations of the Baltic states, however, there is no trace of any deeper integration processes. Although the Baltic states consider cooperation as a suitable means of achieving common goals, they also make efforts to utilize other approaches which are more promising.

One field in which the Baltic states are actively cooperating is defense and security. Military cooperation is of particular importance.

Trilateral cooperation is useful in several respects. Military cooperation between the Baltic states and their efforts to coordinate the activity of their defense systems demonstrate that they would be capable of carrying out organized defense

should the need arise. Moreover, three-way cooperation bolsters the efforts of each individual state in pursuing their strategic goal of membership in NATO.

Defense and security cooperation encompasses the operative strategy (consultations, joint military exercises and the implementation of other active measures) and general strategy (e.g., joint diplomatic, political and military actions during the withdrawal of the Russian Army from the Baltic states and their integration in NATO).

With regard to the withdrawal of Russian forces, their more rapid departure from Lithuania also accelerated analogous processes in Latvia and Estonia.

The Baltic states' present cooperation in security affairs is to a significant extent influenced by current Russian policies regarding these three states. Effective cooperation with the involvement of third parties is continuing (for example, the signing of the U.S.-Baltic States' Charter).

Geographical dimension is very important in the relations between three Baltic states. The influence of geopolitical code and geopolitical gravitation is evident in this case.

The geopolitical interests of all three countries have practically coincided since 1990. During the period immediately following the re-establishment of independence, the governments of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia regarded as their fundamental interest the preservation of their status as independent states and the guaranteeing of their territorial integrity. After the Baltic states became full-fledged subjects of the system of international relations, they began considering as their paramount interests the strengthening of their defense and security as well as the raising of the level of their economic well-being. The threats to securing these interests were and remain generally similar. For all practical purposes, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia had no alternative to cooperation and integration into the EU and NATO in the face of the threat from Moscow.

In examining the development of relations among states, their nature and level of intensity, a researcher may pursue as one line of inquiry the role of historical precedents in foreign policy and their connections with current events.

The question establishing state borders became one of the subjects of dispute both after the declaration of independence in 1918, and following its restoration in 1990. If land borders were the cause of disagreements in the first case, then maritime boundaries were the subject of disputes in the second instance. The inter-war conflicts were resolved with the help of an arbitration commission, however, its rulings satisfied none of the contending parties (especially with respect to the Lithuanian-Latvian case). This choice of means of resolution clearly demonstrated that relations had reached the stage of significant deterioration since the parties were no longer capable of solving problems through bilateral methods. It is for this reason that after 1990, the Baltic states chose the course of bilateral negotiations rather than appealing to international institutions for their assistance (although there were suggestions to this effect). At the same time, the states sought to demonstrate their own ability to settle one of the essential issues of statehood, for one of the most important principles in current international conventions is "with the agreement of the parties."

Institutional cooperation among the Baltic states was quite lethargic after 1918. The signing of the 1934 Treaty on Concord and Cooperation was followed by meetings of foreign ministers, which became the most important link in maintaining relations. At the presidential level active relations were hindered by personal friction (especially between the Latvian and Estonian presidents). These processes lost even

more momentum after authoritarian regimes were established in all of the Baltic states, since the roles of individual leaders usually are much more accentuated in these circumstances. Cooperation at the level of parliaments was completely non-existent. The absence of common institutions in the inter-war period (with the exception of the foreign ministers' conferences after 1934) was one of the factors inhibiting coordination of foreign policy and the search for the most appropriate approaches. Moreover, the Baltic Entente treaty was never implemented de facto. One may assert that radically changed circumstances at present have created far more favorable conditions for cooperation between the presidents and at other institutional levels. In investigating the influence of historical precedents on current events, Robert Jervis, concluded that the events which provide the most potent lessons are those which have radical effects on peoples and states. The perception of Russia as the chief external threat stimulates considerably more active and effective Baltic cooperation in the field of security and defense. This Baltic image of Russia is understandable, since countries which have experienced aggression in the past tend to view the foreign policy of the former aggressors as domineering or expansionist. If one were to compare the present with the inter-war period in terms of opportunities for developing relations, one may assert that the possibilities of cooperation are more favorable today. By learning from shared historical experience, the Baltic states today have an opportunity to pursue more realistic policies of cooperation than during the inter-war period.

Conclusions

The Baltic states should examine the history of their relations with greater care so as to avoid repeating past mistakes (e.g., elevating national ambitions above common interests). Objective similarities and differences determine the present state of relations.

