NATIONAL SECURITY THREAT ASSESSMENT

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STATE SECURITY DEPARTMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

SECOND INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT UNDER
THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

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Vilnius, 2016

CONTENTS

National security threat assessment by the State Security Department of the Republic of Lithuania (SSD) and the Second Investigation Department under the Ministry of National Defence (AOTD) is presented to the public in accordance with Articles 8 and 26 of the Republic of Lithuania Law on Intelligence. The present document provides consolidated, unclassified threat and risk assessment to national security of the Republic of Lithuania by both intelligence agencies.

INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the security situation in Lithuania's neighbourhood and the entire region remained tense as Russia continued nurturing imperial ambitions and pursuing aggressive foreign policy. The significance of its military power, which increased due to Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2014–2015, remains a crucial factor of security situation in Eastern Europe region and particular states.

Although the Russian economy contracted in 2015 and will very likely continue to diminish further, there were no signs that economic problems would threaten the stability of the ruling regime at least in the short term. Its confrontational foreign policy is supported by the majority of the Russian society. The regime successfully mobilises the public support by propaganda means highlighting external threats and the exclusiveness of the Russian nation as a civilisation.

Russia's strategic goals remained the same: reclaiming of the global power status and full domination of the post-Soviet space. Russia considers NATO as the principle obstacle to these goals and, accordingly, the major threat to its national security. Hence, Russia makes every effort to weaken the unity of Western countries and undermine the trust in the Euro-Atlantic institutions, including Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty on collective defence.

Additional security measures taken by NATO in the Baltic region in 2014–2015 were designed to increase the security of the Baltic States. Russia has tried to present these measures as a source of greater tension in the region, and thus to divide Western societies and political elite dissuading them from pursuing more resolute security policies in Eastern Europe and "provoking Russia". In fact, it was well before the rising tensions in 2014–2015 that Russia started its military planning against NATO, simulating a military conflict against it through various military exercises and making other preparations for a potential conflict. Russia will continue to prepare itself for a possible conflict in any circumstances. Therefore, the strengthening of the Baltic armed forces and additional NATO security measures should be considered as a deterrent reducing the possibility that Russia will shift from conflict preparation to the actual use of military force.

In 2015, the concern over security situation in Eastern Europe was overwhelmed by the fight against terrorism and migration crisis. It is highly likely that the latter issues will remain at the heart of the agenda of the European Union (EU), NATO and many other states in 2016. Russia tries to persuade the West that close and sincere cooperation in combating terrorism and other transnational security challenges is possible only when NATO abandons its plans to increase defence commit-

ments and capabilities in Eastern Europe. In case of the Alliance shifting focus from the security situation in Eastern Europe to greater cooperation with Russia, Lithuania's security situation might be affected negatively.

Lithuania's national security is further negatively impacted by the Russian efforts to maintain and increase influence on political, social and economic processes in Lithuania. The economic difficulties experienced by Russia in 2015, in fact, had no or only very limited effect on the scale of Russian intelligence and security services operations against Lithuania as well as on activities in the areas of information, energy policy, and work with the so called compatriots.

Foreign intelligence and security services' activities against Lithuania's defence, foreign policy and economic interests, cyber espionage, and cyber attacks against strategic infrastructure, state institutions and private sector directly undermine national security of Lithuania. It is possible that the negative effects are on an upward trend.

Russia tries to maintain the control of the energy resource market in order to profit from the sale of resources and to use them as an instrument of direct influence on other states. Energy infrastructure projects implemented by Lithuania have significantly reduced Russia's potential to exert influence, but Russia aims to impede Lithuania's further integration into the Western European energy system.

Russia's focus on controlling the Russian language information space poses a very serious threat. Approximately one third of the Lithuanian population receives daily news from the Russian-controlled media and the majority of Russian-speaking people rely exclusively on it. The media actively disseminates the information discrediting Lithuania, builds mistrust towards its public authorities and national as well as NATO and EU policies, downplays the restoration of independence of Lithuania, and promotes nostalgia for the Soviet times.

Various methods, social groups, organisations and individuals are exploited to divide the Lithuanian society, weaken its connection with the Lithuanian statehood, and increase support and loyalty to Russia. Russian institutions have given attention or at least positive news coverage to all movements that bolster eurosceptic, anti-Western and anti-NATO sentiment, ethnic confrontation, and disenchantment of the society with Lithuanian authorities and the Lithuanian state. To strengthen its influence Russia also uses educational and cultural initiatives.

POLITICAL AND MILITARY SECURITY

Russia

In 2015, **the Russian domestic policy was** marked by increasingly stronger authoritarian rule, closure and centralisation of the political system. The stability and continuity of the ruling regime was ensured by extending the control over political, economic and social resources and processes at various levels. The regime used national resources to support loyal political and economic entities that were sympathetic to the regime and thus maintained their interest in preserving the existing conjuncture. This prevented the emergence of preconditions for a change of the Russian political model and increased the possibility that there would be no significant changes in Russia's domestic policies even in the medium or long term.

Presidential administration is central domestic and foreign policy-making institution in Russia, while parliament, government and judiciary perform merely the functions of formal consent and implementation. This is demonstrated by Russian parliament's approval of all president's proposals, including almost unanimous consent to the use of the armed forces in Ukraine and Syria. The government seeks to ensure the highest possible funding to the development of Russia's military capabilities enabling aggressive foreign policy, though the economic situation is not conducive to this. The regime's ability to manipulate courts' decisions was widened by the legal supremacy of the Russian Constitution, enshrined by law in December 2015: the Constitutional Court was given power to allow Russia not to enforce the international judicial decisions if they contradict to the Russian law. Full control of the institutions enables fast adoption and implementation of decisions pursuant to the ruling regime's interpretation of national interests and meeting its needs.

Russia's political leadership gives no prioritized attention to the economic development. In 2015, the Russian economy contracted by about 3.7 %, inflation exceeded 12 %, industrial output fell

The incitement of chauvinism and sentiment against external enemies continues in Russia's public domain.

Anti-Ukrainian march in Moscow in February 2015. (Source: kursk.com)

by 3.3 %, and real wages declined by more than 8 %. The Russian government forecasted that the economic situation in the country would stabilise in 2016 and the majority of indicators would improve, but independent macroeconomic situation assessments revealed that optimistic predictions were unfounded. It is likely that decline in oil prices, continuing capital outflow and economic sanctions will provide Russian private and public entities with limited opportunities to revitalise industrial production, borrow in foreign financial markets and attract foreign investment. In 2016, the country's economy will remain declining. Nevertheless, there are no serious indications that economic problems would heighten political and social tension and start to threaten the stability of the regime at least in the short term.

Any reforms are assessed by Russia's political regime as a threat to the stability of the government. It is probable that any transformations that may increase internal political tensions will be avoided in the run-up to the State Duma elections in 2016 and the presidential elections in 2018. There would be no significant reforms of the Russian economic model, but minor changes are possible for building an image of the government combating the crisis. Control and propaganda measures will be further reinforced in a bid to contain social tensions mounting potentially due to economic problems.

Political constraints and propaganda leave meagre opportunities for opposition movements to wield influence on political and social processes. Nevertheless, the regime continues to subject the opposition to increasingly severe repressions. The opposition is referred to as the 'fifth column', and attempts are made to eliminate its members by bringing criminal charges against them. The atmosphere fuelled with aggressive nationalism radicalises society and promotes violence against the opposition. Consequently, no opposition movement is able to attract wider public support. Even a significant proportion of people who previously protested against the regime currently support, in whole or in part, Russia's aggressive actions in Ukraine. It is likely that aggressive nationalism and imperial chauvinism will continue to mount.

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Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov made public a video showing the opposition members Mikhail Kasyanov and Vladimir Kara-Murza junior through the sight of a sniper rifle.
(Source: www.ntv.ru)

The growing negative trends in Russia's domestic policies and society will encourage even more aggressive foreign policy and increase the likelihood of the use of military force against neighbouring countries and, thus, will negatively affect national security of Lithuania in the long term.

The principal objectives of the **Russian foreign policy** remain unchanged: to reclaim the status of the great power and to achieve a leading role in international politics and full domination of the post-Soviet space, which Russia considers as an area of its privileged interests. This was once again clearly stated in the National Security Strategy revised at the end of December 2015. Instead of the Russia's goals to cooperate with international institutions and to be integrated into the global economy, as defined in the former Strategy, the new one focuses on the 'ever stronger Russia' that pursues independent policies and increases international influence. The Strategy states that Russia reserves the right to use military force not only for ensuring security but also for protecting national interests.

Instability of the international security environment, regional conflicts, and confrontation in the political, economic and informational spaces are assessed by Russia as a natural status in the fight for greater international influence. Russia also considers the division of the spheres of interest and elimination of the Western influence over the post-Soviet space as an integral part of this process. Therefore, this space is considered as the arena of geopolitical competition where extreme measures are not avoided. This is illustrated by the continuation of aggression against Ukraine since the beginning of 2014.

Russia sees NATO as the major obstacle to achieving its geopolitical objectives. Therefore, Russia aims to weaken and internally disintegrate NATO, as well as impede its enlargement and development of its infrastructure and capabilities. In 2015, various level politicians, diplomats and members of the military community of Russia argued that NATO/US plans to deploy additional military capabilities in Eastern Europe and the Baltic States allegedly infringe the 1990 agreements and the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act. This seemingly provokes Russia and threatens to destabilise the security situation in Europe. Attempts are made to convince people that the strengthening

Russia makes a lot
of efforts to demonstrate
that NATO is escalating
tensionsin the
Baltic region
(Source: www.ntv.ru)

defence capabilities of NATO members is unlawful and impractical. Furthermore, Russia manipulates the different interests between the USA and European countries to weaken the transatlantic bond between the Alliance members. By constantly depicting NATO as the USA political tool, Russia seeks to incite anti-American sentiment in European countries.

There was a relative decline in the demonstration of military power in 2015 compared to 2014, when Russia's military activity in the Baltic region was on a sharp rise. The decline was not the result of changes in Russia's adversarial intentions but rather financial problems, lack of personnel, technical condition of the air and naval forces and part of ground forces, and involvement of certain formations in combat or combat support operations in Syria and Ukraine. Some of these problems were long-term. However, in 2014, Russia managed to just temporary circumvent those problems perceiving the need for increasing military activity. In some cases, an increase in military activity only exacerbated the problems, for example, this accelerated the depletion of ammunition storages. Therefore, maintaining the increased military activity in parallel with addressing financial problems and ensuring military activities in the southern direction has become problematic for Russia. It is also likely that Russia could have deliberately reduced military activity over the Baltic Sea to shift the focus from NATO and the US to Syria and to show readiness to cooperate. Therefore, alleged constructive approach and willingness to reduce tension in the Baltic region were demonstrated with a view to portraying NATO and the USA as the culprits of escalating tensions at the western borders of Russia.

Russian officials have repeatedly tried to convince their Western and NATO counterparts that close and sincere cooperation in fight against terrorism is possible only when NATO abandons its plans to increase defence commitments and capabilities in Eastern Europe. It cannot be ruled out that, when Russia fails to achieve normalisation of relations with the West under its own conditions, it will again intensify the demonstration of its military power in the Baltic Sea Region under the pretext of the lack of good will on the part of the West. Indeed, it has to be noted that variations in Russia's military activity and demonstration of military power in the Baltic region are determined by the means available to Russia and its relevant goals of the foreign and security policy and does not show any changes in its approach towards the West or NATO. Well before 2014, Russia was carrying out military planning directed against the Alliance, simulating a military conflict with NATO during various military exercises (e.g. *Zapad 2013*) and taking other steps in preparation for a potential conflict. These activities will continue despite any possible improvement or deterioration of the relations with the West.

Russia's involvement in the military conflict in Syria in 2015, is demonstrating the political will and capability to strive for its national interests by military force. The importance of military power grows in Russia, which started exerting pressure on Turkey at the end of 2015 by strengthening the military presence in the South Caucasus alongside the introduction of political, economic, information and other measures. The Syrian factor is also exploited by Russia to exacerbate the differences of interests between Turkey and those NATO members that wish to involve Russia in the fight against the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIL). By portraying its actions in Syria as the fight against

international terrorism, Russia aims, among other things, to divert the attention of the West from the problem with Ukraine and encourage NATO, the EU and their individual member states to start their cooperation with Russia.

The integration projects controlled by Russia continue to serve as a means for spreading its influence. The Russian-dominated organisations – the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) – continue to have very limited effect. Russia tends to address many issues through bilateral relations to avoid sacrificing its interests for the sake of consensus among all countries belonging to above-mentioned organisations.

As yet, no member of the CIS or the CSTO have recognised the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia or expressed unambiguous support for Russian actions in Ukraine. Russia is engaged in trade wars with Kazakhstan and Belarus, whereby all sides try to protect the competitiveness of their production by applying temporary restrictions on mutual free trade. In addition, Russia has tightened the control of imports from Kazakhstan and Belarus accusing them of re-exporting Western production. It is likely that the ongoing problems in the Russian economy and the confrontation with the West will continue to make the integration into the EEU less attractive for the countries in the post-Soviet space.

