

The Main Goals of Lithuanian Foreign Policy since 2004: Russian Discourse

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The Soviet Union as ‘a political enemy’ was a strong motivation for the Baltic nations to escalate the ideas about the threats posed by this country. Today, after 18 years of independence it is good to acknowledge that EU and NATO membership signify for Baltic nations’ freedom and big change of geopolitical status. Experience of past and present also become a reason why Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Office as one of the main its goals defines support for the development of democracy to the East. Scholarly discussions and interpretations about foreign policy formation of three small Baltic countries focus on a lot of aspects. There are still a number of unanswered questions related to the Foreign policy of Lithuania since 2004 and Russian discourse in that context. Is it possible for Baltic States to find constructive dialog with Russia? The question which really stimulated during the writing process of research is still open for me. Other questions which were born as one of the first ones: Does Lithuania should reduce its foreign policy goals? How should politicians deal with an active participation in both Northern and Eastern dimensions? These issues helped to formulate the following aim. The main aim of the article is to reveal the context of the Lithuanian foreign policy

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towards Russian Federation after EU and NATO enlargement in 2004. To achieve this aim, the following tasks were carried out:

- introduce the main goals of Lithuanian Foreign Policy since 2004;
- analyse the efforts of the Lithuanian politicians to use different strategies and tactics forming foreign policy of Lithuania towards Russia;
- distinguish the main problems in Lithuanian-Russian bilateral relations.

According to well known expert on Lithuania's foreign policy Česlovas Laurinavičius, who wrote his text in 2006, «current Lithuanian foreign policy can be conditionally divided into three main directions: participation in so-called anti-terrorist coalition, NATO and the EU affairs, and support for the development of democracy to the East»¹. In 2008 there are still the same three main directions of Lithuanian foreign policy. It is more important to notice, that questions which were raised by Č. Laurinavičius in 2006 about «whether foreign policy directions are justified, and whether Lithuanian foreign policy increases security of the state, its prestige and, finally, whether it serves national interests»² are still open and in 2008. The hope what discussions will get a deeper approach still exists because of a critical financial situation in all over the world and political changes in Lithuanian parliament while the election process had come to an end. The first part of raised question whether such directions of Lithuanian foreign policy are justified and increases security of the state is related to geopolitical situation and history of Lithuania.

After the World War II long lasting sovietisation strengthened Lithuanian intelligentsia's attitude of mind about the resistance towards communist system. Allies were seen in the USA and in democracy propagated Western European countries. The USA and Canada did not recognise the occupation of the Baltic States, which was an exceptional case in the history of the diplomacy of these two countries in the cold war period. They acknowledged the Soviet Union and at the same time they publicized the fact of forced incorporation executed by the Soviet Union. They also claimed that the Baltic people must be given the right of self-determination and the diplomatic corps of these states must be acknowledged. The importance of such decisions to the soviets becomes clear if we think about the non-recognition of the occupation of the Baltic States in relation to the necessity felt by the Soviet Union to achieve recognition as the status quo in Europe. Since the Baltic region became an area of political and ideological convergences in the cold war period, politicians were made to take into account the advice of Lithuanians in North America. In addition, the results achieved by "congressional action"³ could be directly felt not only by the communities of emigrants, but

1 Č. Laurinavičius, *New vision of Lithuania's foreign policy*, in: "Lithuanian foreign policy review", 2006, no. 2(18), p. 134.

2 *Ibid.*

3 The term "congressional action" is used to refer to the political actions of Lithuanians in the USA

also by other people. Due to the enhanced development of this action, a number of people managed to emigrate from the Soviet Union, the conditions of imprisoned people were made less severe and contacts between Sąjūdis (Lithuanian Reformation Movement) and the governments of the USA and Canada were established. Mass events in North America and especially in the Soviet Union in the years of perestroika can be described as a peaceful political movement that attracted world attention. In 1986, the idea to commemorate those who died as victims of soviet regime and to highlight results of the anti-communist cooperation was born in Canada. The Canadian of Estonian origin Markus Hess and David Somerville in discussions reached the compromise commemoration was named International Black Ribbon Day. The event of the Black Ribbon Day starting since 1987 gained international recognition and was one of the most successful lobbyist actions in the Cold War period though it was organized in a very short period.