The geopolitical position of the Baltic countries permits them to develop their relations across both land borders as well as in the strategic expanses of the sea. This creates possibilities for cooperation, although it simultaneously promotes the appearance of certain conflicts. The existing divergence in their geopolitical codes and in their geopolitical gravitation also conditions the present state of international relations. On the other hand, historical experience (in the defense and security fields, for example) affects in a largely positive manner the development of relations among the Baltic states.

Cooperation is the dominant form of relations among the states of the Eastern Baltic subregion, although its effectiveness is seriously hampered by the absence of clearly defined goals. Cooperation is further undermined by the choice of differing means and strategies as well as concerns that the specific problems of each Baltic state will receive inadequate attention. The intensity of cooperation is determined by the following factors: the strengthening of trans-Atlantic ties, enlargement of the EU and other European integration processes, the situation in Russia and the latter country's policies towards the Baltic states and transformation processes in the subregion itself. The level of conflict and cooperation in the Eastern Baltic subregion also depends greatly on whether the states succeed in balancing their national interests with trilateral interests.

The external and internal characteristics of the conflicts of the Eastern Baltic subregion lead one to assume that their occurrence in the future will decrease. The

stability of the countries as well as the prospect of their membership in the EU also should lessen the probability of conflicts.

Future trilateral relations should develop in parallel with integration into Western structures, and both processes should influence each other. In addition, Baltic cooperation needs not only a common purpose, but also a certain specific foundation. At present this process is frequently considered in terms of trilateral relations, however, the bilateral dimension should be no less important.

Translated by Algis Avižienis

European and Atlantic Integration: Shared Values, Shared Destiny

Alexander Vershbow*

I remember first meeting the President of Lithuania when I was the Director of Soviet Affairs in the Department of State. This was at the time when Soviet troops were on the streets of Vilnius seeking to prevent the Lithuanian people from recovering their freedom. He was introduced as Valdas Adamkus, a civil servant and an active member of the Lithuanian diaspora. So fast promotions do happen to the right people.

Of course, even for someone as capable as President Adamkus, those kind of promotions also depend on the right circumstances. Sitting in my office not even ten years ago, it was impossible to foresee then the kind of changes that would make it possible for me to call him "Mr. President" today.

As foreign policy analysts, we are trained to think in terms of the most likely scenarios. Dramatic changes like the collapse of the Soviet empire rarely happen, so at any given moment, we always consider some other outcome - some variation of muddling through - as more likely. Fortunately, we are sometimes wrong: Great changes do, in fact, happen.

I make this point not to dwell on the past, but to chasten our thinking about the future. Although it may seem that on any given day, dramatic change is unlikely, we can, nonetheless, be confident that, through patient effort and enduring commitment to our values of freedom, democracy, free markets and human rights, great changes will happen.

This is the perspective I would like to bring to bear on the topic of European and Atlantic integration. We can be sure that our ordinary, day-to-day efforts will in fact produce extraordinary and lasting change.

I am pleased that the theme of this conference is integration as the basis for stability and security in Europe, because this is a perfect reflection of America's own policy for both Europe in general and the Baltic region in particular. As a number of senior U.S. officials have already said many times, United States' policy toward the Baltic region can be summed up in three words - "champion of integration."

Integration is a concept used to mean many things. In a very simple sense, we use it to refer to increasing the membership of key institutions - particularly NATO and the European Union.

This is a central part of our policy, because President Clinton's overarching goal is to create a Europe that is truly undivided, democratic and at peace for the first time in history. Opening the doors of these institutions - and keeping them open - is an essential step in building the new Europe.

This opening of doors is a large part, but by no means the only part, of what the upcoming Washington NATO Summit will be about. There, we will be celebrating the admission of the first three countries to join NATO since the end of the Cold War. Like the Baltic states, these are countries that were cut off from mainstream Europe by Soviet troops and had communist systems imposed upon them against their will. Their joining NATO is a sign to all of us that the process of change, the process of creating the new undivided Europe, is well under way.

I want to underscore that the admission of these three new members to NATO is the beginning, not the end, of the enlargement process. As NATO's leaders said in

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Madrid, "The Alliance will continue to welcome new members in a position to further the principles of the Washington Treaty and contribute to security in the Euro-Atlantic area."

NATO, and the United States in particular, will stand by this commitment. As President Clinton said at the signing of the U.S.-Baltic Charter in January, "NATO's door is and will remain open to every partner nation, and America is determined to create the conditions under which Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia will one day walk through that door."

