



SECOND
INVESTIGATION
DEPARTMENT
UNDER THE
MINISTRY OF
NATIONAL DEFENCE



STATE SECURITY
DEPARTMENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF
LITHUANIA

NATIONAL THREAT ASSESSMENT 2020



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INTRODUCTION

The National Security Threat Assessment by the Second Investigation Department under the Ministry of National Defence (AOTD) and the State Security Department of the Republic of Lithuania (VSD) is presented to the public in accordance with the Articles 8 and 26 of the Law on Intelligence of the Republic of Lithuania. The document provides consolidated, unclassified assessment of threats and risks to national security of the Republic of Lithuania prepared by both intelligence services.

The document assesses events, processes and trends that make the biggest influence on national security situation in the Republic of Lithuania. Based on them and considering the long-term trends affecting national security, the document provides the assessment of major challenges that the Lithuanian national security is to face in the near term (2020–2021). The assessments of long-term trends project the perspective up to 10 years.

The assessment is based on information available before 10 December 2019.

The table below outlines the language of probability and definition of terms used in this assessment:

< 25 %	25–50 %	50–75 %	> 75 %
UNLIKELY	POSSIBLE	LIKELY	HIGHLY LIKELY



SUMMARY

■ **The main threat to Lithuania's national security is Russia's foreign and security policies driven by the Kremlin's desire to ensure the regime's stability and demonstrate its indispensability to domestic audience.** While dissatisfaction with declining living standards and actions of authoritarian regime in Russia has been on the rise, even the largest protests in Moscow in recent years have failed to mobilise a largely passive society.

■ **Russia's increasing military potential and activity in the Western Military District and Kaliningrad region, as well as its deepening military integration with Belarus, has a negative impact on Lithuania's military security.** Russia is consistently strengthening its conventional and nuclear capabilities, developing new armaments and conducting large-scale exercises. Russia's military potential and the rapid centralized decision-making create a significant advantage for Russia over Lithuania and other neighbouring states.

■ **The Russian intelligence and security services that are closely cooperating with the Belarusian intelligence and security services pose the main intelligence threat to Lithuania.** The system of free electronic visas to Kaliningrad and St. Petersburg allows Russian intelligence services to collect information from visiting tourists and to look for recruitment targets. Russian intelligence services not only actively collect intelligence information related to Lithuania, but also seek to carry out influence activities through the Russian compatriot community in Lithuania.

■ **Ongoing malicious use of Russian and Chinese cyber capabilities is being observed in Lithuanian cyberspace.** The biggest threat to the security of Lithuanian information systems, and the information stored in them, is the cyber espionage of the Russian intelligence services. The development of 5G technology without sufficient focus on the trustworthiness of the IT service or product provider may become a new risk factor.

■ **In the information domain, events that underpin Lithuania's statehood and testify to its resistance to the Soviet occupation are the main targets of the Russian propaganda and its history policy.** For this reason, Russian propaganda seeks to convince foreign and domestic audiences that those convicted during the case of January 1991 coup case are unduly persecuted political prisoners.

■ **The biggest risk to Lithuania's energy independence comes from Russia's aim to maintain its dominance over the Baltic energy markets.** Russian energy companies seek to establish themselves in the Lithuanian liquefied natural gas market and try to adapt to new conditions shaped by Lithuanian projects ensuring energy independence. The Belarusian nuclear power plant under construction in the vicinity of Lithuania does not comply with international safety standards. Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation 'Rosatom' ignores unfavourable findings of international and Belarusian experts, neglects demands of construction supervisory bodies and seeks to cover up incidents.

■ **Russia seeks to expand its influence in the West through parliamentary diplomacy.** In bilateral and multilateral parliamentary diplomacy fora, the Kremlin looks for foreign politicians and public figures to represent its position internationally and to influence political processes in their own countries. Moscow's main goals are to legitimize the results of its aggression against Ukraine and to incite disagreements among Western countries about the policy of sanctions against Russia.

■ **The Commonwealth of Independent States remains the key area for Russia in terms of maintaining its influence.** Russia's negotiations with Belarus on energy cooperation and deeper integration shift to political pressure. Despite Minsk's relative success in delaying decisions on further integration, Belarus' financial and economic dependence on Russia enables Moscow to pursue deeper political integration.

■ **In order to regain its global power status, Russia attempts to discredit Western policies in geopolitically important regions and expand its influence there.** The Kremlin tries to halt the Western integration of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia and bring them back into the Russian sphere of influence. Russia expands its influence in the Middle East, North and Central Africa, South America, and the Arctic.

■ **China expands its influence around the world by consolidating support on international arena for its global political agenda.** China's pursuit of technological advantage and its penetrating investment activities increase the vulnerability of other states and pose the risk of losing control over the critical infrastructure. Russia's confrontation with the West in international arena encourages Moscow to coordinate its interests with China. These countries maintain close political and military relations and coordinate positions on international issues.

■ **The level of terrorist threat in Lithuania remains low.** While the number of terrorist attacks is on the decline in the European Union, ISIL and Al Qaeda continue to pose a major terrorist threat. The change of the ISIL leader has had little effect on the viability of the organization. ISIL still seeks to fulfil its vision of a 'caliphate', continues its anti-Western propaganda, and incites extremists and supporters online to independent attacks in Western countries. The threat of terrorist attacks by right-wing extremists in Europe is increasing.

REGIONAL SECURITY



REUTERS / Scanpix

WHY RUSSIA POSES A THREAT TO LITHUANIA?

Russia's foreign and security policies pose a threat to Lithuania's national security. In their pursuit Russia seeks to: 1) undermine the sovereignty of other states and increase its influence there; 2) weaken NATO and the EU, confront their policies, and sow discord among Allies; 3) replace international system based on the rule of law with 'pragmatic' agreements made behind closed doors; 4) develop offensive capabilities of its armed forces and intelligence services, increase the effectiveness of their use against foreign countries.

Russia's foreign and security policies are driven by the interests of the Kremlin and its threat perception. The Kremlin's fundamental objective is to ensure stability of the regime. The Russian political and military authorities consider that the West seeks to impose a regime change. Therefore, the Kremlin seeks to halt NATO enlargement, restrict the exposure of Russian society to democratic political culture, and limit the activities of civil movements and media critical of the regime.

