



State Security Department of the Republic of Lithuania



Second Investigation Department under the Ministry of National Defence

NATIONAL SECURITY THREAT ASSESSMENT

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INTRODUCTION

National Security Threat Assessment by the State Security Department of the Republic of Lithuania (VSD) 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 Law on Intelligence of the Republic of Lithuania. The present document provides consolidated, unclassified threat and risk assessment to national security of the Republic of Lithuania prepared by both intelligence services.

SUMMARY

Russia, aggressively seeking to strengthen its dominance in the region and change the global balance of forces, is considered to be **a major source of threats posed to the national security of the Republic of Lithuania**. In 2016, Russia's president was strengthening his authority concentrating even greater power in his hands. The aggressive foreign policy was employed in order to divert attention of the society from economic crisis and growing social problems in Russia. In this way, Russia is attempting to entrench its great power status and is intervening in other countries' internal and foreign affairs more aggressively with an aim to shift them to its own benefit.

Belarus systemic dependence on Russia remains a risk to Lithuanian national security. Russia shows interest in extending its influence over Belarus by ensuring protection of its interests, and first of all, the military ones. In case of a conflict with NATO, Russia could use its influence instruments in Belarus not only against Belarus but also against the neighbour countries.

Throughout 2016, **intelligence services of Russia as well as closely cooperating services of Belarus have continued their active and aggressive activity against Lithuania**. Covert espionage and influence operations carried out by Russian intelligence services against Lithuania supported the objectives of Russian foreign policy. Due to the Seimas elections held in 2016, Russian intelligence services paid special attention to collection of information about the processes of internal policy, and even recruited the residents of Lithuania with no intelligence potential on the territory of Russia. Belarus intelligence services recruited Lithuanians arriving to Belarus, collected information about Lithuanian military and other strategic infrastructure.



In 2016, Russian economic policy in respect of Lithuania has remained basically unchanged. After Lithuania reached essential positive changes, **the major threat perceived to the state's energy security was energy projects from third countries contravening the interests of Lithuania:** construction of Ostrovets Nuclear Power Plant and attempts to revive the project of Baltic Nuclear Power Plant in Kaliningrad Oblast.

Russia was strengthening the tools which restricted the freedom of mass-media and limited the access to alternative sources of information in the country, also **developed the mass-media means abroad.** Through social media and propaganda events **Russia was seeking to wield influence on the audience in Lithuania and abroad** by escalating society-sensitive topics, such as NATO forces deployment or the 13th of January events, and accusing Lithuania of falsifying the history in the public sphere.

Cyber espionage against Lithuanian state institutions, state's critical infrastructure objects, politicians, private sector remains a threat to national security of the country. A major part of **executed cyber attacks (cyber attacks, espionage) against the state sector of Lithuania in 2016 were associated with Russian intelligence and security services,** their-supported groups or individual hackers.

Russia's ambitions to restore its influence in the post-Soviet space affect both, social and political processes of Lithuania. In 2016, **Russia was striving to weaken Lithuania's social integrity by escalating ethnic confrontation.** Russia-friendly social and political forces have not gained much influence over internal processes of Lithuania but their representatives are exploited for Russia's propaganda objectives. Extremism supporters in Lithuania are not large in quantity and currently they are not capable to provoke any larger scale unrests independently.

Terrorism threat in Europe throughout 2016 has remained high. A terrorist organization proclaiming itself the "Islamic State" (ISIL) planned and executed attacks in Europe. The risk of **ISIL terrorist attacks has also increased in Egypt and Turkey, the countries of great tourism attraction by Lithuanian citizens.** It should not be excluded that Lithuania as a member of EU and NATO may become a target for terrorists but presently such possibility is considered to be low.

In 2016, the flows of irregular migrants to Europe decreased but still posed threats to security in Europe, since **part of ISIL members who staged terrorist attacks in Europe had used the routes of irregular migration.**

POLITICAL AND MILITARY SECURITY

Influence of Russian Internal Policy Processes on Lithuanian Security

In 2016, Russian President Vladimir Putin implemented radical institutional changes that strengthened his power. In April, the National Guard Troops Service of Russian Federation (*Rossgvardiya*) that is directly subordinate to the president was established on the basis of special purpose forces of internal troops and law enforcement agencies, whereas the Federal Drug Control Service and the Federal Migration Service were put under the Ministry of the Interior. Putin's former bodyguard, Viktor Zolotov, noted for his loyalty, was assigned to lead *Rossgvardiya*. The primary task of *Rossgvardiya* is to ensure the stability of the regime neutralizing a possible

discontent of the society. In addition, creation of *Rossgvardiya* with extensive powers and directly reporting to the president reduces the influence of the Federal Security Service (FSB) and Armed Forces of Russia.

The powers of the president are becoming more concentrated in the hands of one person and thus it increases the chances of inconsiderate, irrational and risky actions that could be driven by personal motives.

In 2016, Putin made changes in the country's top management and increased the concentration of powers. President replaced the Chief of Staff of the Presidential Administration as well as domestic policy group, changed director of Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), several heads of other important institutions, some governors (including Kaliningrad Oblast). Putin showed an increasing trend to appoint to important positions loyal and obedient persons with good administrative skills, no ambitions so that they would diligently implement Putin's instructions. The result is that the powers are becoming more concentrated in the hands of one person and thus it increases the chance of inconsiderate, irrational and risky actions that could be driven by personal motives.

Russian Parliament elections were held according to Kremlin's scenario where the victory of *Yedinaya Rossiya* party was ensured and opposition marginalized. During the State Duma elections in September 2016, the ruling party *Yedinaya Rossiya* consolidated its positions even



more and won 343 seats out of 450 (105 seats more than in previous elections) that guaranteed constitutional majority and, under necessity, will be able to change Constitution regardless of other parties' opinion. The 2016 elections were particularly unfavourable to non-systemic opposition: no party crossed the barrier of 3 % which could guarantee the federal financing. Convincing victory of *Yedinaya Rossiya* in the elections showed that the regime has a total control over political processes in the country by using the combination of repressions and manipulations.

Due to low oil prices and international isolation the economic crisis in Russia continued through 2016 but the Kremlin has not undertaken any structural reforms. Even though the regime representatives speak about potential economic reforms, any crucial decisions in the short-term (up to 2 years) are not likely. Any changes of power balance can pose a threat to Putin's authority and therefore pose danger to regime. The privatization programme which started in 2016 was intended to refund the budget deficit but it has not changed the economic structure in essence (the best illustrating example is the oil company *Bashneft* which was bought by another state-run oil company *Rosneft*). The major share of the resources in Reserve Fund was used in 2016 and the remaining part could be exhausted in 2017, therefore the National Wealth Fund will be used to cover the budget deficit. Rising global oil prices from the end of 2016 may partially reduce the need for structural reforms and sustain Russia's economic viability for several years.

Russia's Foreign Policy Towards the West

In 2016, Moscow showed its determination for persisting confrontation with the West and its foreign policy was notably becoming more

aggressive. The major spotlights of confrontation remained a 'frozen' conflict with Ukraine, Russia's aggressive military actions in Syria, active interventions in internal affairs of foreign countries (for instance, USA, Montenegro). Moscow has constantly maintained a harsh anti-western rhetoric and this has led to a notably increased number of provocations and controversial decisions taken in the second-half of 2016 (a siege of Aleppo in Syria, demonstrative deployment of *Iskander* missile complexes to Kaliningrad, suspension of agreement with the US on plutonium utilization, etc.). The Kremlin blamed foreign foes from the US and EU over all internal problems in the country.

The primary audience of Russia's confrontational policy with the West is internal public. The Russian regime intends to give an ideological base for its actions: the ambition for the global power status is justified by cultural exclusiveness and the history, whereas the efforts to consolidate society are made by promoting 'traditional' values and threats emanating from abroad. After the State Duma elections in September 2016 and before the presidential elections in 2018 Putin is trying to secure a maximum public support. Weak economy and deteriorating social situation

Russia holds to position of long-term confrontation with the West and increases its influence on West democracies by making use of their infringements.

are suppressed by external enemy threats, preparation for long-lasting confrontation and mobilization of the society.

Russian ruling regime assesses that in 2016 favourable geopolitical circumstances emerged to reduce domination of the West in the international arena. During the 2016 US presidential elections campaign, Russia started to conduct more aggressive foreign policy (particularly in Syria) and more intensively seek

to overcome international isolation: through cooperation with China, Egypt, Serbia and other countries Russia strives to counterweigh the pressure from the West. During the tenure of the newly elected US president Donald Trump, Russia will likely keep the dual strategy in its foreign policy, i.e. will demonstrate its readiness for a new 'reload' with the US trying to consolidate a status quo to Russia's advantage (establishment of "influence zones" in the "Near Abroad", further "freezing" the conflict in Ukraine, legalisation of Crimea annexation); however, if the situation does not change and relations with the US do not improve, Russia will return to the politics based on confrontation and isolation.

By pursuing aggressive foreign policy, Russia actively seeks to fragment the European Union (EU). Currently, the members of the EU lack unity: the United Kingdom's exit from the EU (BREXIT), persisting migration crisis, increasing number of countries doubting the extension of sanctions imposed against Russia. The Kremlin seeks to take advantage of the current situation: actively searches for partners among the EU members (particularly to lift sanctions) in this way making attempts to set EU members against each other and interfere in forming a joint EU policy towards Russia, supports Russia-friendly political forces, and tries to influence EU institutions directly. Three Russian energy companies, namely "Gazprom", "Lukoil" and "Inter RAO UES", have declared officially spending 2 million Euros on lobbying in Brussels in 2016, and this is only a small undisguised part of Russian lobbying effort. Russia is capable enough (cyber attacks, information policy, the Kremlin lobbyists, intelligence and security services operations) to exert influence over internal processes of the EU members to its own advantage, therefore the coming elections in EU countries will likely attract more attention from Moscow.

Russia's Military Policy

Military power remains one of the key elements of Russia's foreign and security policy. It has been reflected by Russia's intervention in eastern Ukraine and also in continuing military operation in Syria.

Defence spending is one of the top priorities for Russian political elite. The budget on defence has increased by almost 25 % in 2016 (up to 23.7 % of the total budget expenditure and about 4.7 % of GDP). However, due to ongoing economic hardship, defence spending for 2017 was planned to be reduced to 17.5 % of the total budget expenditure and 3.4 % of GDP respectively. The finance minister, however, is authorized to allocate additional assignments to defence and security institutions by up to 10 %. Therefore, financing for national defence in 2017 will likely contract insignificantly or will not decrease at all. Saving in national defence spending may negatively impact routine activities of Russian Armed Forces but the effect on modernization program and the growth of combat potential will not be significant.

Ever since the start of the Russian Armed Forces reform the key issue and obstacle for progress was the manning shortfalls. One of solutions reducing a negative effect of the problem on Russian Armed Forces is battalion tactical groups (BTG) becoming the main tactical unit. High combat readiness units of 700-800 soldiers have been manned primarily by contract. During recent years, BTGs have been rapidly increasing in numbers. Officially, Russian Ground Forces had 66 BTGs in 2015, 96 – in 2016, 115 is the target number for 2017, and 125 – for 2018. Growing number of BTGs allows Russia to use its military forces with a relatively short notice.