Russia tries to compensate for the lack of attractiveness of voluntary economic integration by manipulating the security interests of individual countries and making use of regional conflicts. For example, by selling arms to Azerbaijan, Russia has made Armenia, which is in conflict with Azerbaijan, to seek stronger security guarantees and to join the EEU. Thus, Russia can exert greater economic, military and informational pressure that could increase due to the Russian armed forces deployed in the majority of the CIS or CSTO members. Russia's capability and readiness to take extreme measures will dissuade neighbouring countries from too close links with it, but, in the

The map used at the presentation of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation on 2 December 2015 where Turkey was accused of oil trade with ISIL. The evidence provided was obviously falsified. (Source: www.rt.com)
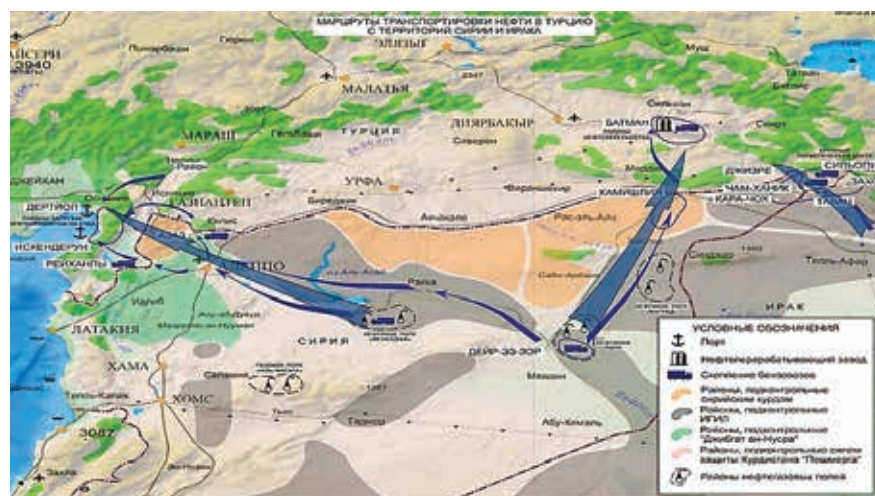
absence of alternatives, they will have to heed the possibility of military force against them and to shape their policies in respect of Russia's interests.

Russia's aggressive foreign policy and clear determination to use military force for achieving its goals have an especially negative effect on Lithuania's security situation. This negative effect is likely to continue even in the long term.

Russia's military policy

The trend towards prioritizing the funding for the Russian armed forces continues even under the conditions of the economic crisis (GDP grew by 1.3 % in 2013 and only by 0.6 % in 2014 and, eventually, fell by 3.9 % in 2015). At the end of 2015, military spending for 2016 was planned to be increased by 0.8 % (up to around 4 % of GDP and 19.6 % of the total budget expenditure). However, in February 2016, there were officially announced that these allocations will be reduced by 5 %. In case of implementation of this plan, the military spending in 2016 will be by 4.2 % lower than in 2015. Although this probable reduction in spending would be implemented for the first time since 2000, military allocations would still constitute close to one-fifth of the total budget expenditure. Therefore, it is likely that the armed forces will receive the highest possible funding even during the deep economic crisis. Compliance with this priority allows Russia to continue consistent modernisation of the armed forces, increase the quantity of new weaponry, and ensure further growth of military capabilities.

There were no indications in 2015 that the economic problems could have a significant negative impact on strengthening the combat capabilities of the Russian armed forces. Structural reforms
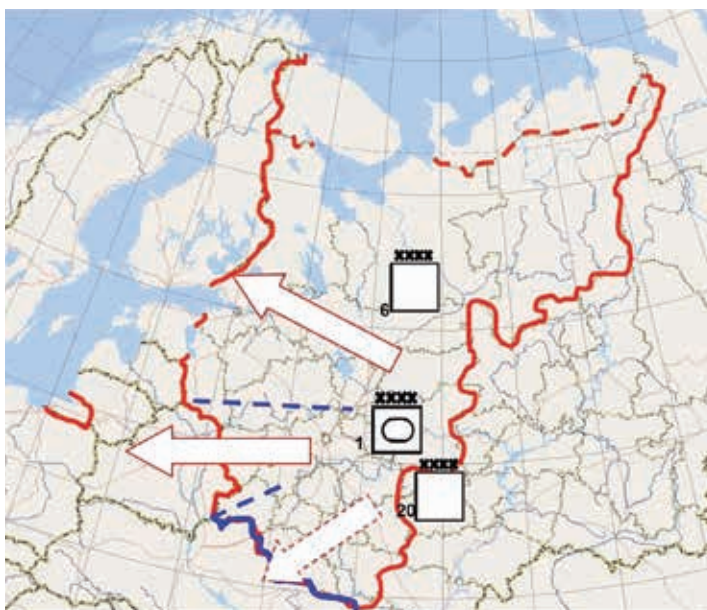
Directions assigned to the armies deployed in the Western Military District

continued consistently, large-scale military exercises took place, and the armed forces enjoyed almost uninterrupted supplies of major weapons systems.

In 2015, despite the continued strengthening of military presence in the Arctic region (in particular in 2014), the focus was on key developments in the Western Military District. This involved building of the 1st Guards Tank Army that incorporated the following units of the 20th Guards Army: 4th Guards Tank Division, 2nd Guards Motor Rifle Division, 6th Tank Brigade, and 27th Independent Guards Motorised Rifle Brigade. In the second half of 2015, the 1st Guards Tank Army proved its capability to function by participating in joint Russian and Belarusian military exercises *Shchit Soyuza 2015*.

Concurrently, it was announced about the re-deployment of the 20th Guards Army towards the border with Ukraine. Thus, Russia fundamentally repositioned its forces in the Western Military District. When the restructuring of the Russian armed forces began in 2008, no Russian operational formations covered the Ukrainian direction. The change in the geopolitical and security situation in the region apparently brought the change in Russia's operational planning as regards the Ukrainian direction. Although structural changes in the 20th Guards Army have just begun, the Army will most probably continue to command the 9th Motorised Rifle Brigade and the 1st Guards Tank Brigade, the latter being formed mainly from the reserve base. The Army will also be reinforced by additional units redeployed from other districts (probably from the Central Military District).

At the end of 2015, it was announced about reorganisation and strengthening of the units deployed in the European part of Russia. These plans were mainly linked with further strengthening of the Western Military District, where three divisions had to be formed (probably from smaller military units).

In 2015, Russia continued with snap tests of combat readiness. Snap exercises were organised in all military districts as well as in the units of different branches of the armed forces. Massive military exercises were yet another important component of ensuring combat readiness. In 2015, the Russian armed forces held a lot of large-scale exercises: *Tsentr 2015*, *Shchit Soyuza 2015*, *Vzaimodeistvie 2015*, *Boyevoye Sodruzhestvo 2015*. According to the official data, around 95,000 troops took part in the strategic exercises *Tsentr 2015*.

On 10–16 September 2015, Russia and Belarus held the joint military exercises *Shchit Soyuza 2015* in Leningrad Oblast and Pskov Oblast thus continuing a series of trainings for the Russian–Belarusian Regional Military Grouping (the last exercise – *Zapad 2013* held at the Lithuanian border). *Shchit Soyuza 2015* brought together up to 9,000 troops. Although NATO was not directly identified as a potential enemy in the official exercise scenario, concentration of the armed forces and conducted military exercises at the NATO borders should be considered as a demonstration of military power. Exercises in the training grounds of Kaliningrad Oblast were not even officially referred to as part of *Shchit Soyuza 2015*. These steps make Russia's actions less transparent and help it to conceal the true nature and extent of the activity of its armed forces.

In 2015, supply of new and modernised weapons to the armed forces went to plan. The trends remained the same as in 2014: development of strategic nuclear weapons was the top priority as this should fulfil Russia's global ambitions and ensure its interests and military security. Therefore, the priority was clearly given to equipping the Strategic Missile Forces. When arming conventional forces, the focus is on long-range conventional strike systems: newly constructed vessels are equipped with cruise missiles *Kalibr*, and ground forces annually receive two brigade sets of operational-tactical ballistic missile systems *Iskander*. Great attention is also given to supply of new digital means of communications to ensure better command and control of armed forces. Ground forces receive and use, for combat training, an abundant supply of unmanned aerial vehicles.

Monitoring of Russia's steps towards the development of armed forces allows detecting dangerous trends. Russia is still incapable of carrying out extensive conventional military action against the entire NATO Alliance, but it is very likely that the Russian political and military leadership has not even set an objective to catch up with and overtake a potential rival, that is, the arms race is not the goal. Russia has adopted and consistently abided by a set of logical decisions (structural reforms, combat training, technical supplies), which enable building up the armed forces capable of implementing specific tasks, instead of just being better than a potential enemy.

What Russia aims to do is not so much rivalling the technical development of adversaries as gaining a military advantage by adjusting the capabilities and operational planning to action against specific adversaries in specific strategic directions seizing on their weaknesses and applying a large set of non-military measures alongside military action. Russia's key objective is to create armed forces capable of particularly rapid deployment in the direction of the conflict thus minimising, as much as possible, the scope for early warning about Russia's readiness for military conflict. Russia seeks to make its military response time significantly shorter than that of NATO. It is already today that Russia would be able to generate and redeploy, within 24–48 hours, the capabilities that would be sufficient to start combat operations against the Baltic States.

In the specific directions of the possible military conflict with NATO (regions of the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea and the Barents Sea), Russia aims to create and develop a set of military measures that are to isolate the region of conflict in case of a crisis or war and maximally limit access and operation of adversarial forces in the region. According to the estimation of Russia, the so-called *A2/AD (Anti-Access/Area Denial)*[1] capabilities should affect NATO's decision-making and promote a softer reaction against the aggressive actions of Russia when a crisis arises. In case of an armed conflict, *A2/AD* capabilities are to help Russia to isolate the area of operations, localise the conflict and control its escalation avoiding the large-scale redeployment of NATO's additional forces and broad involvement of the Alliance in the conflict.

In the abovementioned regions, Russia develops the *A2/AD* capabilities to accordingly reinforce its aviation, air defence, missiles and artillery, coastal defence missiles and the navy. The integrated,

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[1] *Anti-Access* means preventing or impeding the access of an adversary to the region. Area Denial means substantially limiting the scope for an adversary's action in the region.

multi-layer air defence system is developed to deny access to air forces of an adversary to the area under Russia's control and make them concentrate much further away from the area of operations, thus hampering an operation of an adversary. The naval capabilities under development have to prevent hostile naval forces from accessing and dominating in the conflict region and have to disrupt their actions. As far as the development of the land component capabilities is concerned, it should be noted that possible deployment of operational-tactical ballistic missile systems *Iskander* in Kaliningrad Oblast, which is often discussed in the public domain, may pose a potentially greater danger to Lithuania because they may be used for hindering the actions of NATO's allied forces in the region. There is no need to use these systems just for destroying any target within the territory of Lithuania. Moreover, Russia greatly focuses on the development of electronic warfare capabilities in the regions of potential conflicts.

According to Russia's assessment, the effective capabilities developed in a targeted manner, even though inferior to NATO's general combat potential, would maximally hamper NATO's actions in the region of conflict and, first and foremost, require a strong political will from members of the Alliance to take on large combat losses, which would be inevitable in the escalating conflict. This could help Russia gain a strategic advantage in a particular region. The focus on the development of the armed forces aimed at ensuring a shorter reaction period, and gaining and exploiting the strategic advantage in the region by localising a conflict and preventing broad involvement of NATO increase the level of threat. It is likely that this negative impact on Lithuania's national security situation will grow.

Belarus

The internal political situation in Belarus has been shaped by the efforts of President Alexander Lukashenka's administration to maintain and strengthen the authoritarian regime. The presidential elections held in 2015 reaffirmed that the underdeveloped civil society was unable to resist the authoritarian government model effectively. The influence of the opposition parties on political life remains minimal. Despite the fall in social welfare, the opposition is able to draw scarce public support (up to a thousand people), but only at events sanctioned by the authorities.

Russia's aggression in Ukraine has had an impact on the objectives of the opposition forces. The preservation of the Belarusian statehood rather than the overthrow of the regime is now seen as the priority. The exploitation of Ukraine's factor and manipulation with the release of political prisoners have helped Lukashenka to partly normalise relations with the West. Another external actor – Russia – has not shown any signs of its disapproval of Lukashenka's rule. Therefore, it has resulted in a unique situation where both internal and external actors (the opposition, the West and Russia) do not object to the preservation of the *status quo* in Belarus. The deterioration of the economic and social situation in the country has been posing the greatest challenge to the authorities. However, it is likely that at least in the coming years the economic and social situation will not entail the risk to the stability of the regime.

The ongoing financial difficulties have highlighted the need for structural economic reforms, but there is a delay to launch them. The greatest achievement of the new National Bank leadership, appointed at the end of 2014, and the government was the abandoning of the fixed national currency exchange rate, which was previously motivated by political reasons. A new economic model was considered at the end of 2015. Nevertheless, there are no plans to reduce the state sector's role. The denomination of the Belarusian rouble (at a ratio of 1: 10 000) in 2016 has been announced, which should be regarded as the means to mitigate the psychological effects of the depreciation of the Belarusian rouble.

Despite that the EEU was launched in 2015, no substantial changes have taken place. As the supranational institutions lack powers, the bilateral relations with Russia will continue to mean the same for Belarus. Although Belarus has developed lucrative models of food re-export from the West to Russia, the additional income it generates does not offset the decline in other sectors of the economy.

Belarus continues to look for alternative financial sources (China, the International Monetary Fund) as government is unable to balance public finances. Nevertheless, Russia remains the main creditor of Belarus. The visit of China's president Xi Jinping to Belarus in 2015 symbolises a certain achievement for the Belarusian foreign policy. However, the current level of cooperation fails to live up to the expectations of Belarus strategic partnership. Without providing credit for supplementing the national reserves of Belarus, China is not an alternative to Russia.

In the military field, Belarus associates its security guarantees with Russia. It continues to consider NATO as the main source of external threats. Meanwhile, Russia considers Belarus as a front shield and jumping-off ground in a western direction. Sharing a similar approach to possible threats, both countries strengthen the Regional Military Grouping and the United Air Defence System and carry out joint large-scale military exercises in order to simulate a military conflict with NATO.