The US and Canada's non-recognition policy of the occupation of the Baltic States lasted for 50 years. Constantly strengthening ties of emigrants with Lithuania and their belief in the possibility to re-establish independence in the nearest future were felt both in the USA and Canada. The pressure of the US Congress on the President and the State Department was gradually increasing. On October 19th, 1989, thanks to the initiative of the Congress Member Dennis M. Hertel, 121 members of the House of Representatives signed a letter to George Bush. The letter urged the President to raise the issue of the Baltic States as a regional conflict⁴ in the negotiations of the US and the Soviet Union. Two interpretations should be made about that initiative: first, Lithuanian émigrés and US congressmen supporting such universal value as Freedom and focusing on it primarily determined positive attitude of newly created Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania in 1990. Second, Bush's confusion and later foreign policy formation showed that the USA was not ready for such a course of action and stayed aside in order not to make mistakes.

With the fall of Soviet Union, security becomes a main issue in Eastern Europe. In March 1990, the declaration of Lithuania's independence made that issue vital for the country. Political support from the U.S. Congress and above mentioned reasons had an impact on orientation of independent Lithuania's foreign policy towards the United States. Looking geopolitically, participation in activities within international organisations based on Euro-Atlantic values ensures national security and it remains a priority goal of the nation and the State.

In line with Č. Laurinavičius' position it seems that question of Lithuanian-Russian relations disappears from foreign policy priorities list and even in the Agreement between Political Parties of the Republic of Lithuania on the Main

and Canada, the main aim of which was to lobby members of the US Congress and Canadian Parliament as well as top politicians of North America to raise the issue of the occupied Baltic states internally, in international forums, and in the relationship with the Soviet Union in 1957-1990.

4 V. Landsbergis, *Pusbrolis Motiejus: knyga apie Stasį Lozoraitį iš jo laiškų ir pasisakymų*, Vilnius, 2003, p. 53.

Foreign Policy Goals and Objectives for 2004-2008⁵ of May 2004 was not left space to fulfil existing gap. Neither the main principles of Lithuania's foreign policy, nor long-term goals of the Lithuanian foreign policy or the main goals of the Lithuanian foreign policy for 2004-2008 were directed towards bilateral Lithuanian-Russian relations. Also just partly I can agree with Ainius Lašas' position that «the new document put additional emphasis on the third pillar of Lithuanian foreign policy – good neighbourly relations»⁶ while Lithuania in agreement was seen more as «a dynamic and attractive centre of interregional cooperation, which spreads the Euro-Atlantic values and the spirit of tolerance and co-operation across the borders and unites cultures and civilizations»⁷, than the country which strives for strengthening its neighbour relations. In the document it was mentioned the further development of the strategic partnership with Poland also strengthening idea that Lithuania should «initiate and implement new formats of regional co-operation, uniting the states of Northern, Central and Eastern Europe; to support democratic processes in Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, the countries of the South Caucasus and the Russian Federation, in particular the Kaliningrad region»⁸. Of course, NATO and EU policy dimensions were not only adopted but also projected. Nevertheless other Lithuanian foreign policy directions were also projected on NATO and EU documental background. Negative consequences of such political policy changes were not seen by politicians firstly. All attention was put on EU and NATO affairs and in that sense exist mainly one goal to be an active member of EU and NATO.

In practice, however, Lithuania's political discourse almost always has had the idea of good neighbourly relations. Today, in between major goals and objectives of National security strategy of Lithuania and foreign policy could be found an item in which it is said that «one of the major objectives is friendly relationships with foreign countries, regional stability, peace and establishment in the Euro-Atlantic area»⁹.