Russia's military and political leadership still gives a greater focus on strengthening the Western Military District (MD). Yet in 2015, Russian



Russian missile ship crossing Bosphorus Strait amid redeployment from the Black Sea to the Baltic Sea

leadership announced about the plans to create three new divisions in a western direction and presented it as a response to NATO activities. In 2016, majority of fundamental changes in a western direction were in fact conducted in order to build up military capabilities near Ukraine. The process of establishing two motor-rifle divisions in the 20th Army (responsible for Ukraine direction) has already started. The third one is also being established near the border with Ukraine, but in the Southern MD. This is an example illustrating how Russia presents its own strategic development of forces with no direct relation to the Alliance as a response to NATO activities.

Kaliningrad Oblast remains one of the most militarized regions and Russian military grouping deployed there is being further reinforced. In 2016, the Baltic Fleet received two small missile ships equipped with *Kalibr* cruise missiles capable of destroying targets in a range of 2,000 km. Coastal defence system was enhanced in 2016 by Bal and Bastion coastal missile defence systems. This enables Russia to destroy surface targets almost across the entire Baltic Sea basin. In 2016, Russia started to modernize its combat aircraft fleet: the first multi-role fighter jet Su-30SM has already been transferred to Kaliningrad Oblast and the trend will almost certainly continue.

Ground force units located in Kaliningrad Oblast were integrated into the 11th Army Corps

in 2016. It will enable Russia to utilise them more effectively. At the same time, units are being relocated within Kaliningrad Oblast, the subunits of the 79th Motor Rifle Brigade are being transferred from Gusev to Sovetsk (near Lithuanian border). The 11th Corps will likely be augmented in the nearest future with the new units. The expected rearmament of the missile brigade with short-range ballistic missile system *Iskander* will bring the major qualitative change. By now, almost every Russia's missile brigade has already been rearmed with the *Iskander* systems and Russia will inevitably rearm the 152nd Missile Brigade deployed in Kaliningrad Oblast, however it will be presented as a response to NATO actions.

A large part of Russian military activity in the western strategic direction is related to simulation of a conflict with NATO and is intended to provide strategic and regional deterrence. In August 2016, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) exercise *Vzaimodeistviye 2016* was held in Pskov and Leningrad districts of Russia. The exercise scenario overtly included NATO forces in the Baltic Sea region as an enemy and a source of threat. In October 2016, the exercise of strategic nuclear deterrence was held in Russia. The exercise served a function of power

Currently, Russia is capable to conduct combat activities against the Baltic States with 24-48 hrs notice.

In case of Russian military aggression, countries in the region would have a possibility to contain the aggression effectively only if the required sufficient defensive capabilities were already present in the region before the start of the conflict. The capabilities should be sufficient to conduct operations independently from the main allied forces and prior to their deployment.

demonstration and was likely related to the increased tensions over Syria between Russia and the West. During the exercise, *Iskander* missile system was temporarily deployed to Kaliningrad Oblast. It was shipped to Kaliningrad using a civilian ferry.

Russia's military activity in the region during 2017 will increase due to a large-scale strategic exercise *Zapad 2017* held jointly by Russian and Belarusian armed forces in September. Russian Armed Forces usually organize large-scale so-called unexpected combat readiness exercises (SNAPEX) before the exercise of such level. Such SNAPEX in the Western MD with tens of thousands of troops involved will likely precede the exercise *Zapad 2017*. According to official data provided by Russia and Belarus, about 13,000 troops participate in *Zapad 2017* level exercises. However, a real number of exercise participants will highly likely exceed the officially stated numbers and the exercise scenario will

Anti-Access means preventing or impeding the access of an adversary to the region. Area Denial – substantially limiting the scope for an adversary's actions in the region. A2AD – is a whole of military measures which should isolate the conflict region in case of arising crisis or war, restrict adversary's access to the region and limit the scope for actions in the region to maximum.

simulate an armed conflict with NATO. Some of the exercise training ranges will be very close to Lithuanian border, therefore a possibility of deliberate or accidental incidents should not be ruled out. Since some of the exercise episodes will take place at the training ranges of Belarus, a large number of the Russian Armed Forces troops and combat equipment will be deployed to the territory of Belarus.

The main driver of the military build-up in Kaliningrad Oblast is the aim to shorten military reaction times and enhance deterrence. Currently,

Russia is capable to conduct combat activities against the Baltic States with 24-48 hrs notice. In addition, Anti-Access/ Area Denial (A2AD) capabilities continue to be developed. The overall objective for Russian authorities is to have military capabilities in the region that would allow Russia to execute a military operation in the region without a visibly longer period of preparations and minimizing the abilities of opponent to respond effectively. In case of Russian military aggression, countries in the region would have a possibility to contain the aggression effectively only if the required sufficient defensive capabilities were already present in the region before the start of the conflict. The capabilities should be sufficient to conduct operations independently from the main allied forces and prior to their deployment.

Menaces Posed by Belarus' Domestic and Foreign Policy to Lithuania

Belarus is a non-democratic and authoritarian state, systematically dependent on Russia in the sectors of politics, economy and defence. In 2016, the President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenka did not take any necessary economic or administrative reforms. No progress was reached in the field of human rights as well. Belarus' opposition remained weak and split. The victory of two candidates from the opposition in parliamentary elections (after 20-year break) held in September 2016 was not of great political importance.

The economy of Belarus currently undergoes a recession which has a negative effect on the state's possibilities to preserve social guarantees for its residents. In 2016, the Belarus GDP fell by 2.6 % and real wages decreased by 4 %. Deteriorating economic situation increases discontent of the people, however it will hardly likely provoke any larger scale protests posing a threat to regime in

the foreseeable future. The Belarusian society is apathetic, whereas the ruling regime suppresses any attempts to express critical opinion.

Russia is seeking to retain and increase its influence in Belarus. The country is greatly affected through Russia's information sphere. In 2016, Russia launched a multi-media outlet and news agency *Sputnik* in Minsk and established already a third Centre for Science and Culture *Rossotrudnichestvo* in Gomel, Belarus. Currently, around 100 pro-Kremlin organizations are based in Belarus which disseminate "Ruskij Mir" ("Russian World") ideology, organize cultural, historical and sports events funded by the Kremlin structures. Several tens of military patriotic clubs function in Belarus and even six of them conduct their activities in Grodno area, at the border of Lithuania and Poland, e.g. The *Nemunas Cossacks* clubs. Military patriotic clubs maintain close relations with Belarus Orthodox Church (that belongs to Moscow Patriarchate), organize paramilitary camps for youth during which conduct trainings at military bases of Belarus and Russia. It should not be excluded that the members of active military organizations in Belarus who support the ideas of "Ruskij Mir" ("Russian World") could be

mobilized to support Russian military actions or stage provocations first of all in Belarus and also against the Baltic States.

Currently, the tension in relations between Russia and Belarus is rising due to supply of gas and oil, and the quality of Belarusian food products. In December 2016, Lukashenka demonstratively ignored the meeting of Eurasian Economic Union members. In this way, Lukashenka is likely seeking to make pressure on Russia.

In a presence of threat from Russia, the regime of Belarus makes attempts to portrait itself as the only guarantor of the statehood of Belarus, wants to ensure support both from the West and the opposition. For instance, the state institutions of Belarus insistently recommended not to use Russian symbols during the commemoration parades of the 9th of May (instead, urged to use alternative Belarusian symbols – "the flowers of Great Victory"); the Committee of investigation of Belarus has detained three *regnum.ru* journalists who were disseminating the Kremlin's propaganda about the increasing nationalism of Belarus and disloyalty to Russia.

Belarus is sistematically dependant on Russia



• Around 100 pro Kremlin organizations



• 3 centres for Science and Culture "Rossotrudnichestvo"



• At least 20 military patritic clubs who support the ideas of "Ruskij Mir" ("Russian World")



• 60 % of Belarus information sphere is taken up by the Russian media



• 2/3 of Belarusians trust the Russian media



• 60 % of credits come from Russia



• 50 % of annual trade turnover is with Russia



• 100 % dependent on Russian gas



• 90 % dependent on Russian oil

Belarus' Military Policy

Bilateral disagreements have no effect on Belarusian-Russian military cooperation. Both countries largely share their views on regional threats (NATO, US anti-missile defence) and Belarus still considers Russia a strategic partner when it comes to hard security. Russia and Belarus are further developing the Regional Military Grouping (RMG) and the United Air Defence System. They also regularly conduct joint military exercises. Russia consistently delivers armament to Belarus under preferential conditions and thus increases Belarus Armed Forces potential. In 2016, Russia fulfilled all the contractual obligations to supply Belarus with military equipment and armament. Belarus' Air Force and Air Defence Forces procured another four combat trainers Yak-130 and formed a separate squadron. Moreover, Belarus received a batch of helicopters Mi-8MTB-5, early warning radar *Protivnik*, and continued to receive air defence systems. According to Belarus' military leadership, in 2017 Belarus should receive the first Russian fighters Su-30 and other necessary armament and equipment. Belarus has been intensively preparing for large-scale joint strategic military exercise *Zapad 2017* scheduled for September. During the exercise, a military conflict with NATO will likely be simulated. Minsk keeps up the military infrastructure for the needs of the RMG and also Russian Armed Forces. Russia's plans to establish military aviation base in Belarus in 2016 were not implemented, but Belarus still keeps up the infrastructure required for the units.

The aim of Belarus is to have compact and mobile armed forces, equipped with modern armament and combat equipment. Since majority of available armament is outdated, the Armed Forces have been focussing on improving qualitative parameters of the forces. Even though a dire economic situation of the country restrains

acquisition of new and modernized armament, some changes in this sector have been observed after a long pause. Belarusian military industry started to supply the army with new equipment, such as *Rosa* and *Vostok* radars, armoured vehicles. Since the military industrial complex managed to sustain technological potential and manufacturing capabilities it is capable to make an input to defence modernisation effort. Belarus cooperates not only with Russia but also with other countries when the issue concerns armament modernization process. For instance, the new generation multiple launch rocket system (MLRS) *Polonez* was developed in cooperation with Chinese companies. In 2016 system was tested and transferred to the armed forces. With its 200 km range, MLRS *Polonez* is more advanced in terms of its parameters than the legacy MLRS used by Belarus Armed Forces. The supply of this new system will enable Belarus Armed Forces to increase its combat capabilities in the medium-term.



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Ukraine, Georgia and the CIS Zone

Dismissal of Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatseniuk and approval of Vladimir Groisman government in 2016 distanced a possibility of snap elections and allowed to some extent stabilize the internal political situation of Ukraine. A minority government emerged as a result of compromise reached between various groups and interests, and without a majority's backup is dependent upon the support of business-political groups in the parliament.

Relatively stable internal political situation reached in 2016 is fragile due to growing socio-economic tension and the opposition's destructive actions. Mounting discontent with the government, growing popularity of opposition and developing of new political movements retain a possibility of massive protests and snap parliament elections. Currently, populist political movements are the most popular in the country. Ukraine climbed out of economic recession in 2016 but the economic situation still remains complicated. After a two-year decrease GDP has increased by 1.5 % in 2016, and the inflation rate stabilized at 12 %. In 2016, exports destination shifted from the East to the West. The EU share in Ukrainian foreign trade amounts to 40 %, whereas RF share declined down to 15 %. A slow economic recovery tendency is likely in 2017. Even so, Ukraine will remain heavily dependent on foreign financial support.