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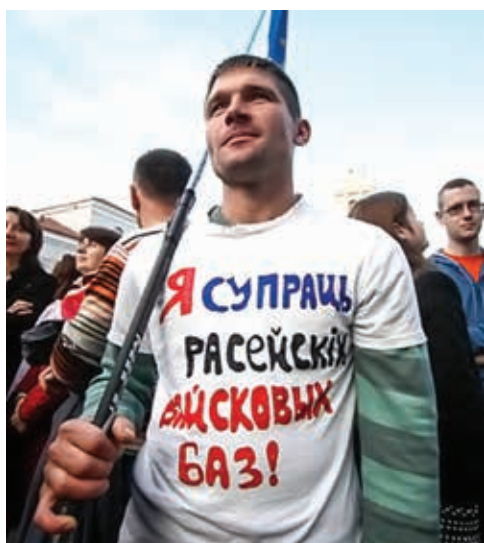
The large part of the Belarusian society is against the establishment of the Russian military base. Photo: participant of the protest rally in Minsk in October 2015. (Source: nn.by)

The growing military integration between the two countries increases the dependency of Belarus on Russia and delays the achievement of the status of a neutral state. As NATO reinforced its military presence in the Baltic Sea region in response to Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine, Russia tightened the control of the Belarusian airspace by deploying its fighter jets. Moreover, Russia plans to establish a military air base in Belarus in 2016. Belarus publicly questions the need for establishing a military base but maintains the infrastructure intended for it. The establishment of a military base would minimise the scope for preserving the neutrality of Belarus in a crisis situation. Russia also enhances the military capabilities of Belarus by providing it with new weapons and military equipment. In 2015, the Belarusian Air and Air Defence Forces received four jet trainers *Jak-130* and four surface-to-air missile systems *S-300*. This year Belarus is expected to get the first new military transport helicopters *Mi-8MTB-5* and APCs *BTR-82A*.

In view of the current military and political situation in the region and the economic potential, Belarus has been building small but efficient mobile armed forces. The priority is to develop the Special Operations Forces and the Air and Air Defence Forces, but the difficult financial situation slows down the acquisition of modern equipment .

Ukraine, Georgia and the CIS area

In Ukraine, the internal political situation remains extremely complicated. All the political parties in power agree on necessity to preserve the incoming flows of foreign financial and political support and to resist the aggressive behaviour of Russia. However, due to the principled differences in political interests, manipulative use of connections by business and oligarchs, and back door deals, tensions between various political and business groups are increasing. Oligarchs continue to wield significant influence on the political decision-making, which further stimulates Ukraine's political instability, fragility of political alliances, and dependence on external factors. The work towards im-

Drone "Forpost" shot down in Eastern Ukraine. The drone is only used by the Russian armed forces. Donetsk Oblast, May 2015 (Source: sivator.com)

plementation of Ukraine's commitments to define the legal status of the territory of the occupied regions of Donetsk and Luhansk as well as the need to implement financial and anti-corruption measures by 2016 will further increase the political tensions in the country.

Public confidence in the President and the government has been steadily decreasing. Even so, the local municipal elections in October 2015 showed that pro-western political movements still retained the greatest popularity rates. On the other hand, the electorate is increasingly searching for alternatives. Therefore, politicians and oligarchs are creating new political movements in the hope of attracting the support of the electorate in search of alternatives, should early parliamentary elections be held.

The economic situation remains very difficult. In 2015, GDP dwindled by 12 %, inflation rates exceeded 43 %, and other main macroeconomic indicators were also not promising. Economic recovery is expected in 2016; however, it is bound to be slow. Ukraine remains highly dependent on foreign financial support. Corruption remains the main problem that hinders the country's development and decreases public trust.

Russia continues to exert intensive military, political, economic and informational pressure on Ukraine in order to implement the Minsk agreements to its own benefit. On their basis, Russia is pressuring Ukraine into the implementation of a constitutional reform that would decentralise the country and into granting exceptional status to the separatist territories, thus establishing their legal status . If this was successful, Russia could use this factor to preserve Ukraine in its sphere of influence, derail it from pro-Western geopolitical development path and create obstacles for Ukraine's deeper cooperation with the EU and NATO. Russia is consistently trying to prove the legitimacy of its interests in Ukraine to the Western countries, in an effort to urge the West to increase

Military exercises
in Armenia
(Source: vpoanalytics.com)

pressures on Ukraine to implement the conflict stabilisation conditions that are beneficial to Russia in exchange for Russia's cooperation with the West in combating terrorism and other security challenges. Even though, since February 2015, the intensity of the military conflict has been comparatively low and limited to local armed conflicts, the objectives and stance of Russia and Ukraine as regards political regulation of the conflict are incompatible. Therefore, the possibility of military conflict escalation remains to be real.

On 1 January 2016, Russia suspended the application of the CIS Free Trade Agreement (FTA) to Ukraine and issued an embargo on Ukrainian foods in reaction to the coming into force of the Free Trade Agreement between the EU and Ukraine. Ukraine's future losses resulting from this are likely to be offset in the long term by customs tax relief on its exports to the EU. The impact of Russia's sanctions is further minimised by the previous consistent decrease of volumes of exports of Ukrainian goods to Russia. The decreasing economic dependence on Russia should be seen as a process that will reduce the opportunities for Russia to blackmail Ukraine and will provide Ukraine with more freedom of action. However, consistent political, economic and social stabilisation in Ukraine is unlikely in the short to medium term.

The banking crisis in **Moldova** in late 2014 developed into a deep political crisis in 2015. The pro-European parties have preserved the power to form the Government, but there is an increasing public need for alternatives to the governing coalition. The anti-government protests in 2015 helped new pro-European politicians rise to power, but they still cannot compete with pro-Russian parties. The absence of real alternatives to the governing parties is reducing public support for the European integration, leading to the growth of popularity of the pro-Russian parties. The latter parties, openly financed by Russia, take advantage of the serious economic situation to discredit the governing authorities. The worsening political and economic crisis, high rates of corruption, close links between business and politics, as well as stalling reform remain the biggest threats to the continuation of Moldova's pro-European course. Early parliamentary elections would create the preconditions for pro-Russian parties to shift the course of foreign policy in Moldova. Russia continues to consistently put efforts into stopping Moldova's European integration and coercing Moldova into the integrational frameworks controlled by Moscow.

There were no essential changes in 2015 as far as settlement of the Transdniestrian conflict is concerned. Moldova is not in a position to deal with the settlement of the Transdniestrian conflict independently. Russia's interest lies in maintaining the existing *status quo,* because it uses the frozen conflict as one of the key levers of influence in the region and as a tool to put an end to Moldova's Euro-Atlantic integration.

The military conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding seven administrative districts of **Azerbaijan** occupied by **Armenia** remains comparatively low in intensity, even though a large part of the military forces of both countries is deployed in the conflict zone. Since the second half of 2014, episodic clashes have been taking place and heavy weapons have been used. The sides to the conflict are formally communicating, but are not willing to search for a compromise to make

progress in conflict regulation. Armenia and Azerbaijan retain very strong rhetoric and run swift military reinforcement and modernisation programmes. Failing to deliver any palpable results for a long time, the political regulation process increases the likelihood of renewal of a large-scale military conflict. The delivery of Russian military equipment to both conflicting sides is yet another factor that increases instability in the region and widens the scale of the possible military conflict.

Russia is further reinforcing its military bases in the separatist regions in **Georgia**. Its presence in Abkhazia and South Ossetia translates into permanent military tensions at the Georgian border and dwindling opportunities to solve the question of Georgia's territorial integrity. Politically, Russia is trying to ensure its control over conflict regulation by blocking direct contacts between the Georgian authorities and the authorities of the breakaway regions. Russia continues implementing partial integration of the separatist regions into its own political, economic and security area, but has so far avoided incorporating them into its own territory. Promotion of bilateral Russian-Georgian economic projects is exploited by Russia to offset closer relations between Georgia and the EU.

THREAT POSED BY RUSSIAN INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY SERVICES

Intelligence collection on Lithuania is mainly conducted by the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), the Federal Security Service (FSB), and the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (GRU). In 2015, due to increasing tensions between Russia and the West, the activities of the Russian intelligence and security services were intensified. The intelligence services recruited Lithuanian citizens working for state institutions and NGOs, used technical tools to collect classified and other information of importance to national security, and conducted influence operations. The Russian intelligence and security services actively worked against Lithuanian citizens in Lithuania, Western countries and Russia, and also engaged in espionage activities against the EU and NATO by using the Lithuanian territory and its citizens.

The Russian intelligence and security services operate under diplomatic cover, as well as under the cover of businessmen, journalists, researchers, members of various delegations, and staff of NGOs. Russian intelligence and security services also conduct illegal operations carried out by intelligence staff permanently working abroad under false identities.

Intelligence activities under diplomatic cover

The Russian SVR and GRU agencies collected intelligence in Lithuania under the cover of Russian diplomatic missions, including the Embassy and the Trade Agency of the Russian Federation in Vilnius as well as the Consulate General in Klaipėda. The staff of the Russian intelligence and security services accounts for one third of the Russian diplomatic corps in Lithuania. Notably, SVR and GRU traditionally use Russian diplomats who are not the members of intelligence services for intelligence purposes in Lithuania.

In 2015, the **SVR** focused on Lithuanian foreign and domestic policy and energy projects. In order to obtain the necessary information and affect decision-making, SVR officers tried to recruit staff members of a number of Lithuanian state institutions and organisations. In some cases, persons recruited by SVR in Lithuania were instructed not only to collect information, but also to pursue a political career and thus create more opportunities for intelligence-gathering for the SVR.

In Lithuania, the SVR also actively collects intelligence on diplomatic missions of other EU and NATO member states. In 2015, it tried to penetrate foreign diplomatic missions to collect information on bilateral relations with Lithuania and policy on Russia, and to shape a more favourable approach of foreign diplomats to Russia.

In 2015, the **GRU** officers acting under diplomatic cover became more active in Lithuania. Even though bilateral military cooperation between Russia and Lithuania is virtually inexistent, Russia's Defence Attaché Office in Lithuania officially consists of four officers who usually belong to the military intelligence service.

In 2015, Russia's GRU re-built the intelligence capabilities it had previously lost due to active counter-intelligence activities of Lithuania. Now they have enough capabilities to conduct a wide-spectrum of intelligence operations. The intelligence officers of Russia's GRU act in Lithuania under both military and civilian diplomatic cover.

It has been found out that in 2015, as in the previous years, the Russian GRU continued to cooperate, coordinate actions and exchange intelligence with the Belarusian GRU in Lithuania. Russia's GRU officers continued to communicate with NGOs that unite the Soviet war veterans and graduates from military schools.

Intelligence activities against the Lithuanian national defence system

In 2015, the focus of Russia's traditional military intelligence was on the changes in Lithuania's defence policy, development of capabilities, weaponry and its modernisation, cooperation in defence sphere, national and international trainings and exercises in Lithuania, NATO Air Policing mission, and participation of Lithuanian troops in military and international operations and missions. Russia continued collecting intelligence on Lithuania's support to and military cooperation with Ukraine and all civil actions directed in favour of Ukraine. As in previous years, intelligence services collected information on the members of staff of the system of national defence who were capable of influencing decision-making and had information on perceptions and plans of top-level management of the system of national defence. The intelligence services also collected information on personal features of character of influential officers and civilian staff.

Apart from the usual topics of interest, in 2015 GRU collected information on continuous mandatory basic military service (CMS), NATO Force Integration Unit in Vilnius, new combat units, Lithuanian Defence and Security Industry Association (LDSIA), recent and planned acquisitions of the Lithuanian Armed Forces, activities and personnel of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union, training grounds in Lithuania, and air surveillance infrastructure.

Notably, the interest of the Russian and Belarusian intelligence services in the restored CMS in the Lithuanian Armed Forces gives ground to believe that the system of national defence can be secretly entered through conscription. For this purpose, intelligence recruited agents can be prompted to infiltrate into the CMS. Alternatively, targets for recruitment can be found among Lithuanian conscripts while they do their CMS. They can be used to collect intelligence information for Russia's purposes, promote sabotage, or conduct other intelligence-related tasks. Another reason why conscripts enrolled for the CMS can be of interest to foreign intelligence services is because they stand a high chance of serving as professional servicemen in the Lithuanian Armed Forces later on. In particular, Andrej Oshurkov, a former soldier of the Lithuanian Armed Forces, sentenced to imprisonment in 2016 for espionage for Belarus, had been recruited by intelligence services in Belarus and been infiltrated into the Lithuanian Armed Forces in 2007 as a conscript

doing the mandatory basic military service. Cases are also known where persons openly supporting Russia and its aggressive foreign policy wanted to join the Lithuanian Armed Forces. There are grounds to believe that this way the adversary intelligence services are trying to learn as much as possible about Lithuania's military training, tactics, weaponry as well as communication and command systems.

Intelligence activities against Lithuania on Russian territory

Russia has well developed activities of collecting intelligence concerning other countries on its own territory.[2] All Russian intelligence and security services are engaged in intelligence gathering on the territory of Russia. The FSB is the most active among them and permanently extends its intelligence capabilities. In particular, it collects intelligence and counter intelligence on foreign countries, especially Russia's neighbours, and aims to affect the processes therein.

In 2015, among the main targets of the FSB again were Lithuanian entrepreneurs working in Russia, including small businessmen. While recruiting them (and offering its cover), FSB takes advantage of corruption and its own power to control local business, issues a range of permits to foreigners and keeps an eye on the criminal world.

The FSB takes a particular interest in officials of Lithuanian state institutions coming to Russia, former and present staff of law enforcement authorities, professional servicemen, businessmen, staff of NGOs and other Lithuanian citizens who have any other political or business relations with Russia. The FSB targets people in financial difficulty, those who are in search for business opportunities in Russia, those who are easily manipulated, have pro-Russian attitudes, and have a negative attitude to Lithuania. Most often, the FSB tries to trick such persons into moving to Russia, Belarus or other countries, and only later immediately or gradually propose them to cooperate.