Although Russia's relations have usually been better with Lithuania than with the other two Baltic States, as Lithuania's citizenship law has enabled all Russians residing in Lithuania at the time of the collapse of Soviet Empire to become Lithuanian citizens (the 'zero option'), bilateral relations with Russia usually remained strained and one of the most important issues in Lithuanian foreign policy. Actually tension in these relations is felt but because of mainly two reasons. Firstly,

5 Resolution on Directions in Foreign Policy of the Republic of Lithuania Following Lithuania's Accession to NATO and the European Union, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, 1 May 2004, <http://www.urm.lt>

6 D. J. Galbreath, A. Lašas, J. W. Lamoreaux, *Continuity and Change in the Baltic Sea Region: Comparing Foreign Policies/On the Boundary of Two Worlds Identity, Freedom, and Moral Imagination in the Baltics*, Rodopi, Amsterdam - New York, 2008, p. 77.

7 Resolution on Directions in Foreign Policy of the Republic of Lithuania Following Lithuania's Accession to NATO and the European Union, cit.

8 *Ibid.*

9 National security strategy of Lithuania and foreign policy, 20th January 2005, <http://www.kam.lt>.

because of Lithuania's fundamental strategic concept to become a member of the EU and NATO; and also after 2004 because of «active participation in making NATO and EU decisions, and further enlargement of these international organisations by accepting to these organisations the countries properly prepared for membership as the most appropriate and credible means to consolidate these historical achievements. Further enlargement of these international organisations would finally ensure not only the security and stability of the whole Baltic region, but long-term security and welfare gains for all the states in the region as well»¹⁰. Secondly, relations have become strained in 2000 because of Lithuanian parliament's approval of a bill demanding compensation by Russia for the damage done by the USSR to the republic during the years of Soviet occupation. The bill was signed by the deputy speaker of the parliament Vytautas Landsbergis, and is therefore law. Due to the existing law every Lithuanian government must remind the question of compensations during Lithuanian-Russian negotiations. This document changed Russia's attitude towards Lithuania. Then started to raise episodes which are giving a better understanding how have changed Russian foreign policy discourse in relations with Lithuania.

Projected gas pipeline from Russia to Germany, will bypass Estonia, Latvia, Poland, and also Lithuania. Few years ago the incident involving the crash of the Russian fighter aircraft was treated by Lithuanians as Russia's special provocation, and by Brussels as an accident. Russia successfully started to use the insufficient integrity of the EU. Circumstances surrounding negotiations on the Russian civil transit through Lithuania also should be reminded in this context. It's worth to write that Lithuania during the negotiations followed instructions of the EU Commission, but Russia through direct contacts with the EU states managed to achieve that Commission's instructions were changed¹¹.

The Mažeikių Nafta refinery in Lithuania and Ventspils Nafta oil terminal in Latvia are connected to the main "Druzhba" pipeline by the branch pipeline from Bryansk region (Russia). Oil shipments to Lithuania were stopped in July 2006 over a breakdown in Russian territory. Russian authorities claimed that it was a technical issue, but Lithuanians insisted that the suspension was politically motivated (in 2006 Mažeikių Nafta refinery was privatized by Poland's PKN Orlen company). After two years in 2008 Russia's Ambassador to Lithuania Vladimir Chkhikvadze said to journalists: «If Lithuania wants the Druzhba oil pipeline back in operation, it has to invest in its repair»¹². All these issues refer to the fact that Lithuanian government adjusting above mentioned law have attained some negative steps by Russia.

A. Lašas writing about Foreign policy of Lithuania after 2004 draw atten-

10 *Ibid.*

11 Č. Laurinavičius, op. cit., p. 135.

12 *Druzhba Oil Pipeline Can Be Repaired with Lithuanian Input*, <http://www.rzd-partner.com/news/2008/10/01/331282.html>.

tion on these issues:

- «To sustain a security buffer between itself and mainland Russia;
- To ensure stable and relatively cheap supply of energy;
- To counter-balance regional influence of Russia;
- To access regional markets vis-à-vis trade transit;
- To continue EU integration;
- To maintain visibility and influence in international affairs through active participation in international organizations, especially the EU and NATO»¹³.

