Back in the USSR, or New Initiatives in Lithuania's Foreign Policy after the Dual Enlargement

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On the surface, there has been little substantial change in Lithuania's foreign and security policy orientation since the "return to the West" (i.e., being admitted to NATO and the EU) in 2004. The government has been taking its transatlantic relations seriously. Among other things, it has maintained its presence in Iraq and Afghanistan. At the same time, Vilnius has tried to be a "good European" as well—it has expressed its support for the European Security and Defense Policy and participated in EU-led operations.[1] However, according to official discourse, in 2004, some major changes were made to Lithuania's foreign and security policy.[2] The government announced that it was going to pursue a "new activism." Relations with the former Soviet republics in the East—Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and the Caucasus, not the West, were prioritized within this strategy.

At the same time, relations with the post–Soviet states in the East and Europe's neighbors to the South (including the Middle East) have been identified as one of the most challenging issues facing the enlarged EU. In 2004, a "European Neighborhood Policy" (ENP) was developed to deal with this task.[3] The goal of this policy is to create a "ring of friends" around the enlarged EU by offering incentives in return for reforms desired by the EU. The ENP is certainly an ambitious program, but its ability to deal with traditional security issues, such as armed conflicts, and at the same time foster democratic reforms in states neighboring the EU is questionable. Indeed, the ENP has already been criticized for (among other things) its ambiguity, the vagueness of its incentives, and the lack of clear benchmarks for the reforms it desires.[4] Given the interest of the Baltic states and Poland in democratization and stability in the former Soviet republics (as well as their own experience in these areas), the questions of whether and how these countries can influence the new EU neighborhood and thus hopefully improve the ENP become especially relevant.

In order to hypothesize about the contributions that the "new" European states may be able to make to emerging common European arrangements, including the ENP, it is necessary to understand the strategic thinking that these actors have embraced. Is

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[1] Vilnius has participated in the military and civilian operations in the former Yugoslavia. For a full description of Lithuania's contributions to European security operations, see Lithuania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, <www.urm.lt>

[2] Linas Linkevičius, "NATO raida ir jos suteikiamos galimybės Lietuvos užsienio ir saugumo politikos sklaidai," in *Lietuva Šiaurės Atlanto Sutarties Organizacijoje 2004-2006*, Vilnius: Aidai, 2006, p. 141.

[3] In early 2005, Ukraine and Moldova (and five other countries) agreed on an Action Plan within the ENP. Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia are currently negotiating an Action Plan. Russia opted out of the ENP. Belarus signed a PCA (Partnership Cooperation Agreement) in 1995, but it was not ratified due to the lack of democracy in Belarus. Thus, the ENP has not been "activated" yet in the case of Belarus. <http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/policy_en.htm>

[4] Karene E. Smith, "The Outsiders: The European Neighborhood Policy," *International Affairs*, July 2005, p. 767.

Lithuania's new foreign policy agenda merely an extension of its pro-Atlanticist orientation[5]—an orientation that encourages involvement in areas that are strategically important to the United States, as its critics have pointed out? Or is it an indication that important changes in Lithuania's foreign and security policy thinking are taking place? In the long run, can this new accent in Lithuania's foreign policy help the country to become a respectable policy maker (instead of a policy taker) and thus acquire more constitutive power in the EU?

Following this line of inquiry, this essay is divided into three parts. The first part examines the changing understandings of security after the dual enlargement of NATO and the EU. This section looks at two approaches in Lithuania's security thinking—the geopolitical (pro-Atlanticist) and an emerging alternative way of thinking that I have entitled a "Euro–optimist" approach. It shows how these approaches were integrated into Lithuania's new foreign policy agenda, which was announced in 2004. The second part analyzes Lithuania's "new foreign policy" in action. It focuses on the most visible foreign policy initiatives in the post-Soviet space. The goal of this section is to analyze the policy tools that Lithuania has employed in that space: Which institutional frameworks (NATO, EU, bilateral agreements, regional institutions) and why did Lithuania choose to pursue its new foreign policy initiatives? Did these initiatives help to reduce the dividing line between the EU and the "others" or did they construct new divisions? Lastly, this essay offers hypotheses about the impact that these foreign policy initiatives may have on the new European neighborhood. It also examines the changes that have taken place in Lithuania's identity within the context of its participation in international initiatives.

I. Old Geopolitical Concerns or New European Optimism? Lithuania's in/security Thinking after Dual Enlargement

Although official documents outlining Lithuania's security and foreign policy suggest that Lithuania, like other small states in the 21st century, is susceptible to transnational threats, security discourse in Lithuania is still quite state-centric. The most recent (2006) edition of the White Book (a document outlining Lithuania's security policy) is a case in point. This document eloquently describes the changing global security landscape—a landscape characterized by fewer interstate wars and more transnational threats (terrorism, migration, organized crime, etc.) that can affect any state. However, the current edition, like the previous one (published in 2002), argues that Lithuania may be faced with some unidentified dangerous states. These states do not have consolidated democratic constitutional systems but possess a "relatively large" military.[6] Therefore, the argument goes, Lithuania may still experience threats from these militarily powerful unfriendly nation-states. This suggests that territorial defense remains a part of strategic

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[5] The "pro-Atlanticist" orientation refers to the belief that Lithuania's NATO membership is still the best guarantor of security. Atlanticist states are interested in strengthening transatlantic relations and keeping the US engaged in Europe. See Arūnas Molis, "The Role and Interests of Small States in Developing European Security and Defense Policy," *Baltic Security and Defense Review*, vol. 8, 2006, pp. 86-87.
[6] *Lietuvos Gynybos Politikos Baltoji Knyga*, Vilnius, Krašto Apsaugos Ministerija, 2006, p. 8.