Integration, however, means a great deal more than just expanding membership. Just as important is the building of closer ties with countries outside these institutions. While membership in NATO will of course remain a special privilege, our goal is to do as much as we can to minimize the differences between members and non-members of the Alliance. We want to create a cooperative security network in which all the countries of Europe and North America can work together to address the security challenges of today and the challenges of the next century.

Through the Partnership for Peace, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, and numerous other bilateral and regional efforts, we are striving to build the closest possible working cooperation among all the states of the Euro-Atlantic region. This commitment will only be strengthened by the admission of new members to NATO.

Precisely because NATO is a successful alliance, the real challenges to security in Europe will likely occur outside NATO territory. Although NATO will remain the "instrument of choice" for facing the challenges to European security into the next century, it will depend increasingly upon the efforts of non-NATO states as well as of Alliance members to overcome such transnational challenges as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, international terrorism, and regional instability of the kind we have seen in the Balkans. This is why it is in NATO's interests as much as that of the Partner states to build such close security cooperation across the entire Euro-Atlantic community.

By working together, we will not only be dealing with the real challenges to security that exist on the Continent, we will also be paving the way for the further enlargement of the Alliance when that step will contribute to the overall security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area.

A further, vital part of our concept of integration is shaping a creative, active and enduring engagement with Russia and Ukraine. We are committed to doing all we can to see that Russia and Ukraine are brought more fully into the transatlantic community.

The foundations for NATO's increased partnership with these countries, the NATO-Russia Founding Act and the NATO-Ukraine Charter, are an integral part of our vision for a stable, democratic and united Europe.

President Clinton, of course, just concluded his Summit in Moscow, so I will leave it to those who were with him there to discuss the details of his meetings and the progress that was made, and the problems that are there.

Let me simply say that our fundamental goal remains for Russia to be a stable, democratic and market-oriented partner, at peace with its neighbors and committed to integration into regional and global economic and political institutions. The best thing for the United States, the best thing for the Baltic states, and, I believe, the best thing for Russia is for Russia to be an integral part of the new Europe we are building.

In this regard, I should note that we applaud Lithuania's efforts to build a strong and positive relationship with Russia. We commend both countries for resolving the

border demarcation issue and for establishing a productive means of handling the delicate question of Kaliningrad.

Although it may seem difficult, given this region's painful history with Russia, the new reality is that the Baltic states and Russia must now see each other as partners in building stable democracies, increasing regional trade, attracting investment, and cleaning up the environment.

As Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott said at the meeting of the U.S.-Baltic Partnership Commission in July, "If Russia can come to see the Baltic states not as a pathway inward for invading armies or as a buffer against imaginary enemies, but rather as a gateway outward to the new Europe of which it seeks to be an increasingly active part, then everyone will benefit - your countries, mine, Russia, and the Euro-Atlantic community as a whole. We will all be safer and more secure."

Likewise, the Baltic states themselves need to look beyond the past to see Russia in a new light. This involves taking steps to build a more inclusive society at home, including rejection of attitudes and opinions which are harmful to minorities.

In the U.S.-Baltic Charter, the U.S. pledged to work with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania through the OSCE to help approve and implement legislation to provide all residents, including members of the ethnic Russian communities, with the same benefits and opportunities as others. I should say that the OSCE is the only standard the U.S. recognizes in this area. There will be no "moving of the "goalposts" - in either direction.

Beyond the Baltic Charter, and also of great importance, are the efforts we are making to build regional cooperation under the rubric of the Northeast European Initiative (NEI). Key to this effort is the work being done to foster greater cross-border cooperation with local and regional governments and businesses in Northwest Russia.

Together with other countries in the region, including Germany, Poland, Denmark and other Nordic countries, we want to try to nourish political and business contacts with Northwest Russia. The kinds of economic and environmental cooperation we expect to take root can hopefully serve as the catalyst for future economic coordination and competition, in place of past confrontation.

In short, it is our hope that the Baltic states will see themselves as part of the larger market, defined not only by the geographic limits of the Baltic region, but by Northeast Europe in general, and that they will work to build support for this concept of broader regional integration with Northwest Russia.

This brings me to my final point, which is that beyond questions of membership and partnership, integration is really about converging systems and common values.

Because when we talk about "integration," what we really mean is that all of our countries - all the countries of the Euro-Atlantic area - should become part of a larger community, one that is dedicated to the values of freedom, democracy, human rights, free markets, and the rule of law.

