Gražina Miniotaitė*
Lithuanian Military Academy
Culture, Philosophy and Arts Research Institute

Lithuania's Evolving Security and Defence Policy: Problems and Prospects**

This article presents an analysis of the developments in Lithuania's security and defence policy (LSDP) since 1990, and makes an attempt at clarifying its main tendencies and prospects. Lithuania's SDP has been mainly shaped by the concerns of re-establishing the country's statehood and state sovereignty. The re-emerging Lithuanian state had not only to guarantee the preservation of national sovereignty, but also to create conditions favourable to radical legal and economic change. When considering the ways in which to reach these formidable goals, Lithuania has treated membership in NATO and EU as the means for the state's security. The process of access negotiations and then living up to the criteria for membership in these organizations led to a significant transformation of the state and the society. In regards to the security policy it led to the efforts of overcoming negative attitudes towards neighbouring states and accepting the idea of a collective security. In turn, this led to changes in the defence policy, replacing the idea of territorial defence to that of a collective defence and accordingly reforming the armed forces. Now a member of the EU and NATO, Lithuania has developed ambitions at becoming the leader of a region in spreading her experience of political and economic reforms to neighbouring eastern countries. Lithuania has supported the strengthening of the military dimension of EU, while being critical of the duplication of EU and NATO functions and capacities, and has linked her own security with the preservation of the strong transatlantic alliance.

Introduction

Lithuania, after obtaining membership in the EU and NATO in 2004, was actively engaged in activities of both institutions. Lithuania was the first of the EU member states to ratify, in 2004, the EU Constitution and among the first of the new member-states to seek entrance to the Euro zone. Both its population and its political elite are positively disposed towards Lithuania's membership in the EU and NATO and optimistic about its prospects. Claims are often made that by decisively turning towards the West in 1994, Lithuania

---

* *Doc. dr. Gražina Miniotaitė* is a professor of the Political Science Department of the Lithuanian Military Academy and a researcher of the Culture, Philosophy and Arts Research Institute. Address: Šilo 5a, LT-10322 Vilnius, Lithuania tel. +370-5-2103569, e–mail: grazina.m@gmail.com

has developed an optimal foreign and security policy reflecting the aspirations of its people. One may wonder, however, whether such optimistic claims do not sound an "end of history" (a state) note. Is it not the case that the sovereign state has become a mere consumer of EU funds diligently complying with EU and NATO directives? Does Lithuania's being in the space of EU leave any room for the country's independent foreign and security initiatives? These questions, widely discussed in Lithuania's media debates, are of particular urgency in studying the relation of Lithuania's security and defence policies to the ESDP and NATO.

An answer to these questions can be found in official statements and texts on security policy, all of them emphasizing that in her relations with the EU and NATO Lithuania is seeking to be "not only a consumer but also contributor."[1] Is this a true characterization of Lithuania's SDP, or is it a mere slogan to be realized in an indefinite future? What is Lithuania's international identity that this ambitious SDP is trying to create? How is it reflected in concrete political decisions? The article attempts to answer these questions by analyzing the evolution of Lithuania's security policies and major recent tendencies in its SDP.

The analysis is mainly based on the constructivist conception of security that stresses the importance of non-material factors (ideas, identities, values, historical myths, etc.) in foreign and security policy. However, it would be wrong to assume that constructivism, when dealing with the behaviour of states, is totally dismissive of objective circumstances. Lithuania will remain, in the foreseeable future, "the main zone of contact"[2] between Russia and the EU. Yet, on the constructivist view, relations with Russia (as well as with other states) are not simply dictated by geopolitical environment, for they are affected by changes in the ideational factors. Our previous research[3] provides us with the evidence that the concept of security, as it is used in Lithuania's political discourse, closely resembles Barry Buzan's definition of security, being that security is "the ability of states and societies to maintain their independent identity and the functional integrity against forces of change which they see as hostile."[4]

The definition rests on the blending of two main paradigms in the analysis of international relations, realism, and constructivism. In the spirit of realism, security is conceived as a nation-state's security that is to be achieved by identifying the objective threats faced by the state and society and neutral-

---

[1] See: Government Performance Report 2005. Prime Minister's statement, 30 03 2006. http://www.lrvk. lt/main_en.php?cat=2&d=4001, 19 08 2006.

[2] Buzan B., Weaver O., *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p.343.

[3] See: Miniotaite G., "The Baltic States: In Search of Security and Identity", Krupnick Ch.,ed., *Almost NATO: Partners and Players in Central and Eastern European Security*, Lanham Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003, p.261-296.

