

# The Baltic States

SEARCH FOR SECURITY

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## **THE LATVIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

The Latvian Institute of International Affairs (LIIA) was established on May 20, 1992 in Riga as a non-profit foundation charged with the task of providing the people of Latvia with information about international events and Baltic security issues. The LIIA is an independent public service institution that organizes lectures, seminars, exchange programmes, issues publications, maintains a specialized library, and conducts research relevant to Baltic security interests.

The views expressed by the authors do not necessarily reflect those of the Institute.

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## INTRODUCTION

*By Atis Lejiņš*

The need to conduct research on Baltic security issues is obvious and requires no apology. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania became independent states after the first great war of this century, only to lose it during the second war that devastated Europe. But unlike other states which regained their statehood after only a few years of occupation during the Second World War, the Baltic states found themselves occupied for almost fifty years.

The central and eastern European states (Poland and Hungary, for example), despite limitations placed upon them by the Soviet Union on their sovereignty, were able to keep considerable attributes of national states, such as national armies and participation in international organizations. The Baltic states, on the other hand, became de facto provinces of Russia.

The USSR collapsed and the Baltic states, which played not an insignificant part in the denouncement of the empire, came back on the stage of independent nations to play their role as small states in world politics.

Although few would have claimed that the Baltic states had a major security problem in the heady years immediately following the restoration of their independence, subsequent developments in Russia characterized by the twin Zhirinovskiy and Zyuganov effects, coupled with the issue of NATO enlargement, show that the very existence of the Baltic states could again become a challenge to the architects of security. However, it appears that policy makers have learned from the bitter lessons of the past and are not planning to draw new dividing lines at the expense of small and weak states. As the former Swedish prime minister Carl Bildt wrote in *Foreign Affairs* in 1994 Russia's policy toward the Baltic states is the litmus test of its policy toward Europe, as, indeed, it was earlier in 1939–1940 although it was not recognized as such.

Since 1991 Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have been intensively searching for security that, as aptly put in the Latvian Foreign Policy Concept would make “restored independence irreversible.” All three states see their ultimate security guarantees in the European Union and NATO membership. The main task of the Latvian Institute of International Affairs (LIIA), established in 1992 as an independent, public service institution with a grant from the Swedish government, is to conduct research relevant to Baltic security interests.

This volume is the result of LIIA's first research program, the Baltic Security Project that was conducted in 1992–1994 and modified by insights gained working on the second project “Small States in a Turbulent Environment/Baltic Perspectives,”

1995–1996. The papers of the first project were presented at an international seminar in Riga in November 1994 and were consequently revised in January 1995. However, because some researchers have left the LIIA since then, not all papers could be wholly revised and updated. Nevertheless it was deemed necessary to publish the papers because of the rapid development of events and paucity of scholarly studies on Baltic security. We aim to publish the second project in 1997.

There are four parts to this book: First the security policies of each Baltic states – Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are examined by scholars from each respective country. The chapter by Žaneta Ozoliņa on Latvia is updated to include developments in the beginning of 1996 while Evaldas Nekrašas stops in January 1995 and Aare Raid's contribution is only partially modified to cover major trends after this date. The main purpose of this section was to see how the security policies of all three states developed in the first years after the restoration of independence.

The second part addresses the twin questions of Baltic relations with the EU and NATO and whether a new – Nordic-Baltic – subregion is in the making after the dividing line running through the middle of the Baltic sea has evaporated? The latter chapter has been wholly revised to take into account the enhanced interest of Norway in the Baltic sea region while the former unfortunately does not go beyond January 1995. Yet it does afford interesting insights which indicate and explain why the accession of the Baltic states to the EU will not be easy sailing and even harder yet – membership in NATO.

The three contributions in the third part have been wholly revised and updated to include the first three months of 1996. Aivars Stranga offers in-depth analysis of Baltic-Russian relations and developments in Russia itself, Daina Bleiere examines Baltic-Ukrainian, Belarus, and Polish relations, while Guntis Štamers focuses on the issue of the large Russian ethnic group in the Baltic states, particularly in Estonia and Latvia, that dramatically shifted the demographic structure of the latter two countries during the Soviet occupation. Here care must be taken to distinguish genuine concern by Russia for its compatriots in the Baltic states and foreign policy that aims to use them as instruments to further perceived Russian national interests.

We have decided to include an essay on the problem of Baltic unity in the concluding part of this volume. Edmunds Apsalons addresses the fundamentals of this problem; although Baltic calls for Baltic unity were heard even before the end of World War One attempts to achieve it floundered in the inter-war period. Only loose cooperation in foreign policy, known as the Baltic Entente, was achieved, which, however, collapsed on the eve of World War II. Today Baltic cooperation has advanced much further but the obstacles faced by three different peoples with varied historical backgrounds are not easily overcome despite the geopolitical logic demanding this.

The sequel to this volume will be the results of our second project on “Small States In a Turbulent Environment/Baltic Perspectives,” in many ways a continuation of the present study. We will partly shift our focus from Ukraine and Belarus to cover the Visegrad countries in their relations with the EU and NATO and attempt to cover new theoretical ground in the study of small states' survival. It is our aim to have the next volume ready in May 1997.

## *Introduction*

The LIIA is now four years old and this is our first major research product. It is an analysis of Baltic security by Baltic security experts who, after the restoration of independence, have spent considerable time conducting research in various Western research institutes.

I would like to particularly thank the Swedish government for granting the necessary financial resources for our two research projects and publishing this book and the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, especially its then director Professor Rutger Lindahl who took a personal interest in the project. I am also grateful to Mr. Christer Söderlund, the vice-director of the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, for the time and practical help he has devoted in managing the Swedish government's grant.

This book was put together on our Macintosh by Daina Bleiere who also painstakingly edited the texts, and our secretary Signe Sole who admirably coped with the myriad of technical details that always accompany projects and publications of this kind. Needless to say viewpoints expressed by the authors do not necessarily reflect the views of the LIIA.

**PART ONE**  
***BUILDING BAL TIC SECURITY***

## **SECURITY POLICY OF THE BALTIC STATES: THE CASE OF ESTONIA**

*By Aare Raid*

In August 1991 Estonia attained its long coveted goal: the restoration of its independence. For more than fifty years, occupation by the Soviet regime had dominated Estonian society. However, the people's hope for independence survived and remained intact.

Although the Soviet type of integration succeeded in obliterating administrative and economic frontiers, it also weakened the ethnic and cultural identity of the numerous nationalities. As a consequence, it has made the Estonians rather suspicious towards any kind of integration that may jeopardize their national identity and culture.

The yearning for freedom and independence paved the way for various expressions of national sentiment and resulted in a wave of national euphoria for a restoration of the pre-war nation-state. Whereas nationalism in Europe is in general decline and has been replaced by a trend toward economic and political integration, in Estonia the idea of a nation-state is still held in high regard and Estonian nationalism remains a strong social political force.

After the restoration of independence, the country's political elite was fast to grasp the essential difference between legal and real independence. Estonia's independence is still shaky and the possibility of losing it remains high. Therefore, the fear that both the state and the nation may perish is an ever present worry in people's minds. The unpredictable nature of the political developments in neighboring Russia is the principal cause for alarm and makes the danger more than a hypothetical one.

The need to establish a viable security policy determined Estonia's choice in actions, methods and means. Such a policy has to take into account not only the presence of external threats but also the built-in vulnerabilities of the state itself.

### **DEFINITION OF SECURITY POLICY**

The predominant understanding of security today has acquired new additional elements beyond the traditional and fundamental concept of military security. The present definition of security policy involves the coordination and integration of numerous functions carried out by the nation-state: the military, political, economic, environmental, social, cultural and judicial. It refers to the comprehensive and all-encompassing strategic thinking by the elected representatives of the state involving an overall integration and inter-relatedness of all of its ministries and directed toward optimizing the nation's assets, resources, beliefs, goals and ambitions. Graphically, the concept of security policy can be depicted as follows:





In the case of Estonia, its security policy should rest upon guarantees for the country's independence and the establishment of the necessary conditions for building up its democracy in accordance with both European standards and domestic needs.<sup>1</sup> Due to the precarious position Estonia finds itself as a newly re-established state, threatened by the instability and unpredictability of the new Russian Federation, this paper will focus upon the different aspects of the general concept of security policy. Such a focus is dictated by the fact that, to date, the Parliament and the Government have failed to even propose, let alone adopt a definite policy for national security and defense.

### SECURITY POLICY OPTIONS

In his speech at the North Atlantic Assembly seminar in Tallinn, October 26–28, 1992, Ülo Nugis, the speaker of the Estonian parliament (*Riigikogu*), stated that “Estonia as a state should rest its security policy decisions on the main cornerstones of the European security structure. In the future, Estonia must become a member of the common (collective) European security institutions as an equal political partner.” This approach as outlined by the Speaker has subsequently been adopted in practice as the direction for Estonia's security policy. Since Estonia is a small state, its national security is logically tied to international and collective security. Estonia has clearly chosen to seek its security guarantees with the international community of the democratic West. Having to share a border with the powerful Russian state whose actions and ambitions are hard to predict, Estonia tends to be suspicious of the intentions of its big neighbor. Russian history provides ample justification for these suspicions.

Just before Estonia gained its independence, the emerging political parties started

voicing views as to their country's position on the international scene and its security structures. With independence, the problem became especially urgent.

The pre-independence visions of the Baltic states as part of a demilitarized and neutral Balto-Scandia lost their significance. Both the post-World War II international order and concrete historical experience obviated the choice of a neutral and non-aligned status for the Baltic states. The new situation required a new security policy content. The idea of "neutrality for the time being" was countered with "neutrality will not guarantee security" and "if the world is no longer divided between two antagonistic blocs, then there is no justification for neutrality."<sup>2</sup>

The security policy alternatives turned out to be extremely restricted. The closely situated Nordic countries, though very friendly to the Baltic states, did not promise any security guarantees, save moral support.

It was a common perception that direct military guarantees from the West would be the best solution. However, the U.S. made it quite clear that the Baltic states were not within her sphere of vital interest. Germany was preoccupied with its reunification process. The Council of the Baltic Sea States, established in 1992 on the initiative of Germany and Denmark, which the three Baltic states also joined, ruled out any debate on national defense and security, contrary to their wish that the Council should promote collective security arrangements that would extend to all nations bordering the Baltic sea.

Maintaining good relations with the U.S.S.R. and its successor Russia, while recognized as a prerequisite for Estonian security, never included the option of establishing a bilateral security alliance with the Soviet Union or Russia. Historically they had proved to be unreliable partners who often broke promises and treaties. Moreover, because of the Soviet occupation, any such security arrangements were unacceptable psychologically and would have been considered politically incorrect.

The Estonian political elite concluded that the best alternative Estonia should pursue was to internationalize its security issue and place it within the broader context of European security. Although it was quite obvious that NATO was not yet ready to accept Estonia as a member, the country's leadership hoped nonetheless that NATO's security umbrella would be expanded to cover Estonia as well.<sup>3</sup> Estonia's security and defense is now linked to NATO and the European Union.

Immediately after the re-establishment of independence, Estonian national security was essentially defined as a complex of military, economic, demographic, cultural and environmental interests that affect the fundamental need to preserve independence for the state and to assure the survival and welfare of the nation. By 1992, however, national security was generally understood as military security. The utmost concern was how to defend the country against the possibility of foreign aggression. The cause for this fear was the growing political instability of Russia.

### **PRINCIPAL SECURITY INTERESTS**

Cooperation with European security structures has become the predominant

focus of Estonian policy makers who regard it as the cornerstone of Estonian security. Their attention is for the main part directed toward NATO and the West European Union (WEU) as the most reliable and influential security institutions in Europe. Cooperation with them in the construction of a viable European security policy is seen as a key element of the country's security policy. Integration into the European economic structures is also considered significant.

The normalization of Estonian-Russian relations remains an important and sensitive security issue contingent upon the dependability of Russia's continued recognition of Estonian independence.

### **PERCEPTION OF THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT**

The main threat to the national security of Estonia remains the unpredictability of the development of the democratization process in Russia — a matter of widespread concern for that country's neighbors. Unfavorable turns in the Russian political process may generate direct military threats such as occupation or unprovoked incursions by military units getting out of the central government's control.

Other Russian threats to Estonia include the possibility of diplomatic/political isolation of the country, Russian inspired internal disturbances by its large Russian-speaking minority, and the spreading of such disturbances from across the Latvian border.

Environmental threats to Estonia are posed by the Sosnovye Bori nuclear power station situated near St. Petersburg and the uranium waste depository left in the town of Sillamäe by the Soviet uranium enrichment factory.

The country is made economically vulnerable by its continued dependence on electricity generated near the Russian border and by a continuing trade imbalance that may cause its monetary system to collapse.

Social disturbances resulting from a low standard of living and poor quality of life could also jeopardize the country.

### **NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY CONCEPT**

Generally, the policy of national security has been carried out on an ad hoc basis and the political elite of the country has yet to recognize the importance of developing a national security policy doctrine. At present, the understanding that such a doctrine is needed is developing. On November 29, 1993, upon the initiative by the parliamentary faction *Free Parliamentarian Union* the representatives of the parties met to discuss the matter. The meeting resulted in the formation of special working groups to study different issues pertaining to the security and defense doctrine.

### **NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY DECISION MAKING**

Under the constitution, Estonia is a parliamentary republic where the legislative power belongs to the parliament and executive power to the government as represented by the prime minister. While the presidency is rather weak, the President is the supreme commander of the state's defense forces. At present, security policy decision making in Estonia involves the parliament (via its Defense and Foreign Affairs committees), the government (via the ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense) and the president. The constitution also provides a Defense Council as an advisory body to the president.

The everyday decision making on issues concerning security and the practical implementation of the resulting policy is generally carried out by the prime minister through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Although the main institutions and authorities involved in security policy making are in place, the process itself still lacks structure and a practical mechanism. As a consequence, the security and defense decision making system remains impractical and the exchange of necessary information between institutions and ministries is unsatisfactory. The communications between the parliament and the government are particularly deficient and the decision making process as a whole, chaotic.<sup>4</sup> The situation is further aggravated by the attacks directed against President Meri and originating with the different political parties, for overstepping his authority in signing agreements with President Yeltsin on July 26, 1994 on the withdrawal of Russian troops from Estonia which took place a few days later.

## **NATIONAL SECURITY AND ITS COMPONENTS**

The principal problem for Estonian security is the existence of a twofold threat, internal and external, that is long term and persistent by nature. The internal threat stems from both the post-war migration and from general social insecurity caused by the reorientation of the society to a free-market economy. The external threat posed by Russia will probably persist for a number of years because of that country's uncertain political situation. Even if the democratization process in the Russian Federation is successful, it will continue to generate a certain level of insecurity in Estonia as a great power with imperialist traditions. Since Estonia is a weak country bordering a great power, its security is comprised of several components with different threat exposures within the national security framework.

The military or defense component of national security is the state's armed defense capabilities combined with the willingness of the population to commit resources to support the military.

The political component involves Estonian participation on the political scene of Europe and the world and securing favorable political conditions and guarantees for its independence and democratic development.

The economic component represents access to world resources, finances and markets to sustain the required level of welfare and quality of life, as well as economic interdependence with other countries to provide further assurances for political

independence.

The social security component can be defined as sustaining, under acceptable and favorable conditions, a continued evolution of a democratic society, national culture, language, identity and traditions.

The environmental security component entails securing adequate ecological conditions for human existence, as well as the responsibility to minimize pollution originating in Estonia and affecting its neighbors and participation in international activities for the protection of environment.

The above security policy components do not operate in isolation, they are interdependent and work together.

### **THE MILITARY COMPONENT**

Estonia is particularly vulnerable to military threats because of its small size, limited resources and geographical proximity to Russia. Therefore, the military threat constitutes the prime risk factor on Estonia's national security agenda and justifies accordingly the adoption of a viable defense policy as a high priority on the government's agenda. In the national security context, the defense or military capability of the Estonian defense forces, including their ability to counter a Russian attack, is very limited. This deficiency has prompted Estonia to develop its paramilitary forces, such as the Defense League *Kaitseliit*, which at the moment of writing is about 7500 strong.

Awareness that the defense forces, via the Baltic peacekeeping battalion, serve both the country and the security interests of Europe at large, helps to encourage the Estonian nation to support Estonia's defense posture. It is obvious that a small and vulnerable country like Estonia will experience considerable difficulties in guaranteeing its national security alone. Considering the range of challenges to the country's security, the preferable and most affordable defense would be its reliance on, and integration with, the security structures of Europe. In the meantime, Estonia must draw on its own resources to develop the best possible defense policy and strengthen its military capability.

After the restoration of independence, the environment for a build-up of Estonian military forces remained unfavorable until 1994. Since Estonia was perceived as part of a region of high security risk, the West refused to sell it arms and military equipment. It was only on March 22, 1994, that the United States lifted the ban on military sales to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Prior to that date, Estonia searched the world markets for suitable military equipment. A limited number of light arms, primarily Kalashnikov type automatic rifles, were purchased from China and Romania. Estonia also concluded a 60 million dollar arms deal with Israel.

At present, the Estonian defense forces number about 3000. By and large, they are armed with light infantry weapons. Mandatory military service was officially legislated on March 10, 1994, when the parliament passed a law for the conscription of

males between the ages of 18 and 28. Every year, there are about 6500 to 7000 men available for conscription. The defense budget for the fiscal year 1994 was 264.8 million Estonian crowns (about 19.76 million dollars). It would, however, be a little misleading to calculate the percentage allotted to defense from the total national budget, which, for 1996, does not include allotments for social security and health insurance, while the local government budgets, a part of the total for fiscal year 1996, were not included in 1995. The defense percentage was 4.9 per cent for 1995, whereas in 1996, it stands at four per cent. The apparent "reduction," however, is a result of calculating in the local government budgets and thus increasing the total annual budget.

Inasmuch as Estonia lacks a fully developed defense policy, the build-up of its defense forces generally remains an ad hoc process that tends to be confusing for both the public and the government. One result is a reluctance to join the defense forces and a rather widespread tendency to avoid conscription. The results of physical examinations of conscripts indicate that only about 60 per cent of them are suitable for military service. According to military authorities, the number of those avoiding conscription also remains high.<sup>5</sup>

### **THE POLITICAL COMPONENT**

As a small, weak state Estonia must focus its security policy both inward (seeking to reduce the vulnerabilities of the state itself) and outward (seeking to reduce external threats by addressing their sources). Estonia's geopolitical position, its proximity to Russia and St. Petersburg, that nation's second largest city makes it vulnerable to external pressures.

Immediately after the restoration of independence Estonia succeeded in securing its recognition by the leading nations of the world and, on September 17, 1991, was admitted to the United Nations. As early as 1990, Estonia participated at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) Paris summit and on September 10, 1991 became full a member of CSCE.

Following the withdrawal of Russian troops, the status of the Russian speaking minority in Estonia remains the only major issue to be resolved in talks with Russia. High among the priorities of Estonian security and foreign policies is the utilization of the OSCE process to resolve this issue and to improve the overall security situation.

Eager to establish contact with NATO, Estonia participated in the 27th session of the NATO Assembly which took place on October 17–20, 1991, in Madrid. In November 1991, the then minister of foreign affairs, Lennart Meri, met in Brussels with the Secretary General of NATO, Manfred Wörner. Both agreed that it was necessary to develop bilateral relations between Estonia and NATO.

On December 20, 1991 Estonia became a member of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC). NACC membership provided Estonia with a European forum to discuss sub-regional and regional security matters and collective defense issues. Estonia is also an associated member of the North Atlantic Assembly.