thinking, although the importance of non-military security challenges (such as environmental security or domestic stability) is underlined.[7]

Likewise, territory, a major concept in geopolitics, plays an important role in Lithuania's strategic thinking. As in other post–Communist states, geopolitics, defined as the study of "geographical aspects of political processes," remains the leading theoretical approach to international relations in Lithuania.[8] Geopolitics focuses on competition for territories and/or populations that inhabit those territories. In Lithuania, the proponents of the geopolitical approach argue that the United States and Russia compete for influence in the Baltic area. The United States is seen as the only actor capable of balancing against Russia. Two reasons—the fact that the United States did not recognize that the occupation of Lithuania by the USSR was legitimate and the ability of the United States to balance against Russia—are seen as the determinants of Lithuania's pro-American geopolitical orientation.[9]

As viewed through a geopolitical prism, Lithuania has three choices in the changing world order: to continue its pro-American orientation, align with the "continental core" of the European Union (Germany and France), or "benefit from the growth of Russia's influence." Although there are significant costs associated with Lithuania's pro–American orientation, Lithuania should aim to keep the US involved in Europe by being "an outpost of US influence," which would enable Lithuania to play the role of "barrier against Russia's imperial integration." Learning to play the role of expert in the region as well as playing the role of diplomatic mediator could help Lithuania to achieve "distinctiveness" in the region. According to this line of argumentation, the benefits from aligning with the continental states of Europe (France and Germany) are "dubious" because Europe may be "forced to enter into exchanges of spheres of influence with Russia." The best that Lithuania can hope for from its alignment with the continental states of Europe is the status of a "golden province" of the European Union.[10]

An unintentional outcome of the use of the terms developed by the geopolitical perspective in popular discourse is an image of untrustworthy continental ("old") Europe who is eager to make deals with Russia behind the back of "new" Europe. This image, as well as the use of a geopolitical paradigm, has been strengthened by several recent developments, including the notorious gas pipeline deal involving Russia and Germany which is planned to go under the Baltic sea, bypassing Poland and the Baltic states,[11] and

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[7] Ibid., p. 11.

[8] This definition is from Nortautas Statkus, Egidijus Motieka, "Globalios ir Baltijos valstybių geopolitinės situacijos pokyčiai: 2001-03 m. pirmojo pusmečio apžvalga," *Lietuvos metinė strateginė apžvalga 2003*, p. 10. *Geopolitiniai kodai[Geopolitical Codes]* by Nortautas Statkus, Egidijus Motieka and Česlovas Laurinavičius (Vilnius: Vilniaus Universiteto leidykla 2004) is used by International Relations students. Recently a book entitled *Geopolitikos Akiračiai* [Geopolitical Perspectives] was published by Geopolis, an organization of academic youth (Vilnius: Eugrimas, 2004).

[9] Statkus and Motieka, p. 51.

[10] Raimundas Lopata, Nortautas Statkus, „Empires, the World Order and Small States," *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2005, p. 48.

[11] According to some estimates, this pipeline may cost up to three or four times more than a pipeline through Poland. Richard J. Krickus, "Iron Troikas: The New Threat from Russia," *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review 2005*, no. 1–2, p. 104.

the celebration of the 750th anniversary of the founding of Kaliningrad in July 2005. Top Lithuanian, as well as Polish, government officials were not invited to attend this ceremony. (The Russian explanation was that Lithuania chose to ignore the May 9 celebration in Moscow that same year.) The ceremony was attended by Schroeder, Putin and Chirac. This event reinforced the image of continental Europe (primarily Germany and France) as being close to Russia and forgetful of the historical sensitivities of the "new" Europeans.

Furthermore, the perception of continental Europe as being untrustworthy has been strengthened by recent memories of the hesitation with which some European countries treated the dual enlargement of NATO and the EU. In his recent book *Įkaito Anatomija: Kaliningrado Jubiliejaus Byla* [Anatomy of a Hostage: Dossier on the 750th Anniversary of Kaliningrad] Raimundas Lopata, Lithuania's leading political analyst, describes the ambivalent (to put it mildly) evaluation of Germany's attitude toward Lithuania's membership in transatlantic institutions:

> "In 2000, Gerhard Schroeder visited Vilnius. This was the first visit by Germany's leader since 1915… Schroeder spent most of his time discussing the colors of the old town and the Lithuanian beer and giving money to the beggars. When he was specifically asked about Lithuania's ability to join NATO in 2002, his answers were very vague… He started to talk about the importance of cooperation with Russia and the principle of the openness of the alliance. (p. 112)"

Russia's behavior and its approach to international relations have contributed to the survival and strength of the geopolitical paradigm in Lithuania. Geopolitics has remained the leading way of thinking in Russia in its conduct of international relations in general and with its neighbors (the former Soviet republics, including the Baltics) in particular. This is one reason why Russia has adamantly opposed NATO expansion to the east, believing that it has important geopolitical implications, while EU expansion (in the case of the Baltics) was primarily viewed in terms of technical issues, such as access to Kaliningrad by Russian citizens.[12]

Influenced by the geopolitical way of thinking, Russia has preferred to communicate bilaterally, using its own direct connections with the "old" European capitals to obtain a desirable place in European decision making.[13] In many cases, Moscow has treated the European Union as a "regular" international institution, in which nation–states still play major roles. The EU's supranational powers have, by and large, been ignored in Russia.[14] To Russia's policy–makers, "true" Europe is the Europe of large continental powers.