Moscow sees international relations as an arena of geopolitical competition between the great powers and their alliances. Moscow considers it necessary to expand its sphere of influence at the expense of its perceived opponents. The Kremlin sees the development of Russia's geopolitical influence as securing its national interests and presents this to the domestic audience as evidence of the regime's effectiveness and indispensability.

The regime effectively combines political and diplomatic activities with economic and military clout. By providing attractive offers for hydrocarbons, arms or other trade deals, the Kremlin is increasing political dependence of other countries on Russia. Moscow uses these methods in an attempt to weaken the unity of NATO and the EU, to undermine the rules based international order, and to secure its global military presence.

Russia is able to use its military power quickly and efficiently in order to achieve its political goals, especially in the situations where potential repercussions do not include unacceptable losses. Russia used such 'windows of opportunity' to occupy part of Ukraine and to consolidate its military presence in Syria. The Kremlin also dispatched its military advisers, instructors, and private military companies to other crisis regions.

THE SURVIVAL STRATEGY OF THE RUSSIAN REGIME IS SECLUSION AND REPRESSION

The year 2019, especially its second half, was marked by the largest protests in Russia since 2011 and 2012, when population protested against the falsification of the parliamentary and presidential elections results. This time, protests also broke out because of elections, when in mid-July 2019 Moscow City Electoral Commission refused to register virtually all candidates opposing the regime.

The use of administrative resources in elections is a common practice used by the Russian authorities. However, this year the refusal to register opposition candidates led to unexpected public resistance. There was outrage over the undisguised application of double standards by the authorities, which rejected the majority of signatures submitted by opposition but accepted all signatures for candidates endorsed by the regime.

Dissatisfaction with the regime in Russia has been on the rise since 2018 when a wave of protests over pension reform occurred. Six months after the record-breaking victory in presidential elections in March 2018, Vladimir Putin's ratings began to decline and the ruling party 'United Russia' had one of the worst performances of the last decade in regional elections.

Citizens' dissatisfaction with the government is increased by the protracted stagnation of the Russian economy. While the country's GDP has been rising marginally for the last three years, the real income of the Russian population has been on decline since 2014. In fact, the Kremlin was so fed up with the pessimistic figures provided by the Russian Federal State Statistics Service that decided to replace its chief executive and to revamp the methodology for calculating real income, which was supposedly outdated and did not reflect the real-life situation. The data since 2013 had to be reviewed and a more optimistic version of the country's economic situation was to be presented. This very much mirrors the use of statistics in Soviet-era propaganda, which had to prove just how good life was in what was supposedly the most powerful country in the world.

The regime also responds bureaucratically to the decline of its popularity. In the 2019 regional elections, a large number of regime-sponsored candidates campaigned as formally independent candidates in order to disguise their ties with 'United Russia'. Even more so than usual, the nomination of candidates



Moscow protest participants were massively detained
AP / Scanpix

was tightly controlled and critics of the regime, or at least more popular personalities, who could take away votes from regime candidates, were prevented from running in the elections.

The regime tried to suppress the Moscow protests by creating an atmosphere of fear. Protest organizers were often detained before protest actions took place, jailed, and significant financial charges were pressed against them for alleged damage. Attempts were made to detain as many protesters as possible and criminal proceedings were launched in an extremely expeditious manner against those who allegedly used violence against law enforcement officers. Court proceedings indicated that Russia is becoming a nation-wide surveillance state. It has not so far been publicly known, for example, that many public areas in Moscow are surveilled with facial recognition cameras. The data collected was used solely for the benefit of the regime – records which could prove that charges against protesters have been fabricated were not accepted as evidence by the courts.

Russia accused the West of organizing protests in Moscow and has set up two parliamentary commissions to investigate this. Their main evidence was the routine embassy safety recommendations to their citizens about places to be avoided during protests. The organization of Alexei Navalny, one of the opposition leaders, that has been most actively involved in organizing the protests has been declared a foreign agent and charged with money laundering from abroad.

The results of the 2019 regional elections confirmed the trend that popular support for 'United Russia' is declining, but not as sharp as to challenge ruling party's dominant position. The opposition has been able to mobilize a small section of the public for protests but has failed to mobilize voters. The intimidation tactics of the ruling regime were also effective – the post-election protest movement began to focus on attempts to protect persecuted protesters, but not on claiming further political rights.

The Russian ruling regime is no longer able to offer its citizens the increase in prosperity and does not have a clear strategy how to halt declining public support – except to restrict political participation and the last vestiges of freedom of expression. However, it successfully conveys to citizens the idea that politics is an evil to be avoided. The situation in Russia is similar to the Soviet period of 'stagnation' with paternalistic politics, ritualized political participation, and indispensable leaders.

THE KREMLIN EXPLOITS INTERPARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY TO EXPAND CONTACTS AND INFLUENCE

The importance of interparliamentary diplomacy as one of the Kremlin's foreign policy tools has been increasing since 2014. As a result of the annexation of Crimea, and the aggression in eastern Ukraine, many democratic states have restricted bilateral relations with Russia, and the Kremlin has begun prioritizing other ways to spread its attitudes and influence. The Kremlin assesses that governments in many Western countries are dominated by anti-Russian parties, but political representation in the parliaments is more diverse and often include persons willing to mend ties with the Kremlin. Interparliamentary diplomacy enables the Kremlin to convey important messages through these individuals, to reach broader audience abroad, and to convince its intermediaries to exert pressure on their own governments to adopt a softer policy towards Russia.



More than 800 participants from 132 countries, including 41 speakers of national parliaments and 14 international interparliamentary organizations, attended the Second International Forum on the Development of Parliamentarism in Moscow in the summer of 2019.

