

*Egidijus Motieka\**

*Institute of International Relations and Political Science of the University of Vilnius*

*Nortautas Statkus\**

*Institute of International Relations and Political Science of the University of Vilnius*

## Global and Lithuanian Geopolitical Situation: Review of 2001-2003\*\*

The authors present the geopolitical analysis of global, regional and local (in the Eastern Baltics) situation for the 2001-2003 period. It is asserted that during this period the United States, Israel and Russia (in some areas) have received the biggest gains, at least in geostrategic terms. In the course of the counter-terrorist global campaign, EU countries have been divided on the issue of the war against Iraq and that, which has prevented consolidation of the common EU foreign, security and defence policies.

China has vigorously sought to entrench itself in the East Asia and the regions that attain less attention from the West by conducting a very rational strategy of co-operation with the USA as the only superpower. China has tried to secure its peaceful external setting, influx of foreign investments, and the arrival of innovative technologies that are necessary for the growth of its economy.

While seeking to take hold of the borders of the continental geostrategic zone (heartland), Russia has only partially restored its influence in the CIS countries. Russia still can't do that in the Baltic States, though it attempts to weaken their structural power.

### 1. Theoretical and Methodological Assumptions

Geopolitics as a discipline explores geographical dimensions of political processes. Geopolitics differs from the international relations discipline in terms of perspective on the role of space. Geopolitical conceptions are based on the assumption that a spread of civilisations' and states' power is determined by the patterns of human movement and information communication abilities in various dimensions of space. The discipline of international relations examines the relations between

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\* *Doc., dr. Egidijus Motieka* - Associate professor of the Institute of International Relations and Political Science of the University of Vilnius, Address: Vokiečių 10, LT-01130 Vilnius, tel. +370-5-2514130.

\* *Dr. Nortautas Statkus* - Researcher of the Institute of International Relations and Political Science of the University of Vilnius, Address: Vokiečių 10, LT-01130 Vilnius, tel. +370-5-2514130, e-mail: nortas@takas.lt

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states and, their foreign policies; the structure and dynamics of the international system; distribution of states' and other political subjects' power and prestige; and regimes of the system (institutions, treaties, norms, unwritten rules), without specific reference to the geographical setting of the states and other political actors.

While international relations estimates the distribution of states' and other political subjects' power and its influence upon domestic politics and foreign policy in general, geopolitics is concerned about reasons of the uneven geographical distribution of power and the political consequences of it. In other words, the geopolitical analyst is concerned not only with how much and why a state has power and for what purposes are of its uses it can be used, but also about how much and why a state has power and how it uses it in specific places on the Earth.

While a scholar of international relations (no matter who he/she is – neorealist or liberal institutionalist) regards the international system as a structured whole of regularly interacting political units, a scholar of geopolitics treats the international system as a structure of geographically defined political subjects. Both for a scholar of international relations and a scholar of geopolitics, the international system consists of elements (political subjects) and links between them (functions). Although, a scholar of geopolitics argues that an interaction between political subjects creates spatial political formations – regions, buffers, zones of influence, “shatter-belts”, and outposts (or barriers).

Thus, geopolitics is a different, space-systemic approach to international relations. Of course, this approach integrates the discipline of international relations. So, geopolitics can be treated as a hybrid discipline, which examines the regularities of power distribution on Earth at a qualitatively higher level, i.e. the regularities of power transformation in space.

**Geopolitics combine geoeconomics (geoenergetics), geostrategy and geoculture.** **Geoeconomics** analyses a distribution of economic power and the changes of this distribution across the Earth (core – semi-periphery – periphery). Also, geoeconomics can be defined as the concentration of economic power and its projection into space to achieve political goals.

**Geoenergetics** analyses uneven spatial distribution of energy resources in the Earth and particularities of their transportation, which eventually determines the uneven distribution of geoeconomical and geopolitical power. In other words, geoenergetics analyses how this inequality gives geoeconomical and eventually, geopolitical supremacy for particular political subjects over others and, how this supremacy can be exploited or neutralised. On the other hand, geoenergetics is about the concentration of energy resources and projecting the project of them in space to achieve political objectives.

**Geostrategy** is a long-term concentration of a state's power and its projection of it in various dimensions of space (sea, land, air, outer space, cyberspace) to achieve its own objectives. The state's geostrategic position is its capacity to spread its power (or capacity to block others' attempts to do so) in those spatial dimensions.

**Geoculture** is a concentration of cultural-civilisational power and the projection of it into space to achieve political objectives. Similarly to as geoeconomics, geocultural studies deal with the uneven distribution of cultural-civilisational resources in space. This uneven distribution generates communicational barriers, in-

fluence the geoeconomical and geopolitical power of a state. Geoculture analyses civilisations, cores of civilisations, relations between semi-peripheries and peripheries, processes of cultural-civilisational innovation, application, adaptation and the spread of these innovations.

Thus, *formal geopolitics* analyses spatial configurations of power – the world’s (region’s, sub-region’s) geographical power structure and its dynamics. *Applied geopolitics* projects the concentration of all sorts of power in space to achieve political objectives.

**According to the international relations discipline, a change of in the international position of a state** is a change of the state’s power and prestige inside the international system (hierarchy): hegemon/superstate/great state (regional dominant), medium state, small state, mini state. For example, Russia is visibly changed from a superstate into a regional great state after the Cold War. In view of this, **geopolitical status** of a state is defined by the place and importance in the geopolitical structure of the world, which consists of geopolitical subjects, higher level formations (geopolitical supra-regions, regions, sub-regions), links between geopolitical subjects, and the functional attributes of the subjects (geopolitical actors, geopolitical centres, buffers, neutral regions, “zones of influence”).

**Change of a state’s geopolitical position** is a change of the state’s power inside a geopolitical region(s) and/or in regard to other geopolitical subjects (liberation from influence, spread of influence, control, division/sharing of influence, loss of influence, retreat, falling under influence/dependency). For example, a state can move away from other states’(s’) spheres of influence and becomes a geopolitical ally or geopolitical centre, or separate from the geopolitical centre – neutral territory. Such dynamics of states’ geopolitical situations can be defined by terms of the growth of states’ power, projection of power in space, geopolitical orientation and gravitation. **The geopolitical process is growth (or decline) both of power and territory (or space)**. For example, the creation of the Warsaw Pact was an establishment of the Soviet Union’s control in a “shatter-belt” of Central and Eastern Europe. NATO enlargement means expansion of maritime states’ power over almost all parts of the European discontinental geostrategic zone and also – the enlargement of the maritime Europe geopolitical region of Europe.

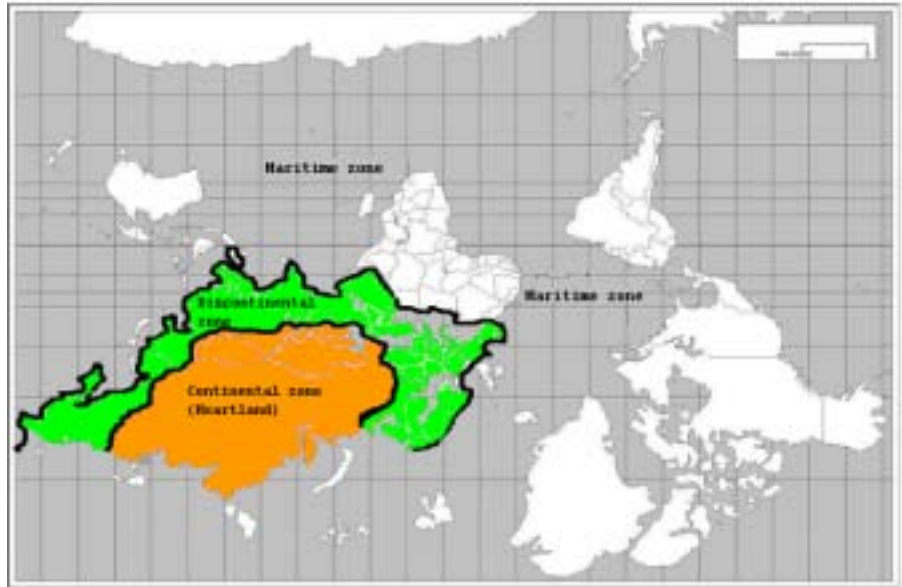
**Geopolitical dynamics include geoeconomical, geoenergetical, geostrategic, and geocultural changes of a state’s position.** **Geoeconomical** change is a transition from one geoeconomical zone to another (core/centre - semi-periphery – periphery). **Geocultural** change means change of a state’s production functions (only in the area of “production” of knowledge and cultural innovations) – from supplier of stock and supportive services to a producer of final products of culture. During the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, – beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the USA turned from a semi-periphery (in terms of geoeconomy and culture) state into one of the major geoeconomical and geocultural centres<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Wallerstein I., *Geopolitics and Geoculture: Essays on the Changing World-System*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

**Geoenergetical change** means a change of a state's position in a the chain of supply of energy resources: stock suppliers – transit and processing countries – states-consumers. For example, the Baltic states turned from energy consumers (in Soviet times) into energy resource transit countries.

**Geostrategic change** is an ability to spread one's own power in various dimensions of space (sea, land, air, cosmos, cyberspace). For example, after building a fleet in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> c. Germany turned from a purely continental state into both a continental and maritime state. India, after launching its first satellite in 1998, is starting to become a cosmic state.



Map 1. Geostrategic zones of the world in sea and land

### 1.1. Global Geopolitical System

**The position of a state from a geopolitical perspective is always estimated in the context of geopolitical supra-regions and according their geopolitical functions.** A researcher needs to understand what kind of interaction structure is created by states and non-state actors in a given geopolitical context. The context can be regional, bilateral relations between two or more states, or even within the global arena.