On June 19, 1992 Estonia participated in the WEU extraordinary meeting in

Petersburg, Germany, where the WEU Forum for Consultations was established. The Forum was of great importance for Estonia since the focus of the consultations were issues concerning the European security architecture, stability, partnership and cooperation. On November 30, 1993 the WEU granted Estonia the status of an observer. In May 1994, under the terms of the Kirchberg Declaration, the Forum was suspended and replaced by the WEU Association of which Estonia became member. Estonia considers its associated cooperation with the WEU an important step toward full membership in the European Union. Since the globalization and interdependence of economic and security structures are world-wide phenomena, the Estonian political elite views Estonia joining the European Union as an important guarantee of its independence and security.

Since early in the independence restoration process, Estonia's political circles have expressed their country's eagerness to become a full member of NATO. On February 3, 1994 Estonia signed the Framework Document of the Partnership for Peace (PFP), and on July 11, 1995 signed its individual Partnership Program.<sup>6</sup> By its active participation in the PFP and within the framework of the program, Estonia aims to demonstrate her willingness to work together with NATO members and her readiness to contribute to the collective effort in securing peace and stability.

The establishment of a joint Baltic battalion for U.N. peacekeeping operations ranks high on this agenda. The formation of such a joint Baltic peacekeeping unit is seen as a signal of international solidarity and sharing the idea of collective security has met with world-wide support. "The Baltic peacekeeping battalion is a unique initiative that is very highly appreciated by NATO."<sup>7</sup> In 1994, Estonia slated 5.3 million EEK for its share in covering the costs of establishing the battalion; in 1995, that figure rose to 20 million EEK. On September 13, 1994, the prime ministers of the three Baltic states met in Riga to sign an agreement on the establishment of the Baltic Peacekeeping Battalion (BALTBAT). In 1995 an Estonian peacekeeping unit participated in the U.N. peace mission in former Yugoslavia, and Estonia has expressed her readiness to place soldiers under NATO command in its peace mission in Bosnia in 1996.

Relations between Estonia and Russia are still far from normal. A nationalist agenda in political thinking on both sides continues to exacerbate bilateral problems. As the two countries experience serious political and economic difficulties, dark shadows from their mutual past tend to generate distrust and selfishness in their present relationship.

Suspicion with which Estonia views the aims and objectives of Russian foreign policy is aggravated by various pronouncements by high-ranking Russian officials. The Russian foreign policy doctrine bestows upon Russia the responsibility for a new world order and the building of a new system of mutual relations between countries that formerly were part of the Soviet Union. Within this new world order Russia is seen as a self-appointed guarantor of regional stability.<sup>8</sup>

The current deadlock in the Estonian–Russian negotiations on border issues is the result of a basic disagreement on how to approach the problem. The Estonian position is based on the understanding that the only international agreement whereby

the Estonian–Russian border was fixed is the Tartu Peace Treaty of February 2, 1920, whereas the Russians insist that the Treaty became void in 1940 when Estonia “voluntarily” joined the U.S.S.R. Consequently, Russia denies the continuity of the Tartu Peace Treaty and demands that the new state border coincide with the administrative border that existed between Estonia and Russia in 1991.

Estonia's official position in the border dispute is based on the view that the restoration of independence in 1991 also means the restoration of the Republic's pre-war borders. Estonia was occupied by the Soviet Union and all border changes were instituted by the occupation regime. It follows that these changes cannot be considered legitimate and subject to the CSCE 1975 Helsinki agreement. The refusal to recognize the borders set by the Tartu Peace Treaty is regarded as a refusal to recognize the continuity of the Estonian state. This view has found firm support among the majority of Estonian political parties and the alternative, more pragmatic, approach to the border issue has been largely neglected. Since late 1994, however, the pragmatic approach is gaining incremental support. In 1995, consultations on the border issue continued, but without any result.

During their July 26, 1994 meeting in Moscow presidents Meri and Yeltsin reached an agreement on three important issues: 1) a complete and final withdrawal of Russian troops from Estonia on August 31, 1994; 2) basic social guarantees for retired Russian military personnel in Estonia; and 3) evacuation and dismantling of the Paldiski nuclear training center.

Two important problems, the border issue and the rights of the Russian speaking minority have yet to be resolved. On August 12, 1994 Russia began a unilateral demarcation of the border thus demonstrating her lack of willingness to reach a compromise in the border dispute.<sup>9</sup>

In September 1994 Estonian foreign minister Jüri Luik unveiled the principal areas of emphasis in foreign policy following the withdrawal of Russian troops. Estonia would 1) seek to improve her relations with Russia; 2) support the independence of Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Moldova and 3) demand equal respect for human rights everywhere.<sup>10</sup>

Under pressure from the West, Russia had to withdraw its troops from Estonia and accept the sovereignty of Estonia as an independent European state. This, however, has not met with universal approval by the various political forces in Russia. The so-called Russian minority problem offers Moscow an effective propaganda tool, which it can use against Estonia in the international arena. On August 11, 1994 president Yeltsin asked his government to work out a policy concerning Russian residents in the former Soviet republics.

In June 1994 president Lennart Meri paid a state visit to Beijing seeking to promote closer ties between Estonia and China. He succeeded in securing Chinese support for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Estonia by the end of August 1994 and for improved political and economic cooperation between the two states.

In June 1994 president Meri also visited Kazakhstan and in August of the same year president Nazarbayev paid a return visit to Estonia. The leaders of the two states agreed to lend mutual support for their respective independence and to promote



Estonian-Kazakh trade relations. Kazakhstan has expressed interest in Estonian ports to facilitate her trade with European countries and, in return, has offered Estonia access to transportation routes for trade with South-East Asia.

Estonian-Ukrainian relations are in the early stages of development. Both countries have exchanged official delegations and state officials have met with their colleagues to encourage cooperation.

On July 6, 1994 president Clinton visited Riga where he met the presidents of the three Baltic states and expressed additional support for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Estonia and Latvia by the end of August 1994. His visit was viewed in Estonia as an unequivocal gesture of support to Baltic independence.

Regular naval visits by U.S., British and French military vessels to Tallinn have been interpreted as a clear signal to Russia that the leading Western states support continued Estonian independence.

Estonia has also succeeded in establishing friendly relations with Germany. Germany views its political, economic and cultural relations with the Baltic states as important and has expressed willingness to assist their integration into the European Union.<sup>11</sup> On September 21, 1994 German defense minister Volker R uhe and Estonian defense minister Enn Tupp signed a cooperation agreement.

On October 3, 1994 Estonia signed a Memorandum of Mutual Understanding with Great Britain providing for military cooperation.

Estonia has re-established its historically good relations with the Nordic countries. These countries have offered a firm support to Estonia in the process of integrating her political and economic structures with Europe.

Increased cooperation between the three Baltic states has also continued since the restoration of their independence.

## **THE ECONOMIC COMPONENT**

The significance of the economic component of security policy should not be undervalued. The quality of life and the level of well-being have a direct influence upon the political behavior of the resident Russian speaking minority. Estonia has firmly stated its intention to achieve full integration with the European economic structures and become a member of the European Union. Optimists hope to reach this goal by the end of this century, pragmatists see the beginning of the next century as a more realistic deadline.

Estonia is a country with a relatively high industrial potential. In 1993, industrial production accounted for over 32 per cent of the gross domestic product with existing enterprises operating below their capacity. According to expert estimates, the average exploitation of production capacities was 53 per cent in the third quarter of 1993. In 1992, the total manufacturing output was approximately 60 per cent of the 1991 level. The decline continued in the first half of 1993 slowing down in the second half of that year. Decline was rather marked in 1994 and 1995 as well. Agriculture was similarly affected. After a 21 per cent decline in the total agricultural production

in 1992, it declined another 17 per cent in 1993<sup>12</sup> and this tendency continued in the following two years. Agriculture is a strategically important area of Estonian economy, since it has to provide the population with subsistence both under normal and crisis conditions. Maintenance and development of agriculture and a rural lifestyle is an integral social-economic problem. The Estonian economy as a whole is expected to return to positive growth by the end of 1995, although unemployment will probably rise to a peak nine per cent before beginning to decline. In September 1994, the Department of Statistics revealed that, contrary to expectations, in the first half of 1994, the total industrial output had dropped a further 5.5 per cent as compared with the first half of 1993.

There has occurred a dramatic shift in the roles of the East and the West as traditional Estonian trading partners. The total volume of trade and the relative importance of imported and exported goods in the time period between November 1994 and November 1995 can be summarized in the following table:<sup>13</sup>

	<b>Exports</b> millions EEK	<b>Imports</b> millions EEK
Latvia/Lithuania	2 843.8	1 609.0
CIS	5 845.9	5 550.1
West	14 062.0	24 108.5
Total	22 751.7	31 267.6

The changes were facilitated by an agreement with the European Union, effective as of April 1, 1993, on trade and economic cooperation. The agreement accorded both sides a Most Favored Nation (MFN) status based on the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT). This was followed by a full Free Trade Agreement with the EU on January 1, 1995. Finally, an association agreement with the EU was signed, along with Latvia and Lithuania, in the summer of 1995.

It would have been economically expedient to build upon the long established economic relations with Russia. However, both the economic instability of Russia and the current direction of its foreign policy have had a negative impact on these relations. As a small country, Estonia is greatly dependent on imports and cannot afford to have its import trade be dominated by any one nation, especially if that nation has not fully abandoned its imperialistic ambitions. Therefore, it has been Estonia's policy to steadily reduce Russia's role in Estonian foreign trade. Estonia and Russia agreed on principle to grant each other MFN status on November 16–17, 1993, but the implementation of this agreement has been delayed for political reasons. In July 1994 Russia doubled the customs tariffs on its imports from Estonia.

In 1993, Estonia traded with 116 countries. Its major export and import partners were the following:

<b>Exports</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Imports</b>	<b>%</b>
Russia	22.9	Finland	36.4
Finland	20.9	Russia	16.0

Sweden	9.6	Sweden	9.0
Latvia	8.7	Germany	8.9
Germany	8.1	Lithuania	3.5

In 1994 and 1995, Finland, Russia and Sweden remained Estonia's main trading partners.

In 1993, Estonia had its greatest trade turnover with Finland (6564.9 million EEK), followed by Russia (4341.5 million EEK), Sweden (2098.1 million EEK), Germany (1918.4 million EEK) and Latvia (1224 million EEK).<sup>14</sup> The same tendency was maintained in 1994 and 1995.

In 1993, direct foreign investments in Estonia amounted to 0.01% of the world total. In terms of per capita investment in Central and Eastern Europe, Estonia placed third, after the Czech Republic and Hungary.<sup>15</sup> The total of direct foreign investments in Estonia came to 2200 million EEK in 1993. The largest investor was Finland with 32.3 per cent, closely followed by Sweden with 29 per cent. The share of other countries was much lower: 5.9 per cent for the Netherlands, 4.4 per cent for Switzerland and three per cent for Italy.<sup>16</sup>

The inviolability of foreign investments in Estonia is guaranteed by the relevant laws and international agreements. Estonia has concluded bilateral agreements on mutual promotion and protection of investments with Switzerland, Germany, Great Britain, France, Austria, Israel, Poland, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, China and the USA.

Estonia has joined the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Paris Convention of Industrial Property Protection.

To avoid double taxation of income and capital and to prevent tax evasion, Estonia has concluded bilateral agreements with Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, Great Britain and Poland.

In June 1992, the Estonian crown (EEK) was introduced to replace the Soviet ruble as legal tender. The crown continues to be fully backed by foreign exchange and is freely convertible to Western currencies at rates determined by its linkage to the German mark at a fixed rate of exchange (currently EEK 8: DM 1). The introduction of a strong domestic currency is regarded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as having contributed to the stabilization of Estonian economy and financial markets.

## THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENT

The environmental component of Estonia's security policy primarily involves the legacy left by the Soviet regime.

A major risk factor was the Russian nuclear submarine training center in Paldiski, which was a potential source of radioactive contamination. However, the dismantling of its two nuclear reactors, 70 MW (th) and 90 (th), was completed in

September 1995 in compliance with the Russian troop withdrawal agreement. Both sides cooperated with the international group of nuclear experts established at their Stockholm meeting on May 14 1994. The Paldiski International Expert Reference Group (PIERG) was created to give technical and material assistance to the dismantling process in Paldiski.

Another potential source of radioactive contamination, the uranium waste depository of the former Soviet uranium enrichment factory at Sillamäe, remains intact. The depository is situated by the sea and any leakage of its contents would endanger the nearby Gulf of Finland. Estonian experts are working together with their Swedish and Finnish colleagues to enhance the safety of the storage facility.

Industrial wastes and agricultural runoff are major sources of pollution in the waters of the Gulf of Finland and the Baltic sea where contamination levels exceed the European norms. This problem is also part of the legacy left by the Soviet system and any improvements require substantial investments that the Estonian economy is currently unable to afford. Some projects have nevertheless been launched with assistance from the Nordic countries.

Estonian environmental problems, however, are not a major source of concern for Estonia's neighbors. Internationally, Estonia has been a reliable and active partner in dealing with matters concerning the environment. In January 1992 she joined the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area and became a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency. On October 19, 1992 the Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal was signed. In 1994 Estonia joined the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, the Convention on Civil Liability in the Field of Nuclear Energy and the Convention on Assistance in Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency.

## **THE SOCIAL COMPONENT**

The social component of security policy has been largely ignored by the Estonian political elite. Political parties have engaged in bitter infighting often failing to see social stability as a major contributing factor to national security.

In 1993 and 1994, the government and the ruling coalition party *Fatherland* had a tendency to invoke concerns for national security as they identified their domestic opponents with the policies of certain foreign powers. The cases of corruption, legal violations by state officials, continuous political intrigues within the government and the parliament have eroded people's trust in state institutions.<sup>17</sup> Efficiency and loyalty, the two key concepts against which the contribution of a state apparatus toward national security can be measured, can be largely questioned in the case of Estonia. New incompetent bureaucracies have been allowed to mushroom. The society has splintered into groups that express varying degrees of dissatisfaction with

domestic policies. An opinion poll conducted in November 1995 indicated that 67 per cent of the population are not satisfied with the domestic situation. The confidence in the state has thus been undermined and state security compromised by its internal vulnerability.

The fact that large numbers of low income families manage to make ends meet can rather be attributed to the strategies of survival developed during centuries of occupation than to any successful economic policy by the government. Official statistics indicate that the bulk of the annual national income is distributed among a mere ten per cent of the population. In July 1994, the average gross salary was 113 dollars a month. By the third quarter of 1995 it had risen to 207 dollars, substantially lagging behind the rate of inflation. Old age pension, in 1993, amounted to a mere 24 per cent of the average gross salary: the lowest percentage in Central and Eastern Europe and a notable drop since the previous year when it was 34 per cent.<sup>18</sup> The situation was aggravated by the high percentage of retirement age people among the population: 25 per cent as of April 1, 1994. According to official statistics, in 1994, people of working age made up 56 per cent of the total population. Life tended to be somewhat easier in the larger cities like Tallinn, where the wages were about 124 per cent of the national average, and Tartu. The living standard in small cities and the countryside was much lower with wages fluctuating from 72 to 70 per cent of the national average.<sup>19</sup>

One of the sources of serious conflicts has been the policy to restore ownership relations as they existed in June 1940, just prior to Soviet occupation. Another problem concerns the complications encountered by those ethnic Estonians who were born in Russia following their parents' deportation in 1941 or 1949 and who have decided to apply for Estonian citizenship. The same difficulties are encountered by orphans and non-Estonians whose parents were Estonian citizens. In September 1994, the parliament confirmed the need to revise the existing citizenship law.<sup>20</sup> Russians who have lived in Estonia for years and are not willing to repatriate to Russia have expressed concern for their political and economic rights. The procedure involved in applying for citizenship and the acquisition regulations are perceived by many of them as complicated and hostile. This perception is continually being enforced by official statements from Russia.

Another key problem is the rising crime rates in different segments of Estonian society. In December 1993, the director of the Central Bureau of Investigations stated that economic crime had become a danger to the Estonian state.<sup>21</sup>

If the idea of state is not firmly rooted, then a weakening of state institutions may well bring about a total collapse and disintegration. In the case of Estonia such a possibility has become a sensitive security issue because of its large number of alien residents, mainly Russians, who have not become integrated into Estonian society. By December 1994 only 46 000 people had obtained Estonian citizenship through naturalization and other procedures. Of those, 20 000 received citizenship on the basis of their Estonian ancestry. For 1995, those figures are similar, when 82 000 Russians applied for and were granted Russian citizenship. The majority of the 600 000 resident aliens in Estonia have yet to identify themselves with any nation.

## **THE CULTURAL COMPONENT**

Postwar migration is perceived as one of the most significant threats to and vulnerabilities of the Estonian state. The immigrants arrived in Estonia from different cultures, from diverse geographical and climactic areas of the former Soviet Union settling mostly in the larger cities instead of rural areas. The Soviet regime used the immigrants to make the indigent population conform to a common Soviet model instead of encouraging their integration into Estonian culture and society.

Estonians perceive their identity as rooted in Western ideas of liberalism, individualism, equality, social and human rights, constitutionalism, the rule of law and free market economy. Historically Estonia had developed close affinity to European culture, whereas the immigrants mostly identified with Orthodox Christianity or Islam, which traditionally attach higher value to the collective rather than the individual and recognize the priority of communal over private property.

Thus, the Soviet state itself was not the only bearer of the Communist system and ideology: in Estonia, the immigrants were perceived to be its direct representatives and guardians. At the heart of the so-called national question are not so much the difficulties involved in the coexistence between people of different cultures and mentalities as the legacy of a process of political and economic colonization.

Survey results from 1992 and 1993 suggest that Russians in Estonia place high value on their ethnic and cultural origins. In 1992, 85 per cent considered themselves wholly or mostly rooted in Russian culture, while by 1993 this figure had increased to 96 per cent.<sup>22</sup>

Because of their general ignorance of Estonian language and culture, immigrants tend to rely on Russian-language mass media and are susceptible to manipulation by Moscow politicians and Russia's shifts in both foreign and domestic policies. In 1993, a great number of Russians in Estonia also identified themselves as representatives of Soviet culture. The Soviet orientation varied by region and was most pronounced in the north-eastern Estonian towns of Narva, Sillamäe and Kohtla-Järve.

Survey data, however, suggest that there exists a parallel process whereby the Estonian culture has become a part of the self-identity of aliens. Many consider themselves at least partially influenced by Estonian culture.

It is evident that national identity is an important component of the security problem. In Estonia, national identity tends to act as a mobilizing force that can either powerfully reinforce state security or deeply undermine it.

Two processes are currently underway in Estonia. First, an integration of aliens, mainly Russians, into the Estonian society. Second, a reintegration of the Estonian nation into the European community.

## **THE ETHNIC COMPONENT**

Ethnic and cultural parochialism tends to be a strong political force everywhere

since the fear of being swamped by foreigners is easy to place on the political agenda as a security issue. In the case of Estonia, problems posed by its vast number of resident aliens are compounded by Russia's attempts to exploit the Russian speaking minority as an instrument of power and a geopolitical factor.<sup>23</sup>

In theory, international migration can be controlled by an enforcement of immigration regulations, but in practice very few states are successful in sealing their borders against determined entry seekers. The potential for further mobility is great, and the incentives are mounting as significant differences appear in the quality of life available in Estonia and Russia. The delays and possible setbacks in the reform process in Russia make the threat of a mass influx of immigrants very real.

One of the basic sources of interethnic tensions have been the rapid changes in Estonia's ethnic makeup after World War II (see a table on page 24). In 1934, Estonia had 1 126 413 residents, 88.2 per cent of them Estonians. By 1989, the Estonian percentage in the total population of 1 565 662 had fallen to 61.5 per cent. According to the latest census data (1989), there were more than 600 000 foreigners living permanently in Estonia and 85 per cent of them could not speak any Estonian. 61 per cent of non-Estonians were born outside Estonia, for people 45 or older that percentage was 92 per cent.<sup>24</sup>

During the postwar years the demographic composition of the non-Estonian population had also undergone a radical change.