“Interparliamentary cooperation can and must become one of the cornerstones of international relations.” Chairwoman of the Federation Council Valentina Matviyenko

duma.gov.ru

Interparliamentary diplomacy in Russia is a centralized process serving the interests of the authoritarian regime and not an independent initiative of parliamentarians. In Russia, foreign policy is strictly coordinated and controlled by the Presidential Administration. In terms of the functions it actually performs, the Parliament – both the State Duma and the Federation Council – is the rubber-stamp of decisions made in the Kremlin. This is illustrated by the fact that in 2019 members of the Duma voted against legislative proposals in less than one percent of all individual votes. It is therefore highly likely that no parliamentary initiative, especially concerning foreign policy, is implemented without the knowledge and consent of the Russian Presidential Administration.

Russia exploits interparliamentary cooperation in its bilateral relations with foreign countries, as well as through active participation in various international parliamentary structures and through the organization of conferences on parliamentarism. The State Duma has established interparliamentary liaison groups with many countries (including Lithuania) and 14 interparliamentary

commissions with foreign countries. The Duma is a member of 17 interparliamentary assemblies, including the Inter-Parliamentary Orthodox Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly.

Russia is inviting foreign parliamentarians to Crimea to justify and legitimize the results of its aggression against Ukraine and to demonstrate to international and domestic audiences that at least some political forces in the West support Russia in this conflict. Interparliamentary diplomacy is also often used to establish informal contacts and to gain direct influence over foreign politicians while offering them and their families travel arrangements with hospitality packages, media publicity, and financial support.

Russia exploits contacts for its own interests, even with foreign politicians who are critical of Russia's ruling regime. The Kremlin presents any attempt to engage in dialogue as an alternative to allegedly ineffective policy of containment and sanctions against Russia and seeks to sow discord among allies.

In 2019, Russia regained voting rights in the PACE, which were suspended in 2014 following Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Dissatisfied with the suspension, Russia has repeatedly stressed that membership of the PACE is not a necessity and has threatened to withdraw from the Council of Europe. But its actions did not match its rhetoric – Russia has consistently made diplomatic efforts to bring together a majority in support of its return. The PACE is the most representative assembly in Europe and Russia seeks to exploit it for advancing its foreign policy agenda.

To the Russian domestic audiences the return of full rights to the Russian delegation in the PACE is presented as actual recognition of the annexation of Crimea and thus a significant victory for Putin's policy. The composition of the new Russian delegation at the PACE is also telling. Of the 18 delegation members, five have direct links to Russian aggression against Ukraine. Duma members Leonid Slutskiy, Leonid Kalashnikov, Igor Lebedev, and Svetlana Zhurova are currently subject to EU sanctions for their active role in supporting the annexation of Crimea. The delegation also includes senator Vladimir Kozhin who, as a former influential official of the Presidential Administration, faces US sanctions for Russian actions in Ukraine. Another senator, Sergey Kislyak, was Russia's ambassador to the US from 2008 to 2017 – his activities were exposed during the investigation on Russian meddling in the 2016 US elections.

Leonid Slutskiy, a member of the Russian delegation to the PACE and chairman of the Duma's Committee on International Affairs, actively cooperates with radical movements across Europe in favor of the Kremlin. As head of the Russian Peace Foundation (*Российский Фонд Мира*) he organizes election observation missions in annexed Crimea.



TASS / Scanpix

BELARUS-RUSSIA RELATIONS: DEEPER INTEGRATION IN EXCHANGE FOR ECONOMIC SUPPORT

Russia seeks to increase its influence on Belarus by using its weak, non-diversified and dependent on Russian energy resources economy as the main lever. Periodically renewed bilateral negotiations on energy cooperation often evolve into political pressure and confrontation. Moscow ties its economic support to Belarus to the implementation of the 1999 treaty regarding the Union State of Russia and Belarus.

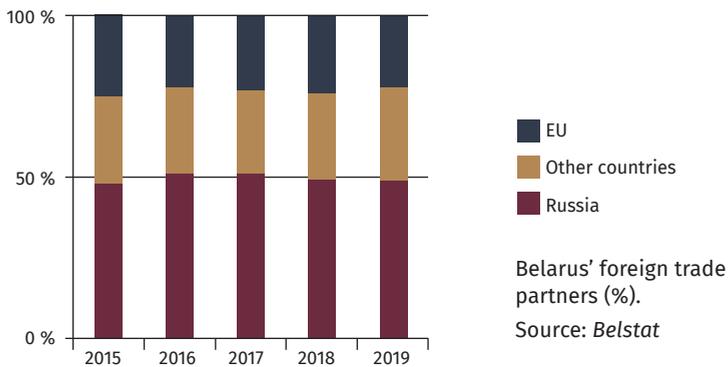
Negotiations for deeper integration between the two countries are complicated by divergent positions and interests. Belarus seeks first to resolve major bilateral economic problems before negotiating any deeper integration. The main demands of Belarus are compensation for Russia's gradually implemented tax reform in the oil sector; supply of natural gas at the Russian domestic market price; stable and unrestricted export of Belarusian dairy and other agricultural products to Russia; and refinancing of Belarusian debt with new Russian loans. Meanwhile, Russia seeks closer political integration by imposing unacceptable conditions on Belarus.

The envisioned integration program covers energy, industry, agriculture, taxation and customs, monetary, social security and labour policies. The program is expected to be implemented between 2021 and 2023 thus it is highly likely that in the mid term Russia's pressure on Belarus will only increase. So far, Minsk has succeeded in delaying Moscow's intentions to develop the political dimension of the Union State which would include the creation of supranational institutions. Due to the conflicting interests, the complexity of the integration objectives, and the ability of Belarus to delay the implementation of already signed agreements, at least in the near term the Union State project is unlikely to make any substantial progress.



Putin's increasing pressure will not allow Belarus president Lukashenko (on the left) to relax. *Sputnik / Scanpix*

Although Belarus declares foreign trade diversification as its goal, Russia remains its main trading partner. In order to reduce its dependence on Russia, Belarus looks for alternative sources of financing and energy supplies, including cooperation with China on granting loans and with Kazakhstan and other countries on supply of oil and petroleum products. Nevertheless, in the mid-term Belarus is unlikely to reduce its financial and economic dependence on Russia. The increase in Russia's political influence over Belarus, fuelled by this dependence, will negatively affect regional security.