To the extent that societies fully reflect these values - whether it be Russia, Lithuania, the United States, or Norway - then we have an inherent interest in working together, in being at peace with one another, in fostering trade and economic growth, and in helping others to share these same benefits.

This is what we mean when we talk about increasing the space in Europe that is democratic, prosperous and secure - the area where wars simply do not happen. This is our vision of Euro-Atlantic integration.

Gediminas Vitkus

The “Democracy Deficit” and Prospects for EU Enlargement

The ongoing enlargement of the European Union in an eastern direction is a many-sided process which has not yet been fully examined. However, it is already clear that it will bring about long-term geopolitical, economic and cultural consequences. One of the aspects of this ongoing process is directly related to the further development of democracy in this region. On the one hand, it is obvious that EU enlargement will positively affect and help consolidate democracy in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries. This is confirmed by the undoubted consolidation of democracy in the Southern European states, which are already EU members, namely, Greece, Spain and Portugal. On the other hand, the very process of the CEE countries' accession to the EU raises many problems connected with the normal functioning of democratic governments in these states.

First of all, the EU states have themselves faced the well-known and widely discussed problem of the democracy deficit. Essentially the problem is that universally binding legislation is adopted not by an assembly of a nation's representatives, such as a parliament, but by ministers assembled in the Council, i.e. representatives of the executive. In other words, the nationals of EU countries must obey laws over whose deliberation and adoption they have virtually no control, either directly or through representatives elected by them. The EU member states are intensively seeking ways to resolve this problem: the powers of the European Parliament are gradually being expanded, while the Amsterdam Treaty provides for a possibility of greater involvement of the national parliaments in the adoption of EU legal acts. This demonstrates the understanding that the national parliaments' opportunities for compensating for the deficit of democracy have still not been utilized properly and in full.

In the case of the CEE states, the problem of democracy deficit is still more acute. The citizens of these countries will be obliged to obey laws, which were prepared and adopted without any participation by their elected representatives. Neither will the validity of these legal acts be subject to discussion, for it is well known that all countries willing to join the EU must comply with the requirement that the *acquis communautaire* be unconditionally accepted in its entirety, i.e. all the legal acts and the practice of their application which have already been accumulated by the EU states since the beginning of the organization. Of course one could argue that there is no deficit of democracy in fact. The decision by the CEE countries to seek membership in the EU and to comply with its requirements was not forced upon them but rather is an expression of the self-determination of the states and their democratically-elected authorities. Nevertheless the situation is complicated and an “antidemocratic spirit” attaches itself to the entire process by the extent, rate and character of the legislative program to be adopted by each state. The point is that everything that the EU member countries have accumulated in the course of four decades will have to be accepted by the present candidate countries in several years.

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The later the date of accession of a state, the larger the number of EU legal acts it will be obliged to adopt and incorporate in its legal system. For example, it was relatively easier for the United Kingdom or Denmark to become members of the European Economic Community in 1973, than it was for Austria or Sweden when they aspired to do the same in 1995. Undoubtedly even more difficult will be the CEE countries' accession, which will start much later. It has been estimated that CEE countries joining the EU will have to take over, adapt and enforce up to 13,000 legal acts set forth on as many as 80,000 pages.¹

In other words, the size and rate of the legislative program to be implemented essentially raises two problems for each candidate country: on the one hand, this means an enormous load of technical work for the lawmakers of those countries, and, on the other hand, it raises the question of the democratic legitimacy, in a broad political sense, of the legal acts which seemingly come down from on high and are not subject to discussion. If the first problem is essentially a problem of ensuring good management - to the extent that good management can be ensured in institutions subject to political authorities - the second issue is much more complicated. Here Euro-institutions and especially national parliaments of the candidate countries find themselves in a paradoxical situation. Instead of acting as guarantors of democracy, the national parliaments of the candidate countries must "serve" an essentially antidemocratic and compulsory process of adopting the *acquis*.