As it was already mentioned, a global geopolitical system, as with any other system, consists of elements and relations between the elements. The elements of a geopolitical system are geopolitical subjects and geopolitical formations – *sub-regions, regions, supra-regions*. The geopolitical system has three levels: 1) global (main elements are hyper-states and supra-regions); 2) regional (main elements are great states and regions); 3) local (main elements are states and their administrative units, sub-regions).

**Interaction between geopolitical subjects results in the creation of higher level geopolitical formations.** Lower level formations are created by a highly *intensive* and *concentrated* interrelationship between geopolitical subjects. Higher the level of a system, the less the intensity and concentration of relations. *Intensity of relations* is measured by their *regularity* and *volume*. A concept of **geopolitical region** signifies that the relations (economic ties, communication channels, transport corridors, energy supply sources) between the geopolitical subjects within a group are more intense and concentrated than those relations with other geopolitical subjects (not belonging to the group). Geopolitical subjects are attributed to the same geopolitical region when tight economic, political, social, and cultural ties bind them.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the boundaries of geopolitical regions are defined by big differences in the values of intensity and concentration of relations<sup>3</sup>. The boundaries of regions are flexible and more often they overlap more often than, less the concentration and intensity of relations between the subjects (de-regionalisation).

Table 1. Structure of a global geopolitical system

System level	Elements of a system	Intensity of relations	Concentration of relations
<b>Global</b>	supra-regions	Low	low
<b>Regional</b>	regions, sub-regions	medium	medium
<b>Local</b>	states, administrative units, corporations, illegal political organisations, NGOs	high	high

The nature of relations between geopolitical subjects can be partially assessed by the quantitative and qualitative scale of relation intensity. Relations can only connect the subjects when the volume of regular (for example per decade) relations is not higher than 25 per cent of all subject's relations. That state of association may be named *interconnectedness*. A higher volume of relations (25-44 per cent) creates some *sensitivity* between the subjects in case relations are broken<sup>4</sup>. A volume of 45-54 per cent indicates high sensitivity. Volumes of 55-74 per cent – *one-way dependency*; volumes of 75-89 per cent means *high dependency*; and volumes higher than 90 per cent – *total dependency*. **The internal (sub-regional) structure of a region is described by lesser variations of intensity (regularity and volume) and concentration (density and variety) of relations between the subjects of a region.**

<sup>2</sup> Cohen S. B. *Geography and politics in a world divided*, 2nd ed., New York: Oxford University Press, 1973, p.64-75.

<sup>3</sup> Intensity of relations is measured by their regularity and volume. Concentration of relations is measured by density of relations, e.g. number of roads, airline flights, joint political institutions; and variety of relations (economic, political, cultural).

<sup>4</sup> Rosenau J. M. *The Study of Global Interdependence: Essays on the Transnationalisation of World Affairs*, London: Frances Pinter Publishers Ltd., 1980, p. 45.

Table 2. Character of relations between geopolitical subjects

Volume of relations (%)	Character of relations for subject A (in terms of dependency)	Character of relations for subject B (in terms of influence)	Examples
10-24 25-44	interconnectedness sensitivity	low influence influence	Germany and USA Czech Republic and Germany
<b>45-54</b> 55-74 74-89 90-100	high sensitivity dependency high dependency total dependency	high influence control predominance monopoly	United Kingdom and EU Austria and Germany Canada and USA Puerto Rico and USA

In essence, a geopolitical region consists of subjects, which have a high concentration of communication between them and a high intensity of communication content. **The dynamic objective state of such relations is called geopolitical gravitation; dynamic subjective – geopolitical orientation.** In other words, a **geopolitical region** is a group of political subjects bound by geopolitical gravitation and orientation.

At the moment, 11 geopolitical regions can be identified:

1. North America and Caribbean
2. Western Eurasia (Jūrinė Europe)
3. Central Eurasia (Russia),
4. Central Asia
5. East Asia
6. South Asia
7. Sub-Saharan Saharan Africa
8. South America
9. Middle East
10. Australia and Oceania
11. Southeast Asia<sup>5</sup>

**Geopolitical gravitation** includes both cultural-civilisational ties of several states and belonging caused by material ties. **Physical material gravitation** reflects the more vivid communication infrastructure of some states: absence of geographical barriers, short distances, good roads, frequent air flights, telecommunication cables, etc. Energy and economic interdependency also ally some states. **Cultural civilisational gravitation** means the easier exchange (pickup) of communication content (information) with inhabitants of some states. This involves standards, rules and stereotypes of social behaviour; standards of political ethics and economic activity.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Cohen, S.B., *Geopolitics of the World System*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Pub. Inc., 2003, p. 36-40.

<sup>6</sup> See: Statkus, N., Motieka, E., Laurinavičius, Č., *Geopolitiniai kodai. Tyrimo metodologija*, Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2003, p. 98-100. *Physical material gravitation* can be quite accurately measured by counting a density and permeability of communication (level of transport infrastructure, railroads and roads, number of air flights, telecommunication cables, infrastructure of gas, oil and other raw material transportation (gas and oil pipelines, ports), area of TV signal, etc.). *Cultural civilisational gravitation* can be described using qualitative methods, but hardly estimated quantitatively. Although, it is always possible to identify whether it exists or not, and if yes, then it is possible to say whether it is strong or weak.

A **geopolitical supra-region** consists of two or more geopolitical regions, bound by functional ties (geostrategic, geoeconomical, or geocultural). These ties are weaker than intraregional ties. Such geopolitical supra-regions are: 1) *Euroatlantic* supra-region linking North America with Maritime Europe, 2) *CIS space* linking Central Eurasia (and also Eastern (continental) Europe as a sub-region), South Caucasus, and Central Asia, 3) *Pacific* supra-region linking Australia, Oceania and Southeast Asia.

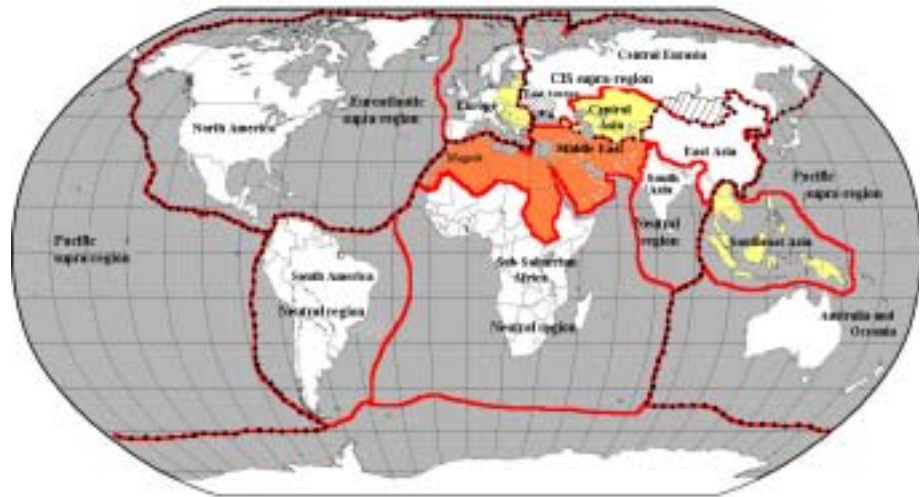
## 1.2. Geopolitical Functions of States (and other Political Entities)

States can be described by their *constitutive* and *relational* attributes. Constitutive attributes are those features of states, which are more or less independent of relations with other geopolitical subjects, e.g. political regime, population, terrain, military force. Relational attributes are determined by the interaction between states or other political entities, e.g. state's international standing (hegemonic state, buffer state). Relational attributes are also functions of a state *vis-a-vis* other states in the geopolitical system.

States, which have global and/or regional geopolitical codes, are *geopolitical actors*, because they have possibilities and the will to influence processes outside their own territory, e.g. G-8 countries. States or regions/territories, which do have neither special potential, nor aspirations to acquire it, but occupying geostrategic positions, which are important for geopolitical actors, are *geopolitical centres*, e.g. Singapore, Denmark, and Ukraine and Ukraine. All other states are objects of influence of geopolitical actors and their area of competition. Geopolitical centres may also perform other geopolitical functions by being an ally, outpost, barrier, gateway, or buffer.

*Geopolitical allies* (friendly regions) are independent states or groups of states, supporting the policy of geopolitical actors. Such a friendly region for the USA is Western Europe, especially during the Cold War years. *Neutral regions* are states (or a group of states) and other political entities, which do not have special importance for geopolitical actors and are not bound by political ties with them, e.g. Argentina, former Yugoslavia.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Kelly, Ph., *Checkerboards and Shatterbelts*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997, p. 33-34.



Map 2. Boundaries of geopolitical regions and supra-regions in 2003.