AN UNDEMOCRATIC POLITICAL SYSTEM IS AT THE ROOT OF BELARUS' WEAKNESS

As expected the Belarusian parliamentary elections in November 2019 – a rehearsal for the Belarus presidential election in 2020 – did not meet democratic standards. From the start of the election campaign, opposition parties faced with unfavourable and discriminatory conditions, opposition-nominated individuals were not allowed to serve as members of electoral commissions. Currently, political opposition in Belarus is not capable of posing a more serious challenge to regime's candidates. This is due to a longstanding policy of persecution and control of the political opposition, as well as a lack of unity among regime-critical political organizations.

Unlike in previous elections, no opposition representatives were 'admitted' to the country's parliament. Real democratic change remains a threat to Lukashenko's rule, furthermore, president's longstanding authoritarian leadership has not only de facto destroyed civil society and rendered other authorities ineffective, but has also diminished the importance of politics in general. Perception of politics in Belarus is reduced to routine management of economic affairs.

In order to maintain power without democratizing the country, the Belarusian political regime gradually became hostage of its own policies. Although the president presents himself as a defender of the Belarusian sovereignty, his longstanding authoritarian policies and procrastination of necessary structural reforms have weakened Belarus and reduced its ability to withstand increasing pressure from Moscow.



In March 2019, Lukashenko inspected a dairy farm in the Mogilev region. Outraged by the housing conditions of the cattle, the president dismissed three local officials, including the district governor. AP / Scanpix

MILITARY SECURITY

RUSSIAN ARMED FORCES ARE GAINING STRENGTH

Russia steadily increases its military power and uses it to enable foreign and security policy endeavours. As a result, Russia's military and security remains one of the most generously funded sectors and the pace of strengthening the armed forces is steady – military infrastructure is being developed, new military units are being created, and the armed forces are being equipped with modern weaponry and combat equipment. By 2020, a phase of State Armament Programme will be complete, with the share of new and modernized armament and combat equipment expected to reach 70 percent. The number of professional contract soldiers increases, but Russia does not intend to completely abandon conscription.



Launch of cruise missiles Kalibr
TASS / Scanpix

Russia continues to strengthen its conventional capabilities and maintains the ability to rapidly generate forces in its Western Strategic Direction, which includes Lithuania. The manoeuvre units (brigades and regiments) are able to form battalion tactical groups (700–800 soldiers), which are fully manned and equipped. These groups are fully professional and are capable to operate with 24 to 48 hours' notice. Russia's ability to generate forces quickly and its particularly rapid and centralized decision-making would enable (at least in the early stages of the conflict) it to gain military advantage over its neighbours.

In addition to developing conventional capabilities, Russia focuses on strategic nuclear forces. Consistent re-arming of the nuclear triad – strategic missile troops, strategic nuclear submarines and long-range (strategic) aviation – with new missiles and their carriers is ongoing. Newly developed hypersonic missiles are designed to overcome missile defence systems.

Large-scale strategic exercises take place on a regular basis, enhancing Russia's capability to act simultaneously in multiple conflicts on various scales. For example, in August 2019, Russia held a large-scale strategic naval forces exercise Ocean Shield which involved combat and support vessels from



Russian strategic exercise Tsentr-2019
SIPA / Scanpix

several fleets and multiple aircraft. Geographical coverage of the exercise ranged from the Baltic and North Seas to the North Atlantic and the Barents Sea in the Arctic.

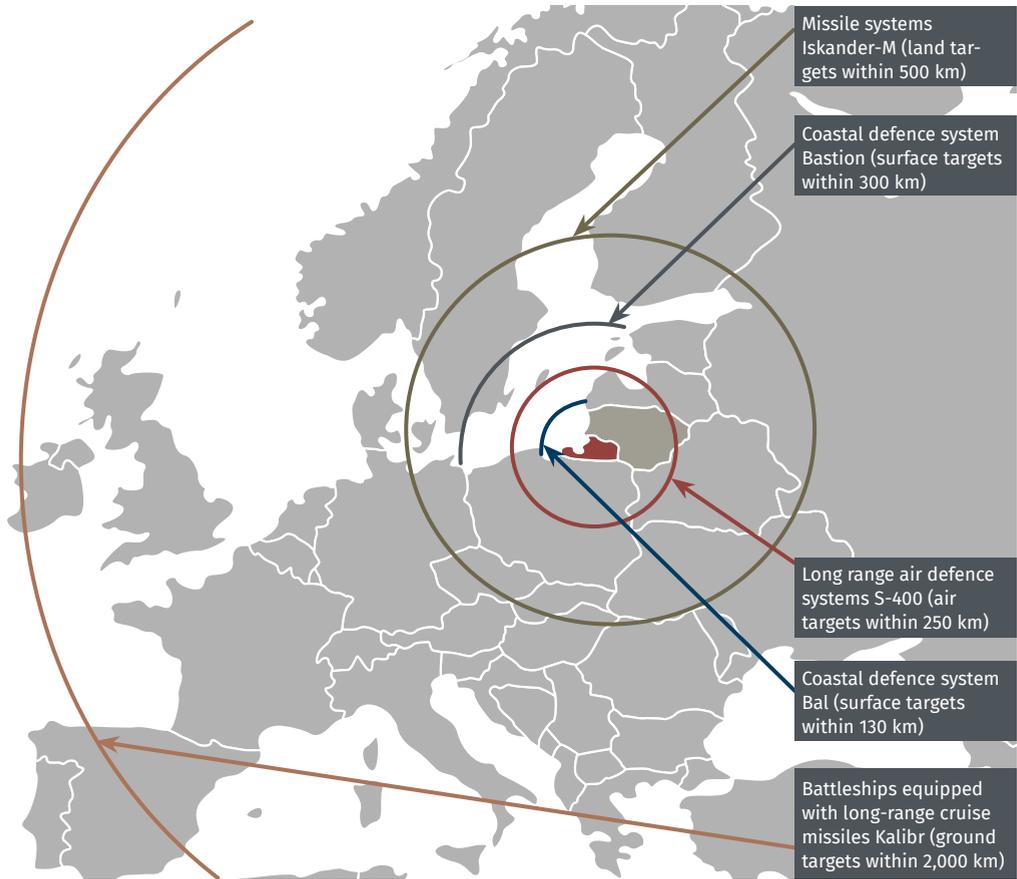
The biggest strategic exercise of the year Tsentr took place in September. According to official announcements, it involved 128,000 troops, with about 2,000 of them coming from other members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Those were mainly Chinese troops (about 1,500), while the rest came from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, India, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. Although the exercise took place not only in the central part of Russia, but also in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, the participation of many foreign countries in the exercise was rather a symbolic demonstration of solidarity than a real improvement of interoperability with the Russian armed forces. Nevertheless, Russia's decision to invite representatives from seven different foreign countries to the exercise demonstrates Moscow's efforts to become a key mediator in global security issues.