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[12] Timofei Bordachev, "Russia's European Problem: Eastward Enlargement of the EU and Moscow Policy," in *Russia and the European Union: Prospects for a New Relationship*, ed. Oksana Antonenko and Kathryn Pinnick, London and New York: Routledge, 2005, p. 51.
[13] Alexander Nikitin, "Russian Perceptions and Approaches to Cooperation in ESDP," in Russian Perceptions of the CFSP/ESDP, available from <www.iss-eu.org/new/analysis/analy145.pdf>
[14] Ibid., p. 52,

"New" Europeans, such as Lithuania, fall into the category of "false" Europe.[15] Due to historical sensibilities, "true" European relations involving Russia are regarded as a source of insecurity in Lithuania.

At the same time, post–enlargement Lithuania has produced another, positive European narrative portraying Europe as a supranational economic entity. This narrative is supported by the public, although, when compared with geopolitical arguments, it still lacks the support of leading strategic thinkers.[16] According to Eurobarometer data from 2006, more than two thirds of Lithuania's residents believe that EU membership is very useful to their homeland. Using this criterion, Lithuania is definitely one of the most Euro–optimistic countries.[17] Support for European cultural and socio–economic integration and development policies exists among both the elites and the population at large. Lithuanians believe that the EU should first and foremost fight poverty, social discrimination and unemployment.[18] In this "Euro–optimistic" narrative security is increasingly conceptualized in socio–economic, not military terms. Emigration, crime, corruption, and alcoholism are identified as the most pertinent threats.[19]

Stories about economic success are crucial to the "Euro–optimists." Given Lithuania's impressive economic growth (its GDP growth was 10.5% in 2003, 7% in 2004, 7.5% in 2005, and is projected to be 8.2% in 2006[20]), the country is seen as being capable of teaching other countries how to succeed. According to Gražina Miniotaitė, an analyst at the Military Academy of Lithuania and Culture, Philosophy and Arts Institute, this newly articulated confidence, not fear of Russia, explains why Lithuania is interested in becoming a regional center. Lithuania's ambition to become a regional center is based on its current achievements, not on the past. These achievements include economic and political reforms, consistent strategies to achieve integration into Western economic and political structures, as well as the ability to maintain good relations with Russia. This experience is attractive to other former Soviet republics who are interested in EU membership.[21] In the words of Valdas Adamkus, Lithuania's President, "it is critical today that these countries [Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova] look at the Balts the same

[15] The categories of "true" and "false" Europe are explained by Viatcheslav Morozov, "The Baltic States and Russia in the new Europe: a neo–Gramscian perspective on the global and the local," in *The Baltic States and Their Region: New Europe or Old?,* ed. David J. Smith, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005, p. 277.

[16] Most arguments for Europe are made using the concepts of "culture," "regional identity" and trade. For example, Andrius Bielskis argues that Eastern Europeans should "accept a more European stance" because they need to "seek to become what they already are—Europeans." Accepting a "more European stance" would help to strengthen "regional cultural identities." Andrius Bielskis, "Towards European Regional Identity: Europe Versus the West," *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review 2005*, no. 1–2, p. 177. In the debates related to Lithuania's "dual loyalty" dilemma, the opponents of the pro–American stance argued that Europe, not the US, is Lithuania's main trading partner. Dovilė Budrytė, "Lithuania's new (in)security: transatlantic tensions and the dilemma of dual loyalty," in *The Baltic States and Their Region: New Europe or Old?*, ed. David J. Smith, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005, p. 59.

[17] The European Commission, Eurobarometras 65: Šalies Ataskaita, available from <www.eudel.lt>.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Socialinių tyrimų institutas, Lietuva Europos Sąjungoje: Pirmieji metai, Vilnius: Firidas, 2005, p. 46.

[20] Data provided by SEB Vilniaus Bankas, available from <www.seb.lt>.

[21] Gražina Miniotaitė, "Tapatybės paieškos šiuolaikinėje Lietuvos užsienio politikoje: tarp Šiaurės ir Rytų dimensijų," *Lietuvos Metinė Strateginė Apžvalga 2005*, pp. 96–97.

way that the Balts looked at the West a decade ago—expecting encouragement, direction, and, finally—a clear European and transatlantic perspective, where they would fit [in] as full members of democratic communities."[22]

The Lithuanians are more than willing to let other former Soviet republics into the West. According to data from March 2006, 60% of Lithuania's residents support further EU expansion. Even 71% of Lithuania's residents (compared with an EU average of 67%) believe that EU expansion can spread peace and stability in the region.[23]

The desire to maintain stability in Lithuania's neighborhood became part of its new foreign policy vision in 2004. It was articulated by Acting President Artūras Paulauskas in May of that year and later by President Adamkus and Foreign Affairs Minister Antanas Valionis in July. Paulauskas' vision of Lithuania was that of "a country which through the quality of its membership [in] the European Union and NATO and good neighbor policy has become a leader [in] the region." Lithuania's foreign policy should be active, not passive. It should attempt to strengthen transatlantic relations, deepen the strategic partnership with Warsaw, and help the European Union to create its eastern neighbor policy.[24] Adamkus' speech also stressed the importance of becoming a "center of regional cooperation" and trying to find new ways to promote such cooperation.[25] Antanas Valionis argued that one of Lithuania's most pertinent interests was to "expand the borders of Europe" and to surround Lithuania with "free, democratic, European states."[26]