The question is: do all these immigrants constitute a new ethnic minority group despite their different background and different level of adaptation to Estonian cultural milieu?

On the basis of sociological surveys conducted in Estonia in 1992–1993 it was forecast that in the near future about 28 to 35 per cent of aliens will become Estonian citizens.<sup>25</sup> Estonia passed its Citizenship Act on February 26, 1992. Eligibility for citizenship requires two years residency in Estonia dating from March 1990, a basic knowledge of the Estonian language, and no war crime convictions. A large number of aliens, primarily Russians, whose ties to the Estonian society are weak and who are easily manipulated by Russian propaganda present a clear security threat from within the state.

Changes in National Composition of Minorities in Estonia  
from 1934 to 1989 (census data)

	Census		Sociological Estimation 1994	
	1934	1989	Total population	Estimated citizens
Russians	92 656	474 834	435 800	91 500
Ukrainians	92	48 271	41 800	8 750
Belarusians	0	27 711	24 900	5 200
Finns	1 922	16 622	16 000	5 450

Jews	4 434	4 613	3 500	1 300
Tatars	166	4 058	3 900	1 300
Germans	6 346	3 466	1 600	550
Latvians	5 436	3 135	3 000	1 000
Poles	1 608	3 008	2 900	1 000
Lithuanians	253	2 568	2 500	850
Swedes	7 641	400	350	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>130 462</b>	<b>588 686</b>	<b>536 250</b>	<b>117 000</b>
<b>The share of non-Estonians</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>35%</b>	

Source: Kirch, A., "From a Change of Evaluations to a Change of Paradigms: Estonia 1940–1993," *Changing Identities in Estonia. Sociological Facts and Commentaries*. (Estonian Science Foundation and Estonian Academy of Sciences, Institute of International and Social Studies: Tallinn, 1994), p. 9.

## CONCLUSIONS

The final withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of Estonia on August 31, 1994 put an end to Soviet occupation. The significance of the troop withdrawal is evident in the improved Estonian-Russian dialogue and a more favorable political and psychological climate for Estonia's integration with Europe. The Estonian security situation, however, has not substantially changed, since significant threats and vulnerabilities have not been removed. Safeguarding the survival and independence of the Estonian nation still remains the principal security goal. The means and resources necessary for accomplishing this goal need to be addressed and identified in Estonia's security and defense policies. The principal resources, population and gross national product, are very limited and will probably remain marginal in the near future. According to estimates, a population of one million has about 140 000 males in the 18–38 age group; the wartime percentage of military manpower in NATO's European member states is projected at about 10 per cent, in neutral states at about 70 per cent of total population. Estonia then has a potential military manpower of 14 000 to 100 000 men.<sup>26</sup> In European NATO states about four per cent of total budget is allocated for defense purposes, in neutral countries, that figure is about two per cent. A small country like Estonia has to be careful in calculating its defense budget so as to avoid overburdening its economy. In September 1994, the Estonian Ministry of Defense estimated that about five to seven per cent of the annual budget should be earmarked for defense.

The single most important factor necessary for an efficient security system is a national defense policy that would be acceptable to and supported by the local population.<sup>27</sup> The absence of a clearly defined national defense policy is preventing the development of an effective and efficient national defense system.<sup>28</sup> The Estonian parliament and Ministry of Defense need to make adoption of such a policy a high priority and come to an understanding that its continued absence may be the cause of



unpleasant and long-term social, economic, military, political and diplomatic consequences for Estonia. The lack of a common defense strategy endorsed and approved by both the parliament and the government undermine the current tactical aspects of Estonia's military development, such as conscription, facilities, equipment, weapons, training, and leadership education which remain uncoordinated and confused.

In order to develop an effective and efficient defense for Estonia, the General Headquarters must be provided with clear policy guidelines taking into account the willingness and ability of both the population and the government to commit resources for the defense of the nation. Under the current circumstances, the military leadership can only proceed with uncoordinated tactical decisions such as: 1) procurement of weapons, worth millions of dollars, without a clear idea as to their implementation within a defense plan; 2) raising battalions and establishing companies in various parts of the country without a blueprint as to what strategic assets are to be defended; 3) training troops in tactics that may or may not correspond to the pending adoption of a defense concept.

The longer the government delays in developing a defense policy strategy, the greater the possibility that the above mentioned tactical measures would dictate, rather than follow a defense concept.

Taking Finland as a model, Estonia should be able to call up about 100 000 men in the event of mobilization. The development of such a large reserve force, however, would require about 20 years of mandatory conscription and training.<sup>29</sup> During the interim period, the problem of military manpower remains critical and can only be resolved in the context of an established defense doctrine.

Any system of national security ultimately rests upon the will of the people complemented by governmental policies. Estonia's security should be guaranteed by a popularly supported defense policy, financed by a pragmatic economic policy and assisted by a foreign policy that would be directed toward reducing potential security threats and vulnerabilities to a minimum. Thus, in its foreign policy decisions Estonia should take into account its large Russian minority and the linkage between domestic issues and the security of the state. The Estonian–Russian border issue provides another example. Whereas opinion polls indicate that the border issue is regarded as unimportant by most respondents, it is still included in the agenda of the parliament radicals who demand a restoration of the 1920 border.\*

The success of state economic policies largely depends upon balance of trade. While during the first eight months of 1993 Estonia's trade balance was in favor of exports, the last four months show a ten per cent surplus of imports. This tendency of imports over exports continued throughout 1994, reaching an alarming level in mid-year, and in 1995. The foreign trade turnover, in the first half of 1994, was the largest with Finland (exports: 822 million EEK, imports: 1704 million EEK). In 1993, Estonia's exports to Russia and other CIS states reached 3221 million EEK, whereas its imports amounted to 2564 EEK. During the first half of 1994, Estonia's exports to these countries exceeded imports by only 18 million EEK. However, in June 1994, Russia doubled its tariffs on imported goods from Estonia causing a decline in Estonian exports.<sup>30</sup>

To secure and guarantee its further existence as a nation state, Estonia needs to adopt a popularly supported security and defense doctrine that would be implemented in its foreign trade and diplomacy taking into account its geopolitical position. Should it fail to do so, Estonia cannot realistically expect to become member of the European collective security system.

Estonians have to fully understand that they have to get their own house in order. If they cannot defend their own freedom and independence, nobody is going to do it for them.<sup>31</sup> The necessity of promptly developing a clearly defined and carefully balanced defense, economic and foreign policies is the most urgent challenge Estonia faces today.

## NOTES

1. To obtain information on the existing approaches to security policy issues and decision making process, the author conducted a number of personal interviews with representatives of parliamentary and government institution in from March to June and in October 1994. Those interviewed were Vello Saatpalu, Head of the Parliament Foreign Policy Commission; Peeter Lorents, Vice-Chairman of the Parliament Defense Commission; Raul Mälk, Vice Chancellor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Toivo Klaar, Head of the Foreign Policy Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ago Tiiman, Counselor of the Foreign Policy Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Secretary of the Estonian delegation to the Estonian-Russian negotiations; Vello Vare, Counselor of the Foreign Policy Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Aleksander Einseln, Major General, Commander of the Defense Forces; Hannes Walter, Chancellor of the Ministry of Defense; and Enn Tupp, Minister of Defense.
2. Petersen, P., "Security Policy in the Post-Soviet Baltic States," *European Security*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Spring 1992), pp. 16–24. Statements by Chairman of the Supreme Council's Foreign Affairs Commission Indrek Toome, Defense Force Chief of Staff Ants Laaneots, Chairman of the Supreme Council's State Defense Commission Enn Tupp and First Secretary of the Judicial Department on CSCE Problems at the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Gregore-Kalev Stoicescu.
3. See note 2. Also statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs Lennart Meri after his visit to Brussels, 11–13 Nov. 1991.
4. During the author's interview with Vello Saatpalu, Head of the parliamentary Foreign Policy Commission, and Rein Helme, Head of the parliamentary Defense Commission, both expressed anxiety concerning the inadequate flow of information from the Government and Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Commissions. Helme stated that the Head of the parliamentary Defense Commission, the Minister of Defense and the Commander of Defense Forces meet with the Prime Minister every other week to discuss defense matters. Toivo Klaar, Head of the Foreign Policy Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs mentioned, in an interview conducted by the author in March 1994, that every Wednesday the President meets with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs to discuss security and foreign policy matters.
5. *P evaleht*, 3 Aug. 1994.
6. *Postimees*, 2 Aug. 1994.
7. Statement by George Katsirdakis, NATO Defense Policy Section, at the seminar "An Approach to Latvia's National Security and Defense Policy," 9–12 June 1994, Riga.

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\*This demand has been dropped by Estonia in the present border negotiations with Russia. – Eds.

8. Statement by Deputy Head of the Russian Security Council directorate Vladislav Chernov, , 23 Apr. 1993.
9. *Postimees*, 2 Aug. 1994. On 29–31 July 1994, during a discussion session at the Setu summer university in Värskä, Estonia, the former Chairman of the Supreme Council, Arnold Rüütel revealed that in 1991 he and President Boris Yeltsin agreed, in principle, on the border between Estonia and Russia. This agreement foresaw changes of the border on the basis of ethnic settlements. The agreement was fixed by signing a communique and the signing ceremony was attended by Estonian Foreign Minister Lennart Meri. The establishment of a repatriation fund was also initiated at this meeting.
10. Speech of Foreign Minister Jüri Luik to the Estonian diplomats and Foreign Ministry staff on 11 Sep. 1994 in Lohusalu. *Hommikuleht*, 26 Sep. 1994.
11. Interview by German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel to the Estonian newspaper *Eesti S numid.. Eesti S numid*, 24 May 1994.
12. Lugus, O. and Vitsur, E., *Why and Where to Invest in Estonia* (Estonian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Economics, 1994), pp. 4–5.
13. Eesti Pank (Bank of Estonia), *Statistical Datasheets* , 10 Jan. 1996.
14. See note 13, p. 8.
15. *Postimees*, 27 May 1994.
16. See Lugus and Vitsur, note 12, p. 12.
17. Several members of the parliament also hold posts on the boards of state enterprises although the Constitution restricts participation of parliament members in business. This practice has caused a number of attacks in the press against leading politicians charging them with corruption. Prime Minister Mart Laar admitted that his government had its own “politburo” of 5 to 6 persons who made all the important decisions. In fact, matters deteriorated to such an extent that the Prime Minister and the ruling majority in the parliament functioned in the atmosphere of continuous public scandal. An end to this state of affairs was put by a parliament vote of no confidence (60:27) in Laar’s government on 26 Sep. 1994.
18. *Eesti S numid*, 25 July 1994.
19. Vitsur, E. and Lugus, O., *The Creation of Basic Conditions for Direct Foreign Investment in the Economies of the Baltic States: Estonia* (Estonian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Economics. Phare Ace Project: Tallinn, 1994), p. 33.
20. Chairman of the parliamentary Legal Commission Mart Nutt stated the need for a revised citizenship law on 27 Sep. 1994.
21. *P evaleht*, 28 Dec. 1993.
22. Kirsch, M., “Diversity of Self-Identification in Estonia: Grounds for Integration or Disintegration? Changing Identities in Estonia,” *Sociological Facts and Commentaries* (Estonian Science Foundation and Estonian Academy of Sciences, Institute of International and Social Studies: Tallinn, 1994), pp. 11–24.
23. Simanjan, R., “With Whom to Live?,” *P evaleht*, 16 Aug. 1994. The author is the head of a project at the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences. He foresees an important role for the Russians living in the Baltic states in the process of economic reintegration between Russia and the Baltic states. In his view, this process would be accompanied by the rise of the political role of Russians in the Baltics.
24. *Estonia In Facts* (The Estonian Institute: Tallinn, 1993). pp. 3–6.
25. Kirch, A., “From a Change of Evaluations to a Change of Paradigms: Estonia 1940–1993,” *Changing Identities in Estonia. Sociological Facts and Commentaries* . (Estonian Science Foundation and Estonian Academy of Sciences, Institute of International and Social Studies: Tallinn, 1994), p. 10.
26. Brower, K. S., “A Pragmatic Approach to the Defense of Small Countries,” Paper presented at the seminar “An Approach to Latvia’s National Security and Defense Policy,” Riga, 9–12 June 1994.
27. Briefing of Major-General Aleksander Einseln, Commander of Defense Forces, in the parliament on 27 Sep. 27 1993. *Postimees*, 28 Sep. 1993. Also Einseln’s interview to the newspaper *Maaleht*.

*Maaleht*, 1 Sep. 1994. Einseln has several times referred to the absence of a clear security and defense doctrine and pointed out the obstacles this has created for developing a viable defense force. He has urged calling a referendum on a defense doctrine arguing that the country's defense forces need a full support of the population.

28. Dr. Warren Christolon from the National Defense University and Washington Institute for National Strategic Studies and the author have made a study of the economic and security situation in Estonia during the years 1992–1994.
29. Nordberg, E., "Baltia: Strateginen Perusselvitus," *Strategian tutkimuksia*, vol. 1, no. 2, (Helsinki, 1993).
30. Mihail Bronstein, "Economic Situation and the Russian-Estonian Relations," *Postimees*, 22 Aug. 1994.
31. Speech by President Lennart Meri at the Frankfurt Institute on 23 Sep. 1994.

## LATVIAN SECURITY POLICY \*

*By Žaneta Ozoliņa*

### INTRODUCTION

The restoration of independence in Latvia led to the objective necessity to establish absolutely new societal structures with the purpose of creating comprehensive preconditions for the survival of the state, its society and individuals. Security policies worked out by the political elite and approved by society are the main tool to guarantee the existence and continuity of the state and its

individuals. This issue is especially important for newly established, small countries with big and unpredictable neighbors. Their future to a large extent depends on the level of their integration into the international community and the success of their domestic policies.

The aim of this article is to concentrate on the Latvian security-building process and its initial results. The first part will reveal the external factors of Latvian security which either help or hinder the development of a creative and favorable environment. In order to better understand the present condition and future trends of Latvian security policy, I present an analysis of the main phase of the development of Latvian security which will be presented.

One of the most important issues in this respect is the interpretation of the overall concept of security in Latvia. As a state which was excluded from security discussions for more than 50 years, Latvia is trying to make up for lost time. This leads to differing interpretations of the idea of security, which in turn makes slow and unwieldy the process of creating a concept of national security, developing the means for its implementation, and achieving integration into European security structures.

The article will seek to address those problems which can affect the security of the individual, society at large, and the state. For this purpose a classification system of threats which is universally accepted in political science will be used: economic, social, political, ecological and military threats.

Other types of threats will be left out in this discourse, and as to the groupings which have been chosen, they must be qualified with the statement that the division of groups is only conditional, since in real life groups of threats tend to overlap.<sup>1</sup>

The last part of the paper is devoted to the legal, institutional and military aspects of Latvian security policy.

## **THE MAIN EXTERNAL FACTORS OF LATVIAN SECURITY**

Latvia's search for security is an integral part of the international environment, and it is closely related to a number of external developments. Security policy development in Latvia is occurring against a background of rapid changes in the international system, especially in Europe. It may be reasonable to believe that the Baltic states, which have only just begun the process of state-building and nation-building and which do not have any extensive experience in foreign policy and security issues, cannot be equal partners to the traditional Western democracies. But Latvia is by no means the only country in the world which must undergo a process of international self-identification during this time of changing international relations and the collapse of the bipolar conception of the globe. This is demonstrated by the heated discussions surrounding the future of NATO, the further prospects of the WEU, the various contradictions inherent in the further development of the European Union, the ongoing

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\*The preparation of this article was partly supported by a NATO scholarship.

role in Europe of the United States, and the place of Russia in the global process. One can fully agree with the views which the Danish historian Nikolaj Petersen has expressed in connection with these processes:

“Again, the odds will often be against them: lack of diplomatic tradition and expertise, lack of resources to build up a working foreign policy apparatus, and difficulties with forging a national foreign policy consensus which transcends the relatively simple goals of independence and liberation from the former imperial power. In these respects the new Baltic states are in the same boat as the 100-odd other new states in international politics.”<sup>2</sup>

Of course Latvian security issues are strongly influenced by the unclear and indistinct security situation in Europe as a whole. The murkiness of the situation is evidenced by such oft-used phrases as “the new architecture of Europe,” “European security structures,” etc. On the other hand, the current open field offers great advantages to a new country which is seeking to become an equal partner in the development of an international system of security.

Among the various external factors which influence Latvian security issues, of special importance are the international relations on which Latvian security policy is based. Relations among states can be characterized as a competition of national interests. Domestic policies in the various countries helps to determine the type and nature of relations with other states. Latvia’s ability to implement its security policy will be largely dependent on the attitude of the larger states toward this process: the level to which they become involved in the process, the resources and methods devoted to the regulation of international relations. Therefore Latvia is very much interested in processes going on in Russia and the means of implementing its foreign policy.

Given the tendencies of institutionalization which are evident in the international arena, it is safe to assume that Latvia’s security future is largely dependent on the various international organizations, especially those which are associated with security issues. The state’s most significant security policy priorities are defined by, and resources for their implementation are often provided by, those organizations in which Latvia is fully involved (the UN, OSCE, the Council of Baltic Sea States, NACC), partly involved (WEU), or still mostly uninvolved (EU, NATO).

Security policy development also is significantly impacted by the regionalization tendencies which are occurring throughout the world, and especially in Europe. Growing interdependence and integration have a particularly large impact on the security policy choices of small or new countries. These have trouble in achieving rapid and unhindered integration into international security structures, and therefore they seek allies among states which have common goals and interests. This, in turn, can serve as a pre-requisite to integration, an example of how domestic and external problems can be resolved. Furthermore, successful integration within a region can provide certain guarantees for the security of individual states in the grouping. This is one reason why Latvian security policy has sought partners in various directions: the Baltic countries, the Nordic countries, the Baltic sea region, the Visegrad group, and Eastern Europe. In all of these cases, Latvia seeks to use the assistance of the

respective groupings to become more actively involved in international security relationships.

### THE PHASES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF LATVIAN SECURITY

The development of Latvian security policy can more or less be divided into three phases, which correspond to the developmental phases of the newly independent state.

**The first phase** covers the period from 4 May 1990 to August 1991. During this period, security issues did not command any significant position in Latvian political thinking and activity, because all possible processes were aimed at recovering state independence. After the election of a new Supreme Council in 1990, a transitional period to independence was declared. In this, Latvia and Estonia went a different route from Lithuania, which already had declared itself to be a fully sovereign actor of international politics. The stated goal of the nation, therefore, determined the chief political priorities. Foremost among these was a gradual reduction of the state's dependence on the Soviet Union. The political and tactical resources used to achieve this end touched largely on the economic sphere.

The level of attention paid to security issues increased after the events of January 1991, when the first defense structures began to form in a fairly haphazard way. These later formed the nucleus around which the *Zemessardze*, or Latvian National Guard, and the state security service were established. Latvian security and defense problems were associated with direct signs from the Soviet Union that Moscow did not wish to let go the three occupied Baltic states, and the country's security debate was given a strict and limited context: Latvian security means the ability to defend the state against possible threats, provoked conflicts, or direct armed action by the Soviet Union.

Simultaneously, the state began to develop its foreign policy and determine its directions. After the Latvian Foreign Ministry was set up and a minister appointed, the politicians involved in foreign policy determination devoted their greatest energies to the establishment of international contacts and the achievement of international recognition of the Latvian state. The tactic was to inform the international community about the new state's goals and resources. With the support of some countries, especially the Nordic states, Latvia also began to participate in the work of some international organizations.