Russia continues to exert strong military, political, economic and informational pressure on Ukraine. Moscow is intensively sending signals that Russia is

not interested in escalating the conflict, but at the same time is striving to settle the conflict by implementing the so-called Minsk agreements to its own benefit. Russia demands that Ukraine implement the Constitutional reform which would establish the decentralization of the state and ensure a special status to separatist territories in this way legalising them as individual subjects. These territories would be exploited for retaining Ukraine in Russian influence zone. Therefore, Russia is manipulating the efforts of the conflict resolution and is stalling the negotiations, simultaneously supporting the armed actions which aggravate stabilization of the political and security situation in Ukraine.

Intensity of military conflict between Ukraine and Russian-led pro-Russian forces in 2016 was relatively low as compared to 2014 and 2015. The stance of Russia and Ukraine on the settlement of the conflict and the goals differ in essence, therefore a possibility of military conflict escalation still remains.

Pro-Russian candidate Igor Dodon won the 2016 direct presidential elections in Moldova, however the course of Moldavian foreign policy will not change in the short-term since the president has no constitutional authority for such alterations.



Dodon will have limited powers and will be restricted by the pro-European majority of the parliament and unofficial government, which is controlled by the oligarch Vladimir Plakhotniuk and his inner circle. Dodon will encounter with difficulties to satisfy society's expectations and fulfil the elections pledges simultaneously retaining the popularity of the Socialist Party until the 2018 scheduled parliamentary elections. Therefore, it is likely that Dodon will seek for snap parliament elections. The pro-European anti-government opposition, which performed well in the presidential elections, will keep on trying to grow its popularity by staging mass protest rallies. However, its possibilities to win the parliamentary elections will remain very limited. High rates of corruption, close relations between business and political representatives as well as stagnating reforms remain the main threats in continuing the course of Moldavian pro-European policy. Snap parliament elections could create preconditions for pro-Russian parties to come to power and shift the course of foreign policy in Moldova.

There were no essential changes in 2016 as far as the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict is concerned. *De facto* presidential elections held in Transnistria in 2016 will have no effect on security of the region. Deepening economic crisis will urge Tiraspoli to choose pragmatic relations with Chisinau. Russia is using Transnistria for making pressure on Moldova and Ukraine but is not seeking to isolate the separatist region entirely from Moldova or to annex it.

Episodic combat clashes with the use of heavy weaponry have been taking place in Nagorno Karabakh since the second half of 2014 and the largest military escalation after 1994 was carried out in April 2016. However, a military conflict remains comparatively low in intensity. A strong possibility remains that new clashes

will take place in the region, but they will hardly likely grow into large-scale military actions. During the 2016 escalation, Azerbaijan regained a symbolic territory which was a significant factor for consolidating the society, reinforcing the regime, and diverting society's attention from economic problems. Dynamics of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict has become slightly more beneficial to Azerbaijan that has started closer relations with Russia and less to the latter's ally Armenia. One of the reasons of such development is that Russia's political, economic and military domination in Armenia has become so strong that Russia is able to ignore the interests of Armenian elite and society.

There were no essential changes in 2016 as far as the issues of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the separatist regions of Georgia, are concerned. 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. Moscow continues partial integration of the separatist regions into its own political, economic and security area, but so far has avoided incorporating them into its own territory. There were no essential changes in the course of foreign policy in Georgia. Neither Georgia nor Russia shows any signs of will to step forward in normalizing the relations. Therefore, the ideas of improving relations between Russia and Georgia remain marginal.



THREATS POSED BY RUSSIAN AND BELARUSIAN INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY SERVICES

Russian Intelligence and Security Services' Interests and Activity Methods against Lithuania

There were no significant changes in counterintelligence field in 2016. The biggest threat against Lithuania is still posed by covert espionage and influence operations supporting the aims of Russian foreign policy. All three Russian intelligence and security institutions – the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) and the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces (GRU) – were carrying out operations. Russian secret services were conducting intelligence against Lithuania not only in Lithuania, in Russia and from Russia, but also in third countries.

In 2016, Russian intelligence services' officers who travelled to Lithuania for work under diplomatic cover continued visiting various events related to international relations, politics, defence, economy, energy, finances, and attending various science and research conferences, presentations of official state publications, exhibitions, etc. Some Russian intelligence officers working in Lithuania are able to communicate in Lithuanian language; they start communication easily and proficiently conceal their real motives of interest. During an "accidental" meeting, which at first does not seem to be suspicious, a Russian intelligence officer always searches for opportunities to obtain as much information about a potential target as possible, his/her creeds, weaknesses and other possible motives for cooperation. In a few hours after the meeting, a Russian intelligence officer informs his/her coordinators in Moscow about

the established contact to find out the following course of operation.

The personnel of Russian secret services often attends events and meetings with diplomats working at the Russian embassy in Lithuania who do not belong to intelligence services but maintain relations with them. There is only a small boundary dividing intelligence and diplomatic activity in Russia, therefore Russian intelligence staff is particularly fond of employing young and naive officials at the Ministry of Russian Foreign Affairs in Lithuania.



Russian intelligence officers who pretend to be Russian diplomats participate in various academic conferences, other official events and search for potential targets and collect information.

In 2016, Russian intelligence services traditionally conducted intelligence gathering on the issues of Lithuanian internal, foreign and economic policy, established agent recruitment relations in Lithuanian state institutions and organizations, searched for new opportunities to increase their influence in Lithuania.

The rising tension in the region in 2016 also changed the interests of Russian intelligence services in Lithuania. Not only they conducted intelligence against NATO and EU interests but also showed distrust of its strategic partner Belarus and spied on it.

Lithuania also feels an exceptional impact of intelligence and counterintelligence activity performed by Russian internal security service (FSB) because of its geographical situation. Moreover, FSB poses a threat to Lithuania because of its influence over economic life of Russia. FSB

Particularly actively Russian intelligence and security services operate in Lithuanian regions bordering with Kaliningrad Oblast where the services are aimed not only at penetrating into local municipalities, law enforcement institutions and other organizations but also make attempts to affect the moods of local people to the benefit of Russia.

One of the Russian intelligence service officers who had been actively recruiting Lithuanian citizens travelling to Kaliningrad Oblast is a staff member of FSB, Sergey KULESHOV. During acquaintance with

FSB inherited and adopted from KGB a so-called counterintelligence service system of industry, transport and financial sector objects which is a tool for making influence upon the majority of Russian business branches.

There is a wide spectrum of FSB handled objects: defence industry, energy sector, all-type transport sector (railways, sea transport, motor transport cargo companies, civil aviation and their agencies abroad), banks, the customs, chemical and medical industry, various spheres of science and research, private safety companies, etc. Above all other functions FSB in all these objects also conducts human intelligence.

FSB also puts a great focus on control and surveillance of foreign investment and foreign capital companies and their employees in Russia. FSB establishes both intelligence and corruption-based ties (frequently related) with foreign businessmen developing their business in Russia

actively follows all Russian economic relations in foreign countries, controls foreign investments, and uses established contacts for intelligence purposes. Accordingly, it poses risk to Lithuania's businessmen who maintain economic relations with Russia, especially the ones who invest in Russian strategic economic sectors.

FSB organizes and trains the so-called network of trolls in social media. This network from one centre systematically and aggressively spreads information beneficial to Russian internal and foreign policy. The main resources of FSB "trolls" are concentrated in Russian-speaking sphere and reach Lithuania through direct users of Russian social media. FSB has doubts about the awareness of social media users and assesses that such "active measures", i.e. circulation of propaganda-like and misleading comments, will affect their attitude.

Lithuanian citizens, he would present himself as an officer of Russian Border Guard Service, employee of Kaliningrad municipality, representative of projects of EU programme for cooperation across the border, "coordinator of projects" and alike. KULESHOV watches potential targets at various meetings of bilateral cooperation with Kaliningrad Oblast, joint Lithuanian and Kaliningrad conferences of projects under the funding of EU, events of Lithuanian community in Kaliningrad Oblast.

FSB shows interest in all Lithuanian citizens

Lithuanian citizens, especially the ones living in border regions, who have any information about the Kaliningrad Oblast's resident Sergey KULESHOV, are urged to contact the State Security Department of Lithuania via anonymous telephone +37070070007 or by email pranesk@vsd.lt

travelling to Russia. Therefore, a Lithuanian citizen may not necessarily know confidential or sensitive information in order to become a potential target for Russian secret services. Individuals without a considerable intelligence potential may be exploited for other intentions – spread propaganda, reconnoitre the territory and infrastructure, illegally transport the persons or cargo related to Russian intelligence across the border, spark provocations and unrest or do other active tasks.

Interests and Activity Methods of Belarusian Intelligence and Security Services in Lithuania

Threats posed by Belarusian intelligence services against Lithuania in 2016 did not decrease. Belarusian intelligence services recruited Lithuanian citizens travelling to Belarus, collected information about Lithuanian military and other strategic infrastructure, closely cooperated with Russian secret services.

The most common target of Belarusian secret services at the border with Lithuania in 2016 remained the officers of the Interior system who were travelling to Belarus to purchase cheaper goods or for other non-service related purposes. The aim of Belarusian secret services was also the intelligence gathering about individuals who were engaged in illegal activities and were crossing the Lithuanian border. The scale of recruitment at the border in 2016 decreased as compared with 2015, since Lithuanian law enforcement institutions' officers took into consideration the recommendations of Lithuanian intelligence and security services, and trips to Belarus for personal purposes decreased.

Still persisting information and political isolation of Russian officials in Lithuania promoted cooperation between Russian and Belarusian services in 2016. After the Crimean annexation conducted

by Russia in March 2014, Russia encountered with isolation and its officers had difficulties in collecting information on relevant political and economic issues not only of Lithuania but also EU and NATO states. Therefore, Russian delegated officers tried to gain information of concern from Belarusian officers who had more possibilities. The main fields of cooperation between Russian and Belarusian intelligence services in 2016 remained the exchange of information about Lithuanian internal, foreign and energy policy; joint intelligence activity carried out against Lithuania and other EU and NATO member states; military intelligence against Lithuania and NATO.

The goals and activity methods of Belarusian intelligence services carried out against Lithuania will not change essentially during 2017. Belarusian intelligence services will be seeking to recruit agents in Lithuanian law enforcement institutions and national defence system, in addition they will be searching for potential individuals who could be employed for lobbying Belarusian interests. Cooperation of Belarussian and Russian intelligence services against Lithuania will further remain dependant on political relations of both countries.

Even though Russian and Belarusian intelligence services acted against NATO and EU states interests in close cooperation, Russian actions carried out in Ukraine and a fear of similar scenario recurrence in Belarus have created a growing mistrust of Belarusian KGB in Russian intelligence services. The mistrust was enhanced by the fact that Russian intelligence services did not consider Belarusian KGB as equal and trustworthy partner and limited the share of information.