However, it is gratifying to note the strengthening of the role of national parliaments in this process as integration becomes wider and deeper. All EU member states have established and developed specialized parliamentary machinery for dealing with EU policy-making. Governments in all EU member states are now required to provide sufficient advance notification of important initiatives to their parliaments, and the national parliaments have obtained increased scrutiny powers over their governments' Community policy. So far, however, no parliament of an EU member state or corresponding European Affairs Committee has the powers equal to the European Committee (*Europaudvalget*) of the Folketing (the Danish Parliament). The basic role of the Danish *Europaudvalget* is to give the Danish Government a mandate before any important decision is taken in the Council of the European Union.² However, the difficulties associated with the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty and subsequent debates on the democracy deficit in the European Union have prompted other member states (e.g., Germany and France) to strengthen the role of national parliaments in the integration policy of these countries. This desideratum is reflected in the modified EU Treaty signed by the representatives of EU member countries in Amsterdam. The Treaty contains a provision calling on the national parliaments to play a greater role in the affairs of the Union. The Commission is to delay presenting its legislative proposals to the Parliament and the Council of the Union for six weeks to give national parliaments a chance to debate the proposals with their respective governments at the start of the legislative process.³ In analyzing the role of the Austrian, Swedish and Finnish Parliaments, John Fitzmaurice, the author of an article entitled *National Parliamentary Control of EU Policy in the Three*

¹Gediminas Šerksnys, "Lithuanian Self-Avis. Presentations at the International Conference," *Lithuania for Europe. Proceedings of the International Conference* (Vilnius, September 26-28, 1997), p. 94.

²*European Affairs Committees of the Parliaments of the Member States*, European Parliament (June, 1995), p. 14-17.

³*Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts. Protocol on the Role of National Parliaments*, in <http://ue.eu.int/Amsterdam/en/amsteroc/docs/amsten.doc>

New Member States, notes a common trend towards greater involvement of the national parliaments in EU policy and believes that this trend should become more marked as EU enlargement progresses.⁴ Thus one may hypothesize that probable EU enlargement and the accession of new states will inevitably mean that the national parliaments of these states will be unwilling to lag behind the parliaments of member states and will exercise a profound influence on this process. This article is based on an analysis of the early experience of Lithuania, Latvia and Poland and will examine this hypothesis in greater depth. We will discuss how the parliaments of the candidate countries are attempting to master and define their new role as their countries gradually integrate into the EU.

European Affairs in the Lithuanian Seimas

The Seimas of the Republic Lithuania is now serving its second term in accordance with the new Constitution. The first Seimas, which functioned from 1992-1996, was controlled by the leftist Democratic Labor Party. The majority in the second Seimas, which started its deliberations in 1996, and whose term expires in 2000, belongs to the right-of-center coalition of Conservatives and Christian Democrats. Despite this change in political composition, Lithuania's policy in the area of European integration remains unchanged. All the main political parties approve of and support Lithuania's integration into the EU.

Along with the change in political structure of the Seimas in 1996, there have been changes regarding the decisions of supervisory institutions concerned with governmental policy towards the EU. In the Seimas of 1992-1996, supervision over EU integration policy was mainly within the competence of the Seimas' Foreign Affairs Committee. It was only on 15 March 1995, not long before the signing of the European (Association) Agreement⁵, that a European Subcommittee was set up under the Foreign Affairs Committee (incidentally, it is interesting to note that the governmental institutions dealing with European integration issues were established as late as May 22, i.e. two months later). However, this structure so far has not played any important role in democratic control over the integration policy pursued by the Government - both due to its relatively low status and because at that time the European integration issues were mainly a matter of high politics. The most that could be done by this subcommittee was the initiation of relevant discussions in the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Seimas. Therefore the prevailing item on the work plans of the subcommittee was the acquaintance with the integration-related work carried out in Lithuania. But later, after the signing of the European (Association) Agreement, attention was naturally focused on preparations for the ratification of the Agreement. The more so that the process of ratification was likely to be quite complicated since it became apparent during Lithuania's discussions with the European Union that Article 47 of the Lithuanian Constitution regulating land ownership did not provide for the possibility of acquisition of land by foreign natural or legal persons. This constituted a serious obstacle, which could prevent the signing of the European (Association) Agreement between the EU and Lithuania. On May 4, 1995, the Seimas of Lithuania passed a declaration committing itself "to take the initiative to prepare and adopt an

⁴John Fitzmaurice, "National Parliamentary Control of EU policy in the Three New Member States," *West European Politics*, 1, 19 (January 1996), p. 88-96.

⁵The European (Association) Agreement between Lithuania and the European Union was signed on June 12, 1995.

amendment to the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania necessary for this purpose as well as a corresponding constitutional law regulating the implementation of the new constitutional norm". Though this work was formally undertaken by the Joint Working Group of Authorized Representatives of Parliamentary Parties and Factions, the main coordinating work was performed by the European Affairs Subcommittee. Therefore one may state, in a certain sense, that the preparation for the ratification of the European (Association) Agreement and the corresponding amending of Article 47 was the main achievement of the European Affairs Subcommittee. The amendment to the Constitution was passed, and the European Agreement was ratified on June 20, 1996. No time was left for the subcommittee to engage in other activities, including supervision of the executive, since the Seimas completed its term in the autumn of that year.