Between the declaration of the new state's independence and the events of August 1991, there were numerous armed conflicts in Latvia and around its borders. Customs posts were especially targeted, and many were burned or sacked. Given a situation where Soviet structures were threatening the lives of customs and police officials, as well as civilian residents, it became evident that Latvia must establish appropriate responsive structures and develop such policies as would react to provocations and limit possible physical or political consequences. On 24 May 1991, the Latvian

Supreme Council adopted a decision “On immediate self-defense actions to be taken in connection with the violent actions of Soviet armed forces on the territory of the Republic of Latvia.”<sup>3</sup> The act was a significant early element in the establishment of a state system of security, emphasizing as it did the need to mobilize all of the various defense structures which existed in society at that time and to establish new structures if necessary. The document also ordered the preparation of a draft law setting out the procedure whereby a state of emergency could be declared, as well as a draft law on the establishment of the National Guard; the establishment of a non-military defense center attached to the presidium of the Supreme Council; and the establishment of a border guard division within the Security Department of the Latvian Council of Ministers, complete with regional divisions, border posts and a training facility.

Significant though these steps may have been, however, they did not add up to a balanced and systematic security policy. Military security was the dominant element, foreign policy was kept separate from security policy, and security policy was replaced with a defense concept.

**The second phase** of Latvian security policy encompasses the time between August 1991 and June 1993. After the Moscow coup, Latvia enjoyed an unhoped for “parade of international recognition” (to paraphrase Mikhail Gorbachev’s term, “parade of sovereignty”). This provided a background for some radical changes in the development of the state’s security policy. The chief accomplishments in this time were the rapid establishment of a Latvian Defense Ministry, the formation of the national armed forces, and Latvia’s accession to the OSCE, complete with the posting of a representative to Vienna so as to allow for quick and thorough involvement in OSCE operations. Latvia’s newly gained membership in the United Nations also permitted the state to express its national security interests and to keep other countries informed about the security situation in Latvia. Through this, Latvia managed to internationalize the most important threat against its security – the ongoing presence of the Soviet armed forces. The issue led to the adoption of a UN General Assembly resolution at the close of its 47th session concerning “the full withdrawal of foreign armed forces from the territory of the Baltic republics.” In November 1992, Latvia joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), thus putting into motion various forms of cooperation with NATO.

There were several specific tendencies to these operations which have direct significance in terms of Latvian security. First of all, security matters were fully covered by or replaced with foreign policy and defense policy. There was no such thing as a self-standing and independent security policy. There were objective reasons for this in Latvia. The first phase of restoring the Latvian state demonstrated that the primary task was the establishment and securing of state sovereignty. As a result, the nation’s political efforts were devoted almost entirely to achieving recognition of the Latvian state internationally and to integrating Latvia into the world’s processes. Once Latvia became both a subject and an object of international relations, however, it became necessary to develop a foreign policy program to facilitate these processes. Furthermore, given the fact that a foreign military force was stationed in Latvia, security matters focused largely on this problem. This led to a narrowed understanding of



security which encompassed only political and military considerations. Also, because of the existence of real military threats in Latvia, security issues were turned over to the handling of the Defense Ministry. Eventually this led to a situation where the concept of security was replaced with a concept of defense. Society and the political leadership were never given the opportunity to gain a broader understanding of the idea of security, one which would allow for the recognition and analysis of other types of threats and the search for rational and effective mechanisms of resolution.

**The third phase** of Latvian security development began in June 1993, when the new Latvian *Saeima* (parliament) was elected to replace the Supreme Council. Current Latvian security policy can be characterized as an intensive search process. It is high time that the state select and formulate its primary security policy directions and determine the route for implementing them.

## **THE INTERPRETATION OF THE SECURITY CONCEPT IN LATVIA**

The establishment of a security policy in the third phase of Latvian development involves, in part, the recognition of the very essence of security and the interpretation of this essence among political leaders and society at large. As noted earlier, during the first and second phases of development, the concept of security as such was left at the level of political rhetoric or replaced with the idea of defense. Latvia is now catching up in this respect: the idea of security is retaking its place in competition with other concepts. Still, Latvia continues to suffer from an overly variegated and multi-faceted interpretation of security which differs from that which is traditional in the West.

There can be many reasons for this fact, and many consequences, but only the most important of these should be pointed out. The fact that Latvia has very little in the way of a developed tradition of security thinking can be explained by the fact that during the fifty years of Soviet occupation, security and defense issues were concentrated in Moscow, and there was no grounding for the theoretical analysis or interpretation of these issues in Latvia, not even in terms of interpreting communist ideology.

There are two leading variations in terms of a security concept in Latvia.

The **first** of these maintains a narrow interpretation of security: politicians try to create a defense system without viewing security as a complex issue; the main focus is put on national defense, but there is no adequate understanding of the goals and means of defense. Individual security is not on the agenda at all: individuals, the state, and the international system are analyzed as separate units. There are no debates on the different types of security – economic, political, ecological, ideological, social, ethnic, etc. Only military and sometimes political security are considered. Ideas like “a broad security agenda” and “the integrated concept of security” are not extensively discussed.

An example of this approach is found in the national law on “State Security Institutions,” which defines the concept of national security thus: “National security in the Republic of Latvia is the body of political, economic, social, military and juridical

processes carried out by the institutions of state authority and governance, the judiciary, and local governments, in the interests of protecting the constitutional order, independent statehood and territorial inviolability of the state, as well as the state's economic, scientific, technical and military potential; in defending state secrets, the environment (the ecological condition) and other vital state interests against external and internal threats; and in ensuring the political rights and freedoms of the citizens of the state, as well as the normal and constitutional functioning of social and political organizations and the institutions of state authority and governance."<sup>4</sup>

State security institutions in this law are defined as those which conduct espionage or counterespionage and which engage in operational activities.<sup>5</sup>

The author of an alternative internal security concept, the former Interior Minister Ziedonis Čevērs, also reduces all of these matters to the establishment of a system of judicial protection which would ensure social order in the state, protect its constitutional order, and defend its political economic and territorial sovereignty.<sup>6</sup> The author views national security as a union of three sub-systems: state defense, state security, and provision of state order.<sup>7</sup>

The popularity of the "narrow" interpretation of security can be explained by Latvia's historical experience, as well as by its efforts to establish security and defense structures quickly. But this approach hinders Latvia's involvement in the international security arena, where a complex approach to security issues has been the order of the day ever since the end of the Cold War. The complex approach permits for an understanding of the main units of security (sub-state communities, states, nation-states, nations, humankind) and the levels of analysis (individual, community, national, regional, international).<sup>8</sup>

Adoption of a complex approach demonstrates the necessity to change transitional attitudes to security. Politicians and researchers do not always use the same terms of research. In Latvia, for instance, the security agenda includes such terms as the defense concept, military threats, armed forces building and national defense, but there is no discussion of issues such as "interdependent elements of security relations," "concepts of security from a peace research perspective," crisis prevention, conflict management, peacemaking aspects, etc.

The appearance of the **second**, broader interpretation of security in Latvia was the result of the 1993 parliamentary elections, after which a clearly defined foreign policy course of European integration was established. This, in turn, dictated the need to accept internationally accepted norms and regulations. Within one year, the concept "security" became a salient part of the state's political discourse. The previous phases have now been reversed: security policy replaces foreign policy, or else the entire complex of foreign policy is subordinated to the implementation of a security policy. On 26 February 1994, Prime Minister Valdis Birkavš attended a conference called "Latvian Security at the Turn of the Century" and presented a speech called "Latvian Security on the Road to the 21st Century."<sup>9</sup> The parliamentary faction *Latvia's Way* (of which Valdis Birkavš is a member) subsequently announced that the speech would serve as a basis for Latvian foreign policy.

At the same time denying the need for a foreign policy and security concept, arguing

that the development of Europe and the world means that any concept which is developed will be out of date within a few months' time. But for several purely objective reasons, there is a need for a security conception in Latvia, irrespective of the turbulence which is occurring in global politics.

First, a concept is needed to specifically state Latvia's place in the international system and to recognize the country's strong and weak points. This might be termed a process of state self-identification in terms of foreign policy. An absence of such self-identification was the reason why in the early days of its independence, Latvia had a chaotic foreign policy which ignored the issue of Baltic cooperation and ended up developing a "great friendship" with the Republic of China on Taiwan. Needless to say, this system had no security structure at all.

Second, concepts of foreign policy and security policy are needed if the state hopes to formulate and officially promote its national interests. In undertaking international relations, countries have a natural interest in the development and acceptance of mutually beneficial rules of conduct. The definition of national interests dictates the foreign policy goals of a country, as well as its efforts with respect to other countries. Latvia has not officially formulated its own national interests, and this can lead to misunderstandings concerning the country's foreign policy goals or else doubts about the permanence and durability of these goals. Latvia must make note of the fact that allegations have arisen in some quarters that the Baltic states may pose a threat to Western Europe because tendencies of militarization have been noted in the republics.<sup>10</sup> Such precepts would be averted if Latvia developed foreign policy and security goals in a timely fashion.

Third, the development of these concepts would help to dictate the state's priorities and directions in terms of future activity. It is true that the modern world is a place of rapid and significant change, but at the same time, Russia will always be Latvia's neighbor, and Latvia's geographic location will not change. This means that Latvia must balance its domestic and foreign interests in terms of foreign and security policy.

During the **third** phase of security policy development, there were extensive discussions concerning the essence and priorities of security, the need for a concept and the mechanisms which could be used to develop one. The result was that on 7 April 1995, Parliament accepted a foreign policy concept for Latvia, and on 12 June 1995, the Cabinet of Ministers accepted a national security concept. Both documents contain clear definitions of Latvia's national interests, among them the desire for full integration into the European Union and NATO. The foreign policy and security concepts, of course, play a significant role in establishing the country's security system, in facilitating the country's self-identification process, and in helping to prioritize international activities. The adoption of the two documents, however, does not in and of itself guarantee successful policies and rapid results. This is particularly clear with respect to the national security concept.

This initiative, which was very promising at its start, has not been brought to a successful end, largely because of institutional disorder. While the document is theoretically well-written and practical in nature, it has for several reasons become virtually irrelevant.

First of all, the document was prepared without the input of broad swathes of the political elite. Second, there was virtually no public discussion of the document after its preparation. Third, the very process by which the concept was adopted was illustrative of the fact that Latvia still has not developed adequate systems for taking major decisions. The document was vetted by the National Security Council on 22 May 1995, and less than one month later, on 13 June, it was accepted by the Cabinet of Ministers. This surprising speed of action eliminated any opportunity for discussion, analysis and amendment of the document.

On 29 June 1995, Prime Minister Māris Gailis ordered all ministries, the Bank of Latvia and the national prosecutor's office to develop security plans for their respective sectors, on the basis of which a national security plan could be established. Although the work was supposed to be done by 28 July, at year's end only a few ministries had complied. To this very day there is no national security plan in Latvia, and the entire process has been subjected to the consequences of Latvia's change in government.

As long as the national security plan has not been approved by Parliament, the national security concept remains at the level of hopes, not reality.

An unhappy fact is that even among supporters of the "broad" concept of security, the idea that the individual is the most important object of security has not taken hold. Despite the broader approach to security issues at large, the main place in the complex of security issues is still held by the state. This confuses the means with the end. The state's role is to guarantee the security of the individual. The state itself is an object of security policy only to the extent to which it is able to create necessary conditions for the development and optimal functioning of the individual and of society at large. This becomes possible if internal resources are utilized effectively, international relations are carefully coordinated, and international institutions are involved both actively and reactively in this work. It is simply a matter of the state's responsibility in defending the interests of its citizens and in creating an adequate level of human comfort within the state's society.

In Latvia's third phase of development, the important question of security guarantees has also arisen. The interpretation and understanding of this matter swings across the broad range of political thinking, ranging from idealism to realism to neostructuralism. Across the spectrum of discussion, however, the important thing is that the search is on for ways by which these guarantees can be obtained. It is clear to everyone that there is no chance of obtaining foolproof guarantees from abroad. Instead, the arsenals of foreign policy and domestic policy must be combined in the interests of creating guarantees. Aleksandrs Kiršteins, a former chairman of the Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee and now minister for European Affairs, has defined a scale of security guarantees which runs from zero to 100. In 1990, Latvia's security guarantees rated a flat zero. Currently, Mr. Kiršteins says, the rating might be around 20, and he expects that Latvia could reach a level of 60 if, having now achieved associate status in the European Union, it takes full advantage of the opportunities for experience and armament which are provided by associate partner status in the WEU.<sup>11</sup>

Still, the major security guarantee for Latvia lies within the state, and the development of a successful Latvian security policy requires an evaluation of the major sources of threats against the state.

### **THREATS TO LATVIA'S SECURITY**

Indeed, the formation and evaluation of security structures and policies inevitably require the definition and analysis of existing and potential threats. Without entering the realm of theoretical constructions of threats, I would like to point to several unique aspects of Latvia's situation. In the early days of security policy development, very little attention was paid to the issue of threats. In the context of overall processes, it was important to establish new ministries and armed formations, as well as to prove the existence of the state in the international system. Complicated relations with Russia, which involved many attempts to directly undermine the political situation in Latvia (most significantly in January and August 1991) led Latvia's politicians to understand the need to define the most significant sources of threat. Of the total body of threats, those of a military and political nature were underscored, especially those which would emanate from the implementation of Russian foreign policy or internal instability. Especially in the first phase of security system development, the dominant view was one which has been stated by Kristian Gerner and Stefan Hedlund: "It is important to keep in mind that the Baltic problems have all arisen from the Russian occupation, from the political dictatorship led by officials in Moscow, and from the material destruction which has come as the 'result' of the Russian economic system."<sup>12</sup>

One can agree with this view to a certain extent, because the Soviet Union did, indeed, provoke many of the internal threats which faced Latvia in the spheres of economics and social affairs. After the Baltic states declared independence in 1990, the Soviet Union resorted to economic sanctions. Given that Baltic industry has highly dependent on the Soviet system, this sector began to collapse and soon ended up on the verge of an outright interruption in production. Many factories operated exclusively on the basis of raw materials imported from other parts of the Soviet Union, and most produced goods were exported to the same place. When production declined or stopped altogether, social problems such as unemployment began to appear. Unemployment struck most heavily among industrial workers, most of whom were migrants from other Soviet republics who had been flooded into Latvia. Latvia's economy, as well as certain groups in society, suffered damage, and the economic and ethnic balance of the country was upset. Russia's own economic situation, none too bright to begin with, suffered from a reciprocal negative effect.

This "economic lesson" at the hands of the Soviet Union did, however, have several positive effects. Latvia was forced to quickly restructure its economic system, reorganizing many businesses without any help or assistance, or else letting them slide into bankruptcy. The end of the artificial and ill-planned system of industrialization led to ecological improvements. The Baltic states were moved to seek economic

partners in the West and it soon became clear that the target is European Union. Trade partners changed accordingly. As Russia raised prices on energy resources, all three Baltic states began to seek new providers.

This book contains a separate chapter on Baltic-Russian relations, but I do want to touch upon a few of the most significant threats which emanate from the neighboring country's past and present activities.

First of all, there is the matter of historical experience. Fifty years of occupation forced Latvia to approach this problem in a new, political context, because a broad range of Russian politicians – imperialists, nationalists and even democrats – are calling for a restoration of a Russian, the Soviet Union, or at least a new system of relations among the republics of the former USSR. Latvia is also threatened by the unstable political situation in Russia, a situation which finds expression in two directions. Latvian foreign policy leaders have trouble developing their policies, because the development of political and social processes in Russia and their effect on Latvian security are most difficult to predict. It is equally hard to determine those Russian political figures who are important enough to warrant political dialogue. The multiplicity of Russian political groupings, the frequent changes in the policies of these groups, and the still dominant form of imperialist thinking – all of these factors do not exactly facilitate a liberalization of Russian foreign policy with respect to the Baltic states. Further, Latvia still is highly dependent on Russia in the sector of energy resources. And finally, there is the military aspect.

The presence of the Russian army and its military bases has always been one of the most serious threats against Latvian security. Along with the traditional concept of military threat, Russia's armed forces, even after their departure from Latvia on 31 August 1994, created a whole series of other threats. The problem of defining the status of retired Soviet military officers and their families left resident in Latvia has arisen by the end of August 1994. The Latvian citizenship law provides certain guarantees to these people, but many aspects of their presence in Latvia are still unclear. The number of these individuals is 21 000. This group can serve as a propaganda resource for Russia as it seeks to carry out its interests. Given the body of historical experience, which includes two coup attempts in Latvia (in January and August 1991), as well as the unclear nature of relations between Latvia and Russia and the many unresolved questions in the economic and social sphere, the opportunities for manipulation are both real and threatening to Latvia's society and statehood. Several organizations with operational goals which do not correspond to the interests of the Latvian state have been established among the retired military personnel. The Russian military presence also has created economic, social and ecological dangers. The military has tended to move personnel illegally, to engage in unauthorized use of Latvian airspace, to engage in criminal activities such as theft, speculation and illegal trade in armaments, illegal export of military inventories, and to badly damage or destroy facilities before their transfer to the Latvian state.

In the area of the environment, the Russian military presence has caused two threats. First there is the environmental pollution caused by the armed forces and by their withdrawal. Second, there are the consequences of World War II: chemical substances dumped in the Baltic sea in 1947 and undiscovered munitions stores.

Resolving these problems will require a great deal of time and effort, and the individual safety of Latvian residents will not be secured until the problems are solved. Latvia has not taken inventory of Russia's former military bases in Latvia, so the true level of risk has not been determined. The state does not have sufficient technical and specialist resources to quickly take care of these complicated problems. Data available at the Latvian Defense Ministry illustrate the scope of the difficulty: Latvian territory at one time held 600 Russian military units sited at approximately 850 separate locations covering some 100 000 hectares of land.

The severest damage to the environment and economy of Latvia was caused by military firing grounds and airfields. The Russian military maintained firing grounds for all types of weapons. For example, the military took up 24 500 hectares of farmland and forest near the village of Zvārde in western Latvia for a military firing range with aviation targets. Mechanical and chemical pollutants such as aviation bomb splinters, unexploded bombs, and similar elements have defaced the terrain, while a variety of contaminants, including aircraft fuel, burning wastes, and explosives have rendered the soil unusable.

Infantry firing ranges near Riga (the Ādaži base of 17 620 hectares) and near the town of Dobele, as well as a restricted zone along the coast near Ventspils, occupied enormous territories of farmland. Another 4535 hectares near the city of Liepāja were taken over to accommodate more firing ranges.

Furthermore, in blatant violation even of military rules, ammunition, including phosphorous bombs, was regularly disposed of at the firing range itself, so that the dune zone on the coast, as well as a considerable stretch of the sea have become contaminated with white phosphorous. This substance, which resembles amber, threatens the well-being and even the lives of area residents. Fourteen civilians, including children, have suffered chemical burns by picking up the phosphorous. This is an especially dangerous situation for children. The situation is difficult to control, because it is impossible to predict when and where the phosphorous might wash up.

Major military airfields were sited in Daugavpils, Jēkabpils, Ogre, Tukums and Liepāja. Characteristic contaminants at these locations include oil products and heavy metals. Waste areas are diffusely polluted with aircraft fuel, and local contamination of groundwater is likely in the vicinity of aircraft filling stations.