Intelligence Activity against Lithuanian National Defence System

Activity of Russian and Belarusian intelligence and security services against National Defence System (NDS) was not diminishing during 2016. Russian and Belarusian services cooperate closely in conducting intelligence activities against NDS and they share similar goals, tasks and intelligence methods. Intelligence priorities in 2016 did not change: the services collected information on Lithuanian defence capabilities, procurement of new weaponry and its modernization, NATO military activity in the Baltic region, continuous mandatory basic military service (CMS), and also gathered information about NATO infrastructure, possible deployment of additional forces in the region.

One of intelligence tasks is to collect information on personnel of NDS (qualifications, education, links with Russia, Belarus, perspectives of service, etc.). Russian intelligence services use such information for conducting the spotting of potential targets for recruitment and their recruitment operations. Moreover, detailed information about the NDS personnel who had received the delegations from Russia and Belarus is highly likely included into reports about the visits paid by Russian and Belarusian delegations to Lithuania. Representatives of different delegations can be also used for making initial contact with a potential recruitment target. Before the visits, Russian and Belarusian representatives coordinate their information requirements and later on exchange intelligence. Russia conducts imagery intelligence (IMINT) by using intelligence collection flights over the territory of Lithuania according to Open

Skies agreement putting a major focus not only on military objects but also on objects of civil purpose. Russia employs this IMINT method to gather information necessary for Russian military planning. This information is related to military and civil objects critical to Lithuanian national security and which are or can be chosen as targets. Moreover, IMINIT method is used to observe the changes of military infrastructure on the territory of Lithuania.

In 2016, Russian intelligence and security services continued to take particular interest in the restored CMS in Lithuania, including the conscription order and procedures, planned dates of calls for conscription and other related details. Russian intelligence collected information on individuals having dual citizenship of Lithuania and Russia and was searching for opportunities to involve them into intelligence activity. Through CMS, hostile intelligence services seek to infiltrate recruited or otherwise affected individuals into NDS. Persons doing their CMS and having links with adversary countries or otherwise vulnerable will remain among potential targets for likely recruitment.



Joint exercise by Lithuanian Army units and their allies

Number of surveillance, photographing and video recording cases of military objects that has particularly increased since the first half of 2014 also remained high through 2016, whereas the activity itself has become a trend. Flights carried out by unmanned aerial vehicles over military territories and exercise zones of Lithuanian Army units were also growing in number. Quite often it is difficult to identify the links of persons conducting surveillance of objects and image recording with adversarial intelligence but surveillance of military and civil objects and their image recording completely correspond to the methods of Russian military intelligence activity.

General intelligence activity level of GRU acting under a diplomatic cover in Lithuania has not changed significantly in 2016 as compared with 2015. While being in communication with a person of concern, GRU officers use intelligence interview methods seeking to extract information of intelligence requirements. The members of GRU officers participate in various events organized by NDS and other meetings, where they wear civil clothes in order to avoid unwanted attention. In Lithuania GRU staff members maintain contacts with non-governmental organizations (NGO) that unite the Soviet war veterans and graduates from military schools.

GRU officers continued to cooperate with the Belarusian military intelligence representatives working under diplomatic cover in Lithuania, likely coordinated actions and had a mutual

exchange of intelligence. In 2016, activity of Belarusian intelligence and security services against NDS was not very intensive and has not changed significantly compared with 2015.

A risk of intelligence threats exists for personnel of Lithuanian Defence Attaché residing in all foreign countries. However, major threats related to intelligence rise to personnel residing in Russia and Belarus.

FSB conducts a regular control of diplomats in Russia using secret or overt surveillance, entering their premises, video recording, photographing, intercepting communications and other aggressive tools of psychological effect and means of control. It is noted that FSB aggressiveness against foreign diplomats from specific countries usually depends on the country's pursued foreign policy with regard to Russia. FSB also conducts recruitment operations of defence attachés residing in Russia. The service constantly collects information on vulnerabilities of diplomats, their personal traits, relations, details that can discredit a person, and other information. In most cases, FSB acts aggressively in respect of a person, who is being recruited, directly and openly offers him/her to build contacts, and often involves provocations and blackmails in order to influence his/her decision for cooperation. FSB conducts intelligence against diplomats of foreign countries under cover of other Russian law enforcement institutions, e.g. police. Belarusian KGB applies

intelligence activity methods, measures and goals in respect of defence attaché personnel from foreign countries residing in Belarus very similar to those of Russian FSB.

Russian GRU officers conduct intelligence using military diplomatic cover of Russian embassy in Lithuania. There are five posts in the embassy intended for GRU officers. It should be noted that a number of Russian defence attaché posts in Lithuania is disproportionately big (e. g. there is only one Lithuanian Army officer working as Lithuania's defence attaché in Russia). The main task of GRU personnel working under defence attaché cover is intelligence and not bilateral military cooperation; therefore, a big number of defence attaché posts in Lithuania create favourable conditions for intelligence collecting activity.

Signals Intelligence Carried out by Russia

Signals intelligence (SIGINT) against Lithuania is conducted using stationary and mobile intelligence platforms in Russian diplomatic missions in Lithuania, Kaliningrad Oblast and mainland Russia. Moreover, active SIGINT in the Baltic Sea is conducted by employing intelligence vessels, intelligence aircraft and above-ground intelligence capabilities.

The trend of Russia exploiting the territory of Belarus for conducting SIGINT continued in 2016. There is a constant interaction between Russian and Belarusian units exchanging intelligence related information. Belarusian military intelligence is supported by Russian produced SIGINT equipment. Intelligence tasks according to Russian SIGINT plans are likely conducted by Belarusian capabilities.

In 2016, electronic warfare (EW) units deployed in Kaliningrad Oblast conducted jamming against military aircraft from foreign countries. Available intelligence suggests that the monitoring of pilots radio communications and suppression of used radio frequencies was systematically conducted during NATO aircraft flights over the Baltic Sea.

Intelligence in the Baltic Sea is also conducted by commercial, passenger ships and scientific research vessels registered in Russia. Some civil ships of this type can contain equipment enabling to conduct SIGINT in the Baltic Sea. In 2016, the Academic Nikolai Strakhov vessel from Shirshov Institute of Oceanology of the Russian Academy of Science applied for permission to carry out research and monitoring in the territorial waters of the Republic of Lithuania. An indicated region of research has a laying NORDBALT power cable. Therefore, the main task of the voyage was likely to carry out the reconnaissance of the cable.

GRU conducts interception of communications of NDS personnel and other state institutions officials and officers. During special events of NDS and others, GRU officers likely use respective man portable technical equipment intended for finding active electronic devices and identifying their parameters. Such data is useful for conducting technical penetration operations during which communications by electronic connection and data transmission means of a specific person is intercepted.



"Akademik Nikolaj Strakhov"

ENERGY AND ECONOMIC SECURITY

Third Countries' Energy Projects Contravening Lithuanian Interests

Despite the incidents held in 2016, a construction of *Ostrovets* Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) conducted by Belarus in line with the corporation *Rosatom* has been underway by forced regime, not complying with international security requirements and ignoring Lithuania's rebukes concerning unguaranteed NPP security. As a result of construction impediments the project implementation schedule was changed (a launch of the first bloc was postponed to 2019) and international community's stance towards NPP has become slightly stricter. All the incidents that happened in NPP Belarus acknowledged only after information appeared in public and/or by the grip of Lithuania. Meanwhile, Belarus' institutions along with *Rosatom* actively made attempts to strengthen lobbying activity in EU countries and institutions.

In 2016, *Rosatom* communication regarding the projects conducted in the neighbourhood of Lithuania was obviously intensifying. Seeking to improve the NPP project public communication, an image formation of NPP project was also included into the agenda of Russian and Belarusian experts club, which was established in Minsk in March 2016 and the participants of which are well-known Russian propagandists. In September 2016, Moscow hosted the club's discussion "Belarus' NPP is the Union State's Development Project", where NPP project was presented as an outstanding example of Belarus and Russia integration. Hence, this proves a dominating political aspect of NPP project.

Although Kaliningrad Oblast based Baltic NPP

construction has been still put on hold, *Rosatom* has intensified its activity through which attempts were made to revive the project: to justify an allegedly stated Baltic NPP benefit, thus ensuring a support from EU states and electricity export markets. A special attention was given to lobbying activity within EU institutions. There were organized different meetings with diplomats, various *think tanks* as well as expert meetings, and it was tried to make contacts with officials

Rosatom has been intensifying its lobbying within EU regarding the nuclear power plants' projects in Kaliningrad Oblast and Belarus.

from European Commission, but so far the results have not been as good as it was expected. *Rosatom* managed to arrange in Brussels several presentations of its projects, including Baltic NPP; however, they failed to attract as much and such high ranking EU officials and representatives of member states as it was expected.

The attempts of Belarus institutions to restrict a spread of negative information about the *Ostrovets* NPP shows that in the short term perspective Belarus will maintain a stance not to disseminate all information, especially negative, about the progress of project implementation. Besides, ever increasing activity of corporation's *Rosatom* "image builders" (lobbyists, diplomats,



polittechnologists, journalists) indicates about an exceptional Russia's attention to energy projects developed in Lithuania's neighbourhood. It is likely that in the short-term this attention will grow: it will be further sought to inveigle the officials of European Commission, make impact through press, and exploit Russian and Belarusian polittechnologists.

Gazprom seeks to preserve its positions in the Baltic States, notwithstanding the evident changes in Lithuania's energy resources market.

Russia seeks to retain influence in European gas markets. The Nord Stream-2 pipeline that is being planned to be laid from Russia to Germany across the Baltic Sea would slow down European energy union establishment processes and would reduce its effectiveness. Gazprom also expects to gain a part of market in the Baltic Sea region, simultaneously implementing liquefied natural gas projects in Kaliningrad and Leningrad Oblast.

Despite the evident changes in Lithuania's energy resources market, in 2016 Russian company *Gazprom* tried to preserve its part in Lithuanian gas market, yet liquefied natural gas supplier *Statoil* having offered a lower price than *Gazprom* and having signed agreements with the companies *Lithuanian gas supply* and *Achema* regarding liquefied natural gas supply in the second and third quarter of 2016, Russian company lost the largest clients in the region. Such loss of positions in Lithuania was determined by the *Gazprom's* ambition to supply gas in higher price than the market value. In the second half of 2016, despite *Gazprom* leaders' public declarations that the major part of gas in the Baltic States will be sold in auctions, the company's authorities refused the plans to organize gas auctions for the next year and started negotiations with the largest natural gas consumers in Lithuania for signing

contracts of supply from 2017.

As Lithuania's natural gas market is gradually contracting and consumption of energy resources from Russia is diminishing, it is likely that a competition among energy resources suppliers will grow further. On the other hand, it is forecasted that Gazprom will seek to retain positions in the region by also trying to manipulate in price of the supplied gas: for instance, acting through particularly loyal trade mediators create for them more favorable purchasing conditions than for the other buyers.