According to him these are the main issues and dilemmas for Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Office. Discussing these objectives separately, author mentions that all of them are closely interconnected and adds «each of these challenges is the search for economy stability and growth»¹⁴. In the face of crisis current economical factors show that they were not enough to have these functioning projections. Some other steps of Lithuanian government demonstrate changes in Lithuanian political tasks. «To some extent Lithuania moved on from its pursuits to beef up national sovereignty and security to more economic growth-driven goals: regional transportation, energy, and trade issues»¹⁵. Obviously it is seen in relations with Kaliningrad region. Speedier inclusion of the Kaliningrad region in European co-operation processes which is suggested and supported by Lithuania would lead to the big positive changes inside of EU. Not surprisingly, since becoming EU and NATO member «Lithuania is particularly interested in political, social, economic and ecological stability in the Kaliningrad region»¹⁶ and participates in social, cultural projects, as a partner and investor activated bilateral agreements in business sphere.

In Lithuania before enlargement of EU in 2004 that process strategically was perceived «as the integration into a single democratic world of the West, a common military, political, economic and cultural space. However, in terms of political practice it mostly meant orientation towards the United States, since in the past decade was realised that, first and foremost, membership in NATO depended on the US. That is why the membership in NATO was supposed to become a precondition for the EU membership»¹⁷. This opinion was strengthened by those countries which become new members of the EU. After 2004 it seemed that European countries split into new and old NATO and EU members. At first glance it even looked that the integration of the Eastern European countries into the Western structures was only imitation, a certain ritual or public relations campaign. Acting under such scenario pessimistic position would even

13 D. J. Galbreath, A. Lašas, J. W. Lamoreaux, *Continuity and Change in the Baltic Sea Region: Comparing Foreign Policies/On the Boundary of Two Worlds Identity, Freedom, and Moral Imagination in the Baltics*, Amsterdam-New York, Rodopi, 2008, p. 80.

14 *Ibid.*

15 *Idem*, p. 98.

16 *National security strategy of Lithuania and foreign policy*, 20th January 2005, www.kam.lt.

17 Č. Laurinavičius, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

lead to the conclusion that the current foreign policy of Lithuania simply has no sufficient strategic substance in the EU and NATO. While sufficient strategic substance is needed by Lithuania's Foreign Affairs Office to construct its Russian discourse. According to Č. Laurinavičius, «not only Lithuania's geopolitical location creates preconditions for becoming a target of eventual hostile Russian policy, but the policy that Lithuania deliberately pursues, makes Lithuania a target for Russia»¹⁸. His arguments are these: active export of democracy to the East is practically not an export of democracy; despite great efforts to influence political processes in Belarus, Ukraine and Georgia, the extent of democracy has hardly increased there. Theoretically it could not have been otherwise. The space we are talking about does not belong to the Western civilization, and the development of liberal democratic values there is obviously problematic. Historical experience shows that the development of democracy has brighter prospects if it is carried out by adaptation and evolution rather than by a speeded-up introduction. However, historical experience has been ignored. As a consequence, everything that has been achieved is an escalation of tensions inside the societies in those countries, and an increase of Russia's hostility.

An active campaign for NATO and the EU enlargement to the East can hardly strengthen NATO and the European Union. The present US Administration stands behind the export of democracy to the East and enlargement of NATO and the EU. This is the major and basic factor of the current foreign policy of Lithuania. The role of the US was significant, if not decisive, in resolving the issue of integration of the Baltic States into NATO. The current Lithuania's foreign policy about enlargement goes different directions with the US.

It is not a secret that the present US Administration stands behind the export of democracy to the East and enlargement of NATO and the European Union. This is the major and basic factor of the current foreign policy of Lithuania. It is understandable that the significance of such powerful factor, with respect to such a small and weak country as Lithuania, is not so easy to identify and assess¹⁹.

However, it should also be mentioned in discussion with scholar who started the process of democracy export? Baltic Sea region while being radically different from other territories on the border, in their understanding of "political nation", as well as in their system of values and way of life could be defined as a part of Central/Eastern Europe. Universal European values were acknowledged and adopted by those who lived in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's territory. Lithuania's history episodes of XIV-XVIII centuries, the formation of political nation, "liberum veto"²⁰ principle, religious tolerance, political system, the sense of

18 *Idem*, p. 136.