States or regions, which are controlled by geopolitical actors or their allies fall under the category of “zone of influence”. Three types of zone of influence can be distinguished: *outpost*, *barrier*, and *province*. *Outpost* is a state (or group of states), which whose territory is used by geopolitical actors to expand their own influence (former GDR, Pakistan for the USA). The opposite of anfor outpost is a *barrier*, which performs a the function of territory preventing adversaries of geopolitical actors from expanding their influence and power, e.g. Finland, South Korea, Mongolia. However, the functions of outposts and barriers often coincide, i.e. the a state is can be both an outpost and barrier. In different phases of a geopolitical actor’s power cycle, the subordinate state can perform the role of barrier (in times of decline) or the role of outpost (in times of expansionuprise). *Province* is a barrier or outpost, which lost its importance for geopolitical actors, but remains in their zone of influence.<sup>8</sup>

A “*Shatter-belt*” is a region where geopolitical actors struggle for influence, e.g. the Middle East.<sup>9</sup> A *Buffer* is a neutral state (or group of states), which separates territories or zones of influence of geopolitical actors (or their allies) thus lowering the probability of direct conflict, e.g. Sweden or, Austria.<sup>10</sup> A *geopolitical gateway* is a spatial political entity, which connects (performs a the function of a bridge) different geopolitical supra-regions, regions and/or states thus facilitating the exchange of people, ideas and goods, e.g. Singapore, Bahrain, Finland, Hong Kong.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Cohen S.B., “Geography and politics in a divided world” in Demko G. J., Wood W. B. eds., *Reordering the World: Geopolitical Perspectives on the Twenty-First Century*, Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1994, p. 15-49.

<sup>10</sup> Chay J., Ross, Th.E., ed., *Buffer States in World Politics*, Boulder: Westview press, 1986, p. 13-15.

<sup>11</sup> Cohen S.B. (note 4), p. 15-49.



## 2. Global Geopolitical Change during 2001-2003

Geopolitical processes after 11 September 11, 2001, shows that the USA and Israel, and also Russia in some areas, have gained most in geostrategic terms. It became clear immediately after 11 September 11<sup>th</sup> that the fight against global terrorism would dominate their foreign policy agenda of the USA. Such a USA policy is beneficial both for Israel and Russia.

The vital interest of **Israel** is to intensify the fight against Arabs. Thus, the USA, fighting with Islam fundamentalists are becoming more dependent on Israel. Israel has not participated in direct military action against the Taliban and Iraq. However, Israel's intelligence services gave full support to the USA and their allies. The fall of the Hussein regime is very beneficial for Israel. After the American occupation of Iraq by Americans, the USA and Israel now are the most influential powers in the Middle East region. Arab states are unable to threaten Israel with full-scale war. Hence, Israel has solved two of its most important security problems: there is no need to fear of a long war with several Arab states simultaneously and the threat of the Palestinian guerrilla war inside Israel is also averted.

The vital interest of **Russia** is to become an equal actor in global politics. After V.Putin supported the US fight against global terrorism, favourable conditions to form the USA-Russia-Israel partnership were created. For Russia, this partnership is a precondition for modernising its economy and returning to status of a great power status. Therefore, Putin made concessions for to the USA. He did not object Washington's endeavour to anchor in Southern flanks of the continental geostrategic zone (*heartland*) – South Caucasus and Central Asia – and the NATO expansion into East Europe, the Balkans and Baltic states. Simultaneously, Russia conducted an active policy of economic expansion (first of all in Central and Eastern Europe) and tried to become an important energy resources supplier for the West. The USA viewed Russia as a balance against China's dominance in Central and Eastern Asia. While seeking actively and effectively seeking to fight against Islamic fundamentalists, the USA were forced to co-operate with Russia. Hence, a global USA-Russia-Israel alliance (geopolitical triad) against Islamic fundamentalism started to develop after 11 September 11<sup>th</sup>.

Successful operations in Afghanistan, the deployment of USA troops in Central Asia, NATO expansion in Europe, and the Iraq occupation of Iraq are creating preconditions for long-term USA domination and a new geopolitical order in the world.

Fundamental geopolitical interests of the USA are: 1) *military hegemony in the oceans and military supremacy in air and space*; 2) *the political disunity of Eurasia*; 3) *scientific-technological leadership*.<sup>12</sup>

In order to implement these interests, the USA does not necessarily need to conduct active global policy. However, from the geostrategic point of view, the USA needs to control coastlines of Eurasia (*discontinental geostrategic zone or rimland*) in order that to prevent any potential rival can from threatening the USA's global mili-

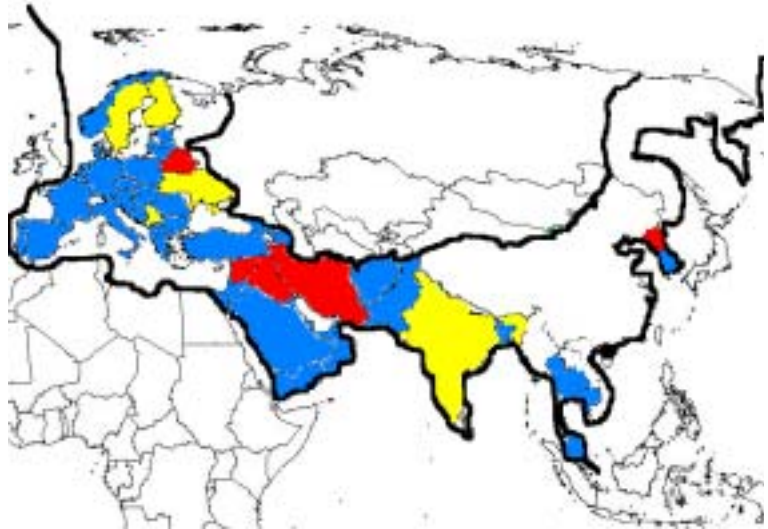
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<sup>12</sup> Statkus, N., Motieka, E., Laurinavičius, Č., *Geopolitiniai kodai. Tyrimo metodologija*, Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2003, p. 125.

tary dominance in the oceans. American geopolitical scholars believe that if the USA controls *rimland* (also dominates in air and space), continental states, without not having access to the oceans, will not challenge USA's global military dominance in the oceans. This, of course, plays in favour of the USA national security of the USA. At the moment, the USA troops are stationed in various conflict spots by along all of the Western and Southeastern borders of Eurasia: Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgystan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Philippines, and South Korea (see Map 3)<sup>13</sup>.

The occupation of Iraq was another American step in striving for more control over the discontinental zone (*rimland*). Now the USA has an excellent opportunity to transform part of the Middle East "shatter-belt" into its own *outpost*. Iraq is an excellent base for to conducting special operations against Islamic terrorists and, putting a pressure upon potential rivals and "sponsors" of terrorism in the region: Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. Also, such a basis is aprovides great support for the most important geopolitical ally in the region – Israel.

We can guess that after establishing a pro-American regime in Iraq and thus anchoring in the South of *Rimland* (strategically important Middle East region), the USA will gradually reduce its participation in European affairs. It can be predicted that the main USA priority will be further attempts to expand influence in the Southeast and East *rimland*. This means that the USA can increase attempts to exacerbate social and political tensions inside China – between agrarian West and industrial coastline provinces - increase– increase pressure upon North Korea, and support ideas of Russian Far East autonomy.



Map 3. Influence of the U.S. in the discontinental zone

<sup>13</sup> *Annual Report to the President and Congress 2001*, <http://www.dod.gov/pubs/almanac/unified.html>; Wolfe, R. "Technology brings power with few constraints", *Financial Times*, February 18 2002. Up to the moment, the following states, which control certain parts of discontinental geostrategic zone, managed to avoid direct or indirect influence from USA: Iraq, Iran, India, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, China, Russia (Far East region).

The successful war in Iraq severely weakened the authority of multilateral security organisations – UN, NATO, OSCE. By waging the war against Iraq without having the UN Security Council mandate, the USA demonstrated that international institutions are unable to exert considerable influence upon the behaviour of the USA. In fact, the UN is becoming almost incompetent as a multilateral international organisation and this eventually means the final end of the Cold War international order and calls for institutions, which reflect the new international distribution of states' power. The successful war in Iraq also demonstrated for other states (irrespective of how far away from the USA they are) that the American potential to deploy military power globally is unrivalled. Thus, it is more rational to adjust one's own interests with the Americans ones than to neglect them.

## 2.1. Changes in Global Geopolitical Code of the USA

Fundamental geopolitical interests and several broad philosophical political assumptions determine the main guidelines of American foreign policy. *Firstly*, strive to spread Western civilisational values of civilization. *Secondly*, the civilisational clash of civilizations between the West and the remaining world, especially between Western civilisation and the Muslim world. *Thirdly*, a vision of world order with a clear hierarchy, with the USA at the top. American global hegemony creates preconditions for consolidation principles by which the USA was created – principles of civic freedoms, a market economy and democratic governance – all over the world.

These neo-conservative attitudes of the G.W. Bush administration shape the short and medium term geopolitical interests of the USA. A geopolitical vision of world order with clear hierarchy is primarily based upon the privileged power of the USA and internal resources: the leadership in new technologies, an obvious military advantage, and almost unconditional support for a new foreign policy course from American society.

Of course, American thinking about international politics is influenced by a number of external factors. The antiterrorist campaign showed once more that the existing international security and defence institutions – UN, NATO – are unable to meet the new challenges of international politics and solve contemporary security questions. Therefore, the USA geostrategy after 11 September 11<sup>th</sup> was aimed at in several directions. *Firstly*, to form new provisional political-military alliances to support short-term goals of fighting against terrorism. *Secondly*, by seeking to maintain the division of Eurasia and China in isolation, to form blocs of states bound by allied relations in important regions of the discontinal zone (*rimland*): Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast and East Asia. For the USA, it is most convenient to create such regional blocks by resting on regional dominants (i.e. states, dominating or having a potential to dominate in a region), which have enough power potential (They are trusted by the USA, can contribute to the expansion of the USA power and are important in geoconomical terms.). *Thirdly*, the USA tries to adapt old global and regional security institutions (firstly NATO).

