This is a peer reviewed, annual research publication published by the Military Academy of Lithuania in cooperation 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 Research Centre of the General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania, alongside its partners at Vilnius University and Vytautas Magnus University, present their readers with the seventeenth volume of the Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review publishing studies and research articles written by Lithuanian and foreign researchers in 2018-2019, devoted to the security and defence topicalities of Lithuania and the Baltics. This volume publishes fourteen research works consistently grouped into four main parts.

The first part of the publication “The Global International System and Lithuania” contains four studies analysing the international systemic context important to Lithuania. Three of the articles deal with implications of Donald Trump presidency, which has brought considerable confusion to the life of the transatlantic security community. In his article “American Foreign Policy in the Age of Donald Trump” written specifically for the “Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review”, David Schultz reflects on foreign policy developments inspired by the US President from a three-year perspective and predicts that Trump’s followers will face even greater challenges relating to the need to act in a world where the United States no longer dominate. In her article, Gerda Jakštaitė examines US security policy during the Trump presidency, paying particular attention to military security and NATO’s role in it, assessing its importance to the Baltic States. In his article, Valentin Beržiūnas looks for answers to two questions: why the administration of the President of the US pursues a protectionist trade policy and how this policy affects transatlantic relations and Lithuania's international situation. The fourth study in this part of the publication called “Strategic Stability: It Takes Two to Tango?” written by Ieva Karpavičiūtė turns to the current changing conditions and developments in nuclear deterrence and strategic stability. The author states that while the basic principles of strategic stability having formed back at the time when the world still was bipolar are still applicable, today’s strategic stability has become more complex and asymmetrical, thus nuclear states have to review their doctrines and policies to respond to major strategic developments.

The second part of the Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review – “The Changing European Security Environment” – analysing regional security challenges consists of three studies. Nortautas Statkus explores the phenomenon of nationalism – the revival of one of the grand ideologies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The weakening and vanishing nationalism was a self-evident phenomenon at the end of the 20th century. But the UK’s decision to leave
the European Union, the election of Donald Trump as US President, and the strengthening of far-right-wing parties in Europe have fuelled debate on the role of nationalism in the international system of the 21st century. The article seeks to answer the question of whether this resuscitation of nationalism is a long-term trend or merely an episode justifying forecasts of its weakening. Arūnas Molis and Veronica Aridu also analyse the phenomenon of the strengthening of far-right-wing parties. The article written by these researchers “Alliance between Putin and European Far-Right: Where Does the Convergence of Interests Lead?” presents three possible scenarios for the development of this alliance and their possible consequences on the further development of the European Union. Vytautas Isoda is also engaged in forecasting the development of the European security architecture and political processes in his article “European Security Architecture after the United Kingdom’s Withdrawal from the European Union: Future Scenarios”. The author refines three alternative scenario storylines: a closer link between Europe’s security and defence; a new Cold War and the revival of the global “Anglo-sphere”.

The third part of the publication “Lithuania’s Eastern Neighbourhood” focuses on the largest neighbour, namely, Russia and its closest ally, Belarus. In his article “Scenarios for Baltic Defence: What to Prepare Against” written specifically for the Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review, Lukas Milevski analyses three hypothetical options of Russian aggression against the Baltic States from various aspects, including an ambiguous invasion, i.e. the so-called hybrid war; a hasty, ill-prepared, reckless Russian invasion, and a well-planned and prepared mass occupation by Russian forces. The author’s analysis shows that the third option is the most likely, because it alone allows Russia to expect an almost definite victory. In his article, Erikas Kaukas analyses the topic of securitization of the Baltic States practiced by Russia, its intensity and reasons therefor. The subject-matter of this study is the public rhetoric of the Foreign Minister of Russia Sergey Lavrov in 2008-2017. Having conducted the analysis, the author notes that while Lavrov barely speaks about Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, he identifies the Baltic States with the generally hostile West, and further demonizes them portraying these countries as exclusively anti-Russian and chauvinistic states. In his article “Military Cooperation between Russia and Belarus: Theoretical and Practical Perspectives”, Virgilijus Pugačiauskas examines the dynamics of this military cooperation after the Ukrainian crisis. The author notes that in the current state of development of the military alliance between the countries, Russia has significantly expanded capabilities for deployment of its military forces by relying on Belarusian military forces and
its territory as a platoon for potential military action. On the other hand, the desire of Belarus to maintain the status quo of political autonomy remained the key factor slowing down the pace of integration in the period of intensified cooperation. The fourth study in this part of the publication – “The Reconstruction of Belarusian Identity Narratives: The Belarusian Language” – by Juljan Jachovič looks back at a change in immediate neighbourhood of Lithuania, which is very important to the country. Although the negative attitude of the Belarusian authorities towards the Belarusian language has been obvious since the very beginning of the presidency of Alexander Lukashenko, however, in the face of public unrest in the region, official stories regarding the statehood of Belarus have changed since 2014, while some state officials of different ranks took over a new discourse in favour of the Belarusian language. The article presents the results of a critical discourse analysis of the newly formed social representation that changes the role of the Belarusian language and the perception of what being a Belorussian means.

The fourth part of the Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review traditionally analyses urgent aspects, problems, and cases of Lithuanian national security. Three studies are published in this part this time. In his study “The Impact of Trends of the Development of Military Technology on the Defence of Small Countries”, Giedrius Česnakas discusses the key military developments brought about by new technologies and considers how small countries and their armies should adapt to these processes and trends. The article by Justinas Juozaitis “Ostrovets Nuclear Power Plant in Lithuanian Foreign Policy: Objectives, Measures and Future Prospects” focuses on the complex case of Lithuanian foreign policy. Having conducted a detailed analysis, the author concludes that despite the obvious inconsistency and with the construction of the power plant being nearly completed, the Lithuanian foreign policy can be considered effective. According to the researcher, we should remember in this case that in defence of its national interests, Lithuania tried to interfere with the construction of a strategic infrastructure in the territory of another state, which had a full support from the great power. However, even in the face of such a disbalance of powers, Lithuania successfully addressed the nuclear safety issues of the Ostrovets Nuclear Power Plant internationally. In her study “The Susceptibility of Lithuanian Youth to Information Attacks: the Elaboration Likelihood Model and Presumable Attack Topics”, Raminta Stankutė-Søsted touches on a very important national security issue. The author raises a question whether the bias of Lithuanian youth to news sources and their passivity to political news may make them vulnerable to attacks. Insights from
propaganda and persuasion studies were used to answer the question developing a quasi-experimental study on their basis.

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We invite our readers to enjoy reading the new interesting studies of researchers. Please be reminded that both these and previous Lithuanian Annual Strategic Reviews are available on the website of the Research Centre of the General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania and in various international databases. Also, please note that the publication is available in both Lithuanian and English.

Vilnius, December 2019

Gediminas Vitkus
Editor-in-Chief
Military Academy of Lithuania

Volume 17 articles are available at:

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