In October 2019, during the nuclear exercise Grom Russia launched ballistic and cruise missiles capable of carrying nuclear weapons. According to official figures, approximately 12,000 personnel from Russian strategic missile troops, long-range aviation and transport aviation, Eastern, Southern, Central and Western military districts participated in the exercise.

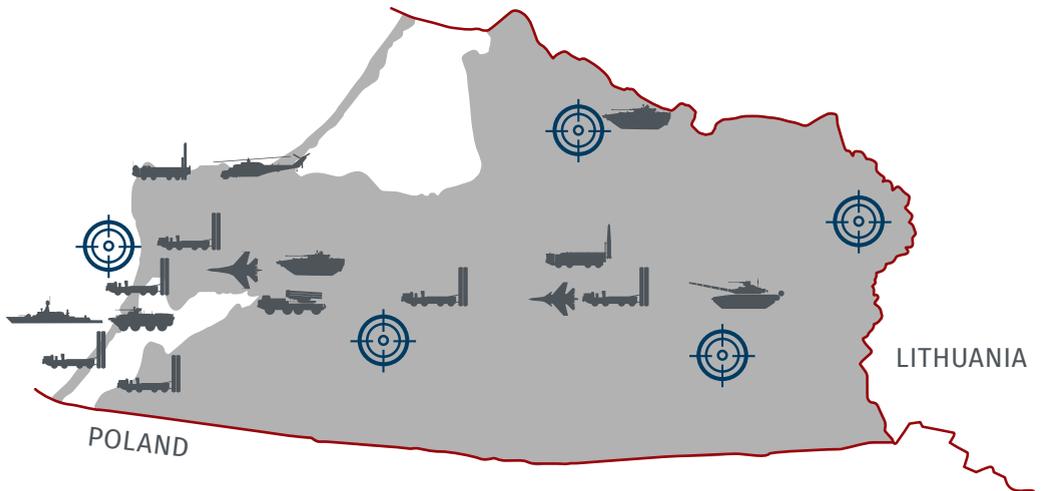
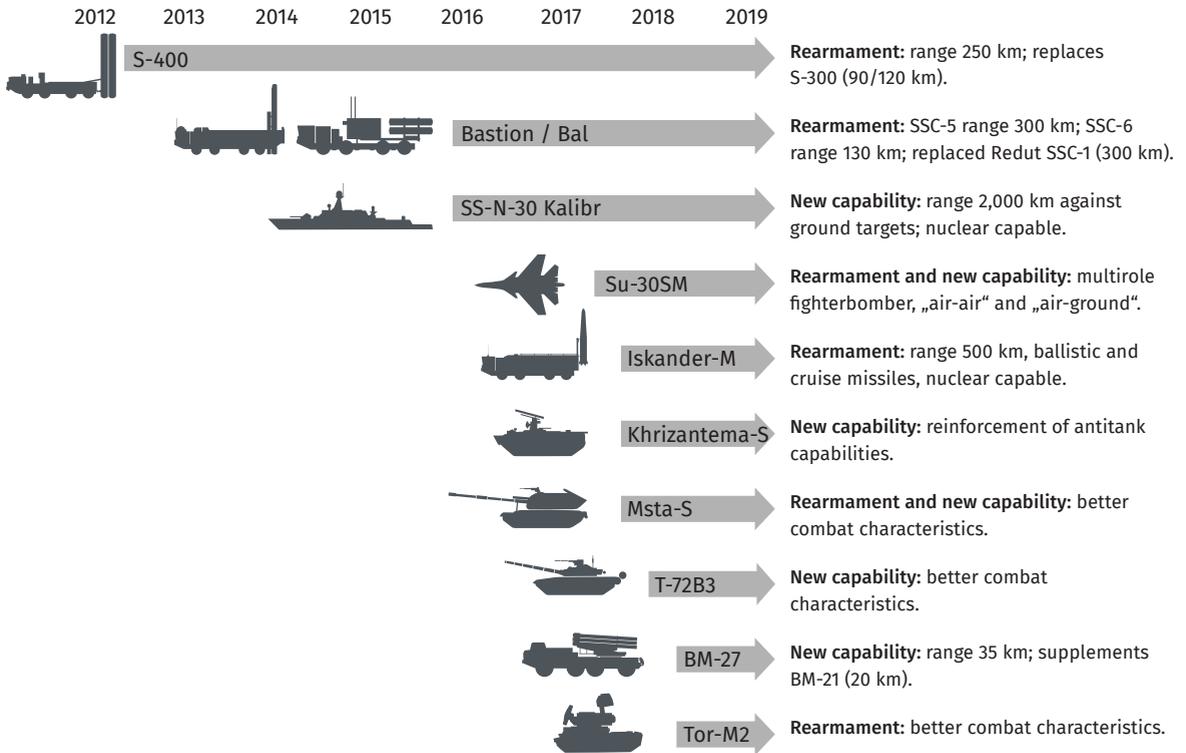
KALININGRAD MILITARY GROUPING IS DESIGNED TO DENY WESTERN ACCESS TO THE BALTIC REGION

Military development in the Kaliningrad region reflects the process ongoing in all Russian armed forces. In the vicinity of Lithuania, Russia develops its capacity to create anti-access and area denial A2 / AD effect which would allow Russia to maintain a favourable balance of forces during the initial phase of a potential conflict. This set of military measures is designed to isolate the region and to minimize NATO's access during a crisis or a war.