[4] Buzan, B. "New Patterns of Global Security in the Twenty-First Century", *International Affairs*. – 1991, 67 (4), p.432.

izing them.[5] However, threats ("forces of change which they see as hostile") are conceptualized inter-subjectively, as social constructs. This latter part of the security conception was further developed in Buzan and Ole Weaver's works and came to be known as the "securitization theory."[6] To simplify it, securitization is a process of threat construction. Under certain circumstances, anything can become the object of securitization – any issue of domestic or foreign policy concern (national identity, migration, energy dependence on one source, etc.).[7]

This conceptual inconsistency finds its reflection in nearly all the documents laying out the guidelines of Lithuania's security policy as well as in political decision-making. And it is related to the tasks that the re-emerging Lithuanian state had to face, which are not only that of securing the state's sovereignty, but also that of creating conditions for radical legal and economic change. It was no accident that the quest for security had been the driving force in Lithuania's domestic and foreign policy until full membership in EU and NATO.

1. Lithuania's Security and Defence Policy from 1990-2004

Theoretically, in terms of political and military security arrangements, after the country's admission to the UN in September 1991, Lithuania could choose from: 1) non-alignment, or neutrality; 2) alliance of two or several small states; or 3) membership in a multilateral alliance around one or more major powers. All three options were considered in Lithuania's security and defence discourse. However, the first and the second options remained at the level of a debate, and were never to be institutionalized. So therefore we will concentrate mostly on the third one.

Neutrality and Baltic State's alliance as a security policy options attracted some attention between the years 1990-1995, this being mostly under the influence of the model of interwar Lithuania. Lithuania's foreign and security policy in the interwar period was a manoeuvring between Moscow and Berlin with the aim of regaining the Vilnius region occupied by Poland in 1920. The conflict over Vilnius prevented the formation of a strong alliance of the Baltic States. And Lithuania's position of neutrality adopted in 1939 under conditions of severe international instability failed to provide security. Any attempt to revert to these ideas after regaining independence would have brought the stereotypes of interwar politics back into the political discourse of the newly

---

[5] See: Law on the Basics of National Security of Lithuania), *Valstybės žinios*, 1997, 2: 2-20.
[6] Buzan B., Wǽver O., de Wilde J., *Security: A New Framework for Analysis,* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1997; Wǽver O., "Securitization and Desecuritization", Lipschutz R. D., ed., *On Security*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995. p.46-86.
[7] See: Williams M.C., "Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics", *International Studies Quaterly*, 2003, 47 (4), p.511-532.

emerging state. In fact, the mere rehearsal of the conflicting interpretations of interwar Polish-Lithuanian relations led to tensions between the two countries from 1991-1992.

At the time, however, the presence of Russia's troops in the country made the option of a pro-Western security policy difficult to embrace openly. Thanks to joint endeavours of Lithuania, some Western states, and also other international bodies, Russian troops were withdrawn from Lithuania in the autumn of 1993. This made it possible for Lithuania to proclaim in 1994 its Euro-Atlantic aspirations, and membership in NATO and the EU as the main goal of Lithuania's foreign and security policy. The pro-Western turn in Lithuania's political discourse was portrayed as a "return to Europe" and its membership in NATO and the EU was presented as the guarantee of an irreversible integration with the West, finally shielding Lithuania from Russia's threats to its sovereignty.

The Western response to the bidding of nearly all post Soviet states for membership in NATO and the EU, was announcing the list of criteria for acceptance, known as the *Copenhagen Criteria* (1993), some of which were reiterated in *The Study on NATO Enlargement* (1995). These overlapping criteria demanded the establishment of regimes based on the principles of a Western liberal democracy. The criteria were supplemented by regulations for their implementation and for the monitoring of progress made (action plans, progress reports). The quest for membership in NATO and the EU initiated the process of rebuilding the Lithuanian state on the model of a Western democracy, and it required radical political and economic reforms, as well as changes in foreign and security policies.