A case for Lithuania as an active regional leader was made by Raimundas Lopata (a leading geopolitical thinker) in an article published in April 2003. This was when Lithuania was faced with the "dilemma of dual loyalty"—debating whether to support the United States or "Old" Europe during the war in Iraq.[27] Lopata argued that this dilemma could be permanently solved if Lithuania managed to escape the Eastern (read "Russian") area of influence. However, establishing normal, interest-based relations with Russia would not be enough to achieve this goal. A solution to the "dual dilemma" could only be achieved if Lithuania found itself in a security environment in which Munich-like agreements involving big powers were unthinkable. Lithuania acting as a regional center and contributing to the common interests of NATO and the EU (such as promoting democracy in Ukraine and Belarus) was likely to contribute to the creation of such a security environment.[28]

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[22] President of the Republic of Lithuania Valdas Adamkus, "Black Sea Vision," *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review 2005*, no. 1–2, p. 8.
[23] The European Commission, Eurobarometras 65: Šalies Ataskaita, available from <www.eudel.lt>.
[24] Artūras Paulauskas, "Naujoji Lietuvos užsienio politika," speech, Vilnius university, May 24, 2004, available from <www.urm.lt>.
[25] Valdas Adamkus, "Address to the Heads of Foreign Diplomatic Missions in Lithuania," Vilnius, July 14, 2004, available from <www.urm.lt>
[26] Antanas Valionis, "Kalba LR diplomatinių atstovybių vadovams," Vilnius, July 7, 2004.
[27] For a more in–depth description of this dilemma, see Dovilė Budrytė, "Lithuania's new (in)security: transatlantic tensions and the dilemma of dual loyalty," in *The Baltic States and Their Region: New Europe or Old?*, ed. David J. Smith, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005, pp. 41–65.
[28]Raimundas Lopata, "Etapas įveiktas, priešaky—naujos paieškos," *Lietuvos rytas*, April 24, 2003, p. 4.

The three foreign policy speeches mentioned earlier outlined some ways that a desirable security environment could be created. They suggested that Vilnius should try to create a "deeper integrated and wider Baltic region,"[29] encourage closer ties between the Kaliningrad region and the rest of Europe, and facilitate the integration of Belarus into the region and European structures if the country decided to do so in the future. At least on paper, these speeches show an interest in pursuing regionalism, understood as institutionalized cooperation between neighboring countries. According to Gražina Miniotaitė, Lithuania's new foreign policy vision resembles the Northern Dimension of the European Union—an approach to regional security meant to erase the dividing lines between East and West.[30]

At the same time, this vision articulates several interests inspired by geopolitical thinking, such as strategic relations with the United States and Poland and the continued involvement of the United States in European security structures ("balancing Russia's influence" in geopolitical vocabulary). Consequently, Lithuania's foreign policy vision represents the search for a synthesis between geopolitical concerns and egalitarian, inclusive approaches to region–building. A similar question—how to find an appropriate balance between the geopolitical way of thinking and regionalism—is currently one of the main issues in EU–Russian relations.[31]

To gain more insight into these questions, it is helpful to find out how Lithuania's new foreign policy vision is put into action through concrete foreign policy initiatives. Is Vilnius practicing inclusive non–confrontational region-building techniques, trying to erase the dividing lines between East and West, between Europe and the "outsiders"? Or are its "new foreign policy" initiatives actually constructing new lines of division in the neighborhood of new Europe? The following section analyzes the most visible initiatives that Lithuania has taken to influence democratization processes in the neighborhood of new Europe after dual enlargement.

II. Lithuania's New Foreign Policy in Action: Initiatives in the New European Neighborhood

Lithuania's decision to support the Orange Revolution in Ukraine before the EU announced its official position is probably the most noticed and the most discussed foreign policy initiative consistent with Lithuania's activist vision of foreign policy. During this crisis, Lithuania coordinated its actions with Poland. The two countries literally "dragged a reluctant EU" into political negotiations that helped to achieve a compromise between the Ukrainian authorities and the "orange" opposition.[32] Polish–

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[29] This phrase is from Acting President Paulauskas' speech.
[30]Miniotaitė, p. 94.
[31] Tomas Gomart, "Evrosoyuz i Rossiya: V poiskakh ravnovesiya mezhdu geopolitikoi i regionalizmom," *Russie.Nei.Visions* No. 10b, May 2006, available from
<http://www.ifri.org/files/Russie/gomart_WS_russe.pdf>
[32] Taras Kuzio, "Poland Plays Strategic Role in Ukraine's 'Orange Revolution'," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 1, Issue 144, December 10, 2004.

Lithuanian participation in the crisis related to the Orange Revolution made it possible for the two countries to present themselves as experts in the post–Soviet region and expect that their competence would be acknowledged by Brussels.

Polish–Lithuanian cooperation to create a "new" stable European neighborhood continues. Since 2004, the two countries have coordinated their foreign policy actions to support pro-democracy forces in Georgia, Moldova, Belarus and Ukraine. In 2004, Lithuania became part of an informal group of states (known as the E–11 Caucus) led by Poland that showed interest in the Eastern dimension of the European Union in general and EU–Ukraine relations in particular.[33] However, this group, as well as the proposed Eastern dimension which tried to help Ukraine and other former Soviet republics prepare for EU membership in the future, was criticized by other EU member states and analysts for introducing dividing lines between those countries that are within the EU and those that are not.[34]

Overall, the pressure exerted by Poland and Lithuania on the EU to try to get it to offer EU membership to Ukraine (to consolidate democratic reforms) did not bring the desired results. Tortured by enlargement fatigue and unwilling to strain its relations with Russia, the EU was reluctant to promise even the distant prospect of membership to Ukraine. Instead, it chose to deal with the "Ukrainian challenge" by including this post–Soviet state into a broader framework (ENP) which includes such unstable areas as the Middle East.