The National Security Strategy of the USA, adopted in 2002, essentially reflects American geostrategic aims in the first half of 21<sup>st</sup> century. **By implementing the new National Security Strategy it is aimed to establish the USA as a *transnatio-***

*nal hyperstate*. The new strategy is preventively interventionist. It is declared that unilateral preventive measures (including military strikes) can be used.<sup>14</sup> Such preventive strategy calls for the strengthening of intelligence capabilities, changes in military doctrine (special significance is given for highly mobile military units, able to conduct military missions in various regions of the world), institutional reform of security institutions, the application of advanced military technologies, fighting against terrorist organisations on a global scale (this is a function of CIA special units and USSOCOM), preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, eliminating the possibility to formation of an alliance of great powers and the rise of a second superpower. Also, by seeking to guarantee a stable economic development of the world and defeat poverty, the USA will support free trade and the establishment of free market institutions on a global scale, thereby seeking to guarantee stable economic development in the world and defeating poverty.

It has been declared that while seeking to protect its national interests, the USA can take unilateral actions and organise effective international coalitions with clear objectives. According to the authors of the Strategy, every state is responsible for the processes taking place on its territory and for the disruption of the new international order, which is shaped by the USA. When a state is unable to meet international obligations, its sovereignty can be violated in order to neutralise the threats or sources of threats<sup>15</sup>. Thus, **the strategy lays down a kind of neo-feudalist approach to international relations**, where a state has the right to administrate freely its own territory to the extent its actions (or inaction) clash with the interests of the USA.

In the fight against threats for national security, the following states are named as allies: Western Europe, Canada, Japan, South Korea, and Australia. The new Strategy also calls for strengthening the role of Japan, South Korea and Australia to guarantee the security of the Pacific region.

The new Strategy is a classical empire-building strategy – maintain huge differences in power, block any attempts of allies to organise hostile conspiracy and prevent attempts of adversaries to merge forces. By implementing this strategy, even unintentionally, the USA can be transformed into a **global empire**. Terrorist organisations are conducting activities in many states (for example, “Al-Qaeda” has cells in 70 states). Thus, by seeking to destroy them, the USA will be forced to conduct both open and secret operations against these organisations in the territories of sovereign states without asking for their permission. The majority of states support the fight against terrorism and will co-operate with the USA. However, in order to ensure that co-operation is sincere, the USA will face a need to increase the monitoring of activity of other states’ institutional activities, especially security and military ones, interfere or even take over the control when the need arises. The continuing reform of the USA military is only directly supporting this proposition.

<sup>14</sup> Dealing with the “Axis of evil”. The US and the “Perilous Crossroads”, *Strategic Comments*, 5(8), June 2002, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September, 2002.

Military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrated that joint actions by space, air, land and naval military units, supported by a large number of military satellites and other modern communication equipment, can easily defeat even large and well-equipped traditional armies. Already during the military campaign in Afghanistan, Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld called for the immediate installation of modern military technologies, reduction in the importance of traditional military munitions, and the formation of mobile military units, able to fight effectively against terrorists in various places around the world.

The military restructuring projects, aimed at transforming the USA armed forces into a highly supermobile, global military power are already prepared. Senior leaders designated to carry out these reforms have also been identified, as well as persons who will carry out the reforms are foreseen. The USA Army will be headed by General Peter Schoomaker, who was the chief of USSOCOM in 1997-2000. He is known as an active advocate of joint operations, when air, navy and land forces co-ordinate their activities. Schoomaker is a fan of military operations by small, almost autonomous units, and active psychological information operations. After a proposal of the current chief of USSOCOM, General Ch. Holland, the possibilities and opportunities for deploying the CIA's and other institutions' special forces (such as Delta, SEAL) were expanded. Today, these units are able to fight with terrorists in foreign countries without falling under any civil jurisdiction. He also proposes to grant more rights for USSOCOM to co-ordinate joint actions together with other military units, which belong to regional commands.<sup>16</sup>

After the reform, the USA military forces will consist of relatively small (the size of a brigade or group) mobile units, which use the latest precision-guided munitions and communication technologies. This will enable them to conduct both co-ordinated and autonomous military operations.

The command structure for joint military operations together with NATO allies is also being transformed. Supreme Allied Command in Europe (SACEUR) was transformed into Allied Command for Operations. The and Supreme Allied Command Atlantic (SACLANT) – into the Allied Command for Transformation. Thus, the USA is centralising strategic planning and tactical guidance of joint military operations together conducted with NATO allies, and enjoys even bigger influence upon over the management of the military forces of the Alliance.<sup>17</sup> **The centralisation of NATO planning and management will force Germany either to obey American demands to increase military spending and surrender independent military policy or secede from the military structure of NATO (like France did).**

It is also planned that the new NATO Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) will have an authority to conduct an operation even **without the consent of all NATO members**, just under orders from SACEUR. This is a substantial and quite radical novel-

<sup>16</sup> Scarborough, R. "Rumsfeld gives 'blank sheet' to update special operations", *Washington Times*, 2002, November 21; Scarborough, R. "Rumsfeld bolsters special forces", *Washington Times*, 2003, January 06.

<sup>17</sup> NATO, "A new frame for Allied Command Europe: Allied Command Operations", 2003, September 1, <http://www.nato.int/shape/news/2003/09/i030901.html>

ty, which is in line with the strategic interests of the USA. *De facto* the RRF will be under the USA control. On the one hand, this development enables to conduct enables RRF operations and missions to be conducted effectively and promptly. On the other hand, this creates the conditions for a NATO split. We can predict, that **NATO will split into two groups of states**: those, which will agree to participate in operations without waiting for others the agreement of others (pro-American states), and those, which will wait for their Parliament's consent, e.g. Germany. This was quite openly expressed by SACEUR General J.L.Jones. According to him, NATO will be divided into two groups: those, who will allow the quick use of using troops quickly, and those, who will wait for consultations and parliamentary approval<sup>18</sup>.

Such reform of the USA military forces implies for certain changes in infrastructure and logistics. Preparing for global hegemony means that military conflicts can emerge at any place in the world. This means that the USA must be able to deploy send their troops there quickly. Since the future conflict spots are harder to predict and more even more spread across the world than in during Cold War times, the Pentagon is planning to return more troops home. From the an economic point of view, it is more reasonable to keep them on American soil. Also, the number of American troops in Europe and Japan will be decreased. In Europe, somepart of the units and bases will be moved from Germany to Poland, the Balkans, and presumably, Lithuania.

Also, the USA plans to increase capabilities to deploy troops in foreign countries, i.e. strengthen air transport and , establishing forward bases in strategically important places. Such bases can be quickly transformed into real bases, able to accept a large number of troops. For example, such bases are already established in Kirgizstan and Uzbekistan. Additional forward bases will be established at important crossroads of global transport and communication lines. This means, that importance of states which, controlling strategic crossroads of global transport and communication lines, will increase become more important for the USA foreign policy.<sup>19</sup> The USA will try to establish friendly relations with such states or put establish protégé regimes.

For example, the USA military establishment wants to increase the number of troops in some African states, since this continent is a potential shelter for terrorists. The Pentagon seeks to strengthen ties with such important allies as Morocco and Tunis, receive permissions to establish military bases in Mali and Algeria, and sign agreements on air transport refuelling with Senegal and Uganda.

## 2.2. Changes in European Geopolitics

After the events of 11 September 11<sup>th</sup>, European states expressed clear and strong support for the USA and pledged to make active moves in fighting against international terrorism. However, later it became clear that this support was almost

<sup>18</sup> *NATO enlargement daily brief*, <http://www.expandnato.org/nedbjune03.html>, 2003, 30 June.

<sup>19</sup> "On imperial overstretch. Can the USA afford to send troops here, there and everywhere?", *Jane's Foreign Report*, 2748, 2003, August 7.

exclusively limited to almost only diplomatic measures. There are two main reasons for that. *Firstly*, the USA adopted a unilateral stance: refused to accept NATO support and started to form non-institutionalised *ad hoc* antiterrorist coalitions of the “willing and capable”. Thus, the importance and influence of existing international organisations – first of all almost importantly, UN and NATO – was decreased. *Secondly*, already existing differences in American and European threat perceptions increased even more. In other words, **European and American positions diverge in terms of tactics and methods of threat neutralisation while conducting antiterrorist campaigns**. The USA is much more inclined to use military power, while Europeans – diplomatic measures.

**The erosion of transatlantic relations became obvious during the Iraq crisis.** After France and Germany, with having Russian support, opposed any military action in Iraq, “diplomatic war” between them and the USA have erupted. However, the stance of continental Europe did not prevent the USA from starting military operations in Iraq. On 20 March 2003, American and British troops started the military operations in Iraq. The first stage of military operations was swift and effective: already after only three weeks, the USA and allied troops practically controlled all of the territory in Iraq.

The Iraq crisis not only increased tensions between the USA and some European states (France, Germany, which were also supported by Belgium and Greece), but also inside Europe itself. Traditionally pro-American European states (United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, Denmark, and others) clearly supported the American position. Also, all of the Central and Eastern European countries also expressly supported American action against Iraq.

Thus, French and German attempts to form a common European foreign policy failed. The USA and its allies started military operations in Iraq, and some part of the EU Member States, as well as plus all of the future EU Member States, expressed political support and granted provided military support for the USA. The success of the first stage of military operations (active military action) only consolidated American unilateral policy. On the other hand, the guerrilla war in Iraq, which started later, forced the USA to rely more on its allies. However, even at this stage, only states, which expressed their support for the USA earlier, are participating in post-war reconstruction of Iraq. France and Germany in practice are not taking part in Iraq reconstruction because of both political and economic reasons.