Like any attempt for a rational control of social processes, the Euro-integration faces the inertia of the social matter, the resistance of historical stereotypes, of social identities already in place, and, sometimes, of disappointed expectations. The Western world that Lithuania so much wants to enter is hardly homogeneous; it is characterized in part by marked differences between the socially oriented Western European welfare states and the more market oriented British and American models. Lithuania, like Estonia and Latvia, by focusing on economic growth, has been leaning towards the Anglo-Saxon model. In a relatively short time they have indeed achieved impressive rates of economic growth,[8] however, the progress is accompanied by the growing gap between the well off and the poor, feelings of insecurity, and even some nostalgia for Soviet times. This creates conditions for political instability, left-right pendulum voting, support for populist parties and leaders, political cynicism, and corruption, as well as Euro-scepticism and anti-globalization. All political forces in Lithuania agree that these phenomena pose serious threats to Lithuania's domestic security. In the security policy documents, the reduction of social exclusion and developments of civil society are proposed as an important means of preventing internal instability.

---

[8] In 2006 Lithuania's GDP reached 47 per cent of the average GDP of EU states, starting from the low point of 33 per cent in 1997.

In Lithuania's foreign and security policy compliance with membership criteria has been linked to good relations with neighbouring countries, to the military's capability of defending the state's territory, and effective contribution to an NATO collective defence. Consistently seeking good relations with the neighbouring states, Lithuania scrapped its interwar stereotypes and established warm relations with Poland since 1997, considering Poland a strategic partner on the road to NATO and the EU. In Lithuania's relations with Belarus, Lithuania has pursued the policy of *pragmatic selective cooperation*, taking in to account of the EU stance towards Belarus after the establishment of its authoritarian regime in 1997.[9] The idea is that political cooperation with Belarus should be minimal (there have been no exchanges of visits between official heads of states, or high-ranking officials, since the end of 2000), while maintaining contacts with some power structures in Belarus and developing bilateral cooperation in areas that are important for the region's security and stability. The area of cooperation includes the demarcation of state borders, illegal migration, local cooperation, and also energy issues.

Lithuania's most powerful and most troublesome neighbour is Russia. This is related not only to the fact that Russia has difficulties in reconciling with the break-up of the Soviet Union and with the loss of the Baltic countries, but also to its peculiar relations with the EU and USA. In an effort to help with the democratization of Russia, and thus to secure a trustworthy partner in energy supplies and in the war on terror, some Western powers (Germany and France in particular) have been prone to sympathize with Russia's resistance to the Baltic States' membership in NATO. The stance found its reflection in the NATO Madrid Summit (1997) decisions, when Poland was invited to NATO while Lithuania was only characterized as an aspirant country.

Despite Russia's resistance to Lithuania's transatlantic integration, its relations with Lithuania developed much more smoothly than with the other Baltic States. Lithuania is the only Baltic state to have signed and ratified the border treaty with Russia.[10] This is so not only because Russia has no complaints about Russian minority rights in Lithuania, but also because of the peculiarity of Russia-Lithuania borders. The relatively short mainland border of Lithuania with Russia's Kaliningrad region is of particular importance for Russia. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and with Lithuania regaining independence in 1991, Russia lost its territorial integrity. Ties with its least developed region, the Kaliningrad region, became dependent on Lithuania's good will concerning the issues of transit (military, economic, movement of persons, etc.) On the other hand, Lithuania is totally dependent on Russia's supplies of oil and gas. It is no wonder that Russia is intent on preserving its political and economic clout in Lithuania.

---

[9] On Lithuania's relations with Belarus see: Lopata R., "Authoritarianism in Belarus: Eventual Threats to Lithuania's Security", *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review 2002*, Vilnius: Lithuanian Military Academy, 2003, p. 215-230; *Understanding Belarus: Transition to Where? Proceedings of the International Conference*, Vilnius, Lithuanian Military Academy, 2003.

[10] Lithuanian-Russian border treaty was signed in 1997 and ratified by Lithuania in 1999 and by Russia in 2003.

The position of Lithuania on the issue underwent changes because of changes in NATO-Russia relations as well as in EU policies towards the region. At first, the militarized Kaliningrad region was perceived as a direct military threat to Lithuania's independence. In 1994 the issue of the Kaliningrad threat was made particularly acute. The treatment of Kaliningrad region as a permanent threat for independence of Lithuania was expressed in the *Basics of National Security of Lithuania* (1996).[11] However, this position of 'hard' security was gradually replaced by a 'soft' one: in the National Security Strategy (2002) the issue of Kaliningrad was conceptualized not as a threat to Lithuanian security but as the "economic, commercial and cultural partnership."[12] One can agree with the authors of a study on the Kaliningrad region that "during the last decade, the region underwent transformation in the foreign policy of Lithuania from the main threat to security into an advantage – an opportunity to play an independent role of the leader in the south-east of the Baltic Sea region, truly contributing to promotion of stability in the area."[13]