19 *Ibid.*

20 "Liberum veto" principle was a parliamentary device in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth that allowed any deputy to a Sejm (parliament) to force an immediate end to the current session and nullify all legislations already passed at it.

'belonging together' when people identified themselves as belonging to clearly for them defined region, all these were the reasons which made an impact on current Lithuania's foreign policy formation. The export of democracy to the East is related with Lithuanian initiative to reconstruct the sense of "belonging together" in the XXI century. If I define the term "civilization" in Jan's Kieniewicz's words as «therefore basically such sets of social systems, which emerged when its representatives forged and then upheld the belief and the conviction that they belonged to a wider community that defined by their particular group/social/national/state bonds (tribes, peoples, nation, state), i.e. to a community wider than the limits of their own culture»²¹ – the "political nation" of Commonwealth of Two Nations was such a set of social system and felt a part of Western civilization.

To my mind to consider the second remark – an active campaign for NATO and the EU enlargement to the East can strengthen NATO and the European Union. Taking into account that different societies tend to focus on different issues during their own distinct periods of active participation in international units Lithuania's position is better understood in the EU and NATO. Only the intensive and concentrated pull of far-reaching historical processes in this direction would be able to strengthen general ideas of becoming an active partner.

Although the US foreign policy aims are easily seen in Lithuania's foreign policy it should be added that the goals of the foreign policy of Lithuania coincided with the American ones.

One of the most prominent Lithuanian historians Teodor Narbut (1784-1864), who noticed that since the 12th century there has been a pattern of balancing in relations between Russia and Lithuania. When Russia grows weak, Lithuania has a chance to regain strength. And vice versa – when Russia recovers, Lithuania goes down again²². Narbut formulated his "theory of scales" in 1835. No one doubts any longer that today's Russia regained strength again. However Gediminas Vitkus, an expert on Lithuania's international relations, did invoke the idea of Russia regaining power, especially in the Baltics: Lithuania is already experiencing both open energy pressure and antagonistic ideological disagreement over the interpretation of the events of the recent (as well as the distant) past and even intervention into their political processes during election campaigns. If we share Narbut's position, the meaning is that if Russia continues to build its power successfully and its economic boom is accompanied by strong-handed domestic and foreign policies of authoritarian rule it will succeed in gaining control over Lithuania and this will "reclaim" its "lost" territories²³. A part of Lithuanian society is linked to believe in the implementation of "theory of scales". Such position does not help to develop bilateral relations. The frontiers with what

21 J. Kieniewicz, *Borderlands and civilizational encounter*, in: "Memoria y civilizacion", vol VIII, 2005, p. 36.

22 T. Narbutas, *Lietuvių tautos istorija. Trečias tomas*, Vilnius, Mintis, 1994, p. 243.

23 G. Vitkus, *High time for reflection: 15 years of Lithuanian-Russian relations*, in: "Lithuanian foreign policy review", no. 2(18), 2006, p. 143.

Russians now termed "the near abroad" also shows country's intentions to maintain influence while "the far abroad" definition is not used by Russian Foreign Affairs.

Lithuania is among the states, towards which current Russian government has quite hostile attitudes. In 1998 Olav F. Knudsen described two positions which gives a better understanding of Lithuanian-Russian relations and attitude towards Lithuania's image. Olav F. Knudsen analysing historical context wrote about the main challenges for Baltic and Russian nations. Author's position partly answers the question why Lithuanian-Russian relations are also as intense as with other Baltic nations while Lithuania has and had otherwise structured society, historical memory and tradition in comparison with Latvia and Estonia. «In the minds of Russians and Balts, the significance of history today is linked to different time perspectives. To the Russians, the history relevant to their attitudes to Baltic affairs is probably the most immediate past – the time of the final break – up of the USSR. In this context the Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians – who at first received important backing from Russians both in the Baltics and in the Russian Federation – were subsequently perceived by many Russians to be changing into ruthless wreckers who allowed their initially commendable project to take an extremist, nationalistic and ultimately destructive course. In such a perspective, part of the guilt for the break-up of the Soviet Union is placed on the Baltic nations. Thus, the Russian view of recent history produces an emotional outlook on Baltic affairs, often amounting to outright bitterness, even among Russian analysts. The attitude among élites in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania is of course entirely different, while equally emotional. First of all, the time perspective is different. In the minds of Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians, the years 1939-40 still serve as the reference for today's policies – these years are markers for all that went wrong and all the injustice that is to be put right»²⁴. Memory of those two different time perspectives dominates in vast majority of Baltic and Russian societies members.