The Iraq crisis also highlighted the importance of the United Kingdom and Poland. The United Kingdom strongly supported the American position and actions. They also gave huge military support for operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The United Kingdom (firstly primarily, Prime Minister Tony Blair) acted as an active advocate for the USA, and the “special relationship” between Americans and Brits was strengthened. The importance of Poland primarily increased mainly not because of Poland’s endeavour, but because of American actions. After the USA granted for Poland the right to control one of the administrative sectors in Iraq, it became clear that **Poland is becoming the main country in Central and Eastern Europe, that Europe that represents American interests**.

After active military action in Iraq was over, the tension between the USA and some EU Member States decreased. This “defrost” of relations became vivid

after the EU-USA Summit in Washington on 25 May 2003. However, this resulted more in the EU concessions for the USA than in mutual compromise. **Main EU concessions made are the following:** *firstly*, the EU promised to take more active actions in the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. On the eve of the Summit, the EU adopted *Basic principles for an EU strategy against proliferation of WMD*. *Secondly*, the EU surrendered to American pressure regarding Iran. Usually the EU avoided to express any strong statements concerning Iran. However, now the EU expressed concern about Iran's nuclear programme and started to demand Iran to quickly sign an Additional Protocol of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, allow international inspections, and co-operate with the International Nuclear Energy Agency. There were even unconfirmed talks that the EU is ready to cancel free trade negotiations with Iran. *Thirdly*, the EU surrendered to American pressure regarding genetically modified products. The EU banned genetically modified products in 1998 and resisted American demands to lift the ban. However, in 2003, a new draft EU Directive on genetically modified food product labelling was drafted and adopted.

**The only common EU action where Europeans have resisted the American pressure was has been concerning the International Criminal Court (ICC).** The EU Member States and future EU Member States have clearly declared that they support the ICC and will not sign bilateral agreements with the USA on to not applying ICC the jurisdiction of ICC upon the USA citizens.

Another important outcome of the Iraq crisis was **consolidation of the French and German efforts in developing the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)**. After realising that common EU Defence Policy is almost impossible, these two states started to develop a "core". The Brussels summit of 29 April 2003 by the leaders of France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg can be regarded as an embryo of such a "core". French and German strive to formulate and control the ESDP is are clearly expressed in the draft EU Constitutional Treaty. These two countries fought for the inclusion of principles of **enhanced co-operation** and **mutual defence** in the draft Constitutional Treaty. The actual goal of these principles is to diminish political dependency of the EU on the USA by creating a EU military planning structure independent of NATO.

However, the provisions ofn the ESDP, outlined in the draft Constitutional Treaty give rise to some threats. Enhanced co-operation will mean recognition of a "two-speed" Europe, and this comes against the principle of equity. The eEstablishment of mutual defence could also could have negative consequences: ESDP can could seek to become an alternative for NATO. This eventually would create problems of duplication and the effective allocation of resources. A proposal to establish the European Armament and Strategic Research Agency also could create some problems. The establishment of the Agency would have positive effects in case if its main function is the standardisation of munitions, and strivng for interoperability. However, negative effects is are inevitable if the EU is granted thea right to establish priorities for munitionmunitions acquisition.

**On the other hand, it is unlikely that these attempts to create a defence "core" inside the EU will prove successful in the short-term.** The main obstacle to increase military power of the EU is the **obvious misbalance between political will and military and financial potential**. While seeking to create an effective ESDP, "core" states will inevitably face financial problems. The EU states need to moderni-



se their military forces, increasing spending on military research and munitions acquisition. This can be achieved in two ways: either by raising taxes, or cutting social programmes. Neither of these options is acceptable politically. Having in mind a prolonged economic stagnation of the EU (even having even signs of crisis sometimes at times), it is unlikely that the “core” states will increase military spending.

Thus, ESDP will remain mainly a political initiative without much serious content. Quantitative and qualitative gap in the military sector between the USA and the EU will only increase.

### 2.3. Changes in Russian Geopolitics

**The partial inclusion of Russia in Atlantic military and political structures corresponds with the national interests of both Russia and the USA.** Though the changes in Russia’s geopolitical orientation can be traced since from the meeting of V.Putin and G.W.Bush in June 2001, a new stage of the more rapidly including Russia’s inclusion to Russia in the most important Atlantic structure – NATO, was launched at the meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers in Reykjavik, May, 2002.

In the most general sense, the increasing convergence of Russian’s and US national interests and the growing perception of their common concerns have conditioned this dynamics. **Both countries face the same threats (Islamic fundamentalism) and have the same potential geopolitical competitor – China.** Common geoeconomic interests also tie both countries: it is important to Washington to have an independent of Muslim countries a supply of strategic raw materials which are independent from Muslim countries. For Moscow, the openness towards the West and especially the cooperation with the USA would enable Russia to modernise its economy.

These common geopolitical and geoeconomic tendencies were visible during Bush’s visit to Moscow at the end of May 2002. Signing the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions was a kind of “concession” to Moscow (taking into account that the Pentagon was against signing the formal bilateral agreement). The treaty didn’t preclude the US from further developing further its antimissile defence system, and this which meant that a US unilaterally withdraws from the ABM treaty. By the way, the possibility of Russia’s participation in the development of that system shouldn’t be discounted as well. In fact, Russia’s participation could positively impact the restructuring of its military complex and lead to its eventually adaptatin to the military structures of NATO and becoming a true member of the Alliance.

In case this scenario seems obscure, the development of a common “Energy Alliance” is real. The USA benefits from the augmentation of Russia’s oil export because that can reduce US dependence on oil supply from Arab countries and stabilise world oil prices. Russia assumed has already taken concrete measures already to develop such an alliance (the engineering of “Murmansk Pipeline Systems” and the construction of the Murmansk liquid natural gas transportation terminal have been launched; the main purpose of these projects is to supply raw energy resources to the US market)<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> Kaliukov, E. “Pravitel’stvo nashlo gde det’ severnuiu neft”, *Gazeta.ru*, 2003 04 17, <http://www.gazeta.ru>;

“Priority neftianki”, *Neftgaz.ru*, 2003 04 17, <http://www.neftgaz.ru>

Considering the above-mentioned circumstances and facts, it can be supposed that the premises for successful political and military cooperation between Russia and the US are emerging. However, it is evident that this co-operation is not, and will not be, on equal grounds. **Still, Russia can claim to become be the main US ally in Eurasia if the geopolitical code of integration into Western security and economic institutions prevails among Russia's elites.**

It is difficult to talk about the prospects of such a development of events. The first reason is political uncertainty in Russia. Putin's pro-Western politics aren't very popular among the military and is are often criticized by the society. That raises the question as to whether if Russia will be able to maintain its pro-Western orientation and implement the necessary administrative, military and economic reforms, even so that political and military leaders would continue their pro-Western course.

On the other hand, it is not completely evident what kind of the ultimate goals Russia aims to achieve by its pro-western politics are not completely evident:

- **pragmatic transcontinental** – to join completely the transcontinental security community from Vladivostok to Vancouver and to become the main partner of the U.S. in Eurasia; to divide with the USA the areas of influence in Europe or to build the European balance of powers, where Russia would be an arbiter.
- **Euro-continental** – eventually to eliminate American influence in Europe and to build the European balance of powers, where Russia would be an arbiter; to strengthen integration of Russian and Western European energy infrastructures, as well as economic and security structures, while creating joint political institutions, in this way turning "EuroRussia" into an alternative global power centre to the USA and China.
- **Eurasian** – to exclude the USA from Europe and even Eurasia, to attain control of the discontinental geostrategic zone together with the allies and, eventually, to challenge the global domination of the USA.

#### 2.4. Geopolitics of China

In 2002 China has vigorously sought to entrench itself in the East Asia and the regions that attain less attention from the West. Strong economic growth, a stable political system and ambitions of the great power encourage China to pursue a more active regional and global policy. Still, China extends its influence especially reservedly and delicately. In 2002 China has undertaken a relatively flexible policy towards the USA.

China supported the US' position on Iraq: in the UN Security Council China approved the sending of inspectors to Iraq and latter it didn't particularly oppose the US military operation against Iraq. Besides, China co-operated with the USA regarding the nuclear program of North Korea and didn't particularly rebuke the US for the export of weapons to Taiwan. That may seem strange, especially after the USA has implicitly named China as its strategic adversary in the US national security strategy.

Nevertheless, Beijing's strategy of co-operation with the USA as the only superpower is very rationale as China seeks to secure its a peaceful external setting, an influx of foreign investments, and the arrival of innovative technologies that are necessary for the economic growth its economy.

Steady economic growth is a substantial prerequisite condition of social and political stability in China because of the disparity in living standards between China's agrarian West and industrial East and Southeast coast regions which are sufficiently sharply different.

**It might be assumed that China has chosen the politics of non-confrontation** (as long as the US does not interfere in China's internal affairs) **and temporarily tolerates the global leadership of the US** in order to mask its own hegemonic aims in the East and Southeast Asia. Besides, China seeks to gain some economic benefits from the co-operation with the US as well, because investments from the US and other Western countries are vital for China's economic growth.

On the other hand, economic advantages achieved while pursuing such kind of this type of foreign policy will enable China to modernise its army and to achieve its long-term goal of domination in the East and Southeast Asia.

*First of all*, China is still further attempting to strengthen and extend its influence in the East Asia and to become an incontestable pre-dominant power of the region. The current conditions are favourable for just that. Currently there are favourable conditions for that. Japan can't pursue an active policy because of recession. Beijing is attempting to seize every opportunity to strengthen its influence in the region. It is likely that the region of East Asia will become more dependent on China, now that after China has joined the WTO.