After NATO and the EU Summits in 2002, that have acknowledged Lithuania's eligibility for membership in both organizations, Lithuania's foreign policy and security policy in relation to Russia has mostly lost its independence by becoming a part of EU-Russia relations. After signing the EU-Russia Agreement on Russian transit from the Kaliningrad enclave through Lithuanian territory in the end of 2002, Russia ratified the long delayed Treaty on the Lithuanian-Russian State Border and signed a readmission agreement in 2003. Stricter regulation of travel to/from the Kaliningrad region via Lithuania (a visa regime) came into effect on 1 July 2003. This brought Lithuania closer to the Schengen Treaty space without causing a major deterioration of relations with Russia. The troubling issue of Kaliningrad has been transformed into a 'window of opportunity' for regional cooperation. Lithuania proved to be capable of creatively implementing the cooperation model proposed by the EU and this has had some impact on the identification of the state. The image of Lithuania as a bridge between the East and the West was replaced by the images of the bridgehead between Lithuania and the West, and eventually, the outpost of Western values.[14]

While striving for membership in NATO and the EU, Lithuania not only diligently complied with the requirements of membership, but also embarked on some independent security policy initiatives contributing to Euro-Atlantic security and stability. Among the more important ones were the so-called Vilnius Conferences organized since 1997. Lithuania has established itself

---

[11] See: Note 5.

[12] National Security Strategy of the Republic of Lithuania 2002, available at: http://www.kam.lt/index.php/en/34381/, 17 03 2006.

[13] Sirutavičius V., Stanytė-Toločkienė I., "Strategic importance of the Kaliningrad Oblast of the Russian Federation", *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review 2002*, Vilnius: Lithuanian Military Academy, 2003, p.193.

[14] See: Miniotaite G. "Convergent Geography and Divergent Identities: A Decade of Transformation in the Baltic States", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 2003, 16(2), p. 209-222; Pavlovaite I., "Paradise Regained: The Conceptualization of Europe in the Lithuanian Debate", in Lehti M. & Smith D., eds., *Post-Cold War Identity Politics: Northern and Baltic Experiences,* London: Frank Cass, 2003, p. 199-218.

as a forum for discussing the issues of developing friendly relations among neighbour states and of integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. In May of 2000 the Vilnius 9 Group ('V-9') was formed. In 2001 the 'V-9' was enlarged to 'Vilnius-10' ('V-10') by admitting Croatia.[15] After the 9/11 terrorist attacks against the United States the 'V-10' stood firm behind the US. They issued a joint statement expressing solidarity with the United States and the Alliance. In 2003 the 'Vilnius-10' issued a similar statement in support of US position on Iraq.

By linking national security to membership in NATO and the EU, Lithuania's security policy has thus achieved its proximate goal. It was in the process of complying with the demands for membership that the main contours of Lithuania's foreign and security policy were initially formed and then further modified in an attempt to live up to the requirements of the EU and NATO strategic documents. Its security policy is now part of a common EU foreign and security policy and Lithuania's politicians are eager to make that part a highly visible one.

2. Lithuania's Security Policy After Dual Enlargement

With the accession to the European Union and NATO, Lithuania faced the task of reformulating key foreign and security policy issues and finding its place in common foreign and security policy (CFSP) of the European Union.[16] During the period of candidacy, Lithuania's domestic and foreign policy, like that of other candidate states, was inevitably adaptive in character. The character remained much the same even after the change in Lithuania's status. As the new edition of National Security Strategy (2005) puts it: 'Lithuania perceives its national security as a constituent part of the security policies of these organizations and follows the provisions of the NATO strategic concept, those of the European Security strategy and other strategic documents of NATO and the EU, and takes into consideration the threat analysis, strategic goals and measures laid down in these documents."[17]

On the other hand, the activities of the 'Vilnius-10' and the country's early involvement in EU New Neighbourhood Policy have created the premises for the realization of Lithuania's ambitions "to consolidate our country as a centre of the regional cooperation"[18] and of becoming a state that is "active,

---

[15] "Vilnius-10" consists of Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.
[16] See: Nekrašas E., "Lithuanian Foreign Policy: Concepts, Achievements and Predicaments", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2005, p. 28-37.
[17] National Security Strategy of the Republic of Lithuania 2005, http://www.kam.lt/index.php/en/34381/, 10-05-2006.
[18] Government Performance Report 2005, note 1.