Russian Transport Policy

Russia continues protectionist policy directed against the Baltic Sea ports and thus enhances their rivalry. Russia's decision to reduce crude oil supply to Belarusian oil refineries and redirect

Russia's strategy to divert local cargo to home seaports, which was inciting a competition between the Baltic States' transport companies, could give background for splitting the Baltic States' stances regarding the most important region's economic security issues.

cargo to Russian ports made a negative impact on Lithuanian transport sector. Russia has begun to press Belarus to shift the oil product export to Russian seaports in return for railway tariffs. Until the end of 2016 Russia and Belarus could not manage to fully agree on oil supply in previous volumes. If Belarus yielded to pressure redirect oil product export to Russian ports, negative



outcomes would also be felt in Lithuanian shipping companies.

In 2016, the extent of Russian companies' production transported through Latvian seaports was considerably less. The oil products and coal transit comprising more than a half of Riga and Ventspils seaports' shipping circulation has mostly decreased. The transportation of oil products was gradually being redirected from Latvian seaports to Russia's Ust Luga, Saint Petersburg, and Primorsk seaports.

Russia's strategy to divert local cargo to home seaports, which was inciting a competition between the Baltic States' road carriers, could give background for splitting the Baltic States' stances regarding the most important region's economic security issues.

The main Russia's goal was to block cargo transit conducted by Lithuanian companies in order to eventually take over the whole transportation of non-Lithuanian origin cargo. In 2016, Lithuanian motor transport transit companies were forced to continue competing with Russian companies on unequal terms. Russia not only exerted pressure on Belarus customs control officers to periodically impede cargo transportations on Lithuania-Belarus border control posts, but also started to apply more administrative requirements on Lithuanian road carriers and state institutions. In addition, motorway tolls had increased. By all this, Russian representatives allegedly were aiming to eliminate gaps enabling the EU states' commodities that are banned to be delivered to Russia.



INFORMATION SECURITY

Russia's Information Policy Changes and Projects against Lithuania

In 2016, after 16 years break Russia had renewed its Information Security Doctrine, in which the measures of informational war against the West are defined. Russia exploits information in public space about the reportedly conducted Western informational war to disseminate propaganda on international level and to strengthen its intelligence services' activity in information sector.

Russia exploits NATO activities (NATO Enhanced Forward Presence, exercises, and national forces development) in the Baltic region in its communication, seeking to degrade the Alliance and justify the actions of Kremlin. Russia sees the increased NATO capabilities in the eastern flank as obstacles that impede reaching for a dialogue on improvement of international security. In 2017, Russian information attacks towards the West will likely intensify for the approaching Zapad 2017 military exercise and during the time of the exercise.

Russia strives to entrench a favourable narrative through the means of public information, i. e. television, press, Internet, and social networks. For instance, in 2016 All-Russia State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company has prepared 1,500 hours of video recordings for foreign audience, which was translated into 10 foreign languages: English, French, Spanish, Portuguese,

Chinese, Arabic, etc. For the first time in the television history such a large extent of video recordings - more than 2,500 documentaries, various types of programmes, cartoons - were translated at one time.

In 2016, the positions of Rossiya segodnya agency, which spreads the Kremlin propaganda in Lithuania and is headed by Dmitriy Kiseliov, who was included into a list of persona non grata in EU, were strengthened. As the Rossiya segodnya continues to develop the media outlet Sputnik intended to disseminate propaganda abroad, in December 2016 agency launched a website

Russia seeks to degrade NATO forces in Lithuania and boost the society's opposition towards deployment of troops in applying information and cyber attacks in order to spread untruthful and provocative information. It is likely that in 2017 Russian information operations towards the West will become ever more active, especially for the approaching Zapad 2017 military exercise and during the time of it.

sputniknews.lt both, in Lithuanian and in Russian languages. Apparently, Russian agency could not find other ways how to anchor in Lithuania as to start the website's activity. Despite a lack of personnel in Lithuania who would agree to work for propaganda media outlet, the website will try to work orienting to Lithuanian-speaking audience. In order to successfully launch Sputnik project in Lithuania Russia asked representatives from Belarus Sputnik branch for assistance. Accordingly, the website sputniknews.lt will likely



be relevant not only to Kremlin's regime allegiant audience, but will also seek to influence a neutral part of the society. Currently, only a small number of people have been reading the articles publicised in this website, and their Facebook account is in fact unpopular.

In 2016, another Rossiya segodnya associated and Russia's financed propaganda media outlet baltnews.lt has continued its intensive activity in Lithuania. The website conducted information attacks against Lithuania exploiting society-sensitive topics: holocaust, refugees, terrorism, fuelled ethnic confrontation. Additionally, this website was seeking to attract not only Russian-speaking audience, but also was implementing a special project in Lithuanian language and presently has been planning a column about the news of the Seimas of Lithuania. The head of the website Russian citizen Anatoliy Ivanov had financed and actively coordinated the issues related to baltnews.lt activity with Moscow, where he pays regular visits.

Anatoliy Ivanov seeks to rally a team of young journalists, who support Kremlin policies: in 2016 he actively recruited employees for propagandistic journalism, among those students as well.

As a result of Ivanov's mediation, some of his sponsored young journalists have already gone to study to Russian and Belarusian high schools. The journalists working at the website baltnews.lt were also sent to propaganda based foreign events, were encouraged to strengthen their ties with Russian mass media.

In an attempt to strengthen Russia's cultural influence and thus consolidate compatriots, in 2016 The Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation Rossotrudnichestvo conducted the project "Russian humanitarian expedition". Educational and cultural events were organized in Vilnius, Kaunas, and Visaginas. They were arranged by visiting representatives of Russian high schools in mediation with compatriots living and acting in Lithuania. Although such events usually do not tend to attract great society's attention, a threat is posed by the fact that Russia's intelligence services usually seek to exploit such projects for their own goals, namely for identifying loyal compatriots or collecting information about persons of interest.

Russia's financed news website baltnews.lt in Lithuania's information space fills only a marginal niche. As the project leader, Ivanov has difficulties in rallying a team of professional journalists, therefore the website only partially implements Russia's raised propagandistic goals. As a new media outlet sputniknews.lt was launched in December 2016, a new task may also be formulated, i. e. to pursue more aggressive information politics towards Lithuania. It is likely, however, that in the context of an increasing society's awareness this project in Lithuania, similarly to other Russian propaganda based outlets, will not become popular.



Information Campaigns against Lithuania in Third Countries

In 2016, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* journalist Galina Sapozhnikova (*persona non grata* in Lithuania until 2020) headed international mass media club *Format A-3*, which is directly financed by Russia and conducts activities directed against Lithuania. There were held 11 events in Lithuania, whose most important aim was to make major Russian propagandist subjects more attractive to Lithuanian audience and spread them in Russian and Lithuanian media.

Galina Sapozhnikova has been assessed as one of the most active organizer and performer of international information attacks directed against Lithuania. She had presented a book in Italy (Rome and Milan) which was published in Italian under the title "Lithuanian Conspiracy. How the Soviet Union Collapsed and what Happened to Those who Tried to Protect it". The journalist was assisted by the former member of European Parliament Italian journalist Giulietto Chiesa, known for his views supporting Kremlin. This book in Russian language was presented in Moscow, Kaliningrad, and Minsk. Presenting this book, Galina Sapozhnikova had several supporters, among those Mikhail Golovатов, the former KGB officer, the head of the group "Alfa" and the suspect perpetrator of January 13th events; also Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, a leader of Russia's Liberal Democrats Party, and others. While conducting this information campaign it was sought to downgrade Lithuania's sovereignty, spread disinformation that on 11 March 1990 people were allegedly forced to run from Lithuania as a result of political persecutions, which still continue. The other deceitful narratives have been constantly repeated during presentations of the book. For example, it was told that Ribbentrop-Molotov pact was in fact useful to Lithuania and there were no massive deportations of Lithuanians in the Soviet Union, also that the Baltic States are occupied by NATO, etc.



Об авторе:

Родилась в Ижевске. Окончила факультет журналистики Санкт-Петербургского университета (1988 г.), после чего была направлена на работу в газету «Молодежь Эстонии». Через год была принята в штат «Комсомольской правды» собственным корреспондентом по Эстонии, Финляндии и Швеции. Вся дальнейшая журналистская карьера связана с ЗАО «Издательский дом "Комсомольская правда"».

В качестве специального корреспондента побывала почти в 50 странах мира. Является одним из учредителей Международного медиацентра «Импредесум» в Таллине и руководителем международного клуба журналистов «Формат А-3».

Получила известность как мастер журналистских расследований – раскрывала тайны гибели парома «Эстония», изучала проблемы ксенофобии в России, помогла «найти» людям, потерявшим память. Автор серии психологических очерков о русской диаспоре – «Осколки Империи». Лауреат и дипломант многих профессиональных наград – премии Союза журналистов России (2004), премий Артема Боровика за лучшие журналистские расследования (2005, 2007), премии А. Сахарова «За журналистику как поступок» (2006), премии МедиаСоюза «Искра» (2007), премии Юлиана Семенова в области экстремальной геополитической журналистики (2015), литературно-медийной премии имени Олеса Бузины (2016). Награждена почетным знаком Союза журналистов России «За заслуги перед профессиональным сообществом» (2014). В 2009 г. ее книга «Арнольд Мерк: Последний эстонский герой» стала победителем конкурса Роспечати на лучшую книгу журналиста.

В 2014 г. за заслуги в развитии отечественной культуры и искусства, телевидения, печати, связи, а также активную общественную деятельность награждена медалью ордена «За заслуги перед Отечеством II степени».

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КОМСОМОЛЬСКАЯ ПРАВДА



CYBER SECURITY

The majority of attacks identified in cyber space of the Republic of Lithuania throughout 2016 (cyber attacks, espionage) were related to Russian intelligence and security services, their supported groups and individual hackers. Russia's financing and exploitation of private hacker groups acting in favour to Russian interests is the trend which will keep growing in the future. In order to designate such state supported capabilities a term *Advanced Persistent Threat* (APT) is used. The APT term defines technologically advanced cyber capabilities, i. e. a group of hackers and/or their cyber espionage tool, which systematically seek to penetrate into particular state's or organization's IT systems. The aim of APT, is not to cause damage to systems, networks or data inside them, but rather to collect necessary information available inside networks, i. e. to spy.

Cyber Espionage

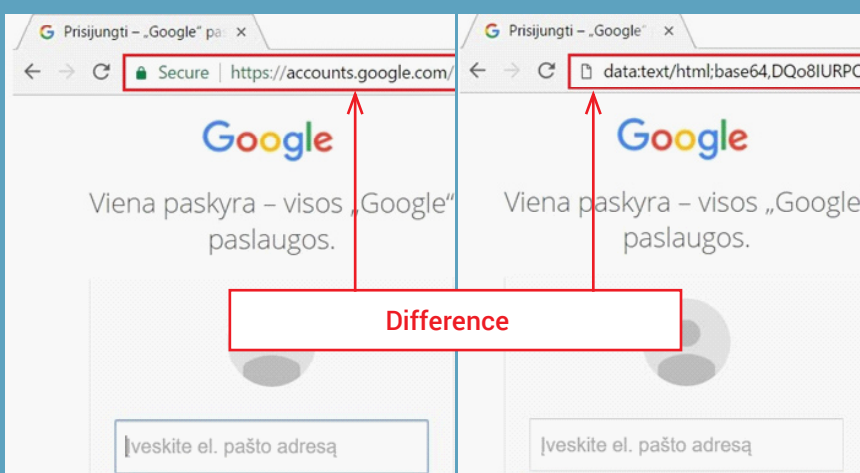
Cyber espionage against Lithuania's state institutions, critical infrastructure objects, politicians, private sector remains a threat to national security. Cyber espionage programs identified in Lithuanian institutions' automated data processing (ADP) systems and networks have been constantly improved and updated. One of the most prevailing, Russian cyber capabilities associated APT type of malware *Snake/Agent.btz* is able to collect computer based data, remotely control an infected computer, identify accounts and passwords, also record image and sound with the help of computer integrated video and audio recording devices. Hardly detected by ordinary computer user, the malware spreads via USB keys or illegal software.