At the same time, China seeks to expand its global influence. While it can't entrench itself in the regions where Western countries and companies dominate, China expands its influence where it faces the weakest opposition – in Africa and Latin America.

It seems like Beijing has worked out a long-term strategy of relations with African countries. It is useful for China to spread out its influence in the African countries for several reasons. *First of all*, in this way this is an opportunity for China to develop a market for its products, primarily for armaments. *Second*, China intensifies its relationships with the countries that are rich in energy resources. Although the majority part of its oil is imported from the Middle East, it seems that China attempts to reduce its dependence on that region and actively seeks alternative sources of energy resources. Beijing has already started to develop significant projects with Nigeria and Angola. It should also be noted that China's influence in Africa could increase in the future even more. *First of all*, China is attractive for to the African countries because of its political system, which effectively ensures political stability and economic growth. Unlike the West, China doesn't have a colonial legacy that could hinder China's domination in Africa. *Finally*, Beijing doesn't raise any special claims on the political regimes of African countries like Western states often do. China also actively pursues co-operation with Brazil<sup>21</sup>.

China has raised new concepts of foreign policy in 2002: economic and political co-operation increases security and security increases co-operation; a Pacific

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<sup>21</sup> Stratfor, *China's 21st Century Africa Policy Evolving*, [http://www.stratfor.com/standard/analysis\\_view.php?ID=205640](http://www.stratfor.com/standard/analysis_view.php?ID=205640), 07 08 2002.

Ocean regional security system against the terrorism and international crimes should be developed; a just and reasonable international order should be established. These ideas may be seen as a kind of critique of the US unilateral policy. China attempts to influence international opinion as well as public opinion in the USA by the proclamation of these ideas.

Realisation of China's regional and global interests will depend on several major factors. First of all, it will depend on how the new generation of China's political elite will manage to minimise the socio-political tensions arising from the differences in the development of China's regions<sup>22</sup>. Looking from the long-term perspective, the dynamics of China's and -US' relations will have an impact as well. It seems likely that Washington will employ the strategy of "two-way traffic" in relations with China. The US will attempt to downgrade China's influence in the regions of the strategic and geoeconomic importance for the USA (first of all especially in Central Asia). Therefore, the US could implicitly (secretly) initiate the development of various regional alliances that would restrain China's ambitions. Also, the U.S. will seek to co-operate directly with China. Additionally, an assumption that the US can incorporate Beijing into the trilateral structure (US/Japan/China) of co-operation formed by US, Japan and China shouldn't be discounted as well.

Currently, China and the US are not inclined not to sharpen their relationships and instead, to remain conciliatory make concessions towards each other. China has passed the a law tightening the control of arms' exports. The US has requested China to pass such a law for a long time. Washington, on the other hand, has registered the Uigur Islamic organisation, which opposes to the regime of Beijing, in on its the list of terrorist organisations.

### 3. Geopolitical position of the Baltic States in 2001-2003

Geostrategic significance of any given territory on the Earth is estimated according to its capacity to control the ways in which other states spread their influence and power. Different Various geopolitical conceptions diversely assess differently the geostrategic and geopolitical position of the East Baltics region. These assessments are somewhat problematic and ambiguous.

Summing-up the main geopolitical conceptions, it might be said that the Baltic States are situated at the periphery *of the heartland* or at the eastern edge (transitional area) of the discontinental geostrategic zone (*rimland*). That is why the geopolitical position of the Baltic States depends on the nature and intensity of relations between the Western maritime and continental states<sup>23</sup>.

Actually, the creation of the Baltic States was to a large extent determined by the conjuncture of political circumstances. The Baltic States came into existence as a result of the confrontation between several geopolitical powers. The formation and

<sup>22</sup> Stratfor, *The Bush-Jiang Summit: A New Chapter in U.S.-Chinese Relations*, <http://www.stratfor.com>, 24 10 2002.

<sup>23</sup> Statkus, N. Motieka, E., Laurinavičius, Č., Op. cit. , p. 118-119 (note 5).

existence of the Baltic States during the inter-war period was conditioned by the efforts of the Soviet Union (Russia) and Germany to embrace the Baltic States into their spheres of their influence. While the West European maritime countries were trying to achieve the a balance between the continental states (trying to set them against each other) the Baltic States gained independence. Their independence, however, was of some kind of depository character. The Baltic States as anthe object of exchange had the prospect of falling into Russia's or Germany's sphere of influence. More probably into Russia's sphere of influence because Western countries viewed the *heartland* controlled by Russia as less dangerous than the *heartland* ruled by Germany<sup>24</sup>.

On During the second half of the 20th century, the Western countries started to block the *heartland* (the policy of containment). Thus Lithuania and the other Baltic countries have got a chance of for final self-determination (independence). In other words, they have had attained the prospects of becoming an integral constituent part of the *rimland* (discontinental geostrategic zone) consolidated by the Western maritime countries. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the strategy of the *heartland's* blockade was replaced by the strategy of the *heartland's* gradual decomposition and inclusion into the sphere of influence of maritime countries. However, this strategy didn't eliminate the manifestations of the balance of power in the policy of Western countries twhat could turn the Baltic countries into the object of exchange once again. In fact, some part of the Russian political and military elite still harbour intentions to turn the Baltic States into its their own tool in the Euro-Atlantic institutions or at minimum into the a neutral buffer. It can be said that the East Baltics still remains in the peculiar "rift" of the geopolitical realms and can be called a geopolitical anomaly.

### 3.1. Discontinentiality of Lithuania and other Baltic States

One of the most distinguished scientists of geopolitics of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, S.Cohen, has divided N.Spykman's *rimland* (the transitional zone between the *heartland* and *maritime world*) into the geopolitical regions. According to S.Cohen, tight political, economic and cultural bonds link those regions. The regions defined by S.Cohen are very large. S.Cohen notes in his scheme that *shatter-belt* regions encompass some particularly geopolitically important geopolitical areas that lean towards the *maritime world* and the others that gravitate towards the *continent*. The areas that are of ambivalent gravitation and have both maritime and continental characteristics are called *discontinental*. These areas are dependent on the sea trade and continental resources. S.Cohen describes the Central and Eastern Europe as a former *shatter-belt* region. Though, generally speaking, all the of Europe can be regarded as the an arena of competition among the maritime and continental states<sup>25</sup>.

A well-known theoretical innovation introduced by S.Cohen – the concept of regions – meaningfully contributes to the theory of geopolitics. Nevertheless N.Spyk-

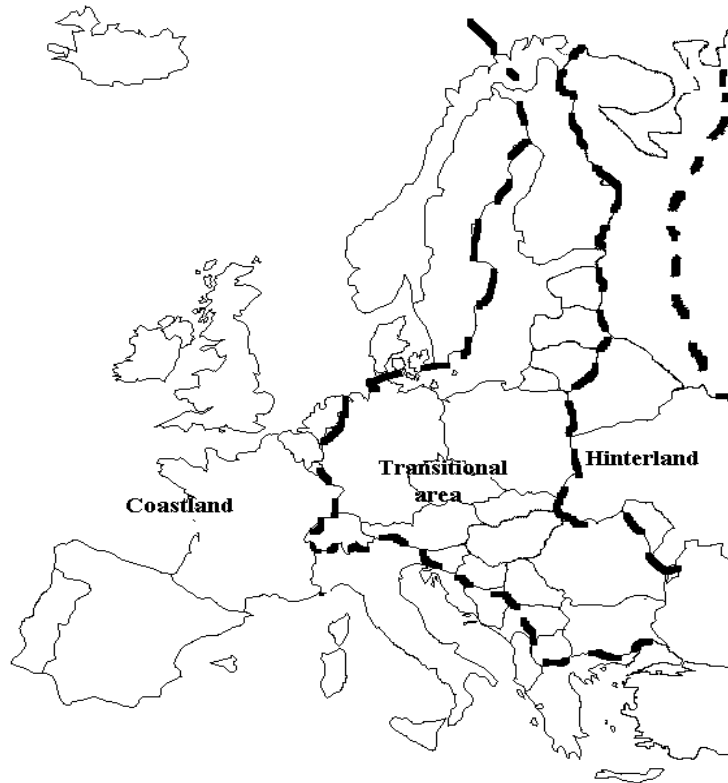
<sup>24</sup> Alexander Martin S. (ed.), *Knowing your Friends, intelligence Inside Alliances and Coalitions from 1914 to the Cold War*, London: Frank Cass, 1998; Luttwak E.N., *Strategy and History*, New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1985; Parker G., *Western Geopolitical Thought in the Twentieth Century*, London: Croom Helm, 1985; Romer J., Ch., *Géopolitique de la Russie*, Paris: Economica, 1999.

<sup>25</sup> Cohen (note 4), p. 15-49.

man's concept of *rimland* shouldn't be abandoned either. All of the regions within the confines of the *rimland* (no matter how different they are economically and culturally) share the same feature – discontinuity. Basically, the *rimland* is a discontinuous zone because of its spatial characteristics (it is accessible to the maritime as well as to the continental powers) but altogether it differs substantially from the maritime and continental zones. Some areas of the *rimland* tend to gravitate towards the maritime zone countries, the others – towards the continental zone, however, this phenomenon is not an exclusive characteristic exclusively of the *shatter-belt* regions as S. Cohen maintains. On the contrary, this is characteristic to all the regions of *rimland*. That is the reason for the authors of this article to consider the concept of *rimland* synonymous to the concept of discontinuous geostrategic zone.