The FSB takes interest in Lithuanian businessmen because of their contacts with political parties, state institutions, and sectors such as law enforcement, finance and energy. The FSB uses them as access agents,[3] which means that even though they cannot provide the FSB with any useful information, they are helpful in establishing contacts with the persons of interest to the FSB.

In 2015, the FSB further aimed to create a network of information sources and agents of influence in Lithuanian law enforcement and other state institutions. The operation of the FSB, which was detected and terminated in April 2015, was intended to recruit, through interim persons, members of staff of agencies under the Ministry of the Interior of Lithuania and later use them to penetrate other state institutions, including the Office of the President of the Republic of Lithuania.

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[2] Intelligence collection on the country's territory is defined as intelligence gathering where agent recruitment takes place in Russia and further meetings related to intelligence collection can take place in any foreign country.

[3] *Access agents* are Lithuania's inhabitants recruited because they have connections with the potential recruiting targets. They are used for establishing intelligence contacts.

Intelligence activities against Lithuania's diplomats and civil servants abroad

The Russian FSB and the Belarusian KGB actively conduct operations against the Lithuanian diplomats and civil servants abroad and their family members employed in or visiting these countries. The FSB and KGB use covert and overt surveillance, videorecording and photographing, as well as interception of communications; they illegally enter the premises inhabited by diplomats and leave intentional signs of such infringement of the property. This is done in order to intimidate the diplomats and their families against activities that are unacceptable to Russia or Belarus. Moreover, in this way, a message is sent that every step of Lithuania's representatives is closely monitored. The FSB also carries out operations to recruit foreign diplomats, including defence attachés of NATO member states.

In 2015, the FSB used provocations against Lithuanian diplomats working in Russia and made attempts at recruiting them. The FSB regularly observes the diplomats residing in Russia, whom it considers vulnerable, and collects or falsifies compromising information, on the basis of which it creates situations of recruitment or provocation. The FSB often falsely charges diplomats with unlawful activities, uses psychological pressure against them and blackmails them without any regard to their diplomatic immunity, in violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations adopted in 1961.

Notably, the FSB seeks to penetrate the diplomatic missions of Lithuania and other countries in Russia not only by using human intelligence, but also through a wide range of technical means, including, but not limited to interception of telephone conversations and information on computer networks, as well as the use of video surveillance and audio recording equipment.

Even though Lithuanian diplomats and civil servants in Russia and Belarus are under the biggest threat, similar threats posed by Russian intelligence and security services also exist in other countries. The Russian intelligence can also conduct surveillance and recruitment of targets in Western countries.

Intelligence under journalistic cover

For information gathering purposes, Russian intelligence services keep using journalistic cover. The scale of intelligence gathering under journalistic cover in Lithuania remains to be high, especially at times of national and international military exercises. Intelligence information is collected by Lithuanian and foreign journalists associated with the Russian intelligence services. They seek to obtain accreditation from the Ministry of National Defence, enabling them to participate in events aimed at the media during the military exercises held in Lithuania. In this way they gather intelligence as tasked by the Russian intelligence services. This trend is likely to persist in the future, as the Russian side thinks that journalistic cover adequately protects the individuals who collect intelligence information. If their access to sources of information is restricted, it is very easy to publicly portray such restrictions as Lithuania's attempt to silence journalists on political grounds.

Intelligence activities at the border

In 2015, Russian intelligence and security services continued to increasingly focus on Lithuania's districts bordering Kaliningrad Oblast, including Šakiai, Jurbarkas, Pagėgiai, and Šilutė. They sent to the municipalities of Lithuania's districts agents and officers working under Kaliningrad's institutional cover, recruited residents of the border districts, gathered data on the processes in municipalities, on businessmen, and law enforcement officers. The aim of the FSB is to have good knowledge about the political, economic and military situation in Lithuania's border districts, gain influence there and promote active involvement in international cooperation projects with Russia.

The FSB takes advantage of the situation where many residents of border regions travel to Russia for purchasing cheaper goods. The FSB stops them on fictitious or real charges, such as charges of smuggling and infringements of border crossing procedures, to name but a few. These individuals are persuaded to collaborate with intelligence services in exchange for unrestricted access to transporting goods to and from Russia. The FSB targets even those Lithuanian citizens who have no extended opportunities to carry out intelligence activities. In fact, any individual can provide simple visual information about targets on the border territory of Lithuania, such as buildings and roads.

It has become a trend that the FSB seeks to recruit persons who organise smuggling activities and transportation of smuggled goods[4]. The FSB proposes them facilitation of further smuggling in exchange for covert cooperation. The FSB takes particular interest in their contacts in the Lithuanian law enforcement institutions.

In 2015, the FSB continued its efforts to establish an intelligence-gathering network in the Lithuanian State Border Guard Service under the Ministry of the Interior (SBGS). The FSB considers the SBGS to be an integral combat unit of Lithuania and therefore tries to penetrate it and collect detailed intelligence information on the human and technical resources used for the protection of the Lithuanian–Russian border, including SBGS officers, their number, equipment and weapons, vehicles, video surveillance cameras, patrolling routes, and interaction with other state institutions.

In 2015, intensified activity of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) was often detected on the Russian and Belarusian territory near the Lithuanian border. It is assessed that UAVs are also used for intelligence collection against the Republic of Lithuania and for planning illegal cross border operations into Lithuania's territory. There are indications that the Russian special operation forces conduct cross border operations in foreign states during peacetime. It is likely that during such operations, the troops are learning to cross the border of another state without being noticed, gather intelligence on predestined targets, and conduct special operations.

In 2014 and 2015, individuals linked with special purpose units associated with the FSB and GRU visited Lithuania on a number of occasions and also crossed Lithuania in transit to other Baltic

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[4] Between 2015 and 2016, three persons engaged in smuggling were sentenced in Estonia for spying. It was established that they had cooperated with the FSB and provided it with intelligence information on the Estonian law enforcement, border protection service and military facilities.

countries. The possibility cannot be ruled out that this was a test of the vigilance of the Lithuanian border guard and security services; this could also have been used for collection of information on potential targets, establishment of contacts with persons representing Russia's interests in Lithuania and networking with them.

Collection of information through surveillance of targets

The cases of observing military units of the Lithuanian Armed Forces, their military equipment and their facilities for civil use that are important for Russian military planning are constantly detected. Surveillance is usually carried out through the use of video cameras, mobile devices and video recorders mounted to vehicles. Sufficient data is available to suggest that the abovementioned activities have become a trend. It has been established that video recording is often carried out by persons associated with Russia. Hired cars or vehicles registered in Russia are used for the purpose. In the second half of 2015, cases of provocative surveillance of abovementioned objects were detected while photographers were demonstratively associated with Russia. This indicates that photographing increasingly takes the form that resembles informational and psychological operations organised in order to create the impression that Russian citizens are free to carry out provocative activities in Lithuania or to cause a disproportionate reaction of the Lithuanian institutions.

Signals intelligence carried out by Russia

Signals intelligence against Lithuania is collected by stationary and mobile intelligence platforms in Russian diplomatic mission in Lithuania, Kaliningrad Oblast and mainland Russia as well as intelligence vessels in the Baltic Sea and intelligence aircrafts. It is noted that Russian signals intelligence increasingly involves Belarus. Belarusian airspace is used for intelligence collection flights; there is an exchange of SIGINT intelligence information between Russia and Belarus ; Belarusian SIGINT officers are trained in Russian military training institutions. It is also likely that Belarusian SIGINT capabilities are exploited by Russia according to its national priorities.

It should be noted that a lot of sensitive information can be lost not only on account of the technical capabilities of Russian intelligence services to penetrate the channels of communication, but also as a result of negligence. Irresponsible communication of civil servants and public officials when they use open channels of communication and exchange sensitive and excessive information related to the performance of duties, and non-compliance with security procedures increase the opportunities for the adversary to collect intelligence information via technical means. As a result of technical penetration operations, personal and compromising information is collected and may later be used for recruitment and for coercing people into collaboration.

One of the tasks of signals intelligence units is to carry out surveillance of NATO military exercises. In 2015, surveillance of the following NATO exercises was carried out in the Baltic Sea region: *Joint Warrior 2015, Saber Strike 2015, BALTOPS 2015, Trident Juncture 2015, Arrcade Fusion 2015*, etc. The

activities and interoperability of the NATO forces as well as Lithuanian Air and Naval forces were thus assessed. It must be noted that the number of flights of Russian signals intelligence aircraft in 2015 was the highest in the past decade.

Based on the assessments of the Lithuanian intelligence and security services, the Russian intelligence and security services' activities against Lithuania remained high in intensity during 2015 and will not be decreasing in the near future.

Russian intelligence and security services have the technical equipment enabling them to intercept telephone conversations of staff of Lithuanian institutions, organisations, and individuals. The photo portrays signals intelligence equipment on the roof of the Russian Embassy in Vilnius

THREATS POSED BY BELARUSIAN INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY SERVICES

There are three Belarusian services gathering intelligence against Lithuania, namely, the State Security Committee (KGB), the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Belarus (GRU), and the intelligence units of the State Border Committee (SBC). The main objectives of the Belarusian intelligence and security services in Lithuania are related to ensuring domestic stability of the Belarusian government and promoting the country's political and economic interests in Lithuania and the EU. The integration processes of Russia and Belarus, especially in the military field, also have a significant impact on the activities of Belarusian intelligence and security services, which are directed against the national security and interests of Lithuania.

In the autumn of 2015, the presidential elections were held in Belarus. Therefore, the KGB strengthened the control of representatives of the Belarusian opposition operating in Lithuania. The key mission of the KGB was to hinder the opposition from holding to a uniform policy for the presidential elections. While gathering information on Belarusian oppositional organisations operating in Lithuania, the Belarusian secret services are recruiting members of the Belarusian community and Belarusian nationals residing in Lithuania. The KGB is also making attempts to infiltrate agents into the Belarusian oppositional organisations and is encouraging them to take part in events organised by the opposition in Lithuania. The KGB recruits sources of information and agents of influence in the oppositional organisations in order to keep the Belarusian opposition fragmented and prevent it from becoming a real political alternative to the current government of Belarus.

In 2015, the KGB actively supported the efforts by the Belarusian authorities to seek lifting of EU sanctions against Belarusian officials and businesses. The KGB staff was collecting information on Lithuania's and the EU's position on ending sanctions against Belarus and was searching for lobbyists among Lithuanian businessmen, whose businesses were related to Belarus, to promote Belarusian political and economic interests. The KGB is constantly seeking to find suitable candidates for recruitment from among Lithuanian businessmen, politicians and civil servants who could be influenced on account of their business interests in Belarus, family or personal relations, and other private interests in the neighbouring country.

The KGB and the GRU of Belarus use a traditional diplomatic cover for intelligence gathering in Lithuania. Half of the diplomatic corps of the Belarusian Embassy in Lithuania are KGB and GRU staff members or persons associated with these services and fulfilling their tasks while working under a diplomatic cover. The Belarusian intelligence and security officers in Lithuania also perform intelligence tasks while pretending to be businessmen, journalists, scientists, and members of the Belarusian state and business delegations.

Compared to the respective Russian services, the Belarusian intelligence and security services are usually more cautious in Lithuania and avoid aggressive actions, thus act more actively and aggressively against Lithuania's interests in the territory of their own country. The same trend continued

in 2015, with Lithuanian law enforcement officers visiting Belarus being the most common targets of recruitment. The scope of recruitment of Lithuanian law enforcement officers crossing the Lithuania–Belarus border has remained unchanged. The KGB, in cooperation with the Belarusian border protection service, has also been recruiting Lithuanian residents living in border areas who are often visiting Belarus and are not law enforcement officers, but who know people working in the Lithuanian intelligence and law enforcement services.

The intelligence needs of the Belarusian GRU in Lithuania basically coincide with the interests of the Russian military intelligence. The military intelligence services of the two countries cooperate closely as they act against Lithuania and other NATO member states. The Belarusian military intelligence, as well as the KGB, is working more actively and more aggressively against Lithuania from the territory of Belarus. Two agents of the service are currently on trial in Lithuania on charges of spying on the Lithuanian Armed Forces and on facilities of strategic importance for the national security of Lithuania.

Taking account of the aggressive efforts by the Belarusian intelligence and security services to penetrate into the Lithuanian law enforcement services and the system of national defence as well as the close intelligence cooperation between Belarus and Russia, the activity by the Belarusian intelligence and security services is regarded to be a threat to the interests of national security of Lithuania.

Recruitment situations at the border with Belarus

- Verification of documents and checking of the vehicle at the border inspection post take an unusually long time.
- The Lithuanian citizen is escorted to the premises of the Belarusian border guards.
- Without introducing themselves, the Belarusian officers wearing civilian clothes conduct an interview.
- If the interviewee is a Lithuanian official, then the questions concern his official functions, colleagues, official data bases, border and military infrastructure.
- Other Lithuanian residents from border areas are asked whether they know any Lithuanian law enforcement officers, what their functions and addresses are, and whether they are visiting Belarus.
- If a person refuses to answer the questions, it is maintained that the person breached Belarusian laws, for example, by indicating that the actual purpose of the visit is shopping, though in his request for a visa it is noted that the person will be visiting relatives.
- The person is given two options: either to provide regular information to the Belarusian authorities or accept that further visits to Belarus will be forbidden (the visa will be annulled, etc.).
- The Belarusian officer indicates a telephone number to be used for the next time the Lithuanian citizen would be paying a visit to Belarus.