In 2016, the activity of cyber espionage group

APT28/Sofacy associated with Russia's military intelligence has increased significantly. It operates against purposefully in advance chosen targets by

Social engineering is one of the ways to manipulate a user of the computer, force him voluntarily perform actions which help to intrude into computer networks, reveal confidential information (e. g. login information) and infect the computer with malicious code.

remotely infecting their computers. Accordingly, seeking to gain access to user information, APT28/Sofacy group usually employs two methods of social engineering : *spear phishing* and *watering hole*. Using the first method, in advance selected targets receive e-mails with



An example of original (left) and fake (right) website to which the user is directed seeking to obtain his login information (spear phishing method). The main noticeable difference to the user is the address in the website's address square.

links to mailboxes or other Internet websites where login information is needed to be filled in. Having clicked on the link in the e-mail the user is being directed to fake earlier created and hackers' controlled website, which is almost the same as the original (e.g. *www.gmail.com*). After the user fills the necessary information, this information becomes available to hackers and thus access is gained to user account. Seeking to penetrate into the user's computer there are also sent e-mails with the attached malware infected document. Having opened it, a malware code is being at once installed in the user's computer. By exploiting available computer system vulnerabilities, the malware code enables the hackers to gain access to certain user information, also is able to identify information that is typed on the keyboard (e.g. logins, passwords, messages, etc.) and thus creates circumstances for further penetration into user's computer, i. e. the total control of the computer.

The *watering hole* method is applied to particular target user group. In the beginning, the chosen group's interests are identified on the Internet and, considering them, particular websites visited by the target group representatives are being infected (e. g. inserting JavaScript or HTML malware code). When one of the target group representatives visits such website, only that particular user is being directed to another malware website. Hence, the user's computer is infected and by this the hackers gain access to

```
⊕ Form item: "bgresponse" = "js_disabled"  
⊕ Form item: "pstMsg" = "1"  
⊕ Form item: "dnConn" = ""  
⊕ Form item: "checkConnection" = ""  
⊕ Form item: "checkedDomains" = "youtube"  
⊕ Form item: "Email" = "randomemail"  
⊕ Form item: "Passwd" = "falsepassword"  
⊕ Form item: "signIn" = "sign in"  
⊕ Form item: "PersistentCookie" = "yes"  
⊕ Form item: "rmShown" = "1"
```

User login information available to hackers (Spear-phishing method)
(source: *www.mcafee.com*)

user's computer data.

Lack of proper and necessary capabilities which would enable to control threats arising to cyber security in state and private sector as well as wide IT infrastructure possibilities in Lithuania create favourable conditions to conduct cyber espionage and exploit Lithuania's cyber infrastructure (servers, IP addresses) for adversarial activity in other states. These possibilities include the spread of the Internet and broadband speed, possibilities of technical data centres, most of the public services' transfer to IT space (E-government), and a possibility to make anonymous e-payments for IT infrastructure lease services. The use of digital currency is especially attractive to cyber hackers, who without revealing their identity can easily take IT servers on lease in Lithuania and exploit them for conducting APT type of attacks. The employment of IT infrastructure in different foreign states is an ordinary activity method of APT groups seeking to stay anonymous.

In 2016, the growing trend was observed that cyber espionage more often is being directed towards the western states' politicians. By using APT28/Sofacy group Russian military intelligence in 2016 penetrated into the US Democratic Party's National Committee computers and publicized the collected sensitive information related to elections in the USA. The APT28/Sofacy had also tried to penetrate into computers of the EU Parliament, German politicians, Poland's Foreign Affairs Ministry's employees. A group associated with Russia in 2016 had chosen part of the members from the Seimas of Lithuania as cyber espionage target objects. Through employing spear phishing method the hackers were seeking to infect the computers used by the members of Seimas with malware and obtain information stored in them. The attack was prevented, but it cannot be ruled out that yet more Lithuanian politicians or state officials could have been chosen as targets.

Considering Russia's activity in cyber space directed against the West, it is assumed that in targeting the Western states' politicians, Russia seeks to influence political processes within NATO states. One of the goals of Russia is through using sensitive or personal information obtained by cyber means take on the active measures and thus discredit Western politicians disadvantageous to Russia.

Cyber Attacks

On 9-21 April 2016, Lithuania encountered with large scale cyber attacks directed mostly against the state sector. DDoS attacks were oriented towards the websites of the Seimas, the President Office, MoD, State Security Department, Special Investigation Services, Financial Crime Investigation Service under the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, Foreign Affairs Ministry, and other state institutions, also Vilnius Airport, media (*Delfi*, *Alfa media*) websites, and other important Lithuanian cyber infrastructure. By these attacks it was sought to restrict Lithuania's information space, detach and isolate the state from information availability and communication with the outside world within the global information space (Internet). Russia had applied this strategy during the conflicts in Georgia (2008) and Ukraine (2014), when cyber capabilities were used in order to restrict the states' Internet connection. Hence, through cyber attacks carried out in April 2016 it was sought to test Lithuania's responsible institutions ability to react to such kind of incidents and assess Lithuania's IT system vulnerability.

The trend in the world has been observed that the targets of cyber attacks more and more often become the states' objects of critical infrastructure. For instance, two cyber attacks were carried out against Ukraine's Ivan-Frankovsk (2015) and Kiev (2016) electric power plants, which affected electricity supply for the part of Ukrainian habitants. These attacks once again

revealed a possibility to sabotage by cyber means the activity of the state critical infrastructure and make a negative impact on society's security, economics and welfare. Evidently, an increase of such incidents signifies that the critical infrastructure, especially the one associated with SCADA systems, has still been insufficiently secured.

The popularity of Internet of Things (IoT) technologies in Lithuania – smart devices capable to connect Internet and exchange information – is rapidly growing. Smartphones, TV sets, watches, printers, smart home appliances, real-time traffic and road information systems not only lead to new possibilities, but also create conditions for cyber threats to emerge. It goes without saying that most of IoT devices can be infected with malicious software and exploited for conducting DDoS type of cyber attacks. A threat may also be posed to device stored data that is usually comprised of information about the user's everyday habits and activity.

Besides cyber espionage the greatest threat for private business is criminal hackers' used Ransomware type of malicious software. By exploiting the security gaps the Internet spread malware encrypt the access to user's data and seeks financial benefit for giving access. There were such cases observed in Lithuania in 2016.



In the framework of state sector Russia remains the greatest threat in cyber space. Considering the developing Russian cyber capabilities and successful operations in cyber space, it is assessed that Russia's activity in cyber space will grow. Lithuanian state sector's IT systems will persist to be a priority cyber espionage target; however, the private critical infrastructure will likely be also targeted: telecommunications companies, SCADA systems installed in industrial objects, and other private objects of national importance. In order to discredit the state, cyber attacks are possible after every Lithuania's

political decision or open political declaration unfavourable to Russia or during any important international event held in Lithuania. It should be noted that a threat of cyber espionage is going to increase for state politicians and representatives of large business. Through exploiting cyber space, Russia's intelligence services will further pursue cyber espionage and information operations against Lithuanian politicians, state officials and private persons, thus seeking to influence Lithuania's internal and foreign policy.



The active measures imply Russian intelligence and security services' and other state subjects' organized activity through which it is sought to influence the other state's foreign policy and internal political processes in a way advantageous to Russia.

DDoS attack (distributed denial of services) is a process of sending superfluous requests from one, several or multiple different Internet points to information sources (websites, registers, command and control networks). In case of overwhelming traffic of requests, the service (website) becomes unstable or completely unavailable.

SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) is a control system architecture that uses computers, network data communication, and programming for industrial processes.

PROTECTION OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER

Russia's Compatriot Policy

Seeking to increase influence in the post-Soviet space Russia implements the so-called compatriot policy. Russia's compatriot policy differs from ordinary democratic power's attitude to national diaspora residing abroad. The compatriot status implies not the ethnic dependence on Russian nation, but first of all allegiance to interests of present Kremlin regime. Russia considers that its compatriots in the Baltic States are not only Russians, but also the loyal Russian-speaking Belarusians, Poles, Tatars, Ukrainians, Jews and representatives of other ethnic minorities.

During recent years Russia sought to increase her influence on Lithuanian Tatar community.

Compatriot policy goals and measures

Russia's compatriot policy goal in the Baltic States is to create a favorable environment for spreading Russian influence and thus diminish social integrity of these states by inciting ethnic conflicts. It is easier to conduct such activity in a closed ethnic community, therefore Russia and its groups of influence in the Baltic States seek to discredit any attempts to implement reforms on ethnic communities' education (e. g. enhanced learning of national language) that promote integration. Such kind of reforms are being downgraded referring them to attempts to assimilate ethnic communities. This deliberate replacement of a positive concept of integration into a negative concept of assimilation is a typical example of Russia's employed methods of propaganda.

Russia is extremely interested that foreign Tatar communities would be represented by persons who positively assess Russia's implemented Crimea annexation. At present the initiatives to weaken some current Lithuanian Tatar leaders' influence and establish new alternative local Tatar organizations are being developed. Part of Lithuanian Tatars has long before been actively participating in Russia's compatriot activity.

It is not accidental that high ranking Russian Foreign Affairs Ministry's officials tend to publicly highlight that in Lithuania not only the rights of Russian, but also Polish community are being violated. In fact, the aim of Russia is to integrate into compatriots' political schedule constantly set requirements to grant the Polish community of Vilnius region exclusive rights. Granting of exclusive rights to the Polish community gives background for Russia and its groups of influence to demand for the same rights and eventually a special status to Russian community in all the Baltic States. These Russia's attempts have also been illustrated by Vilnius based Russian embassy's coordinated compatriots' political cooperation with persons representing Polish community of Vilnius region. One of the ways to escalate ethnic tensions in the Baltic States is constantly and unfairly blame them for violating the rights of ethnic communities.

The compatriot status implies not the ethnic dependence on Russian nation, but first of all allegiance to interests of present Kremlin regime.

Russia's financed defenders of compatriot rights operating in Lithuania tend to take part in various international organizations' (UN, ESCO) human rights forums and along with Russian diplomats blame Lithuania for violating the rights of ethnic communities.