The Ukrainian case reveals what probably is one of the main weaknesses of the ENP: presenting a long list of "demands" (fourteen "priorities for action" in the EU/Ukraine Action Plan) and fulfilling very few of Ukraine's expectations in return.[35] Although the EU has continued to support reforms in Ukraine, the ENP does not offer the "magnet" of membership to inspire those reforms. The unending democratization pains experienced by Ukraine (as well as other post–Soviet states) pale in comparison with the on–going conflict in the Middle East. Given these enormous constraints, there is relatively little that small states such as Lithuania can do to help Ukraine within the EU's institutional framework.

Several of Lithuania's important foreign policy initiatives related to Ukraine were conducted outside of the EU framework. According to Linas Linkevičius, a former Defense Minister, in 2004 NATO (not the EU) became an "especially relevant" tool to pursue the goals of Lithuania's new foreign policy in the East.[36] Since then Lithuania has been committed to helping Ukraine to get into NATO, hoping that it would be easier to

[33] Michal Natorski, "Polish and Spanish Visions of the European Neighborhood: Competing or Complementary Interests for the EU Foreign Policy?" in *European Union and Its New Neighborhood: Different Countries, Common Interests*, edited by Šarūnas Liekis et al., Vilnius: Mykolas Romeris University, 2005, p. 87.

[34] Miniotaitė, p. 94.

[35] Karene E. Smith, p. 768. EU/Ukraine Action Plan is available from <http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/ukraine_enp_ap_final_en.pdf >

[36] Linas Linkevičius, "NATO raida ir jos suteikiamos galimybės Lietuvos užsienio ir saugumo politikos sklaidai," in *Lietuva Šiaurės Atlanto Sutarties Organizacijoje 2004–2006*, Vilnius: Aidai, 2006, p. 141.

do that than to get Ukraine into the EU. As early as June 2004, during a NATO summit meeting in Istanbul, Artūras Paulauskas, Lithuania's Acting President at the time, expressed support for Ukraine's membership in NATO.[37] Vilnius was the location of the first meeting between NATO foreign affairs ministers and Ukraine, which took place in May 2005. During this meeting, Ukraine started what was labeled as an "intensified dialogue" with NATO. Lithuania is currently helping Ukraine in its quest for NATO membership in the following areas: public relations strategies, the expansion of administrative capabilities, reform of its security apparatus, resource planning, and officer training.[38]

Initially the attempts by Lithuania's policy makers to draw Ukraine into Euro-Atlantic structures may have been based on the belief (inspired by the geopolitical narrative) that EU/NATO membership could prevent Ukraine from gravitating towards Russia in the future. As Andrius Kubilius, an MP of the Homeland Union party and former Prime Minister, has argued, gravitation towards Russia is the main obstacle to democratization in Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. Thus, if Lithuania is interested in having democratic neighbors, it should try to reduce Russia's influence in those countries.[39]

However, recent developments in Ukraine, such as the outburst of anti–NATO sentiment after the arrival of a US cargo ship in the Crimea in June 2006, and the lack of public support for NATO membership (some 55–60% of Ukrainians oppose NATO membership[40]) puts Ukraine's NATO membership as well as Lithuania's support for it into question. Right now it seems unlikely that Ukraine's elites will be able to convince the populace to view NATO membership as a genuine "return to the West" instead of a bad divorce with Russia. As Arkady Moshes has argued, the prospect of NATO membership without the promise of EU membership may in fact destabilize Ukraine: "If the perception arises that Ukraine can be admitted into the Euro–Atlantic *security* zone precisely in order to deny it entry into the European *prosperity* zone, frustration among the people will only grow."[41] Instead of trying to influence Ukraine's foreign policy choices, the Europeans should focus on "systemic internal transformation."[42] This is easier said than done. Nevertheless, low–key, un–politicized preparation for membership in NATO (although this membership may not be an option any time soon) may enable small steps to be made toward systemic transformation, especially in areas such as civil–military relations. Lithuania's technical support, such as officer training and reform of Ukraine's security apparatus, within the framework of intensified dialogue with NATO, may eventually contribute to this ambitious goal.

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[37]"A. Paulauskas: Lietuva remia NATO atvirų durų politiką," *Baltic News Service*, June 28, 2004.
[38] "Vilniuje—neoficialios aukšto lygio NATO ir Ukrainos konsultacijos," *Krašto Apsauga*, October 19–November 2, 2005, pp. 10–11.
[39]Andrius Kubilius, "Peržengus slenkstį," *Veidas*, May 6, 2004.
[40] Jan Maksymiuk, "US Navy Stopover Sparks Anti–NATO Protests," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, June 1, 2006.
[41] Arkady Moshes, "Making a Difference: Why and How Europe Should Increase Its Engagement in Ukraine," Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Briefing Paper No. 6, June 12, 2006, p. 5.
[42] Ibid.

Lithuania's initiatives toward Georgia are similar to its involvement in Ukraine. Since 2003 (the year of Rose Revolution), Lithuania has supported Georgia's westward orientation in general and its NATO membership in particular. To express this support, language about a "wide" and "inclusive" Europe has been used. The borders of "Europe" are defined not by geography, but by shared values. When addressing Georgia's parliament in November 2005, President Adamkus used the following rhetoric about Georgia's "returning to Europe":

> "Although Georgia has a long way to go, no one can prevent Georgia from returning to the family of European values. It is a matter of our enthusiasm, creativity, and activity to fulfill the vision of a broad Europe from the West to the East, in which the Black Sea region is a part of European security and economic structures." [43]

Adamkus went on to draw on history, arguing that Georgia could indeed be considered a "natural" part of Europe, and its belonging to the transatlantic area could indeed bring it back to its "normal" self—i.e., to the West. However, a plethora of current issues such as high levels of corruption, conflicts in Abkhazia and Ossetia, and slow progress in the reform of its military, make Georgia's NATO membership appear even less likely than Ukraine's. Consequently, Lithuania's actions go beyond NATO.