ECONOMIC AND ENERGY SECURITY

In 2015, Russia continued its protectionist transport policy, which was also directed against the Lithuanian companies providing transport services. Russia's policy to reduce cargo flows through the Baltic States did not have a significant impact on the combined turnover of cargo handling in Klaipėda State Seaport. However, due to the Russian policy, cargo transit to Kaliningrad Oblast declined by 13 %. The reduction in cargo transit to Kaliningrad Oblast affected the financial indices of *Lietuvos geležinkeliai* (*Lithuanian Railways*), since the transit represented the most profitable activity of the company. The main factor behind the decline in cargo transit was the increase in the number of train ferries between the Port of Baltiysk in Kaliningrad Oblast and the Port of Ust-Luga in the Gulf of Finland. Transportation costs for cargo shipping by rail ferries are higher compared to the costs for land transport, i.e. transit through Lithuania. It is therefore obvious that the quantity of cargo shipped by ferries was increased due to political reasons.

In 2015, the majority of Lithuanian road carriers were competing with Russian carriers under unequal terms. Therefore, Lithuanian freight transport and logistics companies sustained losses. The Lithuanian transport companies suffered as a result of higher administrative costs of transportation control, compared to those incurred by Russian carriers. Besides, Russia tried to change the bilateral and trilateral freight authorisation procedures, in an attempt to acquire further administrative levers to control and restrict the activities of foreign carriers.

In 2015, the interest of companies from third countries (mostly Russian entities concealing the real origin of cash flows) in Lithuania was not declining. They were interested in investing in strategically important economic sectors as well as accessing facilities of critical infrastructure, namely, Klaipėda State Seaport, railway infrastructure and cross-system electricity interconnections (*LitPol Link* and *NordBalt*). With the opening up of opportunities for importing cheaper electricity from Sweden, Russian energy companies (and those from other third countries) have begun showing an increasing interest in exporting electricity from Lithuania or through Lithuania, especially by using the *LitPol Link* interconnection. Russian corporation *Rosatom* actively attempted to get involved in the export schemes of Russian electricity and compete with the public joint stock company *Inter RAO UES*, which has exclusive rights to export Russian electricity. It has been actively looking for partners in the Baltic States since as early as 2013.

Russian authorities have been particularly sensitive to the changes in the global and regional energy markets and to any weakening of the country's positions there for several reasons:

- Revenue from the energy sector (extraction and export of energy resources) is the main source of funding for major Russian state projects (as well as for modernisation of armed forces) and serves as an essential instrument in maintaining internal political stability;

- Energy dominance in the post-Soviet space forms the basis for retaining Russia's influence and developing the Russian-dominated integration projects. In conflict situations, Russia may use and is often using dependence of the post-Soviet region's countries on Russian

energy resources and/or infrastructure as one of the most effective non-military leverage tools;

■ Despite Russia's efforts to diversify its export markets, Europe will remain, even in the longer term, its most important trade partner in energy resources. Russia very often makes use of bilateral relations with the players in this market as a tool for achieving its foreign policy targets and defending its geopolitical interests;

■ The ongoing infrastructural, financial and legal changes in the energy system in the Baltic Sea Region (especially in Lithuania) are seen as an additional threat to Russia's security due to the dependence of Kaliningrad Oblast on the transit of energy resources through a NATO member state.

The ongoing global changes in the energy sector in recent years have had a huge impact on the Russian economy and have essentially been changing the established relations with its key markets. The fallen oil price has reduced Russia's budget revenues and forced the country to use a part of the accumulated reserve funds to finance the intended projects. The devaluation of the rouble and the growing economic isolation of the country have partially mitigated these effects; however, the income in a stable currency from the exports of energy resources has become even more important for the country's economy.

The geopolitical circumstances have strengthened and highlighted the long-term negative trends in the development of the energy sector in Russia. This weakens Russia's positions when forming political and economic integration bodies in the post-Soviet space. The success of the EEU project largely depends on the ability to agree on a single energy space. However, Russia aims to play a dominant role in this market, having a decisive say on energy matters and being in control of the key points of transit and export. As the influence of other countries (particularly China) is increasing in the region and competition is growing, the countries dependent on Russia in economic and energy terms are beginning to demand equal treatment while Russia is gradually finding it more difficult to deter them from alternative projects or reforms. Due to Russia's weakening ability to use energy leverages against these countries, the significance of military instruments and the probability to apply them are largely increasing (the conflict with Ukraine is the most striking example in this case).

In the context of the Russia–Ukraine conflict, the integration and diversification processes that strengthen EU internal energy market have been reinforced in 2015 (the project of the EU Energy Union). If the EU pursued a common energy policy with third countries, this would significantly reduce Russia's chances of manipulating bilateral relations and different interests of EU Member States. Russia aims to slow down these processes by discrediting the idea of the EU Energy Union in the public domain as well as by offering to certain EU Member States profitable projects or transactions (e.g. Nord Stream pipeline), which contribute to building up tension in relations between EU member states and which, if implemented, would prevent greater diversification in the longer perspective.

As Lithuania is implementing its national and regional energy infrastructure projects, the negative effect of Russia's levers of influence in the region is declining sharply. The electricity interconnections with Sweden and Poland, the construction of which Lithuania completed in 2015, and already operating liquefied natural gas (LNG) import terminal in Klaipėda reduce the energy isolation of the region as a whole and at the same time increase its security. However, even though it now has interconnections with other systems, the Baltic Region remains, together with the CIS countries, in the IPS/UPS power system.

Despite *Gazprom*'s exit from the management of Lithuanian gas companies in 2014, the company sought to maintain its positions in the Baltic States and present the LNG terminal and LNG as a poor alternative to Russian gas. In order to achieve this target, *Gazprom* acted both locally (in each of the Baltic countries separately) and at the regional level.

In 2015, in response to the investigation launched by the European Commission (EC), *Gazprom* decided to change the pricing of gas sold under supply contracts and tested gas trading through an auction. Even though it managed to sell only slightly more than one third of the planned quantity of gas, the leaders of the company saw the auction as a success. *Gazprom* intended to switch to the auction system in the Baltic States as early as in the fourth quarter of 2015; however, the start of the auctions was postponed. According to the assessment by Lithuanian intelligence services, *Gazprom's* planned gas sale auctions will only formally satisfy the EC's requirement for the Russian company to shift to a more transparent system of gas sales. In the absence of external supervision, *Gazprom* can continue with the politically motivated manipulation of gas supply.

Further integration of the Baltic Region into the Western European energy system (construction of new power plants, integration with the synchronous grid of Continental Europe) can be hindered by Russia's activities targeted against these projects. Two nuclear power plant projects are being

Works on the construction site of the nuclear power plant in Belarus
(Source: naviny.by)

implemented near the Lithuanian borders (in Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia, and Astravyets, Belarus) and the electricity interconnections between the IPS/UPS system and the synchronous grid of Continental Europe are being offered in parallel.

In the period from 2014 to 2015, the construction of the nuclear power plant in Belarus, which is fully financed by Russia, was fairly consistently continued despite the complicated economic and political situation. This project presents an additional threat to regional security, since it is being implemented in defiance of confirmed infringements of international conventions on the potential negative environmental impact and lack of proper consultations with the public and the international community. Efforts are made to create a perception in the public domain that the detected irregularities have long been corrected while reproaches made are politically motivated. Meanwhile, there are attempts to counterbalance the pressure to fulfil the commitments under international conventions by cooperating more intensively with alternative international organisations. However, their services are used very selectively without inviting expert missions requested by Lithuania (e.g. IAEA site evaluation mission). The nuclear power plant project in Kaliningrad Oblast was suspended in 2013, but *Rosatom* does not relinquish its plans to resume it once more favourable geopolitical and economic circumstances conspire.

Based on the assessment by the Russian leadership, the energy policy of the Baltic States increases the vulnerability of Kaliningrad Oblast that is dependent on the transit via Lithuania. Even though a new long-term contract on gas transit through the Lithuanian territory was signed in 2016, the topic of threats caused by transit is being escalated in the public domain, thereby damaging the reputation of Lithuania as a reliable transit state. The same narrative is used in attempts to justify to the Russian society why, despite the high costs, there are plans to create an isolated energy system[5] in Kaliningrad Oblast instead of strengthening its economy.

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[5] There are plans to build new gas and coal power plants, enlarge an underground natural gas storage facility and construct an LNG import terminal.

INFORMATION SECURITY

Development of a favourable information environment inside and outside Russia continues to be among the priorities of the Russian leadership. For the purpose of implementing its information policy, Russia uses a wide range of soft power instruments, such as foundations, non-governmental organisations, academic institutions, representatives of art, think-tanks, and history projects, which are directly or indirectly financed from the federal budget. In individual cases, persons linked to Russia's intelligence and security services are used to carry out information operations.

The media, namely, television, the press and the Internet, remains as the main instrument aimed at consolidating a favourable narrative for Russia. Russian TV channels broadcasting the official government position and spreading pro-Russian propaganda are targeting, first and foremost, the domestic audience in Russia but are accessible and visible in all the Baltic States. According to the opinion polls of 2015, about 30 % of the Lithuanian population, including nearly two thirds of the Russian-speaking population in Lithuania, daily follow the news announced by Russian state-controlled television channels while 6–8 % of the population read the information on Russian news websites on a daily basis.

The information attacks against Lithuania show that Russia treats the Lithuanian domestic and foreign policy as contrary to its interests. In 2015, Russia's largest information attacks against Lithuania mainly concerned the building up of NATO military capabilities in Eastern Europe and the EU's sanctions and economic policy. Russia was keen to present Lithuania as an aggressive state due to increased defence spending and reinstatement of conscription in Lithuania. In the Russian information field, Lithuania has been presented as a country promoting NATO's military activeness in the Baltic Region, which threatens Europe's stability and security. NATO's military exercises, establishment of NATO Force Integration Unit , and possibility of having permanent military bases close to Russia have all been presented as processes that increase the likelihood of incidents and may provoke new conflicts. NATO's more active presence in Eastern Europe has been presented to the domestic Russian audience as proof of the Alliance's aggressive intentions, which provides Russia the basis for enhancing its military potential in the region.

After reaching the Minsk agreements in February 2015 and achieving lower level of combat activity, the Russian rhetoric with regard to the conflict with Ukraine has become less intense. In the context of the events in Ukraine, Lithuania has received the attention mainly due to its accusations against Russia for the aggression in Ukraine, promotion of Ukraine's integration into the West, and involvement in the development of the Lithuanian–Polish–Ukrainian Brigade (LITPOLUKRBRIG). In the propaganda articles, the brigade has been presented as NATO's Ukraine-based element that would get actively engaged in the conflict.

The refugee crisis, which became increasingly more intensive in 2015, has been used by the Russian propaganda to criticise NATO, the EU and Lithuanian authorities in order to undermine public confidence in them. The audience was being told that NATO operations in Libya and Iraq sparked

off a refugee crisis and that the EU and Lithuania would not be able to cope with the migration crisis that was threatening with the collapse of the Schengen zone, safe havens for terrorists, and demographic changes. In the international context, the Lithuanian positions have been presented as such that block Russia's initiative to work together to fight terrorism in the Middle East.

In the field of energy, emphasis has been made on the proven predictions regarding losses the LNG vessel/terminal would incur. Russia has been trying to convince the people that the most effective solution for the Baltic countries is staying in the common electric power system with Russia. It continued with its efforts to create a favourable information environment for possible cooperation between the EU and the EEU. If the complicated economic situation in Russia persists, it is likely that the flow of messages on the benefits of the economic cooperation will increase in 2016.

By making use of the events, publications, Internet projects and scientific studies dedicated to marking the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in 2015, attempts have been made to consolidate, both within and beyond Russia, the kind of approach to history that meets the interests of Russia. The 2015 objectives of the Russian policy on history with regard to Lithuania have remained unchanged. The policy was aimed at denying the fact of the occupation of Lithuania, justifying the mass deportations, and downplaying the restoration of Lithuania's independence, the post-war resistance movement, the dates important for the development of national identity, and Lithuania's image in the international arena. One of the most active proponents of the Russian policy on history has been the Historical Memory Foundation led by Alexander Dyukov. The foundation seeks to belittle the image of the partisans who fought against the Soviet occupation and rehabilitate the people who worked for Soviet repressive institutions and contributed to the persecution, deportation and killing of the Lithuanian population.

The publications by communists, who formerly resided in Lithuania, naturally add to the common discourse shaped by the Russian policy on history. In Moscow, Vladislavas Švedas, former Second Secretary of the Lithuanian Communist Party, published a book titled *Lietuvos neonaciai prieš Rusiją* (en. *Lithuanian Neo-Nazis against Russia*), in the preface of which he acknowledges the support of Mikhail Golovatov in drafting and publishing the book. Both of these persons are facing charges in the case on the events of 13 January 1991. The book provides documents with the author's interpretations and alleged studies, which, in principle, deny Lithuania's history of statehood, fights for independence, and democratic values. By making use of the policy on history, the Russian propaganda constitutes a long-term strategy aimed at changing the values of the Lithuanian society.

In 2015, Russia did not create any new significant information projects, but it continued to use and improve the existing systems for spreading propaganda and enhanced its propaganda penetration. Despite the difficult economic situation, *Russia Today*, *Rossiya Segodnya* and *Sputnik* media outlets continued to receive financial support while social networks and the media created by the so-called compatriots enjoyed increased support. All EU and NATO initiatives against Russian propaganda have been negatively received by Russia. In 2015, Russia declared its intention to create a single web portal about Russia for the Russian media outlets abroad. Lithuania was also among the countries whose media outlets were to receive the support.