On November 28, 1996, the new Seimas adopted a resolution to establish the Economic Reform and Integration Commission. This Commission, however, was short-lived and did not introduce any notable initiatives in European affairs, in part because of the illness and death of the commission chairman. On September 18, 1997, the Seimas abolished this commission and established the European Affairs Committee in its place. Thus, for the first time in the history of the Lithuanian Seimas, European affairs acquired a status equal to that of other traditional concerns of the Lithuanian parliament.

The European Affairs Committee is one of the thirteen standing committees of the Seimas. Its membership, like that of the other committees, is composed in accordance with the principle of proportional representation by the majority and minority parties. At present it consists of 24 members of the Seimas. According to Article 72(2) of the Statute of the Seimas, the committee shall perform the following functions:

- consider major issues, within the jurisdiction of the Seimas, relating to the policy of the Republic of Lithuania in respect of the European Union and submit recommendations to the Government;
- coordinate the activities of the Seimas committees and commissions related to the issues concerning the integration into the European Union;
- consider a strategy of preparation for the membership of the European Union, the implementation of a program in harmonization of the European Union legislation with legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania, the Government provisions concerning major issues related to the preparation for negotiations on the membership of the European Union, other issues relating to the integration into the European Union, and submit recommendations to the Government;
- exercise parliamentary control over public authorities when preparing for and having entered into the negotiations for the membership of the European Union; and
- assist in ensuring democratic development of the process of Lithuania's integration into the European Union.⁶

The resolutions of this Committee are of an advisory nature, as are those of other Seimas committees. Any executive institution which receives recommendations or proposals by the Committee must consider them and, within 15 days of receipt of

⁶*Statute of Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania*, (17 February 1994, No.I-399. As amended by 11 November 1997, VIII-508), official translation, <http://www.lrs.lt/c-bin/eng/preps2?Condition1=48325&Condition2=>

the proposals or within an agreed period, inform the Committee of the results of its deliberations and any measures taken in this respect. Furthermore, the committee may exert influence on the executive institutions by initiating decisions or resolutions of the Seimas which are binding on the Government. The European Affairs Committee has already made use of this possibility by initiating the adoption of two key Seimas resolutions in the area of European integration ("On the Priorities of the Activities of the Government in the Process of Lithuania's Integration into the European Union" of November 6, 1997, and "On the Implementation of the National Programme for the Adoption of the *Acquis*" of March 17, 1998).

Comparing Lithuanian, Latvian and Polish Parliamentary Euroinstitutions

The European Affairs Committee of the Seimas does not differ in its main functions and work organisation from analogous institutions established in the parliaments of Poland and Latvia. The Polish and Latvian committees are also based on the principle of proportional representation. The standing Commission on European Agreement Affairs was established in the Sejm (i.e. the lower house of the Polish parliament⁷) immediately after the signing of the European (Association) Agreement in 1991. In the present Sejm the European Affairs Commission was established after the last election held in the autumn of 1997. This commission is now one of the 27 standing commissions of the Sejm. The Commission for Foreign Affairs and European Integration was established in the new upper house, the Senate, and has become one of the 14 standing commissions of the Senate. From a political point of view, the Sejm commission has greater weight, since, according to the Polish constitution, the Sejm adopts legislation, while the Senate approves or rejects it. Both commissions are staffed in accordance with the principle of proportional representation.. The Sejm commission has 32 members while 20 members serve on the Senate commission.⁸

In the Latvian parliament, called the Saeima, the European Affairs Committee started functioning in November of 1995. After the 1996 parliamentary election this committee became one of the 16 standing committees of the Saeima. It is also staffed by the proportional representation principle. Until 1998 parliamentary elections the committee consisted of 10 members⁹.

However, the European Affairs Committee of the Lithuanian Seimas differs in certain respects from the analogous Latvian and Polish institutions. First of all, it is relatively larger than its counterparts in the neighbouring states. Not less than 17% of the members of the Seimas (24 of 141) belong to the European Affairs Committee, while in Latvia the comparable ratio is 10%, (10 of 100) and in Poland it is only 6.9% (32 of 460). Furthermore, the European Affairs Committees (Commissions) of Poland and Latvia are not granted any special or extraordinary rights and powers under the statutes of these countries' parliaments that would distinguish them from the other

⁷The Polish Parliament, called - Zgromadzenie Narodowe (i.e. National Assembly) - consists from the higher house - Senate and the lower house- Sejm.