Consequently, the *rimland's* regions aren't homogeneous and can be grouped into three areas:

1. *Coastlands* (these are trade-dependent and gravitate towards the maritime zone);
2. *Hinterlands* (these areas are remote from the sea and oriented towards the *heartland*);
3. *Transitional areas* (these areas can gravitate towards the heartland or the maritime zone).



Map 4. Geostrategic areas of the European part of the discontinuous zone

These areas also could also be called geostrategic *sub-regions*. As the Baltic States are situated in the European part of the *rimland*, it is necessary for us to figure out the structure of the geostrategic and geopolitical *sub-regions*. Sustaining the before-mentioned logic, the European part of *rimland* could be split into three geostrategic sub-regions: *Western Europe* and *Nordic countries* (that gravitate towards the maritime countries), *Central Europe, East Baltics and the Balkans* (transitional sub-region) and the *Eastern Europe* (which that gravitates towards the *heartland*).

However, such classification of geostrategic sub-regions does not correspond to the current political alignment of the states and does not help much to distinguish the correct geopolitical sub-regions of Europe. Germany and Italy are no longer ascribed to the Central Europe, Finland is regarded as the a Scandinavian country. This divergence can be explained by admitting that the geostrategic criterion is not enough for the definition of a geopolitical sub-region. Complementary criterions embracing the economic, political, and cultural-civilisation factors that have conditioned the development of current European geopolitical sub-regions are necessary for the regional analysis.

1. The complementary criterions could be:
2. Belonging to the a particular culture or civilisation;
3. Development of the economy (belonging to the particular geoeconomic zone);
4. Consistent policy of the elite to co-operate with maritime or continental states (geopolitical orientation);
5. Geopolitical orientation of the society.

**Culturally and civilisationally, Europe is divided into two parts** – the Western and Central Europe belong to the Western Latin civilisation and the Eastern part to and the Balkans to Orthodox civilisation. The borderline between the two civilisations stretches between the eastern line of Catholicism and Protestantism. Actually, the heritage of Muslim civilisation in the Balkans prevails in Albania and Bosnia while the seedbeds of the Western Latin civilisation are strong in Moldova, West Belarus and West Ukraine.

The cultural-civilisational boundaries have not changed in Europe for 600 years, already while the economic differences are very dynamic (for example, Portugal was a very weak state 30 years ago). By economic standards, Europe may be divided into two parts: the *core* and the *semi-periphery*. If we chart the map of Europe referring to the isolated criterions of the geopolitical gravitation or geopolitical orientation, culture and geo-economics, we would get an inadequate image of the European sub-regions. But if we take into an account all the four of the before-mentioned criterions we could exactly identify the sub-regions.

Currently, the geopolitical region of the European *rimland* consists of six sub-regions<sup>26</sup> (see Map 5):

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<sup>26</sup> The political scientists continue to dispute on the title “region” as well as on the extent of region’s boundaries. Politicians discord on that too. Moreover, the conception of the region changes in the popular geopolitics. However this research doesn’t aim to describe comprehensively the historical formation of the region.

- 1) the West Europe,
- 2) the Nordic countries,
- 3) the Central Europe,
- 4) the Balkans,
- 5) the Eastern Europe,
- 6) the Eastern Baltics<sup>27</sup>.

*The Eastern Baltics* is a sub-region, which emerged following the confrontation of two rival geopolitical powers: the formation of the region was conditioned by the struggles of the Soviet Union (Russia) and Germany to embrace the Baltic States into their spheres of their influence. In response to these struggles during the inter-war period and in the 1990's, the Baltic States themselves started to strive to provide the sub-region with the a political and ultimately the a military identity. However these efforts were mainly unsuccessful because of 1) the external forces that impeded the alliance of the three Baltic States and 2) and because of the differences in geopolitical gravitation and orientation of the Baltic States.

The current geopolitical orientation of the Baltic States is significant because the *elite* of these countries is orientated towards the *maritime countries* while the orientation of the *society* in general is generally *ambivalent*. Obviously, this is determined by the particularity of the sub-region's geopolitical gravitation (both towards the maritime world and the continent).

The Baltic States belong to the Western Latin civilisation, but while economically – to the semi-periphery. Though the Baltic States are closely associated with Belarus and Ukraine, they substantially differ from the Eastern Europe. The sub-region of the Eastern Europe is in principle the *heartland's* gravitation zone where the Eastern Orthodox civilisation prevails. The historical belonging of Belarus and Ukraine to the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania has left the traces of the Western Latin culture there. To some extent this determines the elite's orientation towards the West while the geopolitical orientation of the general public (masses) is directed towards the East. Geo-economically, the Eastern Europe belongs to the *semi-periphery*.

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<sup>27</sup> More on this see Statkus, N. Motieka, E., Laurinavičius, Č., Op. cit., p. 47-57 (note 5).





Map 5. Geopolitical sub-regions of Europe.

The Eastern Baltics, situated at the intersection of the geostrategic zones, can perform completely different geopolitical functions. In fact, the East Baltics can become the outpost (or the barrier) to the *heartland* countries for their expansion to the Central and West Europe. Alternatively, it can become the barrier (or the outpost) to the maritime countries in the struggle with the *heartland countries*.

**Thus it might be concluded, that geo-strategically, the Baltic States belong to the discontinental zone. They are situated at the border of the transitional area and the hinterland, but orientated towards the maritime countries as a result of their own political initiative and civilisation dependence.** However, because of the *heartland's* geographical proximity and the long-term political subjection to Russia, the Baltic States tend to gravitate towards the continental geo-strategic zone. Not only the geographical position (access to the sea) and geopolitical orientation (aspiration to join the Euro-Atlantic structures) indicate the discontinental character of the Baltic States. Decisive policy led by the maritime states to control (consolidate) all of the coastlands and *transitional areas* of the Eurasian discontinental zone (for example through the enlargement of NATO) sustains the argument of the discontinental character of the Baltic States.

### 3.2. Geopolitical Dimension of Lithuania's Accession to NATO

The Baltic States were not invited to join the Alliance during the first stage of NATO enlargement. The main reason was the absence of support from the large Western European NATO countries (United Kingdom, France and Germany)<sup>28</sup>. The United States took into account the opinion of the allies and did not risk irritating Russia even more.

*First of all*, the large Western European countries didn't treat the security of the Baltic States as a strategically important interest. *Second*, Additionally, it was supposed that the Baltic States were militarily indefensible (because of their tiny population, negligible army and the concentration of Russia's army along the borders of the Baltic States, especially in the Kaliningrad district). Third, the politicians and the security experts in the Western Europe often referred to the problems of protection of the ethnic minorities' rights in Latvia and Estonia and unresolved disputes over the borders with Russia. Since Russia's national security strategy considered the protection of its minorities in the "near abroad" as one of the priorities of Russia's security policy, it was difficult for NATO countries in the Western Europe to imagine a new member of the Alliance with a vast Russian minority.<sup>29</sup>

However, the primary reason was a substantial negative Russian's reaction to the NATO enlargement to the Baltic States. Theoretically the territory of the Baltic States could be used to launch an attack on the Northwest Russia or to block the Baltic fleet deployed in St. Petersburg. Therefore, Russia considered the efforts of the Baltic States to join NATO as a significant geo-strategic threat to Russia's security. At that time, a lot of Russian's citizens had not yet been ready to accept the fact that the Baltic States could choose their own course of security policy.

On November 22, 2002, the North Atlantic Council has unanimously invited the Baltic States to join the Alliance, though practically all the factors that delayed their accession to NATO in 1997 were still present in 2002 too. The independence of the Baltic States wasn't the interest of vital importance to the West. The Baltic States remained untenable and neither the Russian minorities nor the army in Kaliningrad had disappeared. But the position of Russia had changed. Russia didn't resist the expansion of NATO any longer. Nevertheless, it explicitly emphasised that it far from a highly rational step. Russia's position had changed because of some reasons that are not easy to ascertain and which have been ambiguously assessed<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> Asmus, R.D., Nurick R.C., "NATO enlargement and the Baltic States", *Survival*, 38, 2, 1996. P. 121-142.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Russia's foreign policy and the US foreign policy respecting Russia began to change before the Liubliana Summit. The terrorist attacks of the September 11 accelerated this. The USA realised that Russia's diplomatic support, reconnaissance information of the special agencies, sincere cooperation of Russia's policy, customs and financial institutions is necessary for the success of the US antiterrorist operations. Eventually Russia is necessary to the USA in order to counterweight the growing influence of China.

Until 1996, Russia has comforted itself with the hopes of the a strategic partnership with the USA. But when the plans of NATO enlargement have clarified Russia's sought desire to regain its influence in CIS and in the "near abroad", as well as to form the triangle of Russia, China and India, which was intended to as a counterweight to the geopolitics of the USA<sup>31</sup>. When Vladimir Putin became the president, he undertook the doctrine of the former Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov, that Russia has to promote the formation of the multipolar international system. Putin knew that after the decomposition of the Soviet Empire, Russia had practically lost its practically the only effective lever of the foreign policy – fear, that is to say, the threat of the global nuclear war. None in the West were as afraid of Russia any more. Thus, Putin tried to proceed with Primakov's policy – to recapture Russian' influence in the CIS and to revive the relationships with Russia's old Soviet allies, to affiliate with China, and thus to force the USA to alter its policy by granting some political and economic concessions to Russia<sup>32</sup>.