To help to build the rule of law in Georgia, Lithuania has come up with another well publicized foreign policy initiative—the EUJUST Themis mission in Georgia. This initiative was agreed upon in June 2004 and pursued within the framework of the EU's defense and security policy. It is presented by Lithuania's Foreign Affairs Ministry as the country's "input into European common foreign and security policy making." Judge Sylvie Pantz, the head of the mission, acknowledged the "intellectual debt" that her mission owes to similar reforms in former Communist countries, especially Lithuania.[44]

This mission consisted of sending eight legal experts from the EU (one from Lithuania and one from Latvia) to Georgia for one year. The goal of the mission was to advise the government of Georgia on criminal justice reforms according to EU standards. After the mission was over in July 2005, the Georgians were expected to pursue these reforms further, supported by EU funds and visits by EU representatives. The mission fell under EU defense and security policy, and it was hailed as a success story of how the EU can exercise its "soft power" in transforming democratizing countries.[45]

Given the small number of experts sent to Georgia and the relatively short period of time that they spent in the country, this mission did not have much of an effect on the ambitious project of reforming Georgia's legal system. Even after this mission, there are

[43] "Prezidento Valdo Adamkaus kreipimasis į Gruzijos parlamento narius," November 9, 2005, <http://www.president.lt/lt/news.full/6166>
[44] Ahto Lobjakas, "EU Set to End Successful 'Rule of Law' Mission," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, April 19, 2005.
[45] Ibid.

numerous reports of unfair arrests, rigged trials, and corrupt police in Georgia.[46] In the context of the ENP, however, what matters is the willingness of the EU to move away from merely listing desired outcomes or requirements to be met by would–be Europeans into actively participating in the messy process of democratization. In that sense, this mission did "add a new feature to EU external action,"[47] at least in terms of thinking about involvement in the post–Soviet sphere.

The reality is that Georgia, like Ukraine, expects much more in addition to a mission of eight experts and financial aid from the EU. Tbilisi tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to get more participation from the EU in its tense relations with Russia—specifically, on issues such as the "frozen conflicts" in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, energy, and Russia–Georgia border management. However, even careful and low–key conflict prevention initiatives by the EU in Georgia raise Russia's suspicions. According to Alexander Nikitin, Director of the Centre for Euro–Atlantic Security under the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Russian policy makers are wondering why "the EU is so interested in becoming a mediator in Moldova and the Caucasus. To Russia, neither of these crisis areas appears to pose a serious threat to European security."[48]

While the response of the EU and the US to the "frozen conflicts" has been muted, Russia has shown its support to Ossetia and Abkhazia by offering passports and declaring its determination to defend its citizens in those areas. Unsurprisingly, international initiatives that included Russia did not become popular in the region. "The Group of Friends of Georgia" is a case in point. This group, which included Germany, Britain, the US, and France was established in 1995. When Russia was allowed to join this group (which was renamed the "UN Secretary–General's Group of Friends of Georgia") with veto power, it lost its appeal and cohesiveness. The rapprochement between Germany and France, on the one hand, and Russia on the other, contributed to this change.

Ten years later, the Baltic states, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria founded a new group of Georgia's friends. Significantly, five of the six goals of this group were linked to the activities of the EU and NATO.[49] The group wants to support Georgia's domestic reforms, keep Georgia's problems on the transatlantic agenda, and help this democratizing country to address its "frozen conflicts."

Lithuania turned out to be one of the most active members of this group. It initiated the so–called "3+3" framework for cooperation between the three Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) and the three states of the southern Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan). The purpose of this framework is to promote domestic changes and

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[46] "Fighting Talk Casts a Summer Shadow," *Economist*, August 3, 2006.

[47] This was the evaluation of EUJUST Themis by Aron Buzogany, "Ex Oriente Lux–Ex Occidente Lex? Addressing State Failure in the European Neighborhood Policy Towards Georgia," in *European Union and Its New Neighborhood: Different Countries, Common Interests*, edited by Šarūnas Liekis et al., Vilnius: Mykolas Romeris University, 2005, p. 363.

[48] Alexander Nikitin, "Russian Perceptions and Approaches to Cooperation in ESDP," in *Russian Perceptions of the CFSP/ESDP*, available from <www.iss-eu.org/new/analysis/analy145.pdf>

[49] Vladimir Socor, "New Group of Georgia's Friends Founded," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Jamestown Foundation, February 7, 2005.

cooperation involving the civil societies of these six countries. But because of the on–going conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno–Karabakh and the conflicting attitudes which Georgia and Armenia have towards Russia, it is difficult to see how the 3+3 framework will help to bring stability to the region.

Similarly, it is questionable whether another regional self–help initiative supported by Lithuania—the GUAM bloc (which includes Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova)—will contribute to better relations among post–Soviet states, especially Russia. The proposed European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) gives only lukewarm support to regional organizations in the post–Soviet area, arguing that the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements "provide a basis for contractual relations," while in the Mediterranean region partnership agreements "provide a regional framework for cooperation."[50] As Karene E. Smith has pointed out, one reason which explains why regionalism in the post–Soviet space lacks the full support of the EU is "the risk of legitimatizing Russian dominance."[51] (This insight applies to regional arrangements that include Russia.) On the other hand, extending full EU support to regional organizations that do not include Russia defeats the purpose of supporting regional organizations that may foster Russian reconciliation with other former Soviet republics.