visible in the world, and regionally influential."[19] In laying the foundations for Lithuania's new foreign and security policy, the emphasis has been on the revitalization of the image of Lithuania as the centre and the leader of the region. As a matter of fact, during the period of 2004-2006 nearly all documents and official statements dealing with foreign policy and security policy put an emphasis on Lithuania's aspiration to become "an active and an attractive centre of interregional cooperation promoting Euro-Atlantic values, and the spirit of tolerance and cooperation between cultures and civilizations."[20]

It should be noted that the region of which Lithuania aspires to become the centre of has not been defined in the official documents and statements. This is so because the region does not in fact exist, it is rather a social construct still to be implemented by Lithuania's foreign and security policy. In the spirit of theories about new regionalism, the region is conceived not so much as a common geographic space, but as a space of common values creating regional identity by economic, political, and military cooperation and leading to the extension of the Western security community.[21] Regional identity is not merely a derivative of national identities, it is rather something based on common norms and values constituting of what Jürgen Habermas calls "constitutional patriotism."[22] In promoting regional cooperation and aspiring to become its driving force, Lithuania is in so fact creating it. The idea of Lithuania as a regional centre and regional leader is a discursive construction, a narrative on which Lithuania's international identity is to be based.[23]

As the new edition of National Security Strategy (2005) puts it, by constructing its identity as a political leader promoting "freedom and democracy in the neighbouring European regions," Lithuania is creating stronger foundations for its own security. This is the reason why Lithuania is strengthening its relations with Ukraine, Moldova and the Caucasian states. Lithuania supports these states' quest for membership in NATO and the EU and offers them (Ukraine and Georgia in particular) practical assistance for meeting the criteria of membership in these institutions. In its relations with Belarus, Lithuania has followed a policy of 'pragmatic selective cooperation at a practical level' while strengthening support for democratic forces in Belarus. In particular, during the presidential elections in Belarus in 2005, Lithuania supported the opposition by offering it facilities to operate in Vilnius. Lithuania has also offered facilities in Vilnius for the European Humanitarian University that was ousted from Minsk. These actions on the part of Lithuania, led to tensions in the relations

---

[19] Resolution of Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania on directions in Foreign policy of the Republic of Lithuania following Lithuania's Accession to NATO and the European Union, *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2005, 102-05.

[20] Agreement between Political Parties of the Republic of Lithuania on the Main Foreign Policy Goals and Objectives for 2004-2008, *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2005, 106-112.

[21] Adler E., Crawford B., *Normative Power: The European Practice of Region Building and the Case of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership,* Berkeley:University of California, 2004.

[22] Habermas J., *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory*, Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1998, p.225-226.

[23] See Miniotaitė G., "'Europos normatyvinė galia' ir Lietuvos užsienio politika", *Politologija*, 2006, 43 (3), p.3-19.

between the two states. Belarus President accused Lithuania's foreign minister of interfering in Belarusian internal affairs. Nevertheless, the democratization of Belarus and its involvement in EU New Neighbourhood policy remains an important item on Lithuania's security policy agenda.

Lithuania considers the strengthening of the EU Eastern dimension its main task as a participant in the EU New Neighbourhood policy. This was the major topic at the international conference 'Common Vision for Common Neighbourhood' held in Vilnius in 2006.[24]The conference focused on the "frozen conflicts" in Moldova, Georgia, Karabach, and Chechnya, and appealed for a more active involvement of NATO and the EU. All these conflicts were related to the alleged interference of Russia in the former Soviet space. In view of some commentators, insistence on the internationalization of the "frozen conflicts" as well as Richard B. Cheney's statement in which he accused Russia of using gas and oil as "instruments of intimidation and blackmail in order to manipulate supplies and monopolize transit routes"[25] and gave the conference an anti-Russian flavour.

How much have the Lithuanian-Russian relations have changed since Lithuania's joining NATO and EU? Have the tendencies to securitize Russia remained in place? First, as already mentioned, with Lithuania's borders becoming external EU borders some major issues in Lithuanian-Russian relations (e.g. visa and border control) became issues of EU-Russia relations. In Lithuania this prompted ambivalent reactions. Nationalist forces are fearful of new threats to national sovereignty generated by pro-Russian policies of the EU. The prevailing attitude, however, is that Lithuania's membership in the EU and NATO has finally eliminated Russia's military threat. Nevertheless, Russia's securitization remains an observable issue in Lithuania's political discourse. There are incessant attempts at bringing Russia to remorse on account of Lithuania's occupation and its tragic consequences. There are also fears concerning Lithuania's dependence on Russia's energy supplies and possible manipulations in Lithuania's domestic policies by Russia's secret services. This image of Russia has been manifested by Lithuania's President's refusal to participate at the 60th anniversary celebration of Russia's victory over Hitler's Germany held in Moscow in 2005 and their diplomatic support to Georgia in its hard relations with Russia and by the declaration of Vytautas Landsbergis, MEP, to the European Parliament that holds Russia (Soviet Union) responsible for "the loss of millions of lives, burnt in the flames of World War II" and demands "to preserve a place for these tragic facts in Europe's collective memory."[26]