⁸A. Dziewulska, A. A. Ambroziak, "Instytucje koordynujace integracji z UE w Czechach, na Wegrzech i w Polsce," *Wspolnoty Europejskie. Biuletyn informacyjny*, 1 (65), 1997, p. 13-18; the internet web site of the Polish Sejm and Senate: <http://sejm.gov.pl>; <http://senat.gov.pl>

⁹Interview with Ms. Ilona Kirule, First Secretary of Embassy of Republic of Latvia in Vilnius, May 11, 1998.; the Internet web site of Latvian Parliament: <http://saeima.lanet.lv>

committees (commissions), while the Lithuanian Committee has been granted extraordinary status by several articles of the Statute of the Seimas of Lithuania:

- Article 10 provides for participation in the work of the European Affairs Committee by the members of other Seimas committees. This is an exception because the Statute of the Seimas prohibits a Seimas member from working in more than one committee and he/she may only represent another Seimas member in another committee.
- Article 44 states that, according to the proportional principle of representation of factions, the European Affairs Committee shall be composed of not less than 15 members, while other committees of the Seimas must consist of not less than 7 and not more than 17 members of the Seimas.
- Article 46 states that one of the members of the Board of the Seimas shall be elected chairman of the European Affairs Committee. This is also an exception because members of the Seimas Board (i.e. Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Chancellor of the Seimas) may not be committee members.¹⁰

Thus, Lithuania, as distinct from Latvia or Poland, chose a model of the committee oriented towards the consideration of “strategic” integration issues, integration policy and co-ordination of work performed by other committees rather than a model which would turn the body into a forum for the consideration of integration-related issues. The consideration of specific draft legislation is left to traditional special committees. The European Affairs Committee has been given this role by the above-mentioned exceptions provided for in the Statute of the Seimas. Thus, it was at the initiative of the European Affairs Committee that, prior to the adoption of the resolution "On the Implementation of the National Programme for the Adoption of the *Acquis*," attempts were made not only to discuss this document in the Committee itself but also to ensure that all other committees of the Seimas and even individual parliamentarians were able to familiarise themselves with the contents of this programme¹¹.

Finally, practice has already shown that the “exclusivity” of the European Affairs Committee enables it to devote much more time for parliamentary supervision over the executive as compared with the “ordinary” committees. For example, in the period from December 15, 1997 to May 4, 1998, the Committee met 11 times and examined 25 issues, of which as much as 10 (or 40% of the total) were related to the reports of representatives of executive institutions. The following documents prepared by the euroinstitutions of the executive as well as work conducted by them were considered over this period: the national programme for the adoption of the *acquis*, the programme for the integration into the common market, the process of privatisation of major enterprises, the preparation of administrative reform, the status of public information about the EU and others. Only two draft laws (the Law on Telecommunications and the Law on Administrative Reform) were discussed by the Committee over the same period, although the consideration was not detailed; the representatives of the executive institutions presented the drafts to the Committee.

¹⁰*Statute of Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania* (17 February 1994, No.I-399. As amended by 11 November 1997, VIII-508), official translation, <http://www.lrs.lt/c-bin/eng/preps2?Condition1=48325&Condition2=>

¹¹Interview with Ms. Rūta Bunevičiūtė, Senior Advisor to the European Affairs Committee of the Seimas, May 6, 1998.

The European Affairs Committee differs from other committees in not only hearing information furnished by representatives of other state institutions, but also in expressing its own opinion, initiating parliamentary investigations and identifying problems connected with pre-accession. The adequate size of the Committee (24 Seimas deputies) allowed it to form as many as 8 working groups on the basis of eight short-term priorities defined in the National Programme for the Adoption of the *Acquis*. Thus the European Affairs Committee not only exercises control over the executive but takes certain initiatives itself.

Are CEE National Parliaments Becoming Serious Negotiating Partners or EU Fifth Columns?

This overview of the parliamentary euroinstitutions in Lithuania and other CEE countries allows us to conclude that these bodies not only function actively, but also have undergone considerable transformation over a relatively short period of association with the European Union. Parliamentary structures adapted quickly to the varying character of the pre-accession preparations. Since pre-accession has evolved from a foreign policy process to a process of internal political and economic reforms, its management has changed accordingly. As shown by the analysis of the activities of Lithuanian and other CEE countries' parliaments, their participation in European policy underwent gradual differentiation and separated from the sphere of foreign affairs, as was the case with the executive institutions. The Lithuanian European Affairs Subcommittee started functioning in the Seimas Foreign Affairs Committee even before the signing of the European (Association) Agreement, while the new Seimas elected in 1996 has already established a special committee for European affairs.