Contamination of the groundwater is also to be feared around the sizeable filling stations and depots around Zaļumi (near Daugavpils), Vangaži (near Riga) and in Liepāja. The largest of these fuel depots, an 800 000 ton facility in the Krāslava district which was the major depot of the Russian NorthWest Army Group, stored all types of fuel. In addition to steps which must be taken in the interests of saving the groundwater, special precautions must be taken to protect civilian populations in the affected areas when the depots were evacuated. Naturally there is high risk of explosions.<sup>13</sup>

In Latvia's circumstances, it is practically impossible to separate internal threats from external ones. Latvia's long-term and unilateral dependence on the Soviet Union, its geopolitical location, and the process of the state's overall transition all serve to make these two types of threats interdependent. Internal problems can become external, and vice versa. Interviews with Latvian security policy specialists

bear out this view. The former chairman of Parliament's Defense and Internal Affairs Committee, Ivars Silārs, in analyzing the primary forms of threats against Latvian security, has made note of the interdependence of internal and external factors, saying that internal problems are inspired by external ones. Silārs says, for example, that one of the most basic threats to Latvian security is the proliferation of criminal groups which utilize Latvia's poorly guarded border to achieve various goals. If at one time these groups sought staging grounds in former Soviet satellite states such as Poland and Hungary, then now, when they have collected a certain amount of experience and capital, they are moving to the Baltic region. Organized crime has spread so quickly in Latvia that the police alone are not able to stop it. All of society must be consolidated in this effort, and Latvia's border controls must be strengthened.<sup>14</sup>

Aleksandrs Kiršteins believes that the most significant threat against Latvian security lies in the unstable situation in the CIS. The problem goes beyond characters like Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and includes representatives of the military and industrial complex. A political elite has been formed on the industrial base in Russia, typified by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, and it has joined with the military complex to establish a political grouping which potentially could be most dangerous to Latvia's future.<sup>15</sup>

The Defense Systems Concept which was in effect in Latvia until May 1995 lists six groups of threats which reflect the cited tendencies:

- The presence of the occupation armed forces in Latvia;
- The presence and unhampered activity of foreign espionage and counterespionage units in Latvia;
- The presence of various communist, imperialist, or otherwise anti-state groupings in Latvia and their extremist activities;
- The tense crime situation, including the presence of armed, international and organized criminal groups in Latvia;
- Economic instability and the dependence of the state on foreign energy resource providers;
- The Latvian demographic situation, which could be used by anti-state elements to their own purposes.<sup>16</sup>

Unquestionably these threats have a destabilizing role in Latvia's security picture, but they fail to reflect a much more complex network of threats against the state. It is important that the major groups of threats be defined and analyzed to a much greater extent than has been true up until now. The absence of such analysis is sorely felt when the state tries to make sense of the future developmental perspectives of its security system.

The essence of the national security concept which was accepted by the Cabinet of Ministers in June 1995 is a statement of the main threats which face Latvia and the mechanisms which could be used to avert such threats. In Latvia's view, the most likely threat is not military action, but rather efforts by other countries to destabilize Latvia's domestic situation. For this reason, Latvia does not clearly separate internal threats from external threats.

This means that resources to avert threats must also be sought both inside the country and in cooperation with other countries and international organizations. The



list of major threats (economic, political, military) includes a range of issues which are of interest not only to Latvia, but also to the international community, especially with respect to Latvia's neighboring states. One issue to which considerable attention has been devoted is crime in all of its manifestations: organized crime, corruption, economic crime, narcotics trafficking, illegal migration, etc. Latvia has become more active in battling against these problems, especially during the last year, but many initiatives have remained unfulfilled because of unsettled relations with neighboring countries. The major route for illegal migrants, for example, passes through Russia, but Russia has no interest to sign any intergovernmental agreements in this area. Ecological threats are also a matter of common interest.

Although the security concept speaks of the necessity to integrate into European and Transatlantic structures, it particularly emphasizes the need for Baltic cooperation. Latvia's national security is closely tied to the security of its neighboring countries and this, says the concept, is a pre-requisite for integration into Europe's security and economic structures. Cooperation is also important in order to reduce the possibility of economic and political pressure. The document states that "the goal of unfriendly neighboring countries is to create circumstances in the Baltic states which would lead them to come under the full economic and political influence of the neighboring countries." Latvia must work together with others to make certain that this never occurs. Each Baltic state has its own specific situation, of course, and their priorities can and will be different. Nevertheless, the three countries must develop and implement coordinated domestic and foreign policies, especially in light of the fact that institutions for such work already exist (the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council). The national security concept recommends that a mechanism for cooperation be worked and that plans be adopted to avert any crisis situation. It further recommends that the presidents of the three countries cooperate in resolving international problems.<sup>17</sup>

A universal source of threats against the three Baltic states is the transition which Latvia, too, is passing – a transition which is complete with all of the usual contradictions.

Among economic threats, the most significant are the unformed and unclear economic system in Latvia and the corresponding uncertainty about future possibilities; the side effects which have been caused by the transition to a market economy (lowered production, unemployment, inflation, the collapse of industry and agriculture); the slow pace of privatization; poorly considered elements of economic restructuring; the lack of an economy strategy; incomplete lawmaking with respect to the regulation of economic relations; ineffective use of foreign credits; development of illegal business; the connection of economic structures with specific political, social, military or criminal groupings; ongoing dependence on Russia.

According to statistics, in 1994, 39.2 per cent of Latvia's exports went to the European Union, while in 1995 the percentage increased to 44.1 per cent. Imports from the European Union accounted for 49.8 per cent of all imports in 1995 (40.6 per cent in 1994). The role of the EU is thus increasing, but last year Latvia's main trading partner was still Russia (23.2 per cent of all trade turnover, compared to 14.7 per cent for Germany, 8.6 per cent for Sweden and 7.4 per cent for Finland).<sup>18</sup>

Social threats: changes in society's social structure which increase the number of unemployed and pensioned individuals (this because of the restructuring of the industrial sector and because of the state's specific demographic situation); the absence of a wide-ranging social policy; and bankruptcy, reduced production levels and restructuring in many industrial facilities, leaving many people with an entirely unclear and unstable future. It is significant that these facilities largely employed migrants from other parts of the Soviet Union.

A special role in Latvian security issues is played by the state's ethnic minorities and the possibility that these may become a source of threat. The minority question is one of the most prominent in Latvian politics today, and it has economic, social, cultural, political and also international ramifications. In this chapter I would like to assess only those problems which have a direct bearing on the development of Latvian security policy.

Any consideration of the influence of ethnic minorities on Latvia's past and present must be begun with the ethnic composition of society. The situation in Latvia is reflected in Table One.

**Table 1**

Ethnic Composition of Latvia's Population

	No. in 1935	% of total	No. in 1989	% of total	No. in 1994	% of total
Latvians	1 472 600	75.50	1 388 000	52.00	1 391 500	54.23
Russians	206 500	10.59	906 000	34.00	849 300	33.10
Belarussians	26 900	1.38	120 000	4.50	105 100	4.10
Ukrainians	—	—	92 000	3.50	78 200	3.01
Poles	48 900	2.51	60 000	2.30	57 200	2.21
Lithuanians	22 900	1.17	35 000	1.30	33 200	1.31
Jews	93 500	4.79	23 000	0.90	13 300	0.53
Germans	62 100	3.19	3 800	0.10	2 400	0.09
Estonians	7 000	0.36	3 300	0.10	3 000	0.11
Others	10 000	0.51	35 800	1.30	25 400	1.26

Source: Štamers, G., *Latvia Today* (LIIA: Riga, 1995), p. 10.

These data show that Latvia has a fairly unique situation. First of all, there are representatives of some 100 ethnic groups resident in Latvia, and this makes for a typical, multinational society. Secondly, the indigenous population makes up a little more than approximately one half of the total population. Thirdly, given that most residents are concentrated in Latvia's larger cities, it is significant that in many of these cities Latvians are in the distinct minority (Table Two).

**Table 2**

Percentage of Latvians in Latvia's 10 largest cities (%)

	1935	1959	1970	1979	1989	1993
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Rīga	63.0	44.6	40.9	38.3	36.5	37.2
Daugavpils	33.6	13.2	14.4	12.6	13.0	13.4
Liepāja	68.0	52.3	47.5	41.9	38.8	41.1
Jelgava	78.9	59.7	56.4	52.1	49.7	50.3
Jūrmala	86.6	50.7	46.8	48.2	44.2	44.5
Ventspils	83.5	60.4	55.0	47.5	43.0	44.0
Rēzekne	44.0	30.5	34.7	35.0	37.3	38.0
Jēkabpils	65.8	50.4	50.4	50.0	48.4	50.1
Valmiera	95.0	79.6	75.2	74.0	74.6	75.6
Ogre	83.4	60.0	63.1	61.4	60.7	61.7

Source: Vēbers, E. (ed.), *Etnosituācija Latvijā – fakti un komentāri* (The Ethnic situation in Latvia – facts and commentary) (Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmijas Filozofijas un socioloģijas institūta Etnisko pētījumu centrs: Rīga, 1994), p. 5.

The important trend is that since 1991, the number of ethnic Latvians in Latvia has been increasing.

Fourth, changes in the Latvian ethnic structure occurred as a result of mechanical migration over the course of 50 years of occupation. When joined with other characteristics of the communist regime, this destroyed the traditional structure of economic, social and cultural relations (see Table Three).

**Table 3**

Migration in Latvia from 1951 to 1993 (in thousands)

Years	Arrived	Departed	Net Migration
1951–1955	212.0	161.8	50.2
1956–1960	165.2	145.8	19.4
1961–1965	180.6	119.0	61.6
1966–1970	146.8	101.8	45.0
1971–1975	202.0	141.0	61.0
1976–1980	187.2	149.6	37.6
1981–1985	171.3	131.7	39.6
1986–1990	149.8	122.9	26.9
1991–1993	21.3	107.6	86.3

Source: Muižnieks, N. R., “Ethnic Politics in Post-Soviet Latvia,” Unpublished paper, 1994.

If the ethnic minority question is to be seen as a security problem, then we must review its short-term and long-term perspective. The most significant contemporary problem, of course, is the presence of former Russian military and KGB officials in Latvia. This group provides fertile soil for Russian foreign policy exercises aimed at influencing domestic Latvian policy. We must remember how frequently and cleverly Russian foreign policy makers have tried to connect the presence of the Russian armed forces in Latvia with the need to defend the “Russian-speaking population,” thus theoretically undertaking the defense of all minorities, even though nearly all Latvians in Latvia are also “Russian speakers.” These ideas have been repeated several times after the withdrawal of Russian troops from Latvia.

The head of Russia's team in military withdrawal negotiations, Sergei Zotov, at one time demanded that Latvian citizenship be extended to all Russians living in Latvia as a condition for military withdrawal.<sup>19</sup>

It is within the confines of this specific group that anti-state organizations have been formed. This is why Latvian security institutions recently have devoted greater attention to the possible establishment of a "fifth column" in Latvia. When the Latvian government banned a military veterans organization which openly agitated for the restoration of the Soviet Union, this was portrayed by military circles as a human rights violation, and representatives of these circles took up defensive positions.<sup>20</sup>

In the long-term perspective, the effect of the minority problem on Latvian security will be dependent on the extent to which the state and its leaders manage to integrate various ethnic groups into Latvian society. The state has already taken some steps in including minorities in ongoing state processes (there are national cultural associations, minority schools, etc.), but these steps have not been followed up with a coherent nationwide ethnic policy. Mr. Kiršteins believes that the absence of such a policy is the source of a significant threat against Latvian security.<sup>21</sup>

Latvia managed to eliminate one major source of threat when in July 1994 Parliament finally adopted a citizenship law. This occurred thanks to the work of national and international entities, although the law is still being used as something of a political football, a process which emphasizes that Latvia is still in a "gray zone" of sorts.

The distribution of citizenship in Latvia is uneven (see Table Four), but the law states that in 1996, all persons born in Latvia could apply for citizenship in a gradual process. Beginning in the year 2001, persons not born in Latvia will be able to apply. Citizenship can be obtained by individuals with five years of permanent residency since 4 May 1990. Applicants must have a legal income and a basic knowledge of the Latvian language, the country's constitution and history, and the rights and duties of its citizens. New citizens must also take an oath of loyalty.

The citizenship laws of other countries were studied during the development of Latvia's law, and the legislation conforms to the demands of international institutions. The law provides every resident of Latvia with the opportunity to obtain citizenship, save only for those residents who have acted against the independence of the state, who are officials of another government, who serve in another country's armed forces, security service or police, and who are former employees of the KGB. The adoption of the citizenship law removed a significant source of tension in Latvia, because people could ascertain their own and their children's future status. Russian foreign policy demagogues suggested that non-citizens would be very active in this respect, but the experience of the first year indicates that this is not so. Relatively few people have applied for citizenship to this point, and no social tensions have been visible with respect to the issue.

There are also threats of a political nature which are characteristic in Latvia: a newly formed political structure which is still not working to full potential; a rotation of governments; the fact that after active participation in political processes during the renaissance period a large segment of society is experiencing political apathy and a

sense of remoteness from political institutions, both of which can lead to uncontrolled exercising of authority; a large but poorly developed and poorly educated class of bureaucrats; a multiplicity and diversity of security policy makers; separation of responsibility among various politicians, causing the process itself to become difficult, unclear and difficult to control. The former commander of the Latvian defense forces, Dainis Turlais, said in an interview published in the newspaper *Labrīt* that another significant problem is the varied jurisdiction under which Latvia's various military formations operate. Formally all military structures are under the jurisdiction of the president, but in practice it has happened that orders to the National Guard and the municipal police are issued by local government leaders. This can lead to internal or external conflicts.<sup>22</sup>

Reform which was implemented in September 1995 moved to place all military structures under one command. When the third phase of Latvian security development began, security matters gained greater prominence on the agenda of parliament, the government, and society at large. Attempts are being made to bring greater order to this political sector, to create a certain and specific restructuring within the structure of those who are working in the security policy arena, and to overcome at least some of the threats which exist.

### **THE LEGAL BASE OF LATVIAN SECURITY POLICY**

The role of Latvian security policy in society and the state and the direction which this policy is taking are illustrated by the laws, regulations, orders and other regulatory documents which have been issued by the government. Between 1990 and June 1995 Parliament and the government issued some 30 legal documents which establish the juridical basis for a security policy. These can be divided into two major groups:

The first group is made up of decisions and orders which have been adopted as a reaction to specific political events and which regulate the operations of institutions and residents in certain states of emergency. Most of these documents were adopted in January and August of 1991. To a certain extent, the extreme situations created the pre-requisites and fundamental ideas which the state and society need to adopt significant legislation.

The second group is made up of laws which make up the true basis of Latvia's security policy. These specify the institutions which are to deal with security policy issues, designate their obligations, responsibilities and goals, specify the organizational structure of the entire security system, and specify the political figures which are involved in the process. The most significant of these documents are the law "On national defense" (4 November 1992); the law "On the armed forces" (4 November 1992); the law "On states of emergency" (2 December 1992); the law "On civil defense in the Republic of Latvia" (15 December 1992); the law "On the National Guard" (6 April 1993); the law "On the Constitutional Defense Bureau" (5 May 1994); the law "On institutions of state security" (5 May 1994); the law "On national armed forces" (3

Table 4

The Distribution of the Population by Citizenship and Ethnicity in Latvia, March 1995

Ethnicity	Citizens	% of Total Citizens	Non- Citizens	% of All Non- Citizens	Total	% of Population	% of Ethnicity Having Citizenship
Latvian	1 397 523	78.68	24 464	3.30	1 421 987	56.51	98.28
Russian	289 106	16.28	476 790	64.41	765 896	30.43	37.75
Belarussians	20 971	1.18	88 151	11.91	109 122	4.34	19.22
Ukrainian	4 151	0.23	65 183	8.81	69 334	2.76	5.99
Polish	39 522	2.22	25 465	3.44	64 987	2.58	60.82
Lithuanian	7 253	0.41	28 454	3.84	35 707	1.42	20.31
Jewish	6 828	0.38	8 456	1.14	15 284	0.61	44.67
Roma (Gypsy)	6 794	0.38	822	0.11	7 616	0.30	89.21
German	987	0.06	2 857	0.39	3 844	0.15	25.68
Tatar	151	0.01	3 402	0.46	3 553	0.14	4.25
Estonian	1 337	0.08	1 680	0.23	3 017	0.12	44.32
Armenian	299	0.02	2 240	0.30	2 539	0.10	11.78
Moldovan	134	0.01	1 813	0.24	1 947	0.08	6.88
Azeri	162	0.01	1 468	0.20	1 630	0.06	9.94
Chuvash	25	0.00	1 060	0.14	1 085	0.04	2.30
Georgian	190	0.01	812	0.11	1 002	0.04	18.96
Liv	203	0.01	4	0.00	207	0.01	98.07
Other	650	0.04	7 110	0.96	7 760	0.31	8.38
Total	1 776 286	100.00	740 231	100.00	2 516 517	100.00	70.59

Source: *Latvia Human Development Report, 1995* (UNDP: Riga, 1995), p. 22.

September, 1994); the law “On the state defense (19 December 1994); and the “National Security Concept” (June, 1995) and “Defense Concept” (June, 1995).

Laws adopted by Parliament specify the major actors who participate in security decision-making.

### **POLITICAL ACTORS INVOLVED IN SECURITY POLICY-MAKING**

National security policy decision-making in Latvia generally is split up among the president, the parliament in its role as the country’s legislative body, and the Cabinet of Ministers (referred to in Latvian as the “government”) as the executive body.

The president is assigned the leading and coordinating role in state security and defense matters, because he is the head of the state’s defense forces. The president chairs the National Security Council, which is the body in which security-related issues are coordinated. The council reports directly to the president and is the highest-standing institution dealing with security policy. The council’s brief covers monitoring the status of the state’s security and the defense of residents, evaluating internal and external threats, and developing strategies for averting any threats which there may be. The council also determines and monitors the operational direction of the various security institutions. It also has authority over the structure and budgets of these institutions and conducts evaluations of their work. The council also has supervisory authority over the Constitutional Defense Bureau, including the right to hire or fire the director of the bureau.<sup>23</sup>

Parliament is involved in security policy-making by establishing the juridical basis for the work of the state’s security institutions. This is done through legislation which regulates the work of the organizations and their employees. Parliament also plays an important role in state security in that it appropriates money for the security institutions and monitors the spending of state funds which are so allocated. Parliament also has a hand in security policy through its ratification or denunciation of inter-state agreements and other documents of importance to national and international security.

There are several committees in Parliament which have direct influence over security policy: the National Security Committee, the Defense and Interior Committee, the Foreign Affairs Committee<sup>24</sup> and, since December 1995, the Committee on European Affairs.

The multiplicity of security institutions in Latvia dictates the necessity to coordinate and direct their operations. A particularly active period of establishing new security structures and reorganizing old ones was the time immediately after the parliamentary elections of 1993. It was during this period that the idea of the Constitutional Defense Bureau arose. It became reality on 5 May 1994, when the law on the bureau was adopted. The bureau began operations only a year later, however, because it took that long to find a director for it. It is too early to judge whether this will be an effective institution.

In November 1995, there was a political scandal in Latvia which involved secret listening devices on the telephones of the Ministry of Defense. This theoretical-

ly was the first issue to fall under the direct purview of the Constitutional Defense Bureau. The director of the bureau, however, refused to deal with the matter, saying that it was not an issue for his organization. In fact, this was the first national security problem which could have been used to test the effectiveness of the country's security laws. Instead, the episode demonstrated that the Latvian security system is top-heavy and overly complicated and that it is functionally unviable.

