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## Lithuanian New Foreign Policy (2004–2009)

**Zarys treści:** W artykule została zawarta charakterystyka polityki zagranicznej Litwy w latach 2004–2009, czyli w okresie drugiej kadencji prezydenckiej Valdas Adamkusa. Litewskie państwo realizowało wówczas koncepcję nazwaną nową polityką zagraniczną. Polegała ona na szukaniu wsparcia USA oraz zacieśnianiu współpracy z Polską. Celem było odegranie przez Litwę roli regionalnego centrum, oddziałującego politycznie na państwa byłego ZSRR.

**Outline of content:** The article describes Lithuania's foreign policy in the years 2004–2009, i.e. during the second term of office of President Valdas Adamkus. The Lithuanian state was then implementing a concept called "new foreign policy". It consisted in seeking support in the USA and strengthening co-operation with Poland. Its objective for Lithuania was to play the role of a regional centre, politically impacting upon the states of the former USSR.

**Słowa kluczowe:** polityka zagraniczna Litwy, stosunki litewsko-polskie, stosunki litewsko-rosyjskie, Rosja, Litwa, George W. Bush, Valdas Adamkus

**Keywords:** Lithuanian foreign policy, Lithuanian-Polish relations, Russia, Lithuania, George W. Bush, Valdas Adamkus

Integration with the Western world was the priority of Lithuania's foreign policy after regaining independence in 1991.<sup>1</sup> It was almost universally recognized that only NATO and European Union membership would guarantee the Lithuanian state security and civilizational development. The main opponent of the extension of the North Atlantic Treaty by the Baltic States was Russia. At the turn of the twenty first century, Vilnius was trying very hard to win the favour of Washington. This was reflected, among others, in the sales of the oil refinery in Mažeikiai to the American concern Williams International (1999), and then in the unconditional support of the so-called War on Terror, proclaimed by the US President

<sup>1</sup> Cf. K. Buchowski, *Polityka zagraniczna Litwy 1990–2012. Główne kierunki i uwarunkowania*, Białystok, 2013.

George W. Bush. At that time, Lithuania attributed a special role to its relations with Poland, also known as strategic partnership. Poland unequivocally supported Lithuania's Euro-Atlantic aspirations. At the end of 2002, the decision on the enlargement of NATO by the Baltic States, crucial for Lithuania, was eventually made. Soon, the accession negotiations with the EU were also successfully finalized.

These international successes were due to a group of political leaders, including the leader of Sajudis, Vytautas Landsbergis, and Algirdas Brazauskas, the President (1993–1998) and the Prime Minister of Lithuania (2001–2006). Undoubtedly, Valdas Adamkus, a successor to Brazauskas as president, also deserves the credit. Valdas Adamkus was born in 1926 and, at the end of the Second World War, he went to Germany and then to the USA. At the time of emigration, he was actively engaged in the life of the Lithuanian diaspora. Upon obtaining American citizenship, he became an activist of the Republican Party and, in the 1970s, an official in the federal administration. In the 1990s, he returned to his homeland, where he systematically built his political position. In 1998, he won the presidential election. The Constitution of Lithuania granted the head of state relatively broad, although only generally defined, powers in the field of foreign policy.<sup>2</sup> Adamkus used them to force through a rapprochement of Lithuania with the West, looking for particular support from across the Atlantic.

The presidential term ended at the beginning of 2003. Unquestionable achievements in foreign policy allowed Adamkus to think optimistically about re-election. However, victory fell to Rolandas Paksas, formerly the mayor of Vilnius and twice the prime minister. His success was mainly due to the populist tones of his election campaign. Under the new president's rule, the Lithuanians were preparing to celebrate their country's membership in NATO and the EU. Formal accession was to take place in the first months of 2004. However, the turn of 2003 and 2004 brought about a political scandal that undermined the international position of the state. At the end of October 2003, intelligence services informed about connections between the president's close associates and the Russian mafia. Unclear links with the Kremlin were also suggested. The parliamentary inquiry confirmed that Paksas had partially funded his presidential campaign from the funds of a Russian entrepreneur, who was later granted Lithuanian citizenship in violation of law.

<sup>2</sup> *Lietuvos Respublikos Konstitucija*, <http://www3.lrs.lt/home/Konstitucija/Konstitucija.htm#NESI-JUNGIMO> (accessed: 7 September 2016); A. Lukošaitis, "Prezidentas Lietuvos politinėje sistemoje: vietos ir galio paieškos", *Politologija*, 1998, no. 2, pp. 38–53; E. Nekrašas, "Užsienio politikos mechanizmas ir jo tobulinimo būdai", *Politologija*, 1996, no. 8, pp. 115–122; V. Pugačiauskas, "Lithuania's semi-Presidential Model: Prospects for the Stability of the Inter-Institutional Relations", *Lithuanian Political Science Yearbook*, 2002 (Vilnius, 2003), pp. 11–21; W. Kręcisz, "Republika Litewska", in: *Ustroje państw współczesnych*, vol. 2, ed. E. Gdulewicz, Lublin, 2002, pp. 102–134; J. Zieliński, "Prezydent Republiki Litewskiej", in: *Prezydent w państwach współczesnych*, ed. J. Osiński, Warszawa, 2009, pp. 357–400; B. Jagusiak, *Systemy polityczne krajów nadbałtyckich*, Warszawa, 2013, pp. 36–39; T. Godlewski, "Udział prezydenta Republiki Litewskiej w ustawodawstwie", *Przegląd Prawa Konstytucyjnego*, 2014, no. 3, pp. 19–40.