The project Moscow House in Vilnius remains particularly important to Russia. The prospects of this project have relatively large symbolic and practical meaning to Russia as a potential tool of its influence, compatriot policy, and public diplomacy. Until recently, Russia could not manage to establish in Lithuania any similar status holding institution (e. g. Russian Foreign Affairs Ministry subordinated federal agency's Rossotrudnichestvo Russia's science and cultural center); therefore, Russia's Foreign Affairs Ministry and Russian Embassy in Vilnius have been actively taking care of progress on Moscow House project.

In December 2016, Vilnius City District Court annulled Moscow House construction permit and determined a three years term for legalizing the construction. In 2017, Russia will likely assume various means of propaganda and unofficial pressure in order to force Lithuania to give guarantees that this extremely important project for Russia would be allowed to be implemented.

Russian Spiritual Movements' Activity

There are several active movements in Lithuania which advocate "Russia's moral values" (e. g. ancient Slavs) and therefore are attributed to New Age spiritual movement trend. These movements look forward to the New Age, i. e.

Russian spiritual movements' ideas correspond to current Kremlin regime's ideology, through which it is sought to present Russia as an alternative to the West and hence re-establish influence in the post-Soviet space

Nikolay Starikov's books published by "White Swans"

In 2013, the "White Swans" published N. Starikov's book in Lithuanian language titled *Krizė. Kaip tai daroma?* (en. Crisis. How is it made?), and in 2016 - a book praising Stalin and downgrading his misdeeds titled *"Prisimenė kartu"* (en. Remembering together). After a fuss in Lithuania's media, selling of this book was ceased; however, on Christmas occasion the publishing house "White Swans" suggested to give the books praising Stalin and other books published in this publishing house as presents to Lithuania's public libraries. In 2017, the "White Swans" is planning to present yet another Starikov's book translated into Lithuanian language.

the renaissance and prosperity of a new spiritual Russia. It is frequently associated with the end of Western civilization and liberal democracy era. Moreover, the spread of such ideas correspond to current Kremlin regime's ideology, through which it is sought to present Russia as an alternative to the West and hence re-establish influence in the post-Soviet space.

Several years ago appeared a new movement Valeriy Sinelnikov's friends club "White Swans" and a publishing house under the same name. This publishing house has been spreading not only teaching of Russian spiritual movements (e.g. Sinelnikov, Vladimir Megre, Sergei Lazarev and others), but also ideas of a notorious Russian radical Nikolaj Starikov. Conspirologist Starikov, who is known to be admiring the Soviet dictator Stalin, fights against the "Anglo-Saxon conspiracy" and various manifestations of Western influence in Russia. Starikov once had paid a visit to Vilnius to meet his readers and gave an interview to Lithuania's Russian speaking media.

Russia's soft power instruments that are assessed by most of Russian New Age spiritual

movements' representatives in Lithuania to be making small influence on Lithuania's internal processes are restricted to merely spreading Russian religious values. The publishing of Russian propagandist's Starikov books demonstrates that representatives of "White Swans" have begun to act not only as Russia's soft power instrument, but also to implement subversive Russian ideological politics by which it is sought to degrade Lithuania's nationhood. Accordingly, one of the ways of degrading Lithuania's nationhood is forming a positive role of the Soviets (Stalin as well) in Lithuania's development process as well as negation of the Soviet occupation and their crimes.

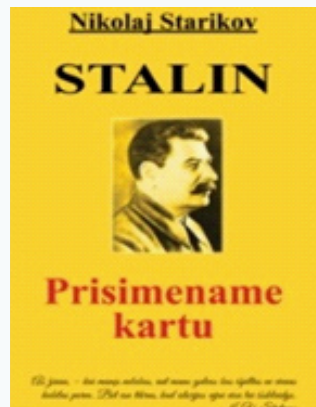
Russia-friendly Social Movements and Political Parties

There are several active Russia-friendly social organizations and political parties which tend to reiterate Russian propaganda clichés. They promote anti-Western ideas, protest against NATO forces deployment and military exercises, diminish Russia's threat, and blame Lithuania for Russophobe attitudes. Some representatives of these organizations stand for neutrality strategy in Lithuanian security and foreign policy that is favourable to Russian interests, and urge to stay aside from the conflict between the West and Russia or even exit from NATO claiming that this is the only way to avoid Russian threat for Lithuanian sovereignty. If Lithuania followed the so-called neutrality policy in the context of present security environment, strengthening of Russian military power and its employment in reestablishment of influence in the post-Soviet space, eventually it would have the same outcomes as Belarus and finally would appear in Russia's influence zone again.

Seeking to promote their ideas, Russia-friendly social movements and political parties organize various protest campaigns. The latest example of such kind of events was a campaign "For peace and justice" held near the Seimas in Vilnius on 16 January 2017, where speeches were made by



On the left: N. Starikov and his books published in Lithuanian language



Russia-friendly Lithuania's social organizations and political parties promote the so-called neutrality strategy in Lithuanian security and foreign policy that is favourable to Russian interests, and urge to stay aside from the conflict between the West and Russia and leave NATO as this would be the only way to avoid Russian threat for Lithuanian sovereignty.



representatives of Socialist People's Front and Fighters for Lithuanian Union. The date of this event was purposefully matched to the day when a riot was held near the Seimas eight years ago. The participants of this campaign announced a petition demanding that Lithuanian authorities would start the NATO leaving process.

So far, the ideas promoted by these organizations have not become popular in Lithuania's society. This was clearly demonstrated by the Seimas elections 2016, where Russia-friendly parties and individual persons have failed. Although Russia-friendly organizations and political parties are not influential, their representatives are still effectively exploited by Kremlin's controlled propagandist media in forming an image that Russian foreign policy supporting public society representatives and politicians are still active in Lithuania.

Radical Ideologies and Political Extremism in Lithuania

Differently to some other European States the extreme right-wing ideologies upholding organizations and groups in Lithuania could not manage to increase popularity of their political attitudes in society. Such situation was determined by the absence of topics suitable for escalation, such as strong ethnic tension or large-scale external immigration as well as fragmentation and internal conflicts of radicals themselves.

In 2016, an autonomous nationalism ideology supporting group was established in Kaunas. In Lithuania it is a new phenomenon, whereas in Europe similar movements have already been active since 2003. In their rhetoric the autonomous nationalists combine the extreme nationalism and xenophobia with anti-capitalist views. The supporters of this ideology oriented towards rebellious youth took over from their political opponents left-wing radicals the major

part of activity and methods of spreading propaganda, also the particular symbolism and outfit elements. It has to be noted that the persons associated with autonomous nationalist group acting in Lithuania during the observed period communicated with "National Action" right-wing radicals' organization in United Kingdom which in December 2016 was banned on the grounds of legal acts on terrorism prevention.

In 2016, there were no extremist groups supporting Russian military aggression and conducting anti-constitutional activity identified in Lithuania; however, there are certain indications that such kind of groups may appear in the future. The conflict in Ukraine and the subsequent scandal in Lithuania's media and society forced a stronger consolidation of persons backing the Kremlin's regime military activity in Lithuania. This was especially noticed in social networks, where a number of campaigns supporting Russia and statements from persons openly admiring Russia's imperial messiahism has increased significantly. It was found that part of these persons were former Soviet soldiers and militia employees, whereas the others currently belong to martial arts, shooting and military sports game clubs. Obviously, such their ideological views and type of activity serve as a precondition for small pro-Kremlin extreme groups to emerge. The members of the groups who are capable to use violence in order to achieve political goals would become the potential players in Russian hybrid aggression directed against Lithuania.



A procession of autonomous nationalist group in Lithuania

CRISIS REGIONS AND TERRORISM

Middle East and North Africa

In 2016, the conflict in Syria has been continuing in favour to ruling regime. Pro-governmental forces backed by Iran and Russia achieved the greatest victory since the beginning of the conflict, as they expelled the insurgent groups from the strategically important city of Aleppo. After this defeat the larger part of military opposition remains entrenched in the western province of Idlib, which has become their main stronghold. This province is dominated by Islamist groups, including the jihadists. This is particularly beneficial to Syrian regime and Russia, which attempt to convince the international community, and especially the Western states, that they fight not against the insurgents but the terrorists. The military opposition remains fragmented. The infighting among separate groups for power and resources become more and more frequent, which in turn impede an effective resistance to regime forces. Nevertheless, the insurgents have enough of ideological motivation to continue the fighting. Moreover, none of the conflicting sides

is willing to fully commit to peace negotiations. Consequently, a possibility to end the conflict in 2017 is low.

Russia has continued military operation in Syria and its strategy has not changed: Russian forces provided support for regime in suppressing the rebellion while Kremlin officially claimed to be fighting terrorists. ISIL fighters were targeted only sporadically; meanwhile, in public sphere Russian officials and pro-Kremlin media constantly emphasized that the fight with ISIL is the main goal of Russia. During the first year of the operation in Syria Russia achieved the following objectives: ensured the survival of Syrian regime, improved its own standing in the region, and demonstrated military capabilities and new armament. Despite all this, the Kremlin has not achieved one of the most important goals – it could not convince the Western states to directly cooperate in Syria on terms set by Russia. Presently, Syrian regime and its foreign backers have control over the course of the conflict. Therefore Moscow has no need to increase involvement in the conflict.



In 2016, international coalition and local partners in Syria and Iraq have continued a successful fight against ISIL. Over the last year, the group has lost some 23 % of territory, including important cities of Ramadi and Fallujah. After having started intervention in Syria in August Turkey managed to expel ISIL fighters from Syrian-Turkey border and thus isolate ISIL pseudostate (caliphate) from the outside world. Iraqi security forces have liberated half of Mosul, whilst Syrian Kurds and their allies started an offensive to retake Raqqa, the capital of ISIL caliphate. The group appears to be on

the verge of collapse as it is being attacked on several different fronts simultaneously. ISIL does not have sufficient capabilities and resources to defend effectively for prolonged period of time. Notwithstanding the huge pressure and constant defeats in Syria and Iraq, ISIL pays great attention to terrorist campaign in the Middle East region. The group organizes and conducts the attacks and urges its supporters to act independently. This ensures the group's visibility in public sphere. It also helps to mitigate the negative impact of defeats on its image and the fighters' motivation.

In 2016, security situation in Libya remained extremely complicated. The Government of National Accord that was established through the efforts of United Nations was unable to unite different political camps and found itself on the verge of collapse. Libya's de facto split into the west and east parts has been further entrenched, and the main power has remained in the hands of various militias. Gen. Khalifa Haftar having the strongest forces in the eastern part seeks to impose military control, with the support of Russia among other forces. After an intensive military operation, ISIL offshoot in Libya has lost the controlled territories in the city of Sirte. However, the internal fights and lack of effective political and security institutions create favourable conditions for various radical armed groups to arise and expand posing security threat to the region. The ongoing conflict in Libya enables the crimes, smuggling, and irregular migration networks from Africa through Libya to Europe to thrive.