Although what exactly it will do is specified in the law:

“The Constitutional Defense Bureau is a non-military state security institution which under the terms of law conducts espionage (counter-espionage) operations and organizes and coordinates the conducting of such operations by other state security agencies, collects, receives, gathers, stores, maintains, analyzes and utilizes information relevant to the state's security, defense and economic sovereignty, in order to protect the state's constitutional order, state independence, and territorial inviolability against threats both external and internal, as well as defend the state's military, economic, scientific and technical potential and secrets.”<sup>25</sup>

The bureau's functions include collecting and analyzing information about threats against the state's security, defense, economic and ecological interests. The bureau is supposed to predict, avert or neutralize any such threats, or organize methods by which they can be eliminated. On the basis of analysis of threats, the bureau is to develop a state security program. The bureau also is to coordinate the various state security agencies, informing them in a timely and thorough manner about any threats which might arise. The bureau is also charged with collecting information about persons who must be analyzed with respect to their appropriateness for state office.

The Cabinet of Ministers is the primary executor of state security policy through the execution of laws and through operations of an organizational nature, including infrastructural development, institutional leadership and coordination, selection of officials and evaluation of their work. The defense, interior and foreign ministries are the ones most directly involved with security policy.

## **THE MILITARY ELEMENT OF LATVIAN SECURITY POLICY**

Unquestionably, one of the important elements in security policy is protection of the existing security system, defending it against possible threats as represented by military structures.

During the brief time that Latvia has existed as an independent state, a military base of security has been established. Naturally, this base does not correspond to the standards of developed countries, but given the financial and human resources at hand, at least a basis for further development of these systems has been created.

From the very earliest days of Latvian independence, there have been debates about the establishment of a defense system and corresponding military structures. The range of opinions which has been expressed illustrates the fact that society is in many ways polarized on this question. When the idea of reestablishing an independent state arose in the late 1980s as part of the country's environmental movement, the



state was envisioned as a neutral, non-militarized country with no army, no armament, no broader defense system. This idealistic concept ignored the facts of political life in the contemporary international system, failed to take account of the political changes in Russia, and incorrectly interpreted the essence and role of neutrality in the modern world. Today it is no longer enough to simply declare one's will to be neutral.

A total rejection of idealistic precepts about defense matters occurred in January and August 1991, times when the entire range of threats was reduced to the Soviet Union and, later, Russia. Any arguments for or against defense structures, therefore, arose from the hypothetical assumption that the neighbor to the East would or would not try to put an end to efforts to reinstate independence and, whether, if this were to happen, a small country like Latvia would have sufficient potential to stand against the political and military actions of the much larger state. It is interesting to note that in this matter, one camp (the one rejecting the necessity of establishing a Latvian army) united political groupings, both leftists and rightists, which in other matters were diametrically opposed one to the other.

In late 1992 and early 1993, there was a sea change in thinking about security matters. This was the result of a greater integration by Latvia into Europe, and especially into European security structures (NACC membership, cooperation with NATO). Latvia's relatively brief experience, and that of other countries, shows that at the end of this century, the role of the armed forces no longer can be reduced simply to the defense of the state in case of armed attack. The Latvian defense systems concept conceives of the army's role in a broader context.

Latvia's unique geographical location makes an army absolutely necessary. Latvia is neighbored by very different countries – traditional democracies to the country's north, Lithuania and Estonia, which are in transit to democracy, and the greatly unstable Russia. Latvia has a responsibility before the rest of the world to take part in stopping such globally unacceptable processes as the flow of refugees, transportation of narcotics, movement of organized criminal groups, illegal migration, etc. This can be done only if Latvia has firm control over its borders, territory, and territorial waters, as well as the Baltic sea economic zone and airspace.

Throughout most of the world, armies regularly review their defense concepts and reorganize themselves to keep up with the changing international situation. The threat of direct military attacks has receded in most parts of the globe, but the possibility for various types of conflict continues to simmer. Armed forces must be prepared to participate in the resolution of conflicts and, possibly, the elimination of the consequences of such conflicts. Politicians involved with Latvian defense matters do not deny the possibility of direct intervention. A former defense minister, Valdis Pavlovskis said in an interview that Latvia must be sufficiently prepared for an attack, enough so that it could stand against the attacking military, inflict losses on it, and gain time during which international organizations and other countries could react to the attack, place pressure on the aggressor, and give Latvia necessary support.<sup>26</sup>

In the context of current political processes, it is important to note other factors which emphasize the need for the armed forces. The level of mutual dependence and

integration in the world is now at a level where countries no longer are able to resolve problems based exclusively on the national interest. Actions today must be coordinated with other countries, especially those with a regional interest, and they must be considered from the perspective of possible reaction by the major powers of the world. Ignoring the interests of other states can lead to international isolation, and this, of course, negatively impacts on not just the defense and security spheres, but also a country's economic and social structures. The tendency toward mutual dependence requires active participation by all concerned states, because cooperation means not just utilization of assistance, but also investment of effort.

If Latvia wishes to participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations or to gain access to various forms of cooperation through the Partnership for Peace program, then Latvia needs military formations which can participate in the establishment and maintenance of an international security system. International support in times of danger will be difficult to request if the state does not offer its own services within the context of the system.

It must also not be forgotten that the armed forces are not just a military, but also a social formation, one which has a great role to play in social consolidation.<sup>27</sup> The army is a positive element in establishing social harmony and lessening social and ethnic tensions. When defense of the state is at issue, the ethnicity of the defender is not important. The events of January and August 1991, when society consolidated around the defense of the country, provided an excellent illustration of this fact.

Even though there are few doubts in society any more about the need for a military, there are still many problems and unresolved issues in the military sphere of national security.

The Latvian defense systems concept envisages the Latvian armed forces as including the border guard, land, sea and air forces, their various units and subunits, and the Latvian National Guard and, in certain circumstances, the military formations of the interior ministry. The numerical condition of the defense forces is illustrated in Table Five.

**Table 5**

Latvian Defense Forces (August 1994)

	<b>Enlisted</b>	<b>Officers</b>	<b>Civilians</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total armed forces	6 413	576	423	7 412
Defense forces	1 619	163	128	1 910
Border guard	3 600	310	220	4 130
Naval forces	1 018	68	60	1 146
Air force	176	35	15	226

Source: Information provided by the Ministry of Defense, Aug. 1994.

The Latvian armed forces operate apart from considerations of the strategic political processes of the state. The military formations were established first, and only later did the state define the basic principles, potential threats, and operational

directions with which the armed forces have to deal. The political base and the military structures are being integrated at this time. The fundamental principles of the Latvian defense system were formulated by the former commander of the armed forces, Dainis Turlais, who characterized these principles as the fundamental right of each state and its society to self-defense; subordination of the defense system to the government and thus to the people; Latvia, as a country which does not see any country as her potential enemy, maintaining military forces which are for defensive purposes only and should not be seen as a threat to any neighboring country; and the fact that the basic principles of the Latvian defense forces are drawn from the defense structures of Western, democratic countries.<sup>28</sup>

The most important factor is the role Latvia's armed forces can play in state defense and in the integration of Latvia into European security structures. Effective execution of this role is dependent on a series of conditions, one of which is the material and financial condition of the armed forces. The low level of economic development in the state means that the abilities of the armed forces to develop and move forward are very limited. Of course, it must be noted that the Latvian armed forces were built up completely from scratch. In 1994 the Latvian armed forces had five coastal ships, eight coastal boats, of which six were operational, two auxiliary ships, both of which were operational, two AN-2 airplanes (one was operational), two L-410 airplanes (both were under repair), and six MI-2 helicopters (five were operational).<sup>29</sup>

The state's current funding of the military is minimal, when compared to the need for the state to strengthen its security and become involved in the establishment of international security. The two percent of the national budget which is devoted to the Defense Ministry, the National Guard and the security service is truly a small sum when compared to spending in countries with developed defense systems. The military budget, and its development over three years, can be seen in Table Six.

**Table 6**

State funding of national defense (in lats) (covering the Defense Ministry, the National Guard and the Security Service)			
	1992	1993	1994*
Total defense spending	6 349 070	11 914 987	18 792 449
Defense Ministry	4 466 405	8 960 299	12 316 943
Defense Min. as % of all defense spending	70.3	75.2	65.5
Defense Min. as % of total state budget	2.0	2.0	2.0

\* – Budget as amended

Source: Information provided by the Ministry of Defense, Aug. 1995.

In 1995 and 1996 the Defense Ministry's allocation was 15.3 million lats and 15.7 million lats respectively. Of these sums, 11.1 million and 11.3 million lats respectively went to the national defense forces. In addition, the National Guard received 5.6 million lats in 1995 and five million lats in 1996. 95.7 per cent of all money is spent on the maintenance of defense and security institutions, including 25.1

per cent on salaries and wages and only 8.1 per cent on the purchase of equipment, communications technology, airplanes, munitions and other armaments.<sup>30</sup> These numbers illustrate the claims made above, but they also speak against occasional allegations that new states in Europe are arming themselves to the teeth and evidencing the birth of new militarism. This argument is presented in the work of Michael Andersen and Mette Skak, who in discussing the changes which have occurred in Europe as a result of the establishment of new countries in Eastern and Central Europe posit that decolonization and national liberation may pose a threat to the West, because the renationalization of security policy leads new countries to desire the establishment of their own armies while using such terms as national interest and national security.<sup>31</sup>

The military base of the Latvian security system involves more than just the establishment of armed forces. The country has also ongoing cooperation agreements with defense ministries in other countries in hopes that they might help Latvia form a more thorough defense system, meet international standards of security, and more quickly become included in international activities.

Through June 1994, the Latvian Defense Ministry had signed military-related mutual cooperation and contact agreements with Poland, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Ukraine, Germany, the United Kingdom, Finland and the Benelux countries. In the case of France, an agreement was signed under the terms of which France would send a technical advisor to Latvia for a set period of time.

Agreements signed with Poland and the Czech Republic envisage several levels of cooperation: development and coordination of security concepts based on the principles of the OSCE and corresponding to Baltic regional interests; organization, assembling and equipping of armed forces structures; education and training of military and civilian personnel; development of social relations and appropriate behavior in the armed forces; information services; historical and cultural events; athletics. The agreements provide for ministerial level meetings at least once a year, and they state that a specific plan of cooperation is to be developed each year.

The agreement signed with Denmark illustrates the Latvian Defense Ministry's great desire to integrate into European security structures. The agreement states that mutual relations between Latvia and Denmark are to be based on the principles of the United Nations charter, the final Document of the OSCE, the Charter of Paris, and the 1992 Vienna Document, as well as the specific elements of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council. This is the first military agreement Latvia has signed with a NATO member state, thus emphasizing its desire to cooperate and participate in activities which are of importance to NATO countries. The agreement also evidences Latvia's will to participate in the further development and strengthening of European security structures, stating that the main thing is to develop peaceful cooperation and stability in Europe, and especially the Baltic region.

The document also speaks of strengthening the mutual relations between the two defense ministries, but also between the armed forces of the two countries. It provides for cooperation both in the military and the defense sector.

In the military sector, cooperation is expected both in organizational and in

practical aspects. The idea is to develop democratically controlled, responsible and effective armed forces; to exchange ideas, defense concepts, and ways of limiting armament; to exchange experience in the practical training of warfare, military education, personnel administration and leadership; to exchange ideas in the area of civilian and military authority; to exchange ideas about the role of the National Guard; and steps to strengthening and consolidate mutual openness and friendship, as well as peaceful relations based on the OSCE process, including verifiable arms limitation.

In the area of defense, exchanges of visits by ministers of defense and other defense officials take place on an ongoing basis, the purpose being development and transformation of the armed forces to make them appropriate for the new security situation in Europe. There should also be cooperation in the establishment of a system whereby democratic civilian control is exercised with the help of the armed forces. Cooperation in defense budgeting matters also takes place.

Along with the agreements among defense ministries, there have also been examples of cooperation without official agreements. Among the most significant are ongoing cooperation with Sweden and the United States. The USA has established a military liaison group and has invested USD 15 million in the formation and development of the Baltic Battalion.

A separate program of cooperation by defense headquarters will deal with matters touching on defense planning, strategy and defense doctrines, defense force and leadership structures, communications and information systems, improvement of reserve forces and their military abilities, the role of the armed forces in environmental issues, arms control, etc.

Latvia has permanent cooperation with several countries, including Sweden, Finland, Norway and Germany, in the area of education, training and information exchange. Similar assistance is also received within the context of the WEU and NATO, and activities have begun within the Partnership for Peace program. 93 Partnership for Peace events occurred in 1995. One example is assistance which France has given to Latvia over a period of two years in the area of military education.

Special mention is deserved by Latvia's agreement with Ukraine, because it is the first military-related agreement with one of the CIS states. The major cooperation tendencies noted in other agreements are also present in this one, but the Ukrainian agreement also devotes considerable attention to implementation of the Partnership for Peace program.

One of the most significant agreements in the security sphere is a pact signed among the three Baltic defense ministries on 2 July 1992 in Pärnu. This document was the first step toward real cooperation among the Baltic defense structures, and it paved the way for economic and political cooperation. Implementation of the agreement, however, has been hampered for a variety of reasons. The pact envisaged the establishment of a permanent structure to monitor its implementation, but sufficient action was not taken in this respect. Frequent changes of defense ministers and entire governments in the three Baltic states also drew attention away from the execution of the agreement. It was also true that armed forces structures were only just being developed, and there

were differing ideas about the way they should be organized. There was also the problem of an insufficient financial and technical base. Security policy as such was poorly developed, as was legislation in the area. Baltic military cooperation was also hampered by the low level of overall cooperation among the three Baltic states.

As Baltic cooperation developed, it became necessary to strengthen and expand cooperation in the defense sector. In February 1995, an agreement on defense and military cooperation was signed. This fell well short of establishing a military union, but it was the cornerstone for cooperation in information exchange, training and maneuvers, airspace control, the Baltic Battalion, and contacts with the UN, the WEU and NATO. The agreement will also lead to closer cooperation within the Partnership for Peace program and will facilitate the integration of the Baltic countries into European structures (many of which perceive the Baltic states as a single entity). There were three other steps which are highly significant in terms of Latvia's security future. These were the agreement to join the Partnership for Peace program (February 1994), the accession to partner status at the WEU (May 1994), and the establishment of the Baltic Battalion (formal decision in November 1993, training began in January 1995).

## CONCLUSIONS

Latvia has begun the establishment of its security system, and there have been both accomplishments and difficulties. The total pace of development, however, illustrates that security policy is an integral part of democracy, and Latvian society is irreversibly moving toward this understanding. The pace and success of these efforts will be dependent on the ability of the state to deal with domestic issues and become involved in international processes.

Despite the fact that Latvia started to create its security policy as a part of democracy, there are many unsolved issues in this area.

Latvia has not yet analyzed and determined the most significant threats which exist now or which may exist in the future. Security policy priorities and strategic directions have been formulated, but in documents they appear differently. The lack of experience in considering security matters leads to a variation of understandings and interpretations of security matters. As one example we can cite the definition of security agencies which is contained in the law about such institutions: the law says that they are institutions which "within the limits of their competency conduct espionage (counterespionage) operations and take other operative action."<sup>32</sup>

The existing structure of security policy-making is oriented toward the political and military spheres, but it pays insufficient heed to other sectors of security policy which are no less important in Latvia: the economy, the social sphere, etc.

Latvia has a juridically based mechanism for security policy development, but this mechanism works very poorly. There are several reasons for this. As I noted, the leading role in security policy belongs to the president, but the presidential institution in Latvia is poorly developed, and therefore the president's activities in developing and executing security policy are limited. The National Security Council is also a new

institution which has not begun to work at full steam. Actually, this could be said about the entire security policy-making mechanism. The work of the various elements in the mechanism frequently overlap, and they are rather chaotic.

Activities which have been undertaken in the sphere of military cooperation unquestionably illustrate Latvia's efforts to become more involved in international processes and by so doing to strengthen its defense system, seek international security guarantees, and help to strengthen European security structures. Good will is insufficient in such matters, of course, and concrete content is required. This means that further development must be at least a two-track process: international contacts must be both expanded and deepened. Emphasis is currently put on the search for new partners, but insufficient thought is given to the execution of existing agreements and their practical application in the establishment of Latvian security policy. Broadening, deepening and further specifying existing agreements would let Latvia develop an operations program which could then be offered to existing European security structures, a program which could illustrate Latvia's potential investment in the facilitation of stability, the building of confidence, and the prevention and solution of conflict.

The conditions for the improvement of the Latvian security system are related to internal as well as external factors. I consider the following elements to be essential for the development of Latvian security:

- The creation of stable Latvian and Baltic national security and defense systems which correspond to the interests of international security and are capable of preventing internal and external threats, in order to facilitate the creation of a favorable environment and functioning of states.
- Broadening cooperation with neighboring countries to permit for the control and prevention of potential conflicts.
- Establishing close links of cooperation among all the Baltic countries to facilitate the national security of these states and their inclusion into larger regions.
- Becoming involved in the formation of the European security process, where the Baltic states, in cooperation with Northern, Central and East European countries, could act on an equal basis with western partners.
- Searching for security cooperation with the great powers, especially with the United States, in the changing international environment.
- Actively participating in international organizations, including the EU, the UN, the OSCE, the WEU, the Council of Baltic Sea States, NATO, the NACC, and the Partnership for Peace program.

## NOTES

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## **LITHUANIA'S SECURITY CONCERNS AND RESPONSES**

*by Evaldas Nekrašas*

Lithuania shares many security concerns with other Baltic states. Some, however, are unique. Though I will refer to Estonia and Latvia, I will nevertheless concentrate mostly on those aspects that are specific to Lithuania. After describing Lithuania's security environment which coincides in many, but not all, of its elements with those of Latvia and Estonia, I shall proceed to the analysis of specific threats to Lithuania's security: external and internal, political and economic, military and social. The section ends with a critical examination of security decision-making in Lithuania, including that related to military developments, and scrutiny of Lithuania's security policies on national, Baltic, and European level.

### **1. LITHUANIA'S SECURITY ENVIRONMENT**

One of the most important factors, which must be taken into account when analyzing Lithuania's security problems, is the vagueness of its geopolitical situation. The collapse or, at least, a loosening of a bi-polar political system which, according to Paul Kennedy, came into existence in 1943,<sup>1</sup> has left the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in a geopolitical vacuum. So far their efforts to overcome this uncomfortable situation have brought only very moderate results, mainly because the West, until recently did not treat the security of this region as an indispensable part of its own security. Notwithstanding the fact that the population and economic potential of the region is practically the same as that of Russia, the West fixed its eyes on Russia, bewitched by its nuclear arsenals, and glanced at Central and Eastern Europe only in passing.

Only political perturbations in Russia, two putsches in the timespan of two years, and the victory of nationalist and imperialist forces in the parliament elections have compelled Western political leaders to slightly change their position and realize that their hopes for Russia soon becoming (or having become) a peaceful, democratic and civilized country posing no serious problems to its neighbors may turn out to be

unrealized. The futility of such hope is confirmed by Russia's drastic military action in Chechnya.

Of course, the West cannot ignore the fact that, in spite of the deep economic, social, and political crisis, as well as a serious weakening of its conventional forces, Russia remains a nuclear power, second only to the United States. That does not mean, however, that appeasement of a great power at the expense of its smaller and military weaker neighbors is the best way to maintain peace and stability in Europe. The lessons of Munich show that such a policy is, shortsighted at best. Up to now it seemed that the West had almost completely forgotten those painful lessons. Admittedly, the West has recently made some steps to fill the dangerous vacuum that has been created in a large region at the very heart of Europe. Some politicians and analysts, however, have a suspicion, that these steps, including the Partnership for Peace program, were, at least initially, not acts of political will to ensure the security of this region, but steps taken in accordance with a non-formal agreement between Bush and Gorbachev, later confirmed by Clinton and Yeltsin. It seems that the key element of this agreement has been a mutual understanding that NATO will not admit the former satellites or republics of the Soviet Union into the alliance. Ib Faurby correctly states that "... the Baltic states do not have a high priority in the foreign and security policies of the major Western powers. The Baltic sea has lost much of its former strategic importance for the West. And for the Western powers, relations with Russia and the internal political developments in Russia are considered to be far [and away] the most important aspects of politics in and towards the former Soviet Union.