Despite the lack of European support, in 2006, GUAM became one of the most active regional institutions in the post–Soviet area. GUAM describes itself as a regional organization based on "common democratic values, free trade and [a] European orientation." President Adamkus attended GUAM's meetings in 2005 and 2006. During the last meeting in Kiev he declared that the "success of GUAM is Lithuania's success" because they both "share the same democratic values, believe in good neighborly relations and sincerely aspire to create prosperous societies."[52]

Given Russia's new assertiveness, it may be much more difficult for the Lithuanian government to show enthusiastic support for post–Soviet regional cooperation which excludes Russia in the future. At the same time, Russia's attempts to "protect" its citizens in territorial enclaves detached from Georgia and Moldova (Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Transnistria) coupled with trade embargoes on Georgian and Moldovan products tends to exacerbate anti–Russian sentiments in these two post–Soviet areas and make regional cooperation with Russia virtually impossible. Taking these factors into account, Lithuania has attempted to promote what it calls "informal" cooperation focused on civil society. The "3+3"framework as well as "The Community of Democratic Choice" initiative created by Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine and Georgia in 2005 are examples of such cooperation. "The Community of Democratic Choice" is based on "The Community of Democracies"—a US–backed institution put together in 1999 to support

[50] Commission of the European Communities, "Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council Laying down General Provisions Establishing a European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument," COM (2004) 628 final, Brussels, September 29, 2004.
[51] Karene E. Smith, p. 772.
[52] " 'Tik tarpusavio parama, kūrybiškumas ir siekimas bendrų tikslų gali duoti rezultatų,' - GUAM valstybių vadovų susitikime Kijeve sakė Prezidentas," May 23, 2006, <www.president.lt>

democratization.[53] This is a second example of "new" Europeans reviving regional organizations that were created by established democracies and trying to run them with little or no involvement from the "parents" of these organizations.

A recent meeting of "The Community of Democratic Choice" in Vilnius in May 2006 represents an attempt (albeit by and large unsuccessful) to get the US more actively involved in post–Soviet regional initiatives. The conference, entitled "Common Vision-Common Neighborhood," was organized by Poland and Lithuania. During this conference, three different approaches to the new European neighborhood were presented. Dick Cheney's speech was seen as representing a tougher line regarding Russia—a line favored by Lithuania's right wing political forces. Cheney accused Putin of a lack of democracy and scolded Russia for using oil and gas to intimidate its neighbors. The speech by Javier Solana reflected the EU's support for democracy in the new neighborhood, but also its unwillingness to promote democracy actively and aggressively. He argued that building institutions, improving legislation, and fighting corruption represented the "way forward" in the former Soviet republics. The lead should come from the "new democracies" (not from the EU). Solana mentioned "frozen conflicts" in the Caucasus several times, suggesting that stability, not regime change, is the main interest of the EU in the former Soviet region. Significantly, the "Declaration of the Intellectuals Forum" (this forum was part of the conference) stated that it was "no longer sufficient to give [the] political institutions and initiatives of the USA and the EU the prerogative of a final say … on all issues, including [the] aspirations and future visions of other European countries and regions." This declaration acknowledged that the mechanisms created by the EU and NATO may not be "perfect" for democratization in the new European neighborhood and asked for more initiatives encouraging the growth of civil society.[54]

Although Lithuanian analysts applauded Cheney for identifying the problems of the current Kremlin administration, hopes that the United States would be able to "stand up" to Russia died soon. Cheney's speech was meant to send a signal to Russia that the US does not like Russia's behavior in the other former Soviet republics. However, before long, it became clear that although US–Russian relations are cooling off, the US needs Russia's cooperation on other issues (such as non–proliferation) which are considered to be more important than problems in the post–Soviet area. Like the EU, the US can do little to influence Russia's behavior in the "near abroad."[55]

The recent deterioration of US–Russian relations and Russian–European relations suggests that Russia has indeed started to create its "own orbit" separate from the West. Within this "orbit," the other former Soviet republics, not its relations with "true" Europe or "strategic relations" with the US, are treated as a priority in foreign policy.[56] Under

[53] Aage Myhre, "The Community of Democratic Choice: A Modern Version of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth?," *Lithuania Today*, May 2006, p. 13.
[54] "Declaration of the Intellectuals Forum," Conference "Common Vision for Common Neighborhood," Vilnius, May 3, 2006, available from <http://www.vilniusconference2006.lt/sen/news.full/51>
[55] Brian Whitmore, "Russia: Expect no Showdowns at G8 Summit," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, July 14, 2006.
[56] Dmitri Trenin, "Russia Leaves the West," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2006, p. 92.

these circumstances, Lithuanian policy makers are probably right to focus on civil society initiatives, informal regional cooperation, and the less intrusive instruments offered by the ENP in the post–Soviet sphere.[57]

Lithuania's engagement in Belarus represents an attempt to strengthen civil society in Belarus without trying to directly influence its foreign policy orientation. In 2004, Vilnius became home to the European Humanitarian University which was pushed out of Minsk. Lithuanian–Belarus relations are fully consistent with the goals of the ENP regarding Belarus. Coupled with the 2006 Polish initiative to educate students from Belarus at Warsaw University, Lithuania's attempts at democratization are centered on the idea of creating a pro–democratic elite. The education of several hundred students each year is a long term strategy that may not yield tangible results any time soon: some students may simply never go back to Belarus. The actions of the Lithuanian and Polish representatives in the European parliament in 2005 fall into the same category. (These representatives successfully lobbied for funds to sponsor radio broadcasts to Belarus. However, it is still difficult to compete with Lukashenka's state propaganda apparatus.)