The separation of the so-called "European affairs" from foreign affairs undoubtedly had to cause changes in the character of parliamentary activities. Here a transition had to occur from the parliamentary control characteristic of the foreign affairs area where the foreign policy strategy is discussed and non-mandatory recommendations are made to the parliamentary control characteristic of the internal affairs where the national parliament traditionally exercises greater powers because the legislative authority is concentrated in its hands. On this basis, one may distinguish two main models of parliamentary work in the area of democratic control over the government's EU policies. The distinctive characteristic of the **first**, or the **early model** is that parliamentary control is formally exercised by the parliament's foreign affairs committee, which does not consider any draft proposals for new laws. This committee mainly communicates with the executive via the ministry of foreign affairs and is only engaged in the discussion of strategic political issues (ratification of the European (Association) Agreement, term of submission of the application for membership, the most important events concerning the EU, for example IGC etc.) and the making of recommendations. A characteristic of the **second** or the **later model** is parliamentary control exercised by a special committee for European affairs. This kind of committee (or commission), as a rule, is set up after the signing and coming into force of a European Agreement. The committee is only partially engaged in the consideration of major political issues, focusing its attention instead on so-called internal policy matters. On the one hand, the ability of the executive institutions to conduct reforms of the legal system and to prepare for negotiations is subject to control, and on the other hand, problems of certain sectors are directly examined and

recommendations are made to the Government.

However, these changes, which would have permitted more effective control over European policy and thus ensured the legitimacy of this policy, were partially negated by the paradoxical nature of "European affairs." The analysis of the activities of the Lithuanian as well as Polish and Latvian parliaments and their European Affairs Committees has shown that they are obliged to assume certain functions which are not typical of other lines of parliamentary activities, i.e. instead of examining draft proposals for new laws and exercising control over the executive they have to verify compliance of legislation with European law. The case of Latvia is particularly exceptional in this context. The Latvian European Affairs Committee monitors all draft laws which pass the Saeima and checks their compatibility with EU norms,¹² while in Poland and Lithuania this work is performed by executive institutions. Urging the government and other executive institutions to more actively and effectively meet the European Commission's requirements and prepare for membership has become a routine task of the parliamentary European Affairs Committees of all three countries.

In other words, the very "anti-democratic" nature of the procedures for preparations for EU accession imperceptibly shifts the main focus of the parliamentary committees' functions from representing national interests to representing the interests of the European Union. Instead of ensuring that the process of preparations for membership is made compatible with public opinion and social needs and adjusting actions of the executive branch of government accordingly, the European Affairs Committees often have begun functioning as the European Union's "unpaid agencies" or "fifth columns" which put pressure on national governments to adapt to EU requirements as quickly as possible. One can observe this kind of "lobbying" activity in all of the CEE countries' parliamentary European Affairs Committees.

That is why it is still difficult to determine whether the negotiation process of accession involving the first five CEE candidate countries will result in an even more active role by the parliaments and perhaps a "third" model, which could in a sense resemble Danish extremism. In any case, the circumstance that these will not be conventional international negotiations over which the executive branch of government exercises exclusive control allows one to presuppose such an eventuality. In other words, the parliaments of some of the candidate countries might express their will to control the contents of the mandate for negotiations (assuming that this is in line with constitutional frameworks).

But without regard to the direction of future developments, it is already notable that the CEE states have set up comprehensive mechanisms for dealing with European integration affairs in which parliamentary oversight institutions occupy an appropriate place. It is also significant that these institutions, at least in terms of their formal powers, differ little from the Euroinstitutions systems of the EU member states. This is a hopeful sign suggesting that the accumulated experience of the national parliaments and their European affairs Committees will help overcome the "democracy deficit" of the European Union, once the anomalies of the transition period end and the present associated countries begin taking full part in the process of adopting EU legal acts.

Conversely, having analyzed the activity and composition of parliamentary

¹²Interview with Ms. Inese Kriškane, EU Information Centre Administrator of the Saeima (Parliament) of Latvia on May 19, 1998.

Euroinstitutions, one is drawn to the conclusion that the parliaments and European Affairs Committees of Lithuania and other associated CEE states possess only a rudimentary and superficial capacity to serve as guarantors of democracy.