Western interests are often seen in highly personalized terms as a struggle between the reforming President Boris Yeltsin and his opponents. ... Consequently, Baltic demands and Baltic policies which are controversial in Moscow are often seen by Western powers as unhelpful or even a nuisance."<sup>2</sup>

In the latter respect the security situation of Lithuania and the other Baltic states does not essentially differ from that of Hungary or the Czech Republic. The Baltic states, however, are in a worse position because Russia treats them, and all the other former Union republics, as part of "the near abroad" regarded by Russia as a narrow sphere of special interests.

For Moscow officials these interests range from the right and even duty to ensure the rights of the Russian speaking minority to access to ice-free ports. Many Moscow politicians not belonging to the present political establishment are more outspoken. Alexander Rutskoy, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, Valentine Varennikov and some others have declared firmly that their main objective is not simply to win or regain power – their mission is to restore the Russian Empire which, "of course," must include Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as "indigenous Russian lands."

That is why political developments in Moscow are followed more closely in the Baltic capitals than in Budapest or Prague. The danger inherent in Moscow's political moves and even the political changes in Moscow are felt more directly in the Baltics.

Yet it must be remembered that the security environment of each Baltic state is not the same. The differences are caused mainly by demographic and geographic fac-

tors, as well as peculiarities of their historical development.

Demographically, Lithuania is in the best position because it does not have large national minorities which, as history and present-day developments show, quite often cause serious security problems. A detailed explanation of why there are now much fewer Russians in Lithuania than in Latvia or Estonia, given that in 1940 their number in all three countries was similar, would be out of place in this section. The main reason, in brief, is that a better developed infrastructure in Estonia and Latvia after World War II was more suitable for rapid industrialization which produced a massive influx of industrial workers, technicians, and engineers from Russia and other Soviet republics. Also, a more intensive and protracted armed resistance to Soviet rule made Lithuania less attractive to new settlers. In addition, unlike in Latvia and Estonia, the political leadership of post-war Lithuania was more reluctant to accept a massive influx of settlers.

Consequently, in 1990, on the eve of independence Russians were only some nine percent, and about seven percent Poles of the total population of Lithuania, while ethnic Lithuanians numbered 80 percent, substantially higher than the number of Estonians in Estonia (60 percent), and Latvians in Latvia (a little over 50 percent). It is remarkable that not Russians, but Poles, concentrated mainly around Vilnius, created more trouble for the consolidation of the restored Lithuanian state. The Polish leaders, instigated by Moscow, threatened to create in 1990–1991 a politically autonomous Vilnius region which would have remained part of the USSR in case of a final separation of Lithuania from the Soviet union. That would have created a situation similar to that which has developed in the Trans-Dniestr region in Moldova. After the August coup in Moscow, the anti-Lithuanian activity in the Vilnius region rapidly decreased, although the problems of this region, which used to be the center of discord in pre-war Lithuanian–Polish relations, still play a great role in those relations.

Lithuania and Poland do not have claims to each other's territories. A declaration of friendship and good relations signed in 1992, and the main political treaty between the two countries signed in 1994 solve all the possible territorial problems. Lithuania has no claims on the territory of the neighbors in general, and in this respect, differs once again from the other Baltic states, especially Estonia. Estonia, at least until the end of 1994, was extremely eager to reestablish the borders set by the Tartu Peace Treaty of 1920 with Russia and regain the territories it lost in January 1945 when Moscow diminished Estonia's area by more than 2000 square kilometers. (Latvia lost some territories at the same time but is more reluctant to lay claims on them.)

Taking a broad view of Lithuania's security environment, it is worth mentioning that, unlike Latvia, Lithuania did not have strategically important Russian military installations on its soil. Only recently have Lithuanians discovered that they have the only runway in Europe suitable for space shuttle landings, but the discontinuation of Russia's space shuttle program made it much less important for defense purposes than the Skrunda anti-ballistic missile phased-array radar in Latvia.

While in a better security situation than Latvia and Estonia in the above-mentioned respects, Lithuania has at least one important deficiency. Lithuania is a transit

country for communication between mainland Russia and the Kaliningrad region – an enclave located between Lithuania and Poland. The Kaliningrad region is heavily militarized, and this fact must be taken into account when deliberating about Lithuania's security. (The issue will be discussed later in this section.)

Russian troops are also deployed in Belarus, which has a long border with Lithuania. As an dependent state, Belarus is still in *statu nascendi*. Therefore, it is difficult to determine its actual role in Lithuania's security environment. Some time ago it seemed plausible that an expansion of bilateral economic and political contacts with Belarus (and the Ukraine) might reduce the degree of Lithuania's dependence upon Russia and thus enhance its security.<sup>3</sup> At present, however, it does not seem likely that the strengthening of ties with Belarus would positively affect Lithuania's security. Belarus's great political, economic, and military dependence upon Russia has become even more pronounced in the last two years. Despite the fact that in the summer of 1994, Russia's then favorite Prime Minister, Vyacheslav Kebich, lost his presidential election bid to the “dark horse” Alexander Lukashenka, relations between Belarus and Russia tend to remain very close. It is not certain that Belarus will forever fail to pursue a foreign policy of its own. In the near future, however, any Belarussian steps on the international policy arena contradicting Russia interests and wishes can hardly be expected.

## **2. THREATS TO LITHUANIA'S SECURITY**

I begin with an analysis of the external threats to Lithuania's security. The main threats are related to Russia. That does not mean that Russian military action against Lithuania is highly likely. The probability of such an action is low, perhaps very low. However, it exists, and therefore must be taken into account deliberations on Lithuania's security. This security risk is so eminent as to be called a threat. The official Russian foreign policy concept states that Russia seeks to retain strategic assets in the Baltic area and to defend the rights of Russians living there. Russian officials openly declare that Russia may use military force in the “former Union republics.” In June 1992, Russia's Minister of Defense Pavel Grachev said: “If the honor and dignity of the Russian population in any region are encroached upon, I will take decisive measures, up to and including the introduction of troops to prevent discrimination, attacks and other hooligan sorties with respect to the Russian population.”<sup>4</sup>

Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrey Kozyrev, admittedly using more diplomatic language, often underlines that Russia has important interests in Lithuania and the other Baltic states and is ready to defend them. It is also quite obvious that in so doing Russia may not need to resort to military measures. Clearly then, the question of Russia's interests in the Baltics is of paramount importance to the security of Lithuania. Are they real and legitimate? Some Western analysts do not hesitate to answer in the affirmative. Paul A. Goble, without any proviso includes the Baltic states in the group of 14 “non-Russian successor states of the Soviet Union,” and states that “Russia has very real interests in these countries, interests that will demand legitimacy by both the successor states and the world

community.”<sup>5</sup>

Enumerating Russia's “obvious” economic interests in these countries, he tops the list with access to ports, raw materials, transport, and communication facilities. Fortunately, Lithuania does not have many raw materials. Stressing that Russia's economic interests are highly differentiated, he regards access to the Baltic ports as more important to Russia than access to natural resources in some other former Soviet republics. Moreover, he claims that “Russia's [legitimate] political interests are even more impressive, if often more frightening to the surrounding states. ... Moscow has a special right to be concerned about the fate of Russians abroad. That is not an issue; the issue ... is the manner in which that interest is prosecuted ... But beyond this issue, Russia has an obvious political interest in playing a special role in all these new countries, in working together with them and in coordinating policies.”<sup>6</sup>

I agree with this analyst that Russia's shift from a mission-oriented foreign policy to an interest-driven one would be a positive development. Most Lithuanian politicians and analysts, however, do not share Goble's opinion that Russia may legitimately claim to have a “special role” to play in the Baltic states. A “special role” is a vague, and therefore, dangerous notion. Proceeding from its “special role” Russia lays claim to a “peacekeeping” mission in the Baltic states as well as in Chechnya. Fortunately, the international community has not been eager to give a mandate to Russia for peacekeeping operations in the Baltics because it knows too well that Russia is unmatched in pretending to solve conflicts of its own creation. Moreover, Lithuania, along with Estonia and Latvia does not regard itself as a “successor state” of the Soviet Union. All three were occupied and annexed in 1940, and the fact that most of Western nations did not accept the Soviet Union's claims over the Baltics as legitimate is important for the security perspectives of the Baltic states. In Lithuania at least, it is a common understanding that the most eminent danger to Lithuania's security is not so much Russia itself with all its instability, messianic zeal, problems with redefining past identities and difficulties in defining and calculating present interests, but Western hesitation about where “to place” the Baltic states – among the “successor states of the Soviet Union” or in the group of the Central European states. The first alternative is quite perilous.

Although in political discussions taking place in Lithuania Russian policies (and Western attitude towards Russia) are regarded as the main external threat, some politicians, especially those opposing the ruling Democratic Labor Party, sometimes talk about risks to Lithuania's security stemming from Poland and Germany. This seemingly paradoxical fear of friendly nations may be understood, if historical consciousness, which still plays an important rule in Lithuanian mentality, is taken into account.

Situated in the geographical center of Europe, between Germany (Prussia) and Russia, Lithuania for centuries had to fight against them, and later, weakened and exhausted, became a stage of their wars and illegal agreements, including the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. Today, some in the older generation still regard Germany, especially as it gains strength, with some suspicion. This suspicion is rarely expressed openly. In fact, it stems from the fear that an economically and politically powerful

Germany may begin to dominate Lithuania. It would be difficult to support this thesis with empirical facts, but as a rule, nationalists in Lithuania (and elsewhere) tend to disregard facts. Accordingly, in Lithuania there exists a great deal of enthusiasm towards the European Union, at the expense of its leading country.

In the past Lithuania had complicated relations also with Poland. After the unification in 1569, for more than two hundred years they were two parts of one state until it was finally partitioned by Russia, Prussia and Austria in 1795. As a consequence, Lithuania, and especially the Vilnius region, became polonised to a certain degree.

When Lithuania and Poland regained their independence in 1918, both laid claim to Vilnius. The old Lithuanian capital and its region were occupied by Poles in 1920, and remained under Poland until 1939. Although Poland unequivocally recognizes this region as an integral part of Lithuania, Polish concerns for the rights of ethnic Poles living in Lithuania are regarded as excessive by some Lithuanians, and for them, are a cause for anxiety. As in the case of Germany, such fears are not typical for the younger generation of Lithuanians.

When discussing internal threats to security it is natural to begin with political instability (or insufficient stability). However, Lithuania seems quite stable, at least in comparison with Latvia and Estonia. Since the autumn of 1992, it has a stable constitution. No amendments to it have been adopted in two years' time. It is a considerable achievement, especially in view of more than 60 amendments to the Provisional Basic Law which was in force in the years 1990–1992. In the parliament, now called the *Seimas* and elected at the same time the constitution was adopted, the Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party holds the absolute majority of seats. The former leader of that party, Algirdas Brazauskas, was elected President in February 1993, and since March of the same year the present leader of the LDLP, Adolfas Šleževičius, has held the post of Prime Minister.\* Firm control over all the official political power centers by one party is a rather rare occurrence in Central Europe.

However, underneath this seeming political stability, passions are running high. Right wing (or the so called right wing) opposition led by the former Chairman of the Supreme Council Vytautas Landsbergis did not accept election defeat with calm dignity. Instead of consolidating the ranks of opposition and preparing for the next parliamentary elections in 1996, he has endeavored to bring about pre-term elections. With that aim in view, the opposition initiated a referendum on “unlawful privatization, depreciated savings and shares, and the obstructed judicial system” which was held in August 1994. As was to be expected, this attempt failed since the motion was only supported by some 33 percent of registered voters (50 plus one was needed to win). It was not the first time that an attempt had been made in Lithuania to put into practice some extremely risky political ideas through a referendum. The failed referendum on the Presidency and the presidential powers, held in May 1992, is another striking example.<sup>7</sup> The fact that, for the opposition, the latest referendum served, in spite of its proclaimed purposes, as a convenient tool (and the only one available at the moment) to derail the present government was not left unnoticed by foreign press.<sup>8</sup>

At the press conference held immediately after the referendum Landsbergis acknowledged this fact openly.

Attempts to overturn the government by all possible and impossible means create a considerable degree of instability in the country, and clearly weaken its security. The present Lithuanian government is to blame for many things, including its own security policy. Acceptance of a proposal (one of eight contained in the draft law presented to voters) to hold parliamentary elections every time 35 percent of the electorate want such elections, however, would be disastrous not only for the government but for the nation as well. If this proposal were adopted, Lithuania's national security would be seriously compromised.

Barry Buzan is right when treating socio-political cohesion of the state as a major factor in any attempt to guarantee national security.<sup>9</sup> Some politicians in Lithuania, however, tend to disregard this point. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that not all the opposition parties supported the proposal, and even those who did (such as the Christian Democrats) were extremely reluctant to do so. Therefore it is not impossible that the "state consciousness" of Lithuanian political parties may increase in the future. At the moment, however, this consciousness is not highly developed, and particular interests often take the upper hand. The degree of consolidation of the Lithuanian nation was very high in the years 1988–1991 during the fight for independence. Paradoxically, after the final restoration of statehood it seems to have lost some of its value. From the standpoint of national security, such tendencies are fairly dangerous. A nation lacking a strongly developed sense of statehood is vulnerable and subject to various pressures, both external and internal. Weakening of an individual's identity with the state (a positive development from the liberal perspective) may be explained by unreasonably high and thus unfulfilled expectations. People linked restoration of the statehood with hopes of a flourishing economy and culture, effective and uncorrupt public administration, rule of law, and personal safety and prosperity. From the marvelous fruits independence was supposed to bring they have, at best, gained only democracy and a free press (polls show that Lithuanians have a much better opinion of their own press than Latvians and Estonians). It is not enough for the majority of Lithuanians life is very hard, so, the good news about the success of privatization or the turning of Lithuanian trade from East to West (in the first half of 1994, for the first time, Lithuania's Eastern and Western trade was almost equal) is of a very limited value. An ordinary citizen is unhappy with his quality of life and standard of living. Seeing that others are much better off he is even more bitter since egalitarian ideas are still deeply rooted. Five years of "building capitalism" have transformed this mentality to a radical extent, and, of course, he misses the guidance and protection of the state which used to take care of his fundamental needs.

According to Arnold Wolfers, security measures the absence of threats to acquired values and the absence of fear that such values will be attacked.<sup>10</sup> The significance of the ability to maintain and defend "core values" for the concept of national security has been exposed by other authors as well, including Walter Lippmann. It is clear, however, that acquired socialist values cannot be maintained in a situation of transition from one system to another. In Lithuania and many other countries in transition

\* A.Šleževičius was voted out of office by the parliament after a financial scandal in February, 1996. —  
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tion that produces an acute feeling of personal insecurity.

Security is an essentially contested concept, encompassing, as it does, important contradictions. In some situations, national security interests may, for example, require the limitation of individual freedoms. Presently in Lithuania, however, the dominating relationship between individual and national security does not seem to be one of contradiction, but rather one of inseparability. The majority of people in this country do not regard the state as a threat to the individual. On the contrary, facing a high crime rate, poverty, and a decline in standards of health services, they expect the state to do more to enhance their physical and economic security. At the same time, respect for the state is relatively low because of the government's widespread corruption, mismanagement, lack of decisiveness in putting promulgated laws into practice, and general ineffectiveness.

At the national security level, not only military, political, and social but also economic threats play an important role (I shall not deal with environmental or cultural threats in this section). Access to resources is of special significance. For Lithuania, oil and gas are the most vital imported resources. The heavy dependence upon Russia as a supplier of oil, and especially gas, makes Lithuania very vulnerable. The Soviet Union used this dependency to exert political pressure on Lithuania in the first months following the proclamation of independence by cutting off supplies. Some temporary cuts of the oil supply by Russia in 1992 and later, were also caused, it seems, by political and not only financial reasons as Russia claimed. Therefore the long awaited decision taken by the Lithuanian government to begin the construction of an oil terminal at Butinge, north of Klaipeda, is fairly important from a national security standpoint because it diminishes dependence on Russia.

Lithuania's dependence on Russia's supplies of other raw materials and commodities is not as pronounced and continues to decline. However, Russia's economic expansion into Lithuania is cause for concern. Here I do not refer to joint ventures with Russia whose number is large, but economic significance small, or to Russian enterprises openly acting in Lithuania. There is a suspicion that some of the seemingly respectable Lithuanian entrepreneurs are only figureheads who, in reality, represent the interests of Russian capital. Also, there is no doubt that a considerable amount of Russian capital circulates in the Lithuanian shadow economy, both in its grey and black varieties. Therefore the real degree of control of Lithuania's economy by Russian capital is considerably higher than those fractions of one percent shown by official statistics. From the national security standpoint, foreign involvement in these shadow economy activities, especially those overlapping with criminal ones, is particularly dangerous. Foreign secret services may easily use channels of political influence of the underworld and illegal business for their own purposes, all to the detriment of Lithuania's national interests.

### **3. SECURITY DECISION-MAKING IN LITHUANIA**

A country facing as many threats as Lithuania does today must have political structures able to identify these threats and take actions in order to eliminate, neutralize or weaken them. Unfortunately, security decision-making is not the better side of



the Lithuanian political process.

Until the autumn of 1992, all security decision-making originated with the Chairman of the Supreme Council. According to the Provisional Basic Law passed by the Supreme Council on March 11, 1990, the same day Lithuania's independence was proclaimed, the Chairman had a double role to play. First, he was Speaker of the Parliament, and, second, he represented Lithuania as the highest official of the state. From a purely legal point of view, his powers established by the Provisional Basic Law were not very extensive. The Presidium of the Supreme Council – a clear relic of Soviet times – was superior to him. However, having the authorization to negotiate with foreign states, and until the end of 1991, enjoying strong support in parliament, he gradually concentrated in his hands enough power to make all the major foreign and security decisions. Being able to pass through the Parliament all the decisions that required a parliamentary approval, Chairman of the Supreme Council, Vytautas Landsbergis, became the main figure in Lithuania's politics, including security decision-making. At that time neither the Foreign Ministry, nor the Department of State Security had much say in security matters. The Supreme Council, often acting like the Convent at the time of the French Revolution (without resorting to terror, of course) was not particularly eager to delegate major powers to the executive. Only the Department (after October 1991 – Ministry) of National Defense under Audrius Butkevičius had influence upon security policy decisions, especially those related to the development of armed forces and the establishment the first unofficial ties with NATO (in defiance of policies of neutrality officially pursued in 1990–1991).

The adoption of permanent constitution, parliamentary and presidential elections, and formation of a new government (all between October 1992 and March 1993) had a great impact on the character of the political process in Lithuania. The president became the main figure in foreign and security policy-making.

According to Lithuania's Constitution, which transformed Lithuania from a parliamentary into a semi-presidential republic, the President's powers in the domestic policy area are rather limited. His powers in the domain of foreign and security policy, however, are impressive. He is the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. Having the right “to settle basic foreign policy issues” (Article 84), and appoint or dismiss, pending the approval of the Seimas, the Chief Commander of the Army (not to be confused with the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces) and the Head of the Security Service, the President and not the Prime Minister controls the country's foreign, defense, and security policy. This asymmetry between presidential powers in national and international policy-making is important for a proper understanding of the role the President of Lithuania plays in decision-making. In foreign and security policy he is the central figure. Other policy actors are directly or indirectly subordinate to him. There is a possibility for the Seimas to influence foreign and security policy, but its powers in this area are quite narrow. The third actor, the Cabinet, including the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of National Defense, is subordinate to the President in this sector of policy-making, and implements, but does not formulate, corresponding decisions.