---

[24] Presidents from nine states of the Baltic Sea and Black Sea regions – Lithuania, Poland, Moldova, Romania, Georgia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Latvia, and Estonia – took part in the conference. Among the participants were also US Vice President Richard B. Cheney and Javier Solana, the EU High Representative for the common foreign and security policy.

[25] Remarks by Vice President of the United States Richard B. Cheney at the 2006 Vilnius conference, May 4, 2006, http://www.vilniusconference2006.lt/sen/lib.download/15, 12 09 2006.

[26] *Declaration on the anniversary of 17 September 1939*, submitted by MEPs Vytautas Landsbergis, Bronislaw Geremek, Valdis Dombrovskis and Toomas Hendrik Ilves. The declaration was not adopted since only 80 MEPs did sign it.

Lithuania, together with other East European nations, the new EU member states, is intent on nudging the 'old Europe' to have a new look on Russia and to stop romanticizing its virtues of 'spontaneity and unpredictability' and to consider, in real terms, the potential threats implicated in Russia's clamp down on democracy. It seems that the United States was the first to take notice of the EU newcomers' concerns, as Richard Cheney's speech in Vilnius demonstrated. Even when Lithuania was still knocking at the door of the EU and NATO and Lithuania made its pro-American stance quite clear, it was then further demonstrated by the 'Vilnius 10' support for the US war on terror and by Lithuania's military involvement in the Iraq war. Politicians in Lithuania are nearly unanimous in rejecting any attempts at creating divides in the European and American understanding of international security, for they consider them as threats to Lithuania's own security. This is explicitly stated in the *White paper of Lithuanian Defence Policy* (2006): "A strong transatlantic link between the US and Europe is an essential precondition to the long-term security of Lithuania."[27] So it seems that, on the whole, Lithuania's security policy has evolved in the direction of global security. This is also evidenced by the development of a new agenda of Lithuania's defence policy.

3. The New Agenda of Lithuania's Defence Policy

Since becoming a part of collective defence system, Lithuania's defence policy has set itself out two main tasks: building and extending a secure environment, and ensuring a reliable military defence. In pursuing the former goal it is guided by the European security strategy, while in pursuing the latter it relies on NATO strategic concept. In Lithuania's political discourse, the EU and NATO play different roles. The EU is treated as possessing normative or civil power, which, in the words of Andrew Moravcsik, is grounded not on the "number of battalions and bombs," but on "peaceful promotion of democracy by trade, foreign aid, and peacekeeping."[28] NATO, on the other hand, is seen as a provider of security based on military power. Supplementing the 'soft' EU power with the 'hard' military power is Lithuania's preferred option. The tendencies, in the wake of the Iraq war, of downplaying NATO's importance are worrying for Lithuania's politicians. Judging by the content of Lithuania's latest strategic documents, they fully endorse Madeleine Albright's, former US Secretary of State, three famous Ds, which outlined American expectations from ESDP: "no duplication of what was done effectively under NATO, no decoupling from the US and NATO, and no discrimination against non-EU members."[29] In the White Paper (2006) a strengthening of the transatlantic link is a top priority in defence policy; its formulation reflects all the three Ds,

---

[27] White Paper of Lithuanian Defense Policy 2006, http://www.kam.lt/index.php/lt/35629/, 06 06 2006.
[28] Moravcsik A. "The Quiet Superpower", *Newsweek*, 2002, June 17-27, p.12.
[29] Albright M. "The Right Balance Will Secure NATO's Future", *Financial Times*, 1998, 7 December.

particularly, the first and the second being: "the principle of non-duplication of capabilities" and "new capabilities instead of new structures."[30]

Being a member of the EU and thus becoming a part of a whole subject to common rules, Lithuania's security policy has nevertheless maintained a measure of independence and used Lithuania's unique experience of integration for getting a foothold in the new environment. One can say that on security matters, Lithuania does not merely comply with the common EU foreign and security policy directives, but makes efforts at influencing them, particularly, in trying to strengthen the eastern dimension of EU security policy. In aspiring to become the political centre of the region, Lithuania feels confident enough to be able to contribute to the strengthening of Europe's normative power.