In 2015, Russia reinforced its existing media sources in Lithuania and maintained contacts with Lithuanian journalists in order to use them for the dissemination of favourable information. The plans of *Rossiya Segodnya* news agency to legitimise a propaganda multimedia project called *Sputnik* in Lithuania pose a threat to the Lithuanian information security. The project is to be implemented directly through the *baltnews.lt* portal under the leadership of Anatoliy Ivanov. In November 2015, Moscow hosted the World Congress of Compatriots Living Abroad, the agenda of which is shaped by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At the Congress, the *Sputnik* project was, for the first time, publicly linked to the *baltnews.lt*, *baltnews.lv* and *baltnews.ee* web portals that operate in the Baltic States, and it was stated that the portals significantly contributed to the dissemination of information which coincided with the interests of Russia. The activities of *baltnews.lt* are financed in a non-transparent way through intermediary companies, and it is registered neither in Lithuania nor in Russia. In 2015, there was an attempt to consolidate *baltnews.lt* positions in the public domain and secure further funding by increasing the number of visitors, advertising its articles on social networks, printing publications with references to other sources, and creating new headings on the Orthodox Church and sport.

The information attacks registered in Lithuania in 2015 show that modern technology is being used and that the information field is consistently being monitored in order to choose the most suitable time for attacks and receive wide public attention. From January to February, the websites of the so-called people's republics of Vilnius, Latgale and Baltic Russians, which are hostile towards the Baltic States, started operating on social networks, which gave rise to public concern about the repetition of the Ukrainian scenario. In February, the results of an opinion poll on the effect of propaganda, which were aired live on a TV3 programme, were falsified with the aim of demonstrating that Russia was not engaged in propaganda and told the truth. In June, a false objective of the *Saber Strike* military exercise was given after the website of the Joint Staff of the Lithuanian Armed Forces was hacked. Later on, some Russian media outlets presented this falsified message as original information to demonstrate Lithuania's hostile intentions in the Baltic Region (to annex Kaliningrad Oblast).

In 2015, the social networks in Lithuania remained popular instruments for Russia to falsify history and spread propaganda. The purpose of the messages on social media was to invoke positive sentiments towards the Soviet Union, degrade the image of Lithuania, shape a negative opinion on the policies pursued by Lithuania, the EU and NATO, justify Russia's actions in the international arena, consolidate protesting groups, and incite ethnic tensions. Attempts were made to include people of different nationalities, religions, political affiliations, education and social status into the groups that supported the Russian policy. The majority of social network users did not spread information more actively and just supported certain ideas. Meanwhile, the Kremlin's propaganda was actively disseminated by several hundreds of people and only a small share of them developed the online content independently. In the short term, information provocations against Lithuania will intensify on social networks.

The political and ideological agenda, constructed by the Kremlin, has been promoted in Lithuania by the international media club *Format A-3*, led by *Komsomolskaya Pravda* journalist Galina Sapozhnikova. In 2015, the club organised ten events, with the participation of political analysts, writers, and representatives of culture and art not only from Russia, but also from France, Germany and Hungary. This model of activity has been an attempt to create the impression that the political discourse favourable to Russia is also supported by Western political analysts and experts. It has also been aimed at promoting distrust in the Lithuanian, EU and NATO policy and institutions, and strengthening nostalgia for the Soviet times.

In 2015, compared to 2014, Russia's information hostility towards the EU, NATO and the US did not decrease. However, its manifestations have become more complex. In 2016, the international agenda will continue to focus on the issues pertaining to NATO's presence in Eastern Europe, accession of new members, development of the Alliance's missile defence system, implementation of the Minsk agreements, EU sanctions against Russia, and the conflict in Syria. Therefore, the intensity of Russian information attacks is not expected to decrease in the short term. The attacks will further target mainly the Lithuanian defence and socioeconomic policy, energy projects, foreign policy towards Ukraine, ethnic communities, society's historical memory and support to the activities of state institutions.

Separatist ideas are spread on the Facebook profile **Lietuviai** (en. Lithuanians)

Ethnic tensions are incited and Lithuania's image is downgraded on the Facebook profile "Gyvenimo kritika" (en. Criticism of life)

Galina Sapozhnikova

CYBER SECURITY

In 2015, the majority of recorded cyber incidents against the Lithuanian state institutions, facilities of strategic importance for national security and the private sector included cyber espionage, attacks (DDoS attacks, unauthorised changes to user interfaces, etc.), and cyber intelligence (scanning).

One of the key objectives of the operators involved in such activities was unauthorised and unnoticed access to systems and networks for information gathering. Except for isolated cases (e.g. defacing of the web page of the Joint Staff of the Lithuanian Armed Forces), damaging the network or compromising the institution was not the primary purpose of these attacks. It is of note that the attacks were carried out disguising ultimate objectives and hackers' affiliation.

The attacks of the type are generally performed by states or by hackers supported/funded or controlled by the state, and the attacks themselves are classified as advanced persistent threats (APTs). Sponsors of APT attacks mainly target various state organisations or individual entities for economic, financial and/or political reasons. It is this distinctive indicator (reason) that helps to distinguish different APT attacks and separate espionage campaigns executed by different operators.

In 2015, it was noticed that financially motivated hackers sought to gain not only economic but also political benefits. Previously, hackers had mainly targeted the banking/financial sector and their main objective was financial gain. Although financially motivated hackers are traditionally associated with criminal offenders rather than individual countries, recent attempts by criminal hackers have coincided with the strategic objectives of some countries. It is very likely that some countries employ representatives of the criminal underworld on a variety of grounds. In 2015, attempts by financially motivated hackers to penetrate into the networks and systems of the Lithuanian state institutions were detected. The institutions targeted were not related to the banking/financial sector.

There is a tendency towards 'purchasing' or 'hiring' of means and services provided by the criminal underworld, or engaging in other forms of cooperation with criminal offenders. The cyber-attacks of 23 December 2015 and subsequent cyber-attacks against the Ukrainian enterprise *Prykarpattya Oblenergo* and other energy companies, when the supply of electricity was physically disrupted,

■ (Source: www.carbonblack.com)

■ (Source: www.scmagazine.com)

were a proof of that. Primary data suggests that hackers used *BlackEnergy* malware that has been around since 2007. According to the experts of international IT security companies, *BlackEnergy* was modified and the platform itself allowed hackers to access company networks and install the *Killdisk* programme enabling the malware to remove or rewrite existing files.[6]

In recent years, to monitor information forwarded or to control malware programmes, the majority of malware developers use No-IP technology . This technology allows carrying out communication without an IP address. It is alarming that the investigation into the prevalence of the malicious code and into the patterns of communication in Lithuania has confirmed that individual state institutions, as well as some private sector players monitor their protection systems at IP level only, whereas the malicious software executes communications by using DNS (Domain Name Server). Such protection systems are, therefore, inefficient, and develop a deceptive sense of security for IT managers and users .

Yet another tendency was identified in 2015. Actual developers and distributors of the malicious code were increasingly using a mix of tools and resources to disguise or hide the malicious code to remain unidentified or falsely identified, when 'stolen signatures' – parts of the application code that conceal the true purpose of the malicious code – are injected into the application code. In addition, the distribution of the malicious code requires the use of Internet resources that are necessary for many internet users. These resources are compromised prior to use. C&C servers are transferred either to the countries, which distribute malicious codes, or to the countries, which have nothing to do with the distribution of malicious codes. This considerably impedes investigations, code analysis and identification of actual code producers.

In 2015, it was found that reports published by some anti-virus software developers and malicious code notifications partially mislead users and that they aggravated rather than facilitated detection of the malicious code. Such a situation may imply that anti-virus software developers are engaged, in one way or another, in the distribution and, possibly, the development and support of the malicious spyware code.

The vast potential of the IT infrastructure in Lithuania (the dissemination of the Internet, in particular, fibre-based network; technical capacities; possibilities offered by data centres; transfer of many services to the public space; possibilities of anonymous payment in the digital currency *bitcoins*; etc.) has created favourable conditions for espionage. According to the available data, it is due to the vast potential of the IT infrastructure in Lithuania that hackers choose Lithuania for launching a range of worldwide cyber-attacks, including APTs.

It should also be noted that, apart from the favourable conditions that enable hackers to execute cyber-attacks, there is a lack of attention to IT security on the part of management of Lithuanian undertakings and institutions and IT users, as well as irresponsible, careless and thoughtless behaviour of IT users/administrators while working with ADP (automated data processing) systems

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[6] ESET, iSIGHT.

and networks, and offline devices. In 2015, Lithuania investigated several cases related to hackers' attempts to take advantage of the long-known vulnerabilities of ADP systems and networks operated by state authorities and other entities. The solutions for eliminating these gaps have long been found; nevertheless, the vulnerabilities have not been corrected for unknown reasons and, consequently, have been successfully exploited by hackers.

Cyber-espionage against Lithuanian state authorities, critical infrastructure and the private sector remains a key threat to national security. In recent years, a growing trend in cyber-espionage cases has been observed. The hacking spyware used in different cyber-espionage campaigns is regularly updated and modified. As a result, it has become particularly sophisticated, thus complicating its timely detection. Countries using APTs pursue to achieve their strategic goals at minimum cost; therefore, they often devote more attention and resources to employment of IT solutions, in particular to the development of offensive capabilities.

In 2015, more than 300 unique APT C&C servers and around 30 different types of APTs were identified. Majority of the APTs detected in Lithuania were analysed by the international companies working in the field of security of information technology and communications (*FireEye*, *Mandiant*, *Antiy*, *Blue Coat*, etc.). Some APT analysis reports together with the technical information were made public a few years ago. However, the technical data received in 2015 suggests that APTs continue to successfully exist by exploiting equipment security gaps and/or incompetence of users.

The APTs identified in 2015 include campaigns related to Russia, China, India and Iran. Traces of cyber weapons were detected both in the networks and systems of the Lithuanian state institutions and critical infrastructure, and in terminal equipment of the private sector.

Like in recent years, the greatest threat to the national security came from hackers associated with Russia, including Russian intelligence and security services. The Russian FSB and structural units of the Russian Ministry of Defence, as well as entities associated with or controlled by them (members of the criminal underworld, hacktivists, patriotic hackers, etc.) have the greatest capabilities to execute operations, to disrupt the functioning of Lithuanian ADP systems and networks, to take over their control, and to check cyber protection capability of competent Lithuanian institutions.

Available and regularly employed capabilities by Russia are directly related with the implementation of Russia's strategic objectives. Russia, by using its cyber capabilities and taking control over and operating computers, computer equipment, telecommunications, ADP networks and systems, mobile devices and other IT equipment, seeks to gain an advantage in the areas of defence, politics, economics, technology, etc. It is assessed that the information collected is used to plan military operations.

The data available suggests that in addition to defence systems, Russian players operating in cyberspace may target various government institutions and, in particular, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, industry, telecommunication systems, energy and critical infrastructure, the disruption of which would have critical implications for the everyday lives of people. Media representatives are among the potential targets.

Russia has no intentions to refrain from aggressive actions in cyberspace. In the future, Russia's activities in the cyber domain will intensify; the spyware used for intelligence will be further developed. In the near future, Russia does not intend to abandon the 'recruiting' of members of the criminal underworld active in cyberspace for achieving its strategic objectives.

In the light of a few years' monitoring results of Russian entities and other information available, it may be said that, even though hackers associated with Russia pose the greatest threat to the national security of Lithuania and may cause irreversible damage to Lithuania's IT infrastructure, in the meantime, however, their capabilities seem limited.

Cyberspace will remain one of the key areas for carrying out espionage and otherwise affecting critical infrastructures, which are important to Lithuania's national security and defence capabilities.

Hackers will continue choosing the targets which have no cyber tools/weapons, early warning and detection systems ensuring continuous, timely and targeted cyber defence, and capable of timely identification of the level of cybersecurity efficiency and elimination of the identified shortcomings and vulnerabilities. Entities giving insufficient focus on IT security and irresponsible, careless or incompetent IT users will remain the key targets of hackers; the damage inflicted will depend on the affiliation of a hacker with the hacking group (motivated by financial or political considerations).

PROTECTION OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER

Russia's influence on the Russian community in Lithuania

Leaders of the Russian-speaking diaspora, who reside abroad and are loyal to Russia and who regard themselves as compatriots, are brought into play in order to achieve the strategic objective of increasing Russia's influence in the post-Soviet space and restoring Russia's great power status on the international arena. In Lithuania, objectives of Russia's compatriot policy are fulfilled mainly by the representatives of the Lithuania's Russian-speaking public organisations belonging to the Co-ordination Council of Russian Compatriots, which is controlled by the Russian Embassy in Vilnius.

In 2015, protection of the rights of Russian compatriots remained a priority of Russia's compatriot policy in Lithuania. The Fund to Support and Protect the Rights of Compatriots Living Abroad, which was established by the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation, commonly known as *Rossotrudnich-estvo*, under the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, continued to finance two Lithuanian-based organisations, namely the Centre for the Protection and Research of Fundamental Rights and the Independent Human Rights Centre.

Oksana Bekerienė, Head of the Centre for the Protection and Research of Fundamental Rights and member of the Coordinating Council of Russian Compatriots of Lithuania, used various international human-rights events in 2015 to blame Lithuania for violating the rights of ethnic communities. Karlis Bilans, Director of the Independent Human Rights Centre and representative of Social-istinis liaudies frontas (en. the Socialist People's Front, SPF) took part in pro-Russian propaganda campaigns against the US and NATO.

Accusations of violating the rights of Russian compatriots served as an effective tool for the Kremlin propaganda to create Lithuania's image as that of an enemy in the eyes of the Russian society

Oksana Bekerienė

Protesting Karlis Bilans gives an interview to the Russian television

as well as among the Russian and Polish communities in Lithuania, which fall within the Russian information field. This helps to secure support of the Russian society for the aggressive Russian policy and to hinder the successful integration of the ethnic communities in Lithuania.

Moscow and St Petersburg city authorities play a substantial role in implementing Russia's compatriot policy. The Department for Foreign Economic Activity and International Relations of the Moscow City Government is responsible for the network of Moscow Houses – culture and business centres of the city of Moscow established in foreign capitals. The network is one of the most important tools for financing and coordinating Russian compatriots abroad. The Russian Embassy in Vilnius looks actively after the implementation of the project of Moscow House.