In 2005 discussions in Lithuania to participate or not in the commemoration of the victory against the Nazis organized by Moscow and its final solution impacted Russian public opinion. Public and political debates around the World War II anniversary commemorations in Moscow in 2005²⁵ and Lithuania's president's Valdas Adamkus decision to stay in Vilnius had an impact on the formation of Russia's foreign policy towards Lithuania. Also Lithuanians «expect Russians to assume responsibility for past misdeeds – the annexation of the Baltic States, the deportations of thousands of Balts, and above all the virtual decapitation of the three nations by the removal of political and cultural élites which this involved. But many Russians will not even admit that such events were misdeeds, much less

24 Olav F. Knudsen, *Cooperative security in the Baltic Sea region*, Institute for Security Studies of WEU, 1998, <http://aei.pitt.edu/490/01/chai33e.html>.

25 For more information see Onken E.-C. *The Baltic states and Moscow's 9 May commemoration: Analysing memory politics in Europe*, in: "Europe-Asia Studies", Vol. 59, Issue 1, January 2007, p. 23 - 46.

atone for them»²⁶. Lithuanian interpretation of historical events with the help of Russian officials creates a negative image of Lithuania in Russian media.

Different positions become better seen during the presidency of Vladimir Putin. When Boris Yeltsin was the president of Russia bilateral relations were formed on good neighbourly background. Russian democratic movement and its goals were formed on similar manner as Lithuanian ones. Also that period separated Baltic nations in relations with Russian Federation because of some issues which were solved quicker than in Latvian and Estonian cases. First of all a small win – Lithuania achieved an agreement regarding the withdrawal of the Russian Army before Latvia and Estonia. Secondly, O. Knudsen gives an interesting interpretation to the question why Lithuanian-Russian relations took the shape of such evolution. «Only Lithuania, the last of the Baltic states to raise a border claim against Russia, succeeded early on in completing an agreement, probably mainly because Russia wanted to single it out for a favour and thus split the Balts, as they had done so many times before. There was the precedent of the 1940 return to Lithuania of the Vilnius region from occupied Poland, the USSR's gift of power that Lithuania could not refuse. Lithuania has become somehow bound by that "gift" ever since. Moscow plays on this factor even today in its bilateral diplomacy with Vilnius. The Russian-speaking minority in Lithuania is quite small, which also makes for more relaxed bilateral relations»²⁷. Thirdly, agreements on military and civil transit to Kaliningrad were reached and functioned successfully, because Russia had interest in solving that situation which become problematic after the declaration of Lithuanian Independence in 1990. In 2004 Kaliningrad region become surrounded by EU and there were just two possibilities left to reach it) left just two possibilities to reach it – by plane or by ship.

G. Vitkus systemized Lithuanian tactical approaches towards Russia using a model of three political leaders' positions during their leadership period of political elites:

- the categorical (that of V. Landsbergis²⁸),
- the moderate (A. Brazauskas²⁹),
- the solid (V. Adamkus³⁰).

26 Olav F. Knudsen, *op. cit.*

27 *Ibid.*

28 Vytautas Landsbergis – Professor, Chairman of the Lithuanian Parliament – de facto President of Lithuania, in office March 11, 1990 – November 25, 1992.

29 Algirdas Brazauskas – first secretary of the Central Committee of Communist Party of Soviet Republic of Lithuania in office 1988-1989; President of Lithuania in office from February 25, 1993 to February 25, 1998 and Prime Minister from 2001 to 2006.