On the other hand, Russia could pursue the carefully planned eurocontinentalist strategy of the "integration into the Western structures" seeking to constrain the U.S. influence in Europe and eventually to replace it. A well-thought-out confrontation with the USA and the orientation towards the anti-American coalition, together with China, India, Iran and other Arab countries, was a kind of preparation (preliminary stage) for the bargaining for the better conditions of the "integration" with the West. That would explain Putin's visits to some former allies of the Soviet Union and friendship and co-operation treaties with China and Iran.

Expedient westernisation is a substantial precondition for the successful Russo-centric eurocontinentalist geopolitical strategy. Russo-centric eurocontinentalism is the only viable long-term geopolitical strategy for Russia if it wills to evade the subordination to the U.S. influence. The economic conditions in Russia are miserable, demographic prospects are gloomy and the technological backwardness is enormous. Russia needs investments, modern technologies and financial resources. Neither China, nor India, nor Iran can provide Russia with this. Besides, Russia could find itself in the position of a "junior brother" if it formed an alliance with China. Since China has the advantage of its dynamic economy and population.

Thus Russia needs support and friendship from the USA and the West in general. generally the West. But distinctly from the period of 1991-1996, Russia does not pretend that the partnership should be on an equal groundson equal grounds. For the time being, it wants to become an important (or maybe even the main) US partner in Europe (and entire all of Eurasia). By joining the Western organisations, Russia expects to influence them in such a way that would undermine their effective work. That would promote the growth of the Russian economy and political weight interna-

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<sup>31</sup> Brzezinski Z., *The Grand Chessboard. American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives*, New York: Basic Books, 1997.

<sup>32</sup> MacFarlane N., "Realism and Russian strategy after the Collapse of the USSR", in Kapstein, E.B., Mastanduno M., *Unipolar Politics: Realism and State Strategies after the Cold War*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, p. 218-260.

tionally. Thus it may turn out that Russia, eventually, will attempt to oust the USA from Europe, or together with the USA, to divide up Europe or, at least, to establish the European balance of power where Russia could be an arbiter.

However, talking about Russia's medium-term goals, it can be said that Russia has only partially restored its influence in the CIS countries. Russia still can not do that in the Baltic States, though it attempts to weaken their structural power. At the same time, taking an advantage of the Baltic States' vulnerabilities (the economic energetic dependence on Russia, the ambivalence of the social and cultural gravitation) **Russia may possibly seek to turn the Baltic States into one of its "influence agents" in the Western transatlantic institutions.**

It could be said that **this is possibly the reason why Russia did not oppose the admission of the Baltic States to NATO.** However, it would be more convenient for Russia to delay the entry of the Baltic States until Russia actually (and peacefully) changes the geopolitical orientation of the Baltic States. Currently, Russia avoids the direct pressure and undertakes the tactics of "temptation" by offering Lithuania the economically beneficial in the short-term, but through strategically risky proposals.

On the other hand, the USA and Russia could have settled an agreement on the status of the Baltic States, ascribing them to the Russian sphere of the economic influence. In principal, all of the Central Europe and the Eastern Baltics is much more the a zone of Russian's and American common interests than that of the EU states (except Germany). The USA has a substantial political influence in this region and Russia's economic (and especially energetic) power constantly increases. The version that the new division of influence between the USA, Western European countries and Russia has matured and is a version that should not be discarded. However, the lines of division go along the domains of social life, not along the states' borders. Economically (and to some extent culturally) the Central Europe and the East Baltics are "handed over" to Russia as a compensation for a loss of geopolitical influence<sup>33</sup>.

If Russia were involved successfully into the new transcontinental security structure, the fate of becoming the a geopolitical province (periphery) and not the a geopolitical centre or outpost awaits the Baltic States (as well as Lithuania). The development of events will depend on the concessions that Russia would get in the nearest future. Lithuania's security affairs will be influenced by its accession to NATO, reform of the Alliance's structure and the formation of more stable geopolitical boundaries in the Central Eurasia. For the time being, the USA and the West do nothing except pass around the promises.

In the case of the West writing off Russia's debts, providing it with a factual possibility to take part in the decision-making in the Council of NATO and Russia, establish the new security structures (taking, for example, the suggested Global Alliance of Security on the grounds of the G-8 or Eurasian Security and Cooperation Organisation) then it could be stated that the relations of the West (and most first of all, the USA) towards Russia have changed substantially and have entered the a qualitatively new stage of co-operation. This could culminate in the

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<sup>33</sup> Janeliūnas T., "Redistribution of geopolitical power in CEE" in *Lithuanian Political Science Yearbook 2002*, Vilnius, 2003, p. 142-153.

*heartland's* subjection to the influence of the maritime countries (except China). On the contrary, it may lead due to certain changes in Russia's and EU member states' internal policy to the eurocontinentalism.

Generally, assessing the dynamics of the geopolitical situation of the Baltic States in 1990-2002, the changes in the Baltic States' geopolitical orientation and gravitation should be taken into account as well as the assessment of these changes in the countries of different geopolitical zones. Conditionally, one could distinguish five periods of the change in the geopolitical status of the Baltic States:

1. *"unstable" Russia's barrier (1990-1993)* – from declaration of independence to a the withdrawal of the Russian armed forces from Lithuania;
2. *"unstable" buffer of the maritime countries and Russia (1993-1995)* – from the withdrawal of the Russian armed forces from Lithuania to Lithuania's official applications for accession to the NATO (4 January 1994) and the EU (8 December 1995);
3. *"unstable" maritime countries' barrier (1995-1999)* – from officially applications applying for accession to the NATO and the EU to the beginning of the accession to the EU negotiations and adoption of the a first NATO Membership action plan;
4. *"unstable" maritime countries' outpost (1999-2002)* – from the beginning of the accession to the EU negotiations and adoption of a the first NATO Membership action plan to the official invitations to join NATO and the EU;
5. *"unstable" maritime countries' outpost, a fragment of the gate-way region* that relate the Western world and Russia or a fragment of the *new type of the shatter-belt?* (since 2002).

Table 3. *The Geopolitical Functions of the Baltic States in 1990-2003*

Period	Geopolitical orientation	Geopolitical gravitation	Geopolitical status
1990-1993	Undefined/ towards maritime states?	Towards Russia	"Unstable" Russia's barrier
1993-1995	Towards maritime states	Towards Russia	Buffer of maritime states and Russia
1994-1998/9	Towards maritime states	Diskontinental	"Unstable" barrier of maritime states
1999-2001/02	Towards maritime states	More towards maritime states	"Unstable" outpost of maritime states
2002 -	Towards maritime states	More towards maritime states	Fragment of new type shatter-belt

## By the way of conclusions Conclusions

Lithuania pursues the a pro-American geopolitical orientation. The USA is considered to be the key guarantor of Lithuania's sovereignty due tofor two main reasons. First of all, the USA has never recognised the annexation of the Baltic States due to Simpson's doctrine not to recognise the states that had been occupied by the use of force. Secondly, the US supremacy counterweights the geopolitically the influence of Russia in the Eastern Baltics.

In spite of the fact, that the USA supports Lithuania's (as well as the other Baltic States') integration into NATO, it seems that the participation of the Baltic States in the Western structures is necessary for the USA for more variousa reasons other than building the a barrier against Russia (the U.S. did not support Poland's undertaking to establish the a barrier in the Eastern Baltics in the inter-war period). Primarily, the USA would like to turn the Baltic States into the **geopolitical gateway/bridge** enabling to penetrat into Russia, Belarus and Ukraine politically and economically. In case Russia changes its pragmatic pro-western geopolitical code into the eurocontinalist or eurasian geopolitical code and the US strategy fails, then the USA could use the East Baltics as the an outpost at the edge of the discontinental zone. In other words, the USA could turn the Baltic States into a "wedge" between Europe, and Russia and "agents of influence" in the EU (together with other Central European countries).

However, the pressure from Russia and some European countries to change the pro-American orientation is increasings. In Lithuania, the arguments against NATO are related to the increase in military expenses at the cost of the social programs. Also, there exist some kind of allergy to the American mass culture and the fear of the "delicate" exchange between Russia and the USA – the Americans could transfer some part of their influence (first of all economic) in the Baltic States to Russia, gaining benefits in return to some kind of dividends in other spheres. This puts into questions the expediency of Lithuania's pro-American geopolitical orientation.

The potential threats of integration into NATO under the USA patronage are not greater than the potential threats that could emerge if Lithuania did not join NATO or replaced its pro-American orientation by the a "pro-European" one. This is because Europe is not adequately able enough (or in some wayssense is not sufficiently interested in) to counterweight Russia's influence in the Eastern Baltics. Therefore, the starting point for further discussions should be the underlying statement that **the costs of the pro-American orientation are smaller than the eventual costs in case this orientation was rejected**. Currently, neither a European state (nor the a group of the states) can (or wants to) to counterweight Russia's influence in the Eastern Baltics. Lithuania's displacement towards Russia would be strengthened if the pro-American orientation was subjected to change. That would have negative economic and political outcomes (the situation in Lithuania would become similar to that of Ukraine, Georgia).

On the other hand, the argument that due tobecause of Lithuania's natural geopolitical *gravitation* towards Europe, the change of the *orientation* into towards the pro-European one, eventually, would reduce the tension in the region and in

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Lithuania's society, is plainly unsound. In this case, the tension would still exist, albeit reducing Lithuania's sovereignty.

**Thus the tension within the country and the region caused by Lithuania's pro-American geopolitical orientation is the cost of greater Lithuania's sovereignty. However, this cost neither exceeds the price of the sovereignty nor produces the destructive effects in the region.** The strengthening of Lithuania's structural power – the eventual consolidation of Lithuania's international standing and prestige – could mitigate the negative outcomes of the pro-American orientation.