This is a peer reviewed, annual research publication published by the Military Academy of Lithuania in co-operation with Vilnius University and Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas. The main objective of this publication is to provide readers with a wide-scale analysis and generalization of the changes, both essential and significant, in the national security of Lithuania at the international–systemic, national, and regional levels. The yearbook also aims to give maximum emphasis to the specificity of Lithuanian national security issues and comprehensively present them to a widely interested and concerned audience.

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Preface

The Strategic Research Centre of the Lithuanian Military Academy, alongside its partners at Vilnius University and Vytautas Magnus University, present their readers with the fifteenth volume of the Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review, devoted to the security problems of Lithuania and the Baltics in 2016-2017. Continuing the established tradition, we have categorized all the studies published in the journal into four groups.

The first group, “The Global International System and Lithuania”, is comprised of two articles. In his study, Jonathan A. Boyd assesses twelve of the top foreign policy and research institutes of the USA, the so-called think tanks, and their attitude towards security and defence matters of the Baltic states expressed in research results. The topic is particularly urgent, keeping in mind both the ambiguous ideas on NATO’s future as expressed by Donald Trump, the new President of the USA, and the impact of the think tanks themselves on USA foreign policy. In another article, Konstantinas Andrijauskas evaluates the correspondence between the goals set in Moscow’s foreign policy towards Asia and the results achieved within the period of 2014-2016 as well as the fundamental objective of Moscow to thus gain more room for manoeuvre on the global and regional levels of international politics in the context of international sanctions and crisis in the relations with the West.

The second part of the Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review – “The Changing European Security Space” – also consists of two studies. Egdūnas Račius explores the Khilafa project initiated by the “Islamic State”, which is a unique phenomenon of state formation, nation building, and national self-awareness. As such, it poses new challenges not only from the perspective of narrow military security but also from a much broader one, particularly, to the countries, among them European, the citizens of which forsake their original social contracts for a new one. Valdis Otzulis and Žaneta Ozoliņa assess, in their study, the impact of the decisions taken at NATO’s Warsaw and Wales summits on the defence of the Baltic states. On the basis of these decisions, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are to host battalion-sized battle groups. Thus, the article aims at investigating how the host nation support could contribute to the self-defence capabilities of the Baltic states.

The third, traditional part of the journal, “Lithuania’s Eastern Neighbourhood”, again focuses on Russia, the greatest neighbour from the East. This time, Russia’s policy and warfare has attracted the attention of four researchers. The article by Virgilijus Pugačiauskas deals with the image of Lithuania as pre-
sented in Russia’s mass media after the annexation of the Crimea. The author shows how Russia’s mass media consistently and deliberately keeps formu-
ating three negative images of Lithuania. Another text in this part, prepared
by three researchers, Vilius Ivanauskas, Vytautas Keršanskas, and Laurynas
Kasčiūnas, is devoted to the new assessment of the Kaliningrad factor in the
relations between Lithuania and Russia and its significance for the security of
Lithuania, taking into consideration the broader negative tendencies in the
relations between Lithuania and Russia.

The fourth part of the Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review traditionally
analyses urgent aspects, problems, and cases of Lithuanian national security.
This time, readers have the opportunity to get acquainted with the work of two
authors. Gediminas Grina presents, in his survey, the development of military
diplomacy in modern Lithuania, defines its priority directions for the futu-
re, and analyses specific features of organizing this service. The author arrives
at the conclusion that the significance of military diplomacy, in light of the
currently developing tendencies of the international framework, is destined
to only become stronger and that fully-fledged diplomacy will not be able to
function without qualified military advice. The article by Romas Švedas, “EU
energy island – characteristics, threats, and how to break out of it: a case study
of Lithuania”, surveys how Lithuania reached the turning point and did away
with its energetic dependence on Russia and thus, essentially, strengthened its
national security.

We hope this new research will engage and interest our readers. Please
note that this and previous volumes of the Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review
can be found at the General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania In-
ternet website as well as in various international databases, including the open
access platform of our publisher, De Gruyter.

Vilnius, June 2017

Editor-in-Chief

Volume 15 articles are available at:

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