KEY A2 / AD WEAPON SYSTEMS DEPLOYED IN THE KALININGRAD REGION



CONSISTENT STRENGTHENING OF MILITARY CAPABILITIES IN KALININGRAD REGION



- | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| | Motorifle Brigade (Bde) | | Bastion/Bal Missile Bde | | Helicopter Reg |
| | Naval Infantry Bde | | Tank Regiment (Reg) | | Air Defence Missile Battalion |
| | Artillery Bde | | Fighter Reg | | Baltiysk Naval Base |
| | Iskander Missile Bde | | Bomber Reg | | Training range |

Russia intensively develops and deploys long-range weapon systems capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear payload. The number of vessels capable of carrying 'Kalibr' cruise missiles is steadily increasing. These Russian missile systems can strike a potential adversary's critical infrastructure within 2,000 kilometres range. Kaliningrad witnesses a steady increase of these capabilities. Four ships were delivered there in 2016 to 2019 and the fifth 'Kalibr' equipped ship should be delivered in 2020. In Kaliningrad, Russia retains the tactical nuclear weapon capabilities.

In addition, a mixed aviation division with two aviation regiments – fighter aviation regiment and a bomber regiment – were re-established in Kaliningrad. A helicopter regiment was also formed. In the Kaliningrad region, modern Su-30SM / FLANKER-H multi-role fighter jets are deployed and are actively used in combat training. A new larger military unit – the motorized rifle division will be established in Kaliningrad. It will increase the capability of forces there to conduct military operations without reinforcement from mainland Russia. The development of larger units in the Kaliningrad region demonstrates the long-term intentions of Russia's political and military leadership to continue gradual build-up of military capabilities in this exclave.

Military activity is particularly intense at the Dobrovolsk range near the Lithuanian state border used for training by the units of the 11th Army Corps and the Baltic Fleet aircraft. It has a negative impact on Lithuania's security environment and increases the risk of unintended incidents.

Baltic national armed forces and NATO Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) battalions deployed in the region reduce Russia's ability to initiate a potential military conflict and rapidly achieve desirable results, avoiding a large-scale Alliance involvement. This reduces the likelihood that Russia will resort to military force against the Baltic States. However, Russia will further seek to persuade NATO Allies decision-makers and societies that additional security measures in the Baltic region are increasing tensions.

MINSK SEES ITS MILITARY INTEGRATION WITH RUSSIA AS ITS SECURITY GUARANTEE

Belarus perceives Russia as a key security guarantor against military threats. Countries conduct combined military exercises to improve interoperability of their armed forces. Russian military industry remains one of the most important sources of modernization of the Belarusian armed forces.

With certain distinctions the Belarusian threat perception regarding NATO is similar to Russia's approach. Belarus, unlike Russia, does not have the 'superpower' mentality. Therefore, Belarusians are less critical of NATO enlargement, even though Minsk regards the Alliance as a risk factor for Belarus. Moreover, lack of trust between Lukashenko and Putin encourages Minsk to avoid permanent deployment of Russian armed forces in Belarus. In the near to mid term, Lukashenko will highly likely try to maintain his freedom to maneuver despite the military alliance with Russia. However, Minsk's security and defence policy will completely correspond to Moscow's interests.

Belarus and Russia pay special attention to military interaction. They constantly renew their plans for military activities and test their effectiveness every two years alternately in 'Union Shield' and 'Zapad' exercises. Belarus and Russia continue to develop and integrate their military elements – the Regional Military Grouping and the Unified Regional Air Defence System. Interoperability of respective units is tested through combined smaller-scale exercises. Belarus and Russia develop and improve the infrastructure ensuring functionality and improving efficiency of the Regional Military Grouping. Belarus pays significant effort to develop host country capabilities.

The Belarusian military leadership aims to modernize the Belarusian armed forces, to provide them with modern armaments and military equipment. However, Russia remains the primary source of new military equipment for Belarus. The Belarusian armed forces have acquired from Russia 12 light attack aircraft Yak-130 / MITTEN and early-warning radars 'Protivnik', continues modernization of tanks. In 2019, Belarus received from Russia its first Su-30SM / FLANKER-H multifunctional fighter jets. By 2021 Belarus plans to purchase a total of 12 of these aircraft.

ACTIVITIES OF HOSTILE INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY SERVICES

RUSSIAN INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITY IN LITHUANIA REMAINS INTENSE

Effective counterintelligence measures applied by the Lithuanian intelligence community make the territory of Lithuania a hard operating environment for Russian intelligence and security services. However, to offset these limitations Russian intelligence increased the use of technical means and human intelligence from Russian territory. Different counter-intelligence methods are used to observe and prevent the activities of hostile intelligence services and persons related to them against Lithuanian national interests.

In 2019, three Lithuanian citizens were convicted of spying for Russia. According to the tasks received from Russian intelligence they collected non-classified but not publicly available information about the Lithuanian armed forces, military and other infrastructure of strategic importance. This type of information is used by Russian military for operational planning.

LITHUANIA CARRIED OUT ITS FIRST EXCHANGE OF PERSONS CONVICTED OF ESPIONAGE WITH RUSSIA

In 2019, Lithuania carried out its first exchange with Russia of persons convicted of espionage. Lithuania handed over to Russia convicted Russian intelligence officers Sergei Moiseyenko and Nikolai Filipchenko. Russia handed over a convicted citizen of Lithuania and a dual citizen of Lithuania and the Russian Federation. Along with them, the exchange also involved a citizen of the Kingdom of Norway sentenced in Russia. This exchange became possible when Lithuania and Russia reached a mutually acceptable agreement.

At the time of his arrest Filipchenko was an officer for particularly important cases in the Intelligence Division of the FSB Directorate for the Kaliningrad region. Filipchenko participated in the FSB intelligence operation aimed at penetrating Lithuanian government institutions, Lithuanian law enforcement and intelligence services. One of the goals of this FSB operation was to target officers of the Dignitary Protection Department under the Ministry of Interior who were responsible for protection of the President of Lithuania and could tap communications at both the office and residence of the Lithuanian President in exchange for payment.