Influence of Russia on education of ethnic communities in Lithuania

In 2015, compatriot representatives in cooperation with the Russian Embassy in Vilnius continued developing a young generation of Russian-speaking activists, who would be loyal to Russia. They were assisted in this work by the closed system of education for ethnic communities in Lithuania, which has been preserved since the Soviet times, as well as by the network of schools, which does not contribute sufficiently to connecting young people from ethnic communities to the statehood of Lithuania.

Russian teachers from Lithuanian schools with Russian as the language of instruction, who cooperatee with Russian diplomats, help ensure a favourable environment for Russia's influence. Ela Kanaitė, Head of the Association of Teachers of Russian Schools in Lithuania, is one of the leaders of the Coordinating Council of Russian Compatriots of Lithuania that is controlled by the Russian Embassy in Vilnius. In 2015, representatives of Russian compatriots organised refresher courses for teachers, which were funded by Russia, and promoted free studies in Russia. Russian-speaking young people from Lithuania, studying in Russia, are potential objects of attention of Russian intelligence services.

Moscow House in Vilnius

Members of the Striking Battalion of Death Visaginas, 2015

For young people in Lithuania, active compatriots arrange various propaganda conferences and trainings, establish clusters of young journalists, commemorate Soviet dates, organise camps, etc., which often serve as a platform for promoting the Soviet concept of history, which is favourable to Russia's interests and which downplay the statehood of Lithuania.[7]

In 2015, schoolchildren increasingly participated in joint trainings and competitions of the *Airsoft* military simulation game together with pro-Russian teams. Minor pupils from the *Atgimimas* and the *Verdėnė* High Schools and the *Gerosios Vilties* Secondary School in Visaginas set up a team called the *Striking Battalion of Death* (RU: Ударный Батальон смерти).

Despite the fact that the activities funded by Russia failed to develop many young Lithuanian Russians into loyal leaders capable of adversely affecting social processes, ethnic community schools in Lithuania remain a fertile ground for projecting Russia's influence, which threatens to cause serious harm to national security of Lithuania.

Russia's attempts to incite ethnic conflicts and stir up tensions in society

The closed character of the education system for ethnic communities in Lithuania also stands as one of the key obstacles for the Polish ethnic community to become an integral part of civil society. A substantial proportion of this community lives in the Russian cultural and information field, which constantly incites anti-Lithuanian hostility and mistrust of the ethnic communities through disinformation and propaganda. It is in the interests of Russia to fuel ethnic conflicts within the Polish community in Lithuania and weaken social cohesion of our country. These actions are aimed at creating an environment that is conducive to projecting Russian influence and at harming the relationship between the NATO allies – Lithuania and Poland.

■ Rafael Muksinov

[7] One of these events – an international jamboree of young scouts that was held in Leningrad Oblast, Russia, in 2015 to commemorate the 70th anniversary of World War II – was attended by pupils from the Lithuanian town of Visaginas.

In the autumn of 2015, Konstantin Dolgov, Russian Foreign Ministry's Special Representative for Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, publicly expressed his deep concern over the situation of Lithuanian Poles, to which they are subjected "because of the Lithuanization conducted by the Lithuanian authorities and the destruction of Polish schools in Lithuania". Such declarations about the allegedly persecuted ethnic communities are aimed at discrediting Lithuania in the international sphere.

The policy objectives of Russian compatriots correspond to the activities and demands of some representatives of the Polish community to grant exclusive rights to the population of south-eastern Lithuania. In individual cases, their demands and statements are in line with the aggressive Russian foreign policy and attitudes incompatible with the interests of Lithuania. For example, pro-Russian propaganda media inciting ethnic tension in the Baltic States publish various interventions, which do not exclude the possibility of establishing Polish and Russian cultural autonomies in the Baltic States and threaten to take extreme measures to assert their rights. Renata Cytacka, President of Forum of Polish Schools' Parents of Šalčininkai District, is among the authors of the interventions of the kind.

Activists taking shelter within ethnic communities but representing the interests of Russia discredit political activities of such communities. Rafael Muksinov, representing the Coalition of Poles' Electoral Action and Russian Alliance in Vilnius City Municipality, was previously the Head of the Coordination Council of Russian Compatriots, the activities of which are coordinated by the Russian Embassy in Vilnius. In mid-December 2015, Mr Muksinov 'represented' Lithuania in the third International Scientific Conference on *World War II and the Baltic States in 1939–1945*, which was held in Moscow House in Riga. At this Conference, the Baltic States were accused of instigating anti-Semitism even before the outbreak of World War II and threatening, together with Finland, the security of the Soviet Union.

Orthodox Church and religious movements as Russia's soft power instruments

Under Putin's Presidency, orthodoxy has become an essential part of state ideology, symbolically legitimising the current ruling regime. The Moscow Patriarchate acquired the status of the key state actor and became an integral part of the ruling elite in Russia. Support to Vladimir Putin and his regime strengthens the position of the Russian Orthodox Church both domestically and abroad. Patriarch Kirill of Moscow renders unconditional support to Vladimir Putin and tries to provide an ideological and value-oriented dimension to the conflict between Russia and the West. Administrative organisations of the Moscow Patriarchate abroad are becoming a vital soft power instrument of Russia.

The Episcopate of Vilnius and Lithuania constitutes part of the Patriarchate of Moscow and all Rus'. On 14–17 March 2015, on the one-year anniversary of the annexation of Crimea by Russia, Ortho-

dox churches of Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda hosted exhibitions of relics from the Pechersk Lavra Monastery in Kiev (Ukraine). It is most likely that the expositions aimed at proving that Russia and Ukraine had a shared history and at consolidating the status of the Moscow Patriarchate as the sole descendent of the Orthodox Church of the Kyivan Rus'. In the context of the war in Ukraine, the exhibitions were much more important in terms of ideology rather than in terms of history and culture.

In Lithuania, there are adherents to Russian religious movements that are prone to believe in various conspiracy theories and that declare the end of the era of destructive Western civilisation and look forward to the renaissance of a new spiritual Russia. This goes in line with the expansionist ideology, which is promoted by the Kremlin regime to present Russia as a unique European civilisation and which is aimed at restoring Russia's lost influence over the 'near abroad'. Although limited in number, the followers of these movements are very active in the public domain in Lithuania in expressing their political support to the aggressive Russian foreign policy. Some of the followers are engaged in paramilitary camps promoting pro-Russian chauvinism and extremism.

Apologists of the 'Concept of Public Security' (Rus: Contseptsia obshchestvennoi bezopasnosti) in Russia can be considered as an example of these movements, the representatives of which operate both in Russia and Lithuania. They fanatically believe in the concept and disseminate its ideas in the public online domain in the Lithuanian language. The Concept of Public Security is a typical conspiracy theory about the global governance. According to the theory, the world is ruled by western corporations aiming at exploiting the Russian civilisation which is rich in natural resources. People, who believe in the Concept of Public Security, think that these ideas might serve as the basis for restoring the might of Russia and overcoming the 'destructive' West, and support the aggressive foreign policy of Russia.

Laurynas Ragelskis, who promotes the ideas of the Concept of Public Security in Lithuania, is in charge of the *Ldiena.lt* platform of websites publishing anti-western and pro-Russian articles in

■ Laurynas Ragelskis

Lithuanian. Some other supporters of the Concept of Public Security participated actively in pro-test campaigns against the US and NATO.

Religious movements promoting the Russian expansionist ideology constitute a risk factor for the national security of Lithuania because the people, who adhere to the belief that Russia performs a pre-eminent role, may be easily (and not necessarily through direct assignment of tasks) used for implementing hostile Russian interests in Lithuania.

Preservation of cultural heritage associated with Russia

For several years now, Russia has funded the preservation of its heritage assets in Lithuania, which are handy for spreading the Russian influence, including the search for remains of Soviet and Russian soldiers belonging to different epochs, re-burial of remains, tidying-up of the graves, restoration of cemetery monuments, publishing of books, and organisation of conferences. There are active attempts to engage Lithuania's local and central authorities into the process. They are invited to take part in opening ceremonies of restored monuments, various conferences marking historical events and subsequent informal meetings.

In 2015, Russian-funded commemorative projects were carried out by representatives of the association *Užmiršti kareiviai* (en. *Forgotten Soldiers*), public enterprise *Karo paveldo institutas* (en. *Military Heritage Institute*) and other Lithuania-registered organisations and businesses, which cooperate with the Russian Embassy in Vilnius.

Russia-friendly political popular movements

In 2015, political and social organisations and movements, which call themselves as the non-systemic opposition, became very active. The most active of these organisations include: the political party Socialist People's Front (SPF), the non-informal movement *Mūsų gretos* (en. O*ur Ranks*) led by Rolandas Paulauskas, and the group *Būkime vieningi* (en. *Let Us Be United*) led by Vaidas Lekstutis, which promotes the aforementioned Concept of Public Security. These organisations give major focus on disseminating pro-Russian propaganda on the Lithuanian Internet. Most of this information is published via the websites *ekspertai.eu*, *ldiena.lt*, *sauksmas.lt*, *revoliucija.org*, *slfrontas.lt*, *sarmatas.lt*, *versijos.lt* and *laisvaslaikrastis.lt*. A particular attention was given to the dissemination of information on social networks and the *YouTube.*

Over the last few years, Zigmas Vaišvila, who has tried to consolidate these efforts, has become one of the most cited Lithuanian politicians in pro-Russian Lithuanian media and the media controlled by the Kremlin. On 3 June 2015, the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences held a forum called *Goal of Our State*, which was organised by Zigmas Vaišvila and Audrius Nakas, Member of the Seimas. The participants of the forum established the *Birželio 3-iosios grupė*, or otherwise the *B 3 Group* (en. *Group of the 3rd of June*). The group, consisting of the movement *Mūsų gretos*, the Lithuanian People's Party, and the social movement against forced immigration *Nacionalinis interesas* (en. *National*

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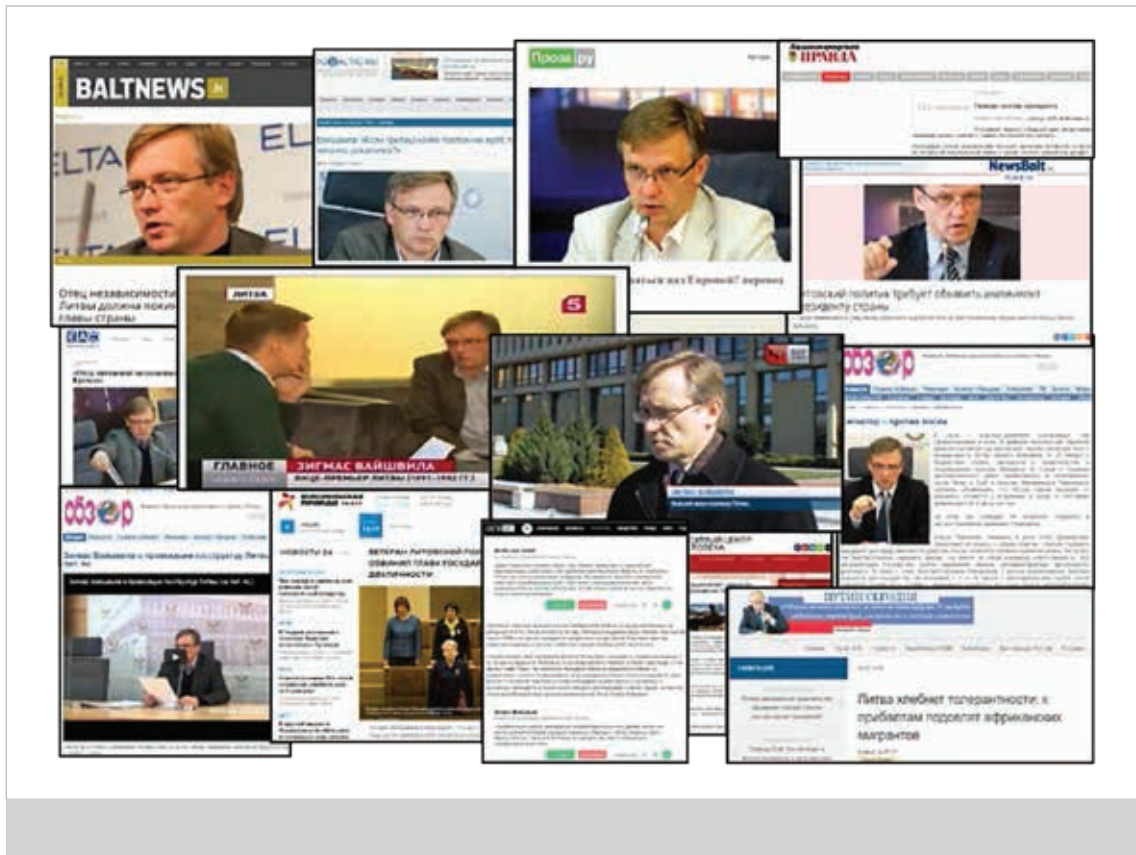
*Zigmas Vaišvila
in the Russian media*

■

*Algirdas Paleckis and
Giedrius Grabauskas*

Interest[8], etc.), aims to establish an officially registered political organisation. The *B 3 Group* has almost no impact on the Lithuanian society. Nevertheless, the Kremlin-supported media exploits the activities of the Group to shape an opinion that in Lithuania there is a significant non-systemic opposition, which does not support the country's pro-western orientation and foreign policy. Algirdas Paleckis, former Chairman of the SPF, who formally severed his relations with the organisation, is now seeking to return to the political elite.

Political extremism

The refugee crisis has greatly affected European movements advocating extreme right-wing ideologies. Right-wing radicals in some Member States used the crisis to gain popularity and organise large-scale protest campaigns. Moreover, there has also been an increase in the number of the acts of violence associated with refugees. The far-right in Lithuania tried to exploit the tendencies. In the second half of 2015, they have organised a number of small-scale protest campaigns, which did not command significant support from society. In 2015, there were no violent attacks against refugee-related facilities in Lithuania.