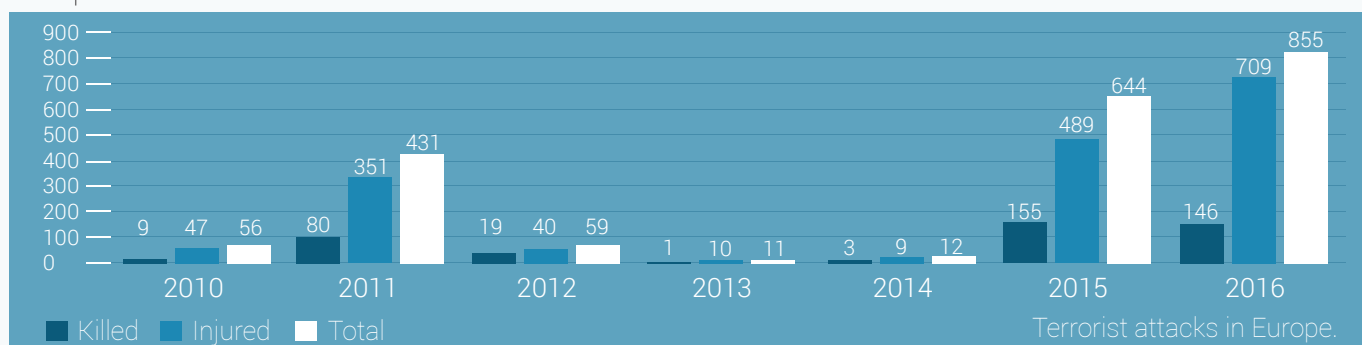
International Terrorism

In 2016, a terrorism threat in Europe remained high: ISIL members conducted large-scale and individual attacks against civilians and law enforcement officers in Belgium, France, and Germany (see Chart)

In 2016, a number of antiterrorist operations, detained extremists who planned the terror attacks and provided logistic support for them in Europe has increased. Despite the losses in Syria and Iraq, ISIL has intentions and capabilities to plan and implement large-scale terror attacks in Europe. Accordingly, its priority targets in Europe are the most active members of international antiterrorist coalition, namely France, United Kingdom, Belgium, and Germany.



ISIL recommended terrorist tactics



How ISIL propaganda works?

Aiming to recruit new members, ISIL has been releasing propaganda magazines (Dabiq, Rumiya, Dar Al Islam, etc.) as well as other sound records and video, short messages, and creating songs inspiring for war ("nasheeds"). ISIL propaganda has been disseminated via the most popular social networks, like Facebook, Twitter and others, extremists' forums and blogs in order it would reach as wider audience as possible. ISIL member having made a contact with radicalized person, she/he is directed to closed communication platforms (e.g. "Telegram"), where a person is being encouraged to carry out a terrorist attack, also giving advices for choosing a target, purchasing weapons, organizing logistics and tactics.

ISIL members who seek to return to Europe after gaining combat experience in the conflict regions of Syria and Iraq pose a direct terrorism threat. Out of 5,000 European extremists more than 1,700 persons have already returned to Europe. Part of more than 2,000 European members of ISIL that remained in the conflict regions may attempt to return to Europe in the collapse of "caliphate" declared by ISIL in Syria and Iraq and its province in Libya. Some of ISIS members may try to pretend refugees, use the migrants' smuggling routes and counterfeit documents.

A departure of extremists from Europe to ISIL "caliphate", planning and supporting of terror attacks indicate radicalization of part of Muslims residing in different European countries. This radicalization for a long time was incited by some Islamist organizations', movements' and individual imams' propagated antagonism towards the West, the spread of radical interpretations of Islam, and eventually, it was all strengthened by a long lasting conflict in Syria and Iraq as well as ISIL propaganda.

The terrorist organization Al Qaeda (AQ) has remained a threat for security in Europe although

in 2016 AQ had not organized any terror attacks in Europe. In its propaganda AQ urged to conduct individual attacks in Europe, and AQ affiliates carried out attacks against interests of European countries in Africa.

Terrorism Threats to Lithuania and its Citizens

Being a member state of EU and NATO Lithuania is a potential but not a priority target for Islamist terrorists. In 2016, in Lithuania there were no activities of radical Islamist terrorist organizations identified, no threats to carry out a terror attack issued, and no information about departure of our citizens from Lithuania to Syrian and Iraq conflicts was received.

The level of Lithuanian Muslim community's radicalization has remained low. In 2016, there were observed unsuccessful attempts of foreign Muslims to make influence on Lithuanian Muslim community and change Islam traditions of Tartars residing in Lithuania. The Tartars' domination in Lithuanian Muslim community and guidance of its religious life have restricted possibilities of spreading radicalization in Lithuania.

In 2016, a terrorism threat in Egypt and Turkey – mostly loved tourism destinations of Lithuanians - has continued to grow. In January 2016, two radicalized individuals attacked with knife European tourists in Hurghada holiday resort hotel of Egypt, where Lithuanians were staying as well. The attacks against the authorities in Egypt were conducted by a terrorist group declaring itself as ISIL Sinai Province. Their goal is to cause damage to tourism sector that is so important to Egypt economy and European states' objects in the country.

In 2016, a terrorism threat has extremely increased to Turkey which is involved in military campaign against ISIL in Syria. ISIL terrorist attacks in Turkey have intensified; their

geographical coverage (attacks in Istanbul, Ankara, tourist locations, territories settled by Kurds, regions bordering Syria) and targets (tourists, transport sector) have expanded. After ceasefire failure in 2015 attacks against Turkish government and security forces have been constantly conducted by terrorist separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and its units which warned tourists not to go to Turkey.

Irregular Migration

After EU agreement with Turkey for readmission of immigrants and closing the Western Balkan route in 2016 irregular migration flows to Europe have decreased. Throughout 2016 some 364,000 of irregular migrants came to Europe which is almost by two thirds less than in 2015 when more than 1 million was recorded. In 2016, there were two dominant migration routes to Europe: Central Mediterranean (Libya-Italy) and Eastern Mediterranean (Turkey-Greece).

Such a high number of immigrants who moved to EU states in 2016 caused problems to security of European states. The part of ISIL members and their ideology supporters, who carried out terror attacks in Paris, Brussels and Berlin had used the poorly controlled flows of migrants and failures of personal identification in 2015-2016. Making use of migrant flows is not permanent and mass, yet likely there are more ISIL members who came to EU under the disguise of refugee. There is to add that propaganda of radical groups can

also affect part of immigrants disappointed for unfulfilled expectations and reluctant to integrate into local societies.

As a result of massive flows of irregular migration to Europe, in 2016 the activity of European far-right and far-left organizations seeking to exploit this crisis for spreading their ideology has intensified (protests, demonstrations, vandalism). The migration topic has also been actively used in propaganda of Russia, which is determined to split EU, reduce its attention to Ukrainian and other Eastern partnership issues.

Resettlement of Asylum Seekers to Lithuania

So far, EU countries have not implemented the quotas of resettlement scheme for asylum seekers from Greece and Italy (relocation of about 10,000 migrants from more than 160,000 have been already completed). Until the end of 2016, relocations of 210 asylum seekers from Greece and Italy to Lithuania had been already completed. After checking procedures, some persons, whose intentions for entering Lithuania were not related to real need of protection or their relocation to Lithuania would have posed threat to national security, were recommended not to be granted with permission to enter Lithuania.



Throughout 2016 some 364,000 of irregular migrants came to Europe which is almost by two thirds less than in 2015 when more than 1 million was recorded.

CONCLUSIONS & FORECASTS

The main Kremlin's goal for 2017 is to ensure the stability of the regime and to make favourable conditions for Putin's re-election for the next term in president office. Stricter control over internal processes increases a possibility that Russia will continue its aggressive foreign policy which helps effectively compensate potential discontent in the society about social and economic situation. International trends favourable to Russia allow Kremlin to interfere in internal policy of foreign countries and destroy unity of the West. Since Putin is concentrating more and more power in his hands, a risk of unpredictable actions is also mounting. Therefore, in order to strengthen its global power status or enhance support for the regime Russia may undertake new risky steps in foreign policy.

In the short-term (up to 2 years), Lukashenka's regime will likely continue its multi-vector foreign policy. Through cultivation of relations with the West, Minsk will demonstrate that Russia is the main ally of Belarus but not the only partner. In order to retain visibility of Eurasian Economic Union effectiveness, Russia will be interested in providing direct and indirect support for Belarus but only when it holds a real control of processes taking place in Belarus. In this way, Russia will seek not to repeat the strategy pursued in Ukraine which was ineffective and caused Ukraine to turn its back on Russia. In the short and medium terms (from 2 to 5 years), Russia will likely exert stronger influence over Belarus and will assume stricter posture towards Belarus. Due to well-developed influence leverages of Russia in Belarus, provocations and deliberate incidents are likely to take place at the border of Lithuania and Poland during the coming *Zapad 2017* exercise.

Threats and challenges posed to Lithuanian national security by Russian and Belarusian intelligence and security services will be growing in intensity. In the short, medium and long terms (from 5 to 10 years), 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. In 2017, Belarusian intelligence services will continue to recruit officers from Lithuanian law enforcement institutions and national defence system, search for individuals who could be of service to Belarus and will closely cooperate with Russian intelligence services.

Russia's efforts (in Ostrovets NPP case – in joint efforts with Belarus) to implement projects in the Baltic region and attempts to secure positions of weakening Gazprom in Lithuania show determination of Russia to retain its influence in the Baltic States. In the short-term, Russian transit policy will remain unfavourable to Lithuanian transport sector as Russia will be further seeking to reduce cargo flows across the Baltic States and simultaneously increase mutual competition and encourage possible disagreements.

In the short-term, Russia will not reduce information attacks against Lithuania in intensity due to tensed geopolitical situation. The main targets of Russian propaganda projects and mass-media means will remain the issues of Lithuanian defence, NATO forces deployment, Lithuanian history and energy policy. Russia will highly likely put great focus on projects in Lithuanian language and will carry out activity in higher intensity in social media (portals, social networks). Russia will make attempts to affect Lithuanian society and decision-makers in information sphere so that Lithuanian pursued internal and foreign policy would meet the interests of Russia.

Lithuanian state sector's IT system will remain a priority target of Russian cyber espionage but private critical infrastructure will also be of high importance. Cyber attacks will likely be carried out after every Lithuanian political resolution unfavourable to Russia or during major international events in Lithuania.

Negative impact of Russian propaganda on Lithuanian ethnic communities will help to retain Russia's sphere of influence upon Lithuanian social processes. Taking advantage of the situation, Russia will be further reducing social integrity of Lithuania. Russia-friendly political forces will make attempts to unite on the basis of anti-Western values, but it is hardly likely that they will gain considerably greater influence on Lithuanian political processes in 2017. The extreme ideologies supporting groups will remain small and confined mostly to organizing propaganda campaigns in 2017.

In the short-term, a threat of terror attacks planned by ISIL and held by its ideology affected individuals in Europe will remain high. Facing a defeat of ISIL in Syria and Iraq, some ISIL members may make attempts to return to Europe by using the routes of irregular migrants. AQ may also be planning terrorist attacks in Europe. In the short and medium term, a possibility of terrorist attacks will remain high in Egypt and Turkey, the countries favoured by Lithuanian tourists.

The threat of terrorism in Lithuania will remain low in the short and medium term. However, Lithuania as a country of Schengen area may likely become one of the terrorists' transit states. Radicalization level of Lithuanian Muslims will remain low in the medium term but attempts of foreign Muslims to make influence upon religious life of local Muslims may negatively affect the stability of Lithuanian Muslims community.