Lithuania's defence policy has always been linked to NATO. Since the start of the period of candidacy for NATO in 1994, Lithuania has considerably altered its defence objectives ever more accommodating them to changes in NATO security strategy. Neither the NATO security strategy, nor the requirement for the interoperability of the country's defence forces with those of NATO, was ever in doubt in Lithuania. The most serious challenge to Lithuania's defence policy has been the transition from territorial to collective defence. Lithuania's conception of territorial defence, based as it was on the principle of total and unconditional defence, was in full accord with Lithuania's political quest of nation state building. In the framework of this conception, NATO was primarily associated with Article 5 obligating member states to collective defence. NATO was perceived as the guarantor of Lithuania's territorial integrity. This image of NATO was in line with Lithuania's conception of territorial defence as formulated in *The Law on Fundamentals of National Security* (1996). Noticeable changes in the defence policy began with Lithuania's involvement in the NATO Membership Action Plan in 1999-2001. It is moved from the purely threat based approach, which implied preparations for the worst case scenario, to a capability based approach, which implies having capabilities to respond to a variety of the most likely or most demanding scenarios.

By 2004, Lithuania's military strategy was already firmly based on the idea of collective defence: "By participating in international peacekeeping and crises response operations, the Armed Forces of Lithuania, an active member of NATO and the European Union, strengthen the national security as well as the security of the whole Euro-Atlantic community."[31] Accordingly, there are changes in the goals of Lithuania's military forces, for example they are now oriented to actions unrelated to Article 5 and not only in the Euro-Atlantic area, but also beyond it.[32] Priority is given to the development of the Reaction Brigade, which by the end of 2014 should be capable of deploying and sustaining one infantry battalion task group.

---

[30] White Paper, note 27.

[31] The Military Strategy of the Republic of Lithuania, 2004, http://www.kam.lt/index.php/en/34381/, 05 09 2006

[32] For the latest information on participation of the Lithuanian military in NATO, ESDP, OSCE, UN international operations see a website of the Lithuanian Defence ministry http://www.kam.lt/index.php/lt/104524/.

It is often emphasized by the high officials, that Lithuania must counter threats where they arise, in other words, the defence of Lithuania today starts in Afghanistan rather than within Lithuania's borders."[33] However, Renatas Norkus, Secretary of the Ministry of National Defence, has observed that such concepts as crisis management, peacekeeping or reconstruction of a remote Afghan province are slow to enter Lithuania's public mind. People find little reason in having armed forces engaged in forest fire extinction or environmental cleaning. The soldier is loosing the image of the nation's and the country's defender. And it is becoming more difficult to obtain public support for the increased funding of the military: "One of the most difficult challenges has been a mental one: to start thinking in terms of collective defence of the Alliance instead of a collective defence for Lithuania."[34]

4. The Lithuanian and the European Defence Policy

In essence, Lithuania's system of defence has been developing as a part of the NATO system of defence. Lithuania has linked its own security to the preservation of a strong transatlantic link between the US and Europe. Some movement of the EU made in 2004, towards creating an autonomous European defence system, has had a lukewarm reception in Lithuania. Lithuania approves the instituting of the European Defence Agency and the strengthening of European military capacities only as a European pillar within NATO. Lithuania actively contributes to the development of the EU battle group, consisting of Polish, German, Slovak, Lithuanian, and Latvian troops. Yet even more emphatically Lithuania supports NATO aspirations to take greater responsibility for international security and more actively engage in peacekeeping, peacemaking and, if necessary, in combat missions anywhere in the world (see table).

---

[33] See: Norkus R., "Defense Transformation: A Lithuanian Perspective",. 11 April 2006, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. http://www.kam.lt/index.php/lt/96062/, 2006 09 15.
[34] Ibid.

Table 1. **Participation of Lithuania in major military operations in 2005/2006**

Operation	ESDP operations	NATO operations	US-led operations
CONCORDIA*	1 staff officer		
ARTEMIS	-		
ALTHEA	1 staff officer		
KFOR**		1 company (100); 1 platoon (30) within Polish-Ukrainian battalion	
ISAF		1 provincial reconstruction team (120)	
Pakistan relief operation		10 specialists	
Iraqi freedom			2 platoons with Polish and Danish contingents (110); Staff officers (12)
Enduring Freedom			1 staff officer

* Operation was terminated in 2003.
** The three Baltic States have rotated a company size unit (the Baltic Squadron) every six months within a Danish Battalion in Bosnia and Herzegovina since 2000.