At the beginning of this term, President Algirdas Brazauskas did not try to

excessively dominate foreign, defense, and security policy-making. He was interested in cooperating with the Parliament and its committees. However, the honeymoon of close cooperation with the Parliament (both majority and opposition) ended in August, 1993. As August 31, the day of the final withdrawal of Russian troops from Lithuania, approached, some problems with Russia developed. In this situation, the President began to act with unexpected self-confidence, and from that time on decided the majority of issues in foreign, defense, and security policy without previous consultations with the legislature.

In Lithuania, there is one constitutional body which could influence security policy decisions taken by the President – the State Defense Council. The Constitution states: “The main issues of national defense shall be considered and coordinated by the State Defense Council which consists of the President of the Republic of Lithuania, the Prime Minister, the Seimas Chairperson, the Minister of National Defense, and the Chief Commander of the Army. The State Defense Council shall be headed by the President of the Republic of Lithuania.”<sup>11</sup>

The State Defense Council, however, does not play a primary role in security decision-making. Its composition is not very suitable for security decision-making since neither Minister of Foreign Affairs, nor the Head of the Security Service (Security Department) are members. The decision to create such a truncated body reflects serious faults in the security consciousness of the MP's and experts who took part in the preparation of the draft Constitution.

Some time ago a non-constitutional body was created by the Decree of the President called the Coordination Council on Foreign Policy. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Chairperson of the Seimas Committee of Foreign Affairs are members of this Council. The Council discusses some problems related to security, but this body does not play an important role in security policy-making either. The status of this council is low, and its composition far from the best.

Lithuania badly needs an influential national security council able to discuss the main security issues and make well-grounded proposals to the President. The security council is needed all the more since the Department of State Security is very weak. Changes in the leadership and rank-and-file members of this Department were so great in the last years that the Department was almost paralyzed. This state of affairs was very comfortable for foreign secret services operating in Lithuania. Lithuania's President does not have an influential personal adviser on national security either. (Admittedly though, the adviser on foreign affairs – Justas Paleckis – is quite an influential person and is interested in security matters.) Regrettably, it does not seem that a national security council will be created anytime soon.

For the above-mentioned reasons, security decision-making in Lithuania does not go smoothly, and there is an evident deficiency of coordination of activities of different governmental structures. This explains why, until now, a national security concept has existed only as a package of incoherent drafts offered by different cabinet and parliamentary structures, and by the Christian Democrats. In November 1994, the Parliament established a working group for drafting a national security concept on the basis of existing proposals. The task of this group is to create a text acceptable to all the main parties

represented in legislature. As of the beginning of 1995, consensus on some of these security issues is still lacking, and Lithuania also does not have an official defense doctrine.

The lack of fundamental documents and inadequate coordination of security policy do not mean, however, that this policy is in complete disarray. A foreign policy concept was confirmed by the Cabinet in Spring 1994; the chapter on Lithuania's security policy is an important, albeit a short part of this document.

#### **4. LITHUANIAN SECURITY POLICIES**

The first priority in Lithuania's national security policy, after the pull-out of Russian troops, is integration with NATO. Since January 1994 Lithuania has officially sought to become a full member of the alliance. That does not mean that in its efforts to ensure international guarantees for its security, Lithuania has concentrated exclusively on NATO. UN and OSCE (former CSCE) are important organizations, and participation in them, to some extent, enhances Lithuania's security. The EU, in this respect, is of special importance. Lithuania views joining the EU as a main objective of its foreign policy and has made substantial progress in approaching the EU. In the middle of 1994, Lithuania signed a free trade agreement with the EU that came into force on January, 1995, and, at the end of the 1994, began negotiations on an association (Euro) agreement, to be concluded by mid-1995.\*

Participation in the EU would be highly conducive to enhancing Lithuania's security. It would greatly strengthen its soft security. However there is consensus between all political parties represented in the parliament that only full membership in NATO can provide Lithuania with real security guaranties it is so desperately seeking. Thus, only membership in NATO may ensure Lithuania's hard security.

At the same time, Lithuania hopes to transform its present associated partnership with the WEU into a full membership after joining the EU. The role of the WEU as an important European security structure will certainly grow, and, in the next century, may even surpass that of NATO.

Therefore, Lithuania seeks to strengthen its cooperation with the WEU. On the other hand, it regards initiatives to create alternative security blocks in Central Europe with skepticism because new structures of this kind would counterpoise members of such blocks both to Western European and CIS defense structures.

The transition from the policy of neutrality pursued in 1990-1991 to the policy of actively seeking NATO membership was not an easy step for some Lithuanian politicians. They, however, were compelled to accept arguments put forward by the opponents of the neutrality policy: that such a policy led to disastrous results for Lithuania's statehood in the pre-war years, that it is too expensive and cannot ensure Lithuania's security in the present geopolitical situation.

A policy of joining NATO (in spite of the present NATO's unwillingness to accept new members) requires member states, among other things, to build military forces able to cooperate with NATO. It is necessary to stress that Lithuania maintains closer contacts with NATO than Latvia and Estonia. Lithuania was more active in this

area in the past years, and it is even more active now. One recent example: of the three Baltic states only Lithuania took part in the exercises of NATO and its PFP partners conducted in 1994 in Poland and the North sea. The Individual Partnership Program for Lithuania foresees in-depth cooperation with NATO in at least 8 important areas.<sup>12</sup>

In building military forces Lithuania is ahead of the other Baltic states as well. Its superiority is most pronounced in the development of a navy. Lithuania's navy with its two fast Grisha III class corvettes equipped with relatively modern anti-aircraft and anti-submarine systems is quite impressive for such a small and new state. Estonians and Latvians have no counterparts and must be content with a few coast guard vessels. Unfortunately, these corvettes would be a relatively easy target for modern military planes in a real military conflict. A deficiency of the navy as a defense system pillar is also the location of its operational area westwards from Lithuania, while an attack on Lithuania from the West is less than likely. The corvettes, however, are very useful for displaying the Lithuanian flag and taking part in NATO's maneuvers. Close cooperation with NATO, without doubt, enhances Lithuania's security.

The core of the ground forces is a field army brigade *Geležinis Vilkas (Iron Wolf)*. It consists of 8 battalions. The draft defense doctrine accords this brigade the role of a mobile force. Currently, however, the number of vehicles, especially the armored type, is absolutely inadequate. The brigade badly needs communication equipment, anti-tank, and anti-aircraft weapons.

Until the middle of 1994, the Border Guard was an important part of the ground forces. It had approximately the same number of men (some four thousands) as the Iron Wolf brigade. Now, however, the Border Guard has been placed under the Ministry of Interior in the Border Guard Department. That has substantially strengthened the forces of the Ministry of Interior, whose two regiments were a force to be reckoned with when estimating Lithuania's military potential even before the Border Guard found itself under this Ministry of National Defense. Audrius Butkevičius strongly opposed the plans to hand over the Border Guard from his ministry to the Ministry of the Interior.

Normally, border control is a function of the border police. There were border police in pre-war Lithuania. Border police may be more effective in controlling borders than army conscripts. The task of the military Border Guard is, however, not only to control borders, but to defend them as well. It is rather doubtful that a border police force would be able to carry out this task. Transfer of the Border Guard from one ministry to another created plenty of other problems related to reconnaissance, early warning, control of air space, etc. Effective command of all forces in case of emergency has been made more difficult. There is a doubt that the newly born Lithuanian army was weakened by this much debated step, although that that does not automatically imply an infringement upon Lithuania's security interests.

In addition to the Navy and ground forces, Lithuania has a small air force con-

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\* The European Agreements were concluded in June 1995 with all Baltic countries. – Eds.

sisting of 4 training jets L-39 Albatros (“in principle” able to carry out military missions as well) and about 30, mostly small, transport planes and helicopters.

Ending this brief survey of Lithuania's military potential it is necessary to mention servicemen on the roll of the Ministry of National Defense serving in the Civil Defense and in the Volunteer National Defense Service. The Volunteer National Defense Service has about 10 000 volunteers on the muster-roll but at the moment its combat value is rather doubtful.

Following the transfer of the Border Guard to the Ministry of Interior the number of servicemen on the roll of the Ministry of National Defense dropped from some 12 000 to 8000. In the state budget for the year 1994 allocations for defense comprised about four percent. Keeping in mind that Lithuania's armed forces were created in three year's time practically from nothing and that shortages in equipment are enormous, this is not much. The state, however, hardly can afford more. In the year 1995 the Cabinet plans to reduce the number of servicemen on the roll of the Ministry of National Defense and to use part of the saved money for better equipment and for raising salaries of the rest.

In spite of all the financial problems the Ministry of National Defense under new Minister Linas Linkevičius acted very effectively in creating peace-keeping forces to serve under the UN. The first exercises of the joint BALTBAT (the Baltic Battalion) have been carried out, and the first Lithuanian unit of 32 men involved in peacekeeping operations in Croatia as part of the Danish peacekeeping force are in place. Participation in peacekeeping operations under the UN flag is regarded in Lithuania with some justification as a way to enhance Lithuania's security by heightening its political profile in the world, strengthening ties with NATO countries, and acquiring military experience.

The withdrawal of Russian troops from Lithuania a year before of their pull out of Germany, Latvia and Estonia shows that in spite its deficiencies, Lithuania's foreign and security policy has been far from hopeless. Negotiations on the pullout of Russian troops were very difficult.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, Lithuania managed to get rid of the foreign forces on its soil without any substantial commitments to Russia which Latvia and Estonia were forced to make.

Since the end of the withdrawal on August 31, 1993, some progress in enhancing Lithuania's security, especially through Lithuania's integration into Western security structures, has been made. Most important is associate membership in the WEU and active participation in the Partnership for Peace program. Baltic cooperation in the security area has also been strengthened. In November 1994 the Baltic Assembly, an interparliamentary organization of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, recommended to the Baltic Council of Ministers to draft a defense agreement between the three states and to begin coordination of border control activities. (At the moment all Baltic states have problems in ensuring tight control of their outside borders but there is no sense in double controls on their inside borders.) Defense structures of the Baltic states have begun preparatory work in the creation of a united system of airspace control. Setting up the BALTBAT serves as strong evidence that military cooperation between the Baltic states can be fruitful.

In April 1994 Lithuania signed the long negotiated treaty on friendly relations and good-neighborly cooperation with Poland, which was ratified by both countries in October. (In the near future a similar treaty is to be concluded with Belarus.) The conclusion of the main treaty with Poland not only practically removes all residual tensions between Lithuania and Poland and strengthens Lithuania's international position (especially vis-a-vis Moscow), but opens new perspectives for cooperation with all the Visegrad countries as well.

Those countries expect to join the EU and NATO before the Baltic states but that may have a rather negative effect on the security of the Baltic states, because Russia would conclude that the West is substantially less interested in the Baltics than in other countries of Central Europe.

There are some signs that our Western partners do understand Lithuania's position and try to diminish the difference in speed at which the Visegrad countries and the Baltic states are integrated into the main European structures and brought into the main political enterprises. At least the WEU and Stability Pact treat the Baltic states as equals to the Visegrad countries. Lithuania expects to have the same official status in the EU soon. It is therefore quite natural that a September 6, 1994 publication in *The Washington Times* on a "Second Yalta" suggesting that the US State Department is seriously considering the possibility of leaving the Baltic states in Russia's sphere of influence caused great concern in Lithuania. According to the article, Peter Tarnoff, undersecretary of state for political affairs, sent a corresponding document to Secretary of State Warren Christopher in July 1994. Lithuania's Foreign Ministry immediately asked the States Department for an explanation. As expected, the State Department again confirmed its earlier position: the Baltic states should not, are not, and will not be in anyone's sphere of influence. Yet Lithuania's Foreign Minister, Povilas Gylys, was not fully satisfied because the existence of the document was not denied.<sup>14</sup>

Russia's intentions and policy towards Lithuania are still a great security concern for Lithuania. The time that has elapsed since the withdrawal of Russian troops was completed has not been used very effectively for improving relations with Russia, and if some improvement can be detected, it has been achieved at the expense of Lithuania's interests by yielding to Russia's pressure. The commitments to Russia, which Lithuania succeeded in avoiding before the final pullout of Russian troops, have been made thereafter. Specifically, on November 18, 1993 Lithuania signed an agreement with Russia to the effect that Russian military pensioners may remain in Lithuania. Formally, the agreement touches only upon the question of social guarantees for them. At the same time, the trade agreement containing a most favored nation status clause was signed between the two countries. This first agreement came into force immediately, along with some others, but the trade agreement, has not been in force until recently, although Lithuania was very interested in its enactment, and did everything in its power to persuade Russia to keep its word and ratify the agreement. Instead in 1994, Russia doubled import duties on Lithuanian goods, trying to compel Lithuania to sign an agreement on military transit to and from the Kaliningrad region.

In 1994 the problem of Russia's military transit to and from Kaliningrad region has been the most debated issue related to national security in Lithuania. Numerous formal and informal political meetings and scientific conferences have dealt with this issue.

Until recently, Russia's military transit through Lithuania to the Kaliningrad region has been conducted as specified in the agreement between Lithuania and Russia on the use of Lithuania's railway system and other transportation facilities, especially the ferry line from Mukran (Rügen) to Klaipeda for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Germany. Although Russia had completed the pullout in August 1994, this agreement was in force until December 31, 1994. Russia, seeking to continue military transit after that date was very eager to conclude a new agreement.

All oppositional parties represented in Lithuanian Parliament were against such an agreement, claiming that it was extremely undesirable. Some of them were generally opposed to Russia's military transit through Lithuania. They argued that Russia may provoke incidents and then use them against Lithuania. Apart from politically dangerous incidents, there exists the possibility of physically dangerous accidents. Besides, continuation of Russia's military transit through Lithuania may hinder Lithuania's integration into Western security structures. And in 1995 Russia will be able to use the ferry line from St. Petersburg to Kaliningrad built specifically for this purpose, they argued. Costs of shipment of military personal and materials via St. Petersburg will be much lower than by rail through Lithuania, and, second, there is no military necessity for Russia to use the transit route through Lithuania at all.

Not all leaders of the opposition are against military transit through Lithuania in principle. They, however, are convinced that there is no need to have an agreement with Russia to this effect. It was argued that such an agreement would bind Lithuania to Russia politically and military thus violating the Constitutional Act on the Non-Alignment of the Republic of Lithuania to post-Soviet Eastern Alliances. All that is needed, they believe, is unilaterally established general rules for military and other dangerous transit.

The government has agreed that such rules are indispensable. They were approved by the Cabinet in October 1994. From the political point of view, the most important element of these rules is the requirement to obtain special permission from Lithuanian authorities for each border crossing. However, yielding to Russia's pressure, the government has also agreed to prepare a bilateral document specifying some financial and other details of Russia's military transit. Russia, however, wanted to have a comprehensive political agreement. The difference between the positions of both sides is reflected by the fact that the draft agreement prepared by the Lithuanian side contained two pages, and that prepared by Russian side contained 30 pages.

Negotiations between Lithuania and Russia on military transit were very difficult. In September, Russia promised that after approval by the Lithuanian government of the rules for military transit, the trade agreement between the two nations will come into force. It failed to keep the promise. Russia's military planes permanently violate Lithuanian airspace. For these and other reasons, the Lithuanian government was quite reluctant to fulfill all of Russia's wishes. Russia, however, has unexpectedly

found influential supporters. In the middle of 1994 some Western politicians, including John Major, urged Lithuania to sign an agreement on military transit, and at the end of the year, embassies of the EU countries in Lithuania expressed their wishes that an agreement be concluded.

In October 1994 at the CSCE conference in Budapest, Lithuania's Deputy Foreign Minister Albinas Januška laid out Lithuania's position concerning military transit very clearly, stressing that Lithuania does not have any commitments to Russia concerning military transit and Russia does not have any indisputable rights to it.<sup>15</sup> At the beginning of 1995, still no agreement on military transit existed. Dramatic developments in Chechnya made a conclusion of such an agreement even more difficult, especially because of suspicion that at least one military transport from Kaliningrad carried ammunition for Russian troops fighting in Chechnya. At last, on January 18, 1995 it was announced that a temporary solution had been reached. First, Russia agreed to give Lithuania most favored nation status, and, second, Lithuania agreed that until December 31, 1995 Russia's military transit to and from Kaliningrad would be continued according to regulations established in the old Lithuanian-Russian agreement on the withdrawal of Russian troops from Germany.

Debates on military transit going on in Lithuania have exposed a more general problem concerning the Kaliningrad region, whose significance transcends the confines of Lithuanian-Russian relations. In his September 30, 1994 speech at the United Nations, Lithuania's President Algirdas Brazauskas stressed that it is a problem for Europe as a whole and should be discussed within the framework of the Balladur plan. In November 1994 the Baltic Assembly officially put forward a proposal to demilitarize the Kaliningrad region, which would forever eliminate the problem of military transit through Lithuania. From a purely military point of view, the value of ground troops stationed in this exclave for Russia's defense is very limited. The strategic value of the Russian Baltic Fleet with bases in this region has diminished substantially as well. Therefore demilitarization of the region is quite possible. Some time ago, Russia's Defense Minister acknowledged that, under certain circumstances, it would be even desirable.<sup>16</sup> Without any doubt, such a development would promote the security of Europe as a whole, not only that of Lithuania.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. The West underestimates the significance of the Baltics, and of Central Europe, for the security of the West itself.
2. The difference in speed at which the Visegrad countries and the Baltic states are integrated into the main European political, economic, and security structures has to be diminished.
3. Russia cannot legitimately claim to have a special role to play in the Baltics.
4. Lithuania's internal security situation is better than that of Latvia and Estonia, but its external security situation is worse.
5. Lithuania is ahead of the other Baltic states in building a military and security system.



6. From the security point of view, the demilitarization of the Kaliningrad region is both desirable and possible.

## NOTES

1. See Kennedy, P., *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (Fontana Press: London, 1989), Ch. 7.
2. Faurby, I., "Baltic Security: Problems and Policies since Independence," ed. Petersen, N., *The Baltic States in International Politics* (DJOF Publishing: Copenhagen, 1993), p. 56.
3. See Nekrašas, E., "Lithuania and Her Neighbors," see Petersen, note 2, p. 44–45.
4. Quoted from Faurby, see note 2, p. 53.
5. Goble, P. A., "Russia as an Eurasian Power: Moscow and the Post-Soviet Successor States," reprinted in ed. Remeikis, T., *International Relations and Security of Small States* (TNA Productions International, 1994), p. 320.
6. See note 5, pp. 322–323.
7. For details see Nekrašas, E., *Legislature and the Executive in Foreign Policy Making* (Bitas Publishers: Vilnius, 1994), p. 11–14.
8. See *Baltic Independent*, 26 Aug. –1 Sep. 1994.
9. Buzan, B., *People, States and Fear. An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*. 2nd ed. (Harvester Wheatsheaf: New York, etc., 1991), Ch. 2.
10. See Wolfers, A., *Discord and Collaboration* (John Hopkins University Press: Baltimore), 1962, p. 150.
11. *Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania* (Publishing Office of the Seimas: Vilnius, 1993), Article 140 (p. 25).
12. See *Lietuvos Rytas* 8 Sep. 1994.
13. See *Negotiations with the Russian Federation Concerning the Withdrawal of Russian Military Forces from the Territory of the Republic of Lithuania* (Office of Public Affairs of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania: Vilnius, 1992). This "White Book" contains 133 documents related to negotiations going on from July 29, 1991 till September 8, 1992.
14. See *Lietuvos Rytas* 10 Sep. 1994.
15. See *Lietuvos Rytas* 12 Oct. 1994.
16. See *Lietuvos Rytas* 28 May 1994.

*Lithuania's Security Concerns and Responses*