The other person transferred to Russia, Moiseyenko, was a Russian intelligence officer who conducted long-term espionage in Lithuania and had formed a circle of trusted persons and agents. In Lithuania, he recruited a Lithuanian armed forces' officer who provided national and NATO, classified and non-classified but not publicly available information to Russian intelligence.



A counterintelligence operation resulted in arrest of two individuals – the head of the meteorological unit of the air operations support squadron and a reserve captain of the Lithuanian armed forces. The head of the meteorological unit photographed official documents containing information about the military infrastructure and equipment deployed at the Lithuanian Air Force air base. Later, he passed this information to the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (GRU). Meanwhile, the reserve captain acted as an intermediary and was exploited for the transmission of technical means for espionage and instructions, and for the collection and transportation of collected information to Russian territory.

Another counterintelligence operation led to arrest of a Lithuanian citizen with no direct links to the national defence system. However, the GRU used him to execute intelligence tasks at the port of Klaipėda. He collected and passed information about Lithuanian armed forces and NATO vessels coming to Klaipėda, military equipment carried by them, as well as information about other objects located in Klaipėda city and Klaipėda port which are of strategic importance for the national security.

All of the above-mentioned Lithuanian citizens were recruited by the GRU in Russia. It is highly likely that the GRU chose the head of the meteorological unit as a recruitment target because of his position at strategic air force base and his regular trips to Russia. On the ground of real and alleged violations of public order, customs, border control, and migration regulations he was detained on Russian territory, interrogated, and recruited. The recruitment of the other two Lithuanian citizens was even easier as they both were living in Russia.

Typical recruitment scheme



Potential target selection



Establishing a contact



Developing friendly relationships



Recruitment



Exploitation for espionage activities

Belarus is Russia's most important ally in intelligence activities against Lithuania. Belarusian intelligence services actively cooperate with Russian intelligence and support their operations in Belarus. Recruitment cases on Russian territory prove that trips to Russia and Belarus can significantly increase the likelihood of recruitment of those Lithuanian citizens who are of interest to Russian intelligence.

FREE VISAS TO RUSSIA OPEN MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RUSSIAN INTELLIGENCE SERVICES

In 2019, Russia introduced free electronic visas for the citizens of Lithuania and 52 other countries to the Kaliningrad region, St. Petersburg, and the Leningrad region. In this way, Russia hopes to promote tourism and generate additional income. This decision not only provides additional travel opportunities for Lithuanian residents, but also poses a risk to national security.

Visa facilitation and the consequent increase of foreigners traveling to Russia are particularly favourable to Russian intelligence services. They systematically search for foreigners able to provide intelligence on foreign countries or perform other tasks. The Federal Security Service (FSB) and the GRU develop and use this foreign intelligence method known as intelligence from the territory. Majority of Russian espionage cases identified in the Baltic States in recent years were examples of intelligence from the territory – residents of the Baltic States who agreed to cooperate with Russian intelligence were recruited in Russia.

Russian intelligence services receive information about foreigners coming to Russia at the moment they submit their visa applications. Among the travelers Russian intelligence services look for individuals who may possess valuable information or who are perceived as vulnerable. The Russian intelligence services pay special attention to former and active politicians, businessmen, law enforcement officers, military personnel, and journalists traveling to Russia.

However, Russian intelligence services increasingly tend to recruit anyone they can and decide later how to use them as agents. For instance, they can be tasked to collect visual information, disseminate propaganda, act as intermediaries or provide operational support.

In Russia the FSB and the GRU operate aggressively, and particularly often use compromising information and blackmail in their recruitment operations. NATO security services identified many cases where Russian intelligence services used aggressive measures when establishing contacts with foreigners. They simulate incidents with local law enforcement, migration or financial institutions threaten to restrict business or personal trips to Russia, initiate acquaintance with co-optees of Russian intelligence to establish intimate relations.



Those traveling to Russia are advised to avoid traveling alone and violating public order; to possess valid documents and necessary permits; to provide truthful information in visa application; to consume moderate amounts of alcohol; to avoid carrying primary mobile and computer devices; to critically assess new acquaintances, offers and requests.

RUSSIAN INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES SEEK TO EXPLOIT RUSSIAN COMPATRIOTS IN LITHUANIA

In order to expand its influence in the post-Soviet space, Russia employs 'soft power' means such as influence over the Russian-speaking diaspora, history policy, promotion of Russian language and culture, strengthening of cultural cooperation. Plenty of institutions engage in cultivating the Russian 'soft power', including means the Russian Presidential Administration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, diplomatic missions abroad, the federal agency 'Rossotrudnichestvo', multiple foundations and government-controlled 'non-governmental' organizations (GONGO's). In addition to these relatively openly operating institutions and organizations, the Russian intelligence services are secretly engaged in Russian 'soft power' activities with the aim to influence foreign audiences.

Systematic and covert attempts by the Russian FSB to spread certain historical narratives and to influence the Russian compatriots are observed in Lithuania. One of the most active individuals in these activities is the FSB officer Pyotr Chagin. For intelligence activities against Lithuania he uses the cover of 'Fond Pobedy' (Фонд Победы), a non-existent organization in the Kaliningrad region. In his legend the FSB officer adopted a fictitious identity of Petras Taraškevičius and claimed to be representative of 'Fond Pobedy' in Lithuania.



FSB officer Chagin who also uses a fictitious identity of Petras Taraškevičius

Operating from the Kaliningrad region, Chagin developed contacts with representatives of Russian compatriot organizations in Lithuania and exploited them to organize and fund multiple events. These events were meant to underline a positive impact the Soviet Union and Russia made on the development of Lithuania. For example, the FSB officer took a keen interest in the organization of the 'Immortal Regiment' (Бессмертный Полк) campaign in Klaipėda that corresponded with the overall goals of Russian history policy. Similarly, without disclosing the true authorship Chagin used his contacts to publish articles prepared by the FSB in Russian language media in Lithuania.