Source: The Ministry of National Defence of the Republic of Lithuania

The table shows that only two Lithuanian soldiers have taken part in ESDP operations in 2006. Much more importance has been accorded to the participation of Lithuanian experts in various conflicts. Lithuanian experts were sent on the "rule of law mission" to Georgia and on border monitoring missions to Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia, and all EU missions. Lithuania is also supportive of EU plans to extend crisis management missions from neighbouring, to more remote, regions. In 2005 Lithuanian experts participated in EU missions to Indonesia and Palestine, and they took part in the training of Iraqi police. Overall, in 2005, there were 17 Lithuanian experts taking part in EU civilian missions and 33 Lithuanian observers involved in monitoring elections.[35]

The main contingent of Lithuanian troops has been involved in international operations led by NATO and the USA. This is again indicative of Lithuania's treatment of NATO and EU defence policies as complementary and mutually reinvigorating parts of a whole. However, Lithuania has been concerned about some tendencies in the EU defence policy and its future development. As Kestutis Paulauskas noticed, the first concern is that EU and NATO military standards and defence planning system might diverge. In that case Lithuania's efforts at reaching NATO standards would have been spent in vain. Besides, the ever more noticeable duplication between the military bodies of NATO and the EU would force a split in two of Lithuania's modest defence capacities. The second concern relates to the stance of the European Defence Agency. Its pursuit of a common European procurement policy could

---

[35] *Lietuvos respublikos vyriausybės 2005 metų veiklos ataskaita*, 2006 m. kovo 30 d., http://www.lrv.lt/main_en.php?cat=2&script=1, 10 09 2006

cost Lithuania a great deal, for in complying with its insistence on procuring European armaments Lithuania would lose American armaments supplies purchased on quite favourable terms.[36] So it is natural that Lithuania wants the European armament policies to remain open to the transatlantic cooperation.

Concluding Remarks

"Not only consumer, also contributor" – a phrase used in many official documents, statements, and speeches is an apt description of the official stance of Lithuania, as member of both EU and NATO, on matters of security and defence. Does the foregoing analysis confirm this ambitious claim?

Both NATO and the EU have always had a two-faced interpretation in Lithuania's political discourse, the instrumental and the normative one. The instrumental view prevailed with respect to NATO, for NATO was primarily perceived as a security umbrella against threats from the East. A much more symbolically charged role was accorded to EU, since the prospect of joining the EU was like a return to the lost El Dorado, bringing not only national security, but restoring Lithuania to Western identity.

The accession negotiations and the process of coming into conformance with the criteria of EU and NATO membership led to a thorough transformation of the state and society. In security policy this meant that the overcoming of negative attitudes towards neighbouring states and the embrace of the conception of cooperative security. This in turn led to adjustments in the defence policy, including the switch from the idea of territorial defence to that of a common defence.

Since the accession to NATO and the EU, Lithuania's formerly uniform security/defence policy began to come apart, splitting into both foreign/security policy and defence policy components. The former is associated with the expansion of Europe's normative power, encapsulated in the appellation of EU security strategy 'A secure Europe in a better world.' In contributing to the realization of the strategy, Lithuania has assumed the ambitious role of a leader urging the rest 'to extend the benefits of economic and political cooperation to our neighbours in the East.' The annual Vilnius conferences have become a forum for post-Soviet states seeking membership in the EU and NATO.

Lithuania's defence policy has been developing as part of a NATO defense policy. In making its contribution for the attainment of NATO strategic goals, Lithuania has sought to become a trustworthy member of the alliance. The specific role that Lithuania envisions for itself in the alliance is Lithuania's active promotion of NATO enlargement to the East. Lithuania supports the strengthening of the military dimension of EU, but opposes the possible duplication of the EU and NATO defence capacities.

---

[36] In 2001-2003 Lithuania purchased from the United States 75 anti-tank missiles, 60 surface-to-air missiles, 8 launchers, and 15 Humvees. See Paulauskas K. "The Baltics: from nation states to member states", *Occational Paper*, 2006, 62, p.38.

Thus we can give a twofold answer to the question whether Lithuania's ambitions at having a high profile role in EU security and defence policy are justified. Lithuania has indeed played an active and creative role in implementing the EU security strategy by strengthening its eastern dimension. However, until now Lithuania's participation in the strengthening of the military dimension of the EU has been merely symbolic.