30 Valdas Adamkus – President of Lithuania two times: 26th February 1998 - 26th February 2003 and since 12th July 2004.

THE CATEGORICAL

The tougher and more declarative tactic proposed by the right-wing forces was doubtlessly useful because it enabled stating the strategic goals in a principled way and sending a clear message to the negotiation partner about the principled position that would be subject to negotiation. Usually, this is really important for small states that do not have much opportunity for manoeuvring. Doubtlessly, however, there was also a constant danger of provoking Russia to upset normal economic relations and pragmatic co-operation.

THE MODERATE

With Lithuania's more adaptive and pragmatic tactic it was easier to solve a number of practical issues in a less charged political atmosphere, avoiding excessive emphasis on the remaining principled political differences. The goals of such politics had to withstand harsh and ruthless criticisms by the opposing political forces and were under almost constant suspicion of betraying the national interests. The worst of it was that moderation would also inspire certain hopes or illusions to Moscow that it could succeed in altering the overall course of Lithuania's foreign and security policy, thereby encouraging it to further increase pressure.

THE SOLID

Attempts were made to emphasize that good relations with Russia and Lithuania's NATO membership are compatible. This tactic had positive correspondence with the particularly cautious or even favourable attitude of some of the Western European states towards Russia and their unwillingness to damage relations with it, especially over the small Baltic States. The accumulated practical experience of relations reveals that both in its relations with Lithuania and other Baltic States, Yeltsin's and, even more so, Putin's Russia always tried to condescend and was reluctant to acknowledge that these countries can also have legitimate national interests that do not necessarily coincide with the Russian preferences³¹.

It is important that these different approaches coincided with periods of Lithuanian state's development. In the beginning of regained independence categorical position of Lithuanian politicians had been even needed to be used while agreement regarding the withdrawal of the Russian Army was related with national security and sovereignty of Lithuanian state. The moderate approach coincided with the start of stabilization processes in Lithuania. Third tactics helped Lithuania to become a member of NATO and EU maintaining quite good while at the same time also tense relations with Russia. These strategies succeeded in achieving normalization of Lithuanian-Russian relations. G. Vitkus analysed politics acknowledging that Lithuania is too small to negotiate alone with Russia and constructed idea that «Lithuania has achieved favourable outcomes of negotiations only in those cases when it has

31 G. Vitkus, *High time for reflection: 15 years of Lithuanian-Russian relations*, in: "Lithuanian foreign policy review". no.12(18), 2006, p. 143-144.

managed to successfully mobilize international opinion or secure solid political backing and sufficient international pressure towards Russia through international organizations or from Western democratic states»³². Instruments of Lithuanian Diplomacy were disclosed by such strongly formulated position. Active participation in European politics after 2004 gives an opportunity to highlight the work of Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Office. Lithuanians successfully mobilizing international opinion managed to reach the goals which were formed by Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Since 2004 international relations showed up the possibilities of Lithuania's activities. Active participation in Northern and Eastern dimension programs; Construction of new Nuclear Power Plant in Lithuania; Strengthening cooperation with the Baltic Sea region countries; To be active member in EU and NATO organisations. These directions are still waiting to be implemented in the best way possible by Lithuanian political elites.

CONCLUSION

Directions of Lithuanian foreign policy are related to geopolitical situation and history of Lithuania.

The efforts of Lithuanian political leaders to establish contacts with Russian Federation did not reach final normalization of bilateral relations. Improvement in the relationship between Lithuania and Russia in comparison with Latvia and Estonia conditioned good neighbourly Kaliningrad-Lithuanian relations. While the question of Lithuanian-Russian relations disappeared from foreign policy priorities list in the Agreement between Political Parties of the Republic of Lithuania, good neighbourly were stressed in National security strategy of Lithuania and foreign policy. Tradition and sense of "belonging together" to the Western civilization is an important part of Lithuanian history. Lithuania's fundamental strategic concept to become a member of the EU and NATO and V. Adamkus' position affirmed that Lithuania formed good a political discourse, as far as its relations with Russia are concerned.

32 *Idem*, p. 146.