Through his contacts Chagin not only tried to influence Lithuanian public opinion, but also collected intelligence on the situation in the Russian compatriot community, political situation in Lithuanian municipalities, and showed interest in certain Lithuanian citizens. Chagin observed conspiracy typical to intelligence officers – he never came to Lithuania, set up meetings with his contacts only in Russia, communicated with them via multiple electronic means.

Chagin's case shows that Russian intelligence services try to take advantage of the Russian compatriot community and engage them in illegal activities.

EVENTS FUNDED BY THE FSB

11-04-2018 Concert in Vilnius to commemorate the International Day for the Release of Prisoners of Concentration Camps

29-05-2018 Commemoration of Victory Day in Klaipėda

22-06-2018 Event in Klaipėda to commemorate the beginning of the Soviet Union war with Germany

12-04-2019 Concert on the Day of the Russian Border Guard in Klaipėda

09-05-2019 Concert of Victory Day in Šiauliai

22-06-2019 Event in Klaipėda to commemorate the beginning of the Soviet Union war with Germany

However, Chagin's intelligence activities in Lithuania were short of success. The events he funded neither attracted nor influenced the intended audiences. On the contrary, the FSB actions undermined the Russian-speaking community in Lithuania and discredited their legitimate cultural activities.



We ask Lithuanian residents who know or have information about Kaliningrad resident Pyotr Chagin or Petras Taraškevičius to contact VSD on the Trust Line 8 700 70007 or by e-mail pranesk@vsd.lt

CHINESE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES LOOK FOR TARGETS IN LITHUANIA ON LINKEDIN

Hostile foreign intelligence services increasingly use online social networks to find and recruit sources abroad. Chinese intelligence services are particularly aggressive in this area and they mainly use the opportunities provided by the social network LinkedIn.

SIGNS OF RECRUITMENT BY CHINESE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES VIA LINKEDIN



- The message is received on LinkedIn platform from a Chinese company, research center or recruitment company
- LinkedIn account with Western name and Chinese surname; fake photo, sometimes generated by artificial intelligence; abstract and often meaningless description of company; usually the company has no history or does not exist; poor English; high number of account connections
- Proposal to provide consultancy services
- Invitation to China with all expenses covered
- Meeting with a LinkedIn contact and his alleged colleagues in China
- Meetings that resemble regular work interviews in hotels
- Request for an analytical assessment of trends in a given country, summary of public and non-public political or military information
- Payment in advance
- Request for confidentiality
- Further contacts via mobile apps (such as WeChat) or e-mail
- Agreement on the next meeting in China
- Consistent involvement in espionage activities

A wide range of private and public sector professionals use LinkedIn to establish professional contacts and find potential employers as well as recruitment companies look for employees for their clients. Similarly, Chinese intelligence services exploit opportunities provided by these features.

Chinese intelligence uses LinkedIn to establish contacts with selected targets abroad in the early stages of recruitment operations. The most common targets are civil servants, information technology specialists, defence sector employees, scientists, and experts in multiple other fields. The ultimate goal of the Chinese intelligence is to recruit targets in China. Such operations are extremely cheap and pose no risk to Chinese intelligence officers.

Thousands of LinkedIn users around the world have received offers from fictitious Chinese companies – used as a cover for Chinese intelligence – to become their consultants or employees. Such activities of the Chinese intelligence were also identified in Lithuania.

NEXT-GENERATION TECHNOLOGIES EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CYBER-ESPIONAGE

Malicious activity in Lithuanian cyberspace remains high. Russia, China and other countries gather technical intelligence on Lithuanian information systems. They seek to collect information on vulnerabilities of Lithuanian individual and corporate user systems that can be used for hacking and spying. There are attempts to gain access to critical infrastructure and private sector information systems and use it for espionage. The biggest threat to the security of Lithuanian information systems and the information stored in them is the cyber espionage of Russian intelligence agencies. It is conducted, for example, by the GRU group *Sofacy / APT28* and the FSB group *Agent.btz / Snake*.

The fifth generation (5G) communication technology which will enable a much larger number of devices to connect to the Internet and allow new sectors to manage systems via the Internet may become a new risk factor for the national security. 5G should contribute to the economy, innovation, and technological progress in medicine, transport and other areas. However, the 5G-enabled critical systems will become potential targets for cyber attacks. Such attacks will be able to intercept information previously unavailable on the Internet and to disrupt newly created critical infrastructure. Sectors that are new to connecting their systems online may not have the necessary experience and knowledge to deal with emerging threats. While the convenience and speed of 5G technology is widely recognized as an offset for its drawbacks, putting its benefits above security could pose risks to the security of personal data and critical infrastructure.

Another new and particularly dangerous risk factor is supply chain violations when a selected target is not attacked directly, but through its supplier networks, IT products or services. While the common cyberattacks are usually carried out by third-party hackers, trustworthiness of providers remains crucial for protection of sensitive data and the integrity of the information systems. Evaluation of a provider should not only encompass potential links with well-known hackers, their groupings or hostile intelligence services, but also the assurance that it is able to ensure security of their products. Vulnerabilities found in both hardware and software components of information systems allow hackers to perform malicious activities against these systems, disrupt them, and exfiltrate information stored on them. Although so far the damage caused by similar attacks in Lithuania has been relatively insignificant, due to the global nature of these operations it is possible that in the long term the impact of these attacks on Lithuanian private companies and critical infrastructure will increase.

USE OF THE SUPPLY CHAIN ATTACK METHOD

- Since 2016 the cyber grouping *APT10* conducted operation *Cloud Hopper* which attacked IT service companies remotely controlling the IT infrastructure of businesses and government agencies. Through these companies *APT10* sought to penetrate the information systems of their end targets – customers of those IT companies. One of the targets of this operation was a foreign-owned enterprise operating in Lithuania. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Chinese state authorities were linked to this operation.
- In the 2017 *NotPetya* ransomware attacks linked to Russian intelligence services the malware entered the victims' information systems through an accounting software used to access the Ukrainian tax system. The malware encrypted systems data, the loss of which not only affected Ukrainian state and private organizations, but also spread to other countries. Although *NotPetya* virus affected only a few dozen companies in Lithuania, the impact of the attack worldwide was massive, with damage estimated at hundreds of millions of euros.

A simplified example of a supply chain attack