The goal of such initiatives is to help to make other post–Soviet republics, especially those that have already identified themselves as "part of the West," feel as non–member members of the transatlantic community. Some of these initiatives—especially the ones geared at strengthening civil society—and their final goal (democratization in the post–Soviet sphere) are supported not only by the US, but also by other European countries—even by what is called "old" Europe in Lithuania. As a matter of fact, Lithuania's efforts to support democracy in other former Soviet republics have already received recognition from France.[58] This positive reinforcement may help to erase the image of "old" untrustworthy Europe from recent Lithuanian memory. Thus, paradoxically, by going to the east—"back" to the former USSR—Lithuania could come closer to Western Europe. Such geographical twists would be a very useful outcome of Lithuania's new foreign policy—as long as this policy is pursued with evolving common European institutions in mind.

III. Conclusion: The Promises and Limits of Lithuania's New Foreign Policy

The analysis of the most visible aspects of Lithuania's new foreign policy initiatives suggests that Vilnius has experimented with different institutional tools in the other former Soviet republics. It has supported further NATO and EU expansion. It has pursued intense bilateral cooperation ("strategic partnership") with Poland. It has attempted to shape the ENP by encouraging the EU to become more engaged and by supporting regional cooperation in the post–Soviet sphere. It has tried to enlist the support of the weakening superpower, the United States. On one hand, the effectiveness of these initiatives has been severely limited by the EU's experience of "expansion

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[57] "Vilnius Conference '06 Common Vision for Common Neighborhood Joint Communiqué," May 4, 2006, available from <http://www.vilniusconference2006.lt/sen/news.full/54>

[58] In October 2005, Jacques Chirac applauded Lithuania's initiatives in Belarus. "Prancūzijos prezidentas ragina Lietuvą tapti ES balsu Baltarusijoje," October 7, 2005, <www.euro.lt/ivykiai>

fatigue" and the unstated desire to preserve the "status quo" ("stability") in the post–Soviet borderlands. On the other hand, the internal weaknesses of the aspiring post–Soviet Europeans themselves put significant limits on Lithuania's desire to consolidate democratic forces in the post–Soviet sphere. Given the current changes in the global security environment, Lithuania's future initiatives are likely to focus on slower and less visible techniques to promote democratization in the other former Soviet republics.

Conceptually, Lithuania's new foreign policy thinking represents an uneasy marriage of two schools of thought. On the one hand, given Lithuania's history and recent statehood, there has been an understandable attraction to the geopolitical paradigm. According to this way of thinking, Lithuania has been trapped in-between two spheres of influence (Western and Russian), and it should be interested in expanding the Western sphere of influence. On the other hand, a more optimistic way of thinking focuses on Lithuania's economic success and its ability to generate innovative ideas for regional cooperation. Although it is erroneous to assert that the geopolitical way of thinking has lost its salience, this analysis of Lithuania's initiatives in the post–Soviet sphere suggests that the country is using the region–building and soft power approaches favored by the EU.

The initiatives which Lithuania has undertaken in the post–Soviet sphere and which have been analyzed in this paper have not (and probably could not have) included Russia. In spite of this obvious exclusion, these initiatives do offer a means by which other post–Soviet states could achieve unofficial membership in the transatlantic area. In addition, in the case of Belarus, Lithuanian and Polish initiatives to create a new Belarusian elite may spur a wave of nationalism. If, as political science theorists suggest, nationalism and democracy come as a package during the initial stages of democratization, then this initiative may help to achieve regime change.

Vilnius' active international involvement is already having an impact on Lithuania's identity. Given Lithuania's desire to strengthen democracy abroad, it has become necessary to critically evaluate its own democracy and identify its deficiencies. The easternization of foreign policy has already raised questions about whether the country is capable of pursuing integration into Western structures and getting engaged in the new European neighborhood at the same time. To defend easternization, Lithuanian policy makers are starting to use terms such as "pragmaticism" and "economic interest" instead of "spheres of influence." This may signal an important change in Lithuania's strategic vocabulary.

Although the analysis of Lithuania's foreign policy initiatives that has been presented in this article suggests that the country has repeatedly supported the expansion of transatlantic organizations into the post-Soviet sphere and followed Poland's lead in promoting Ukraine's NATO and EU membership, it is unfair to conclude that these initiatives introduced new dividing lines in the European security landscape. Russia's retreat into its own "orbit" and its desire to create its own "sovereign democracy" were probably strengthened by certain actions in the West, such as the repeated treatment of Russia as a special case. Of course, Russia's divorce from the West would have taken place even without Lithuania's foreign policy initiatives. The western orientation of

Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia was primarily the result of Russia's behavior and local elites, not Lithuania's initiatives.

Furthermore, these initiatives did not radically alter the ENP. Given the instability in the Middle East, it is more than likely that the policy will have to give priority to that more unstable neighborhood, not the former Soviet republics. However, the Polish–Lithuanian initiatives (especially in the case of Ukraine) did encourage the EU to confront the dilemma of where its final borders should be and which criteria should determine these borders. In a changing security environment, it is necessary to address these questions if the EU is preparing to become a more effective and united international actor. In the end, this may be one of the most important contributions of Lithuania and other post–Communist states to new Europe.