Events organised in the Baltic States by the far-right are frequently attended by Russian media representatives. Normally, the Russian media present the events organised by right-wing radicals in the Baltic States as a negative example of promotion of allegedly negative right-wing extremism ideologies. However, protest campaigns held by the same people against the reception of refugees, are presented as a positive resistance of EU citizens against the EU policy that violates their rights.

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[8] The social movement against forced immigration *Nacionalinis interesas* was set up by Marius Jonaitis and Vitalijus Balkus, who are known for their pro-Russian attitudes. The movement argues against compulsory admission of immigrants from Asia and Africa, blames the US and its allies for the migrant crisis and publically supports Russia's actions in Syria.

CRISIS REGIONS AND TERRORISM

Middle East and North Africa

The armed conflict has been continuing in **Syria** for over 5 years. More than 4.6 million Syrians have fled the country and some 8 million people have become internally displaced during this period (before the conflict, Syria had the population of 22 million inhabitants). In 2015, the conflict was volatile. In the first part of the year, the initiative was held by various insurgent groups, which received coordinated support from Arab countries of the Gulf region and Turkey. It made external partners of the Syrian President Bashar al Assad to respond. The main ally Iran strengthened its support for the Syrian regime in the second half of 2015. Russia became actively engaged in the conflict in September with its air forces intensively attacking the opponents of the regime. Thanks to considerable support from foreign partners, the regime, though remaining weak, managed to reverse the course of the conflict to its favour. Military opposition remains strategically and politically fragmented. Currently, none of the conflict parties is able to achieve the final victory. Despite the agreements on the ceasefire in Syria, the talks between the ruling regime and the opposition groups will remain difficult and a political decision on peace is hardly likely in the short term.

Since the very beginning of its intervention in Syria, Russia has been referring to it in public as 'fight against terrorism' and saying that the main target of its air raids was the fighters of ISIL. However, for the most part, Russian air forces target insurgent groups unrelated to ISIL and most inconvenient to the Syrian regime. At least 80 % of air raids target the said groups while ISIL fighters are attacked only sporadically under the necessity. The issue of fighting terrorism is beneficial for Russia when finding common ground with Western countries and seeking to divert the attention from actions in Ukraine.

The radical extremist group ISIL, which had established a pseudo state in the territories of Syria and **Iraq,** suffered a heavy setback in 2015. A US led international coalition, in cooperation with local partners, such as Iraqi security forces and Kurdish fighters from Syria and Iraq, weakened ISIL significantly. Over the last year, the group has lost around 30 % of territories previously under its control, as well as a number of medium-level and top leaders, who cannot be successfully replaced by new members. Continuous air raids by the international coalition resulted in the disruption of ISIL's network of illegal oil trade and the decrease of income from this trade. Since May 2015 ISIL has been unable to gain significant victories and has been forced to continuously defend its occupied territories. Military defeats of ISIL have become increasingly common. They are detrimental to ISIL's promoted image of a powerful organisation, which is crucial in order to attract new fighters.

ISIL has stepped up its actions in the Middle East and North Africa not only against military and security institutions but also against the tourism sector, which is of great economic significance to the countries in this region. The places of tourist attraction visited by people from Western coun-

tries, including Lithuania, have become priority targets for ISIL. Attacks on resorts and cities favoured by foreigners receive considerable media coverage, which is of particular importance to ISIL seeking the status and image of a global terrorist organisation. By these attacks, the group seeks to intimidate foreign tourists and deter them from traveling in the region, thus causing harm to the countries which benefit from tourism.

In 2015, the institutional anarchy and chaos in **Libya** deepened as two political camps in Tripoli and Tobruk continued their rivalry. At local level, the country has been controlled by various armed insurgent groups fighting against each other. Political fragmentation and power vacuum in Libya created favourable conditions for radical groups to operate freely and allowed ISIL fighters to entrench. Having occupied Sirte, ISIL aims to expand the territories under its control to other cities. It conducts terrorist attacks, including those on oil infrastructure. The number of incoming foreign fighters has also been on the increase. It is assessed that Libya is becoming the second most important territory after Syria and Iraq where ISIL has been consolidating its position. The expansion of radical groups poses a threat to Libya, other countries of the region and potentially to Western countries that are considering the possibilities of a military operation against ISIL in Libya. In late 2015, following the long-lasting UN mediation efforts and international pressure, a political agreement on the Government of National Accord in Libya was reached. This was the first step to break the deadlock. However, the viability of the new government will depend on political and armed militias' support, as well as on its own capability to address serious economic problems and form the national security forces of Libya.

In 2015, the threat of terrorist attacks also increased in **Egypt.** Terrorist attacks have grown in intensity not only in the Sinai Peninsula, where different groups had become more active, but also in the mainland Egypt. In recent years, the Sinai Peninsula has seen active engagement of a radical group, associated with ISIL. Egyptian security forces are the main target of attacks; however, foreign diplomatic missions and tourism sector have recently become new targets (explosion of a Russian passenger plane in October). Although Egyptian security forces have been conducting intensive operations, it is estimated that the risk of terrorist attacks will grow in the short term.

International terrorism

The year 2015 saw the greatest threat of terrorism in the EU over the last decade. The general situation of terrorism in the EU was mostly affected by the activities of the terrorist organisations – ISIL and Al Qaeda. The terrorist attacks in France in January and November 2015 have demonstrated that those groups are capable of organising and carrying out attacks in Western countries. They are even more active in the media environment by spreading jihadist ideology.

ISIL's information campaign, in terms of quantity and quality, is more sophisticated than that of other groups. ISIL has easily absorbed modern digital and Internet technologies; it uses the access to information online and develops compelling and effective propaganda. It helps ISIL to attract foreign fighters, encourages other terrorist groups to swear allegiance and inspires the followers

to independently carry out terrorist attacks in their own countries. Successful spread of ideology is the aspect of ISIL's activities that poses the greatest threat to European countries.

Since ISIL's involvement in the Syrian conflict in 2013, approximately five thousand fighters from the EU have joined the group. More than a thousand of them have returned to Europe. Members of ISIL with EU passports pose a serious threat to security in Europe. Some members, as instructed by ISIL, establish extremist cells, recruit members and organise funding and logistics. For instance, a part of organisers of the terrorist attack in Paris in November 2015 had returned from Syria.

It is highly likely that in 2016, ISIL will place a greater focus on terrorist attacks in the West by sending its fighters to organise and carry out attacks, inciting and radicalising local population with the help of its propaganda. As a result, the likelihood of terrorist attacks in Western Europe will increase in 2016. A large Muslim population in Western Europe facilitates the organisation of attacks and recruitment of terrorists and helps to ensure a wide media coverage and public attention.

No active terrorist organisations, locally founded extremist groups or independent extremists were detected in Lithuania in 2015. Representatives of Muslim organisations coming from abroad did not carry out any extremist activities in Lithuania. ISIL's intensive propaganda online and invitation to join its established caliphate in 2014 has not stirred up the interest of the Lithuanian population and has not encouraged its radicalisation. There is no data on the involvement of Lithuanian citizens in conflict regions in Syria and Iraq.

■ Reference to Lithuania in the Islamist propaganda

The name of Lithuania and its flag was detected in the jihadist propaganda for the first time in 2015. In September 2015, ISIL published a digital magazine titled DABIQ and a video material online where it made a reference to Lithuania among other members of the international coalition against ISIL. The reference to Lithuania in the general context of the ISIL propaganda does not show a direct threat posed by terrorists. ISIL directs its information campaigns not only against its main enemy – the USA and leading EU countries but also against their allies with the aim of intimidating them.

The likelihood of terrorist attacks in Lithuania is low. In the short term, the level of the threat of terrorism in Lithuania will remain low. Nevertheless, the growing threat of terrorism in Europe, the spread of extremist ideology, return of EU citizens from conflict regions, establishment of independent local radical groups in Europe has an indirect negative effect on national security in Lithuania. In addition, the growing threat of terrorism also draws the attention of Western countries away from security situation in Eastern Europe and aggressive foreign policy of Russian Federation.

Irregular migration

The rate of irregular migration to Europe rocketed high last year. In total, over 1 million of migrants came to EU countries by the Mediterranean Sea; the number is 4.6 times larger than in 2014. Turkey–Greece has become the most popular route to Europe (84 % of all immigrants). This route is much shorter and safer if compared to the route from Libya to Italy chosen by the majority of migrants in 2014.

A rapid increase of migration rates last year resulted from the ongoing conflict in Syria and a variety of other factors. Immigrants were encouraged to come to Europe by its accessibility, simplified EU entry procedures and an open door policy opted by the leaders of some EU member states. This resulted in migrants' growing expectations to live in stable and wealthy Western countries. All these factors have caused the situation which migrants from the Middle East, North Africa, and other countries consider as a unique opportunity to escape from instability, persecution or poverty and start a new life in Europe.

According to the United Nations, 58 % of all migrants are adult males; 49 % of immigrants indicated having arrived from Syria. However, this official statistics is not accurate. A share of immigrants provides false information about their nationality and age. People from other countries often pretend to be Syrian citizens and young men pretend to be underage in order to obtain the asylum in the EU easier. Therefore, the overall number of Syrian citizens among the general flow of immigrants is smaller, while the number of adult men is larger. In addition, sex disproportion among the immigrants can be seen. Over 70 % of immigrants crossing the Mediterranean last year were men. Over 40 % of all immigrants came from Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, North African countries (Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria), etc.

The increasingly growing and uncontrolled migration flows cause political, social and security problems in Europe in both short and long terms. In the short term, the most affected countries face

the problems of registration and verification processes of immigrants, as well as ensuring public order. The vicinity of temporary migrants accommodation centres have witnessed riots, incidents of violence, robberies, and sex-related crimes. Bureaucratic processes of asylum application take a considerable amount of time and do not always end in granting the asylum. Some disappointed and unemployed immigrants engage in criminal activities.

In the longer term, the integration of immigrants could be impeded by significant cultural differences, language barriers and, in some cases, by a deliberate reluctance to integrate. As can be seen by a previous experience of some Western countries, part of the immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa rather tend to adhere to their own cultural and religious norms and to form ghetto-type communities. Such closed communities are unwilling to accept European social norms, respect the laws, and integrate into society. People living in such communities are more susceptible to radical ideas, including propaganda spread by jihadist groups.

Mass migration offers new opportunities for extremist groups. ISIL has repeatedly threatened Western countries with terrorist attacks to be carried out by its members who come along with refugees. The terrorist operation in Paris in November 2015 demonstrated ISIL's capacity to make use of illegal migration flows: two terrorists came to France via irregular migration route from Turkey to Greece with fake Syrian passports. It is highly likely that more members of terrorist organisations or affiliated persons have taken the routes of irregular immigration to enter the EU, where they usually operate in "sleeper cells". These cells are activated, if needed, for executing the attacks or organising financial and logistic support for terrorist activities.

In 2015, the immigration crisis very obviously disrupted the unity of the EU. This negative trend is likely to persist. It will have a negative effect on Lithuania's interests not only because it will hinder the pursuance of consistent EU-related policy but also because the weakening of the EU's unity would be very beneficial to Russia. The migration crisis may deepen the polarisation of European society, result in xenophobic reaction, and increase the popularity of populist radical political parties in some EU countries.

CONCLUSIONS AND FORECASTS

- The greatest threat to national security in Lithuania is posed by:
  – Russia's imperialistic ambitions, aggressive foreign policy and readiness to use military force;
  – Active intelligence activities targeted against Lithuania's interests;
  – Hostile information policy;
  – Attempts to incite hostility among Lithuania's ethnic communities against the Lithuanian state.

- The economic downturn will not have a dominant influence on Russia's intentions to assert its interests in the region. Irrespective of the tactics chosen by Russia, be it strengthening of further confrontation or warming relations with the West, Russia will continue to disrupt the unity of NATO and the EU and undermine security guarantees of countries in the region, including Lithuania.

- Belarus will remain dependant on Russia and will engage in particularly active military cooperation and in activities of security services against Lithuania, the EU, and NATO countries.

- Russia–Ukraine conflict will remain one of the key sources of instability in the region, while the likelihood of the escalation of the conflict will persist. It is quite unlikely that fundamental decisions to reduce the crisis will be taken in the short term.

- Threats posed by hostile foreign intelligence and security services will grow in the short, medium and long terms. The greatest intelligence threat to Lithuania will be posed by activities and cyber espionage of Russian intelligence and security services carried out from the territory of Russia. It will be facilitated by the lack of knowledge about working with classified information in the public sector and a nonchalant attitude to IT security.

- Russia's capability to exert pressure on Lithuania in connection with energy and economy will decrease due to establishment of a competitive market of energy resources in the Baltic States, strengthening of interconnections with the Western energy and transport systems, and new export markets.

- Information and ideological policy will remain one of the key measures that Russia uses to strengthen a favourable perception of historical and political processes and to divide Lithuania's society. With the help of various cultural and historical initiatives, Russia will seek that the largest possible part of Lithuania's society cherishes Russian values. This is Russia's long-term strategic objective.

- With a view to retaining its influence on ethnic communities in Lithuania and impeding the consolidation of Lithuania's society, Russia will continue to allegedly defend the rights of the so-called compatriots and will attempt to involve as much Lithuanian youth as possible in various education and cultural initiatives.

- Direct likelihood of terrorist attacks in Lithuania will remain low in the short term. In the long term, the threat of terrorism in Lithuania can increase due to the growing threat of terrorism in the EU and radicalisation of particular ethno-confession or socio-political communities.

- As the threat of terrorism increases, Western countries will place less focus on Russia's aggressive policy. The migration crisis will continue to shatter the unity of the EU. This will have a negative impact on the security situation in Lithuania.