At the beginning of 2004, the list of charges was extended and the president was called to resign. Paksas did not intend to give up without a fight, however, after the ruling of the Constitutional Court, which recognized the merits of the accusations, the parliament (*Seimas*) finally implemented the impeachment procedure in early April 2004. Artūras Paulauskas, the speaker of the parliament, took over the duties of the head of state. The date of the new presidential election was set for June 2004.<sup>3</sup>

At the end of these dramatic events, Lithuania officially became a member of NATO (29 March 2004) and the European Union (1 May). The then objective of its foreign policy was thus achieved. In the opinion of the political elites, the Lithuanian state faced new challenges as part of the West. Under these particular circumstances, in spring 2004, a draft doctrine called *new foreign policy* (*naujoji užsienio politika*) was presented.

The fundamental assumptions of the programme stemmed from the contemporary international situation. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States launched its intervention in Afghanistan and then in Iraq. Especially in the latter case, Washington expected solidarity from European states. However, part of its traditional allies refused to support the Americans. The American administration was infuriated and suggested a change of policy towards Europe. Donald Rumsfeld, the Secretary of Defence, even stated that Germany and France, objecting to the war in Iraq, represented “old Europe”. He opposed it with a “new” one, represented by the Central European states entering NATO and favouring the American vision. According to Rumsfeld, the “centre of gravity” of Washington’s interest in Europe had clearly shifted to the east. Shortly thereafter, American administration took steps which were interpreted in the Central European capitals as the establishment of a strategic partnership between the selected countries of the region and the USA. The American enhancement of their status concerned particularly Poland, which from the outset almost unconditionally supported Bush’s policy. Warsaw recognized that it was “among the constructors of a better world”, so it should participate in the process of introducing and consolidating “Western values” wherever they were deficient. It was believed that the “mature strategic partnership” between Poland and the United States guaranteed regional security and the success of the adopted strategy. As it turned out later, Washington treated their declarations vis-à-vis Poland purely instrumentally, but officially Warsaw was not spared warm words or assurances of solidarity. The Polish authorities interpreted the American position primarily as consent to an increased, almost missionary activity in the post-Soviet area. The long-term goal was the broadly understood and long-term westernization of the region, i.e. drawing the former Soviet republics into the circle of Western civilization and the political influence of the West. Russia’s dissatisfaction and possible counteraction were to be balanced by strong American support.

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<sup>3</sup> For more on the presidential crisis, cf. R. Lopata, A. Matonis, *Prezidento suktukas*, Vilnius, 2004.

Some Lithuanian experts and politicians recognized that the new strategy of Washington and the American-Polish alliance could mean a unique opportunity for Lithuania. Vilnius still considered Russia the greatest threat to Lithuania's security. Vladimir Putin's presidency once again strengthened Russian imperial tendencies. Lithuania's accession to NATO and the European Union provided an opportunity to stabilize relations with Russia. However, only the permanent implementation of "Western values" in such countries as Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia itself could definitively dispel the danger looming in the east. The only guarantee of success of this intention was a stronger commitment of the US to the problems of Central and Eastern Europe. It was, therefore, concluded that Vilnius should tighten its co-operation with Washington in the direction the Americans desired. However, the necessary condition was the increased co-operation with Poland, which ranked high across the Atlantic. According to the presented calculations, Lithuanian-Polish partnership should be revived, which would make Lithuania one of the regional leaders of the Western civilizational mission. Lithuania could offer primarily its own experience gained on the path to democracy and free market economy. It was intended to share it with interested societies wishing to achieve similar success. Signals from Washington and Warsaw were interpreted as support for Lithuanian aspirations and willingness to set up "special relations" with Vilnius.<sup>4</sup>

Preparations of a new strategy for Lithuanian diplomacy began in 2002, inspired by President Adamkus. However, the work was finalized only after Paksas, who had a bad press in Washington, had been removed from power. The Lithuanian elites were keen to cover over the bad impression as soon as possible and move the country out of isolation in the wake of the presidential crisis. Already on May 1, 2004, the Seimas adopted the resolution on the directions of foreign policy after Lithuania's accession to NATO and the European Union. Among others, it declared willingness to play an active role in the international arena by exploiting the opportunities created by the country's membership in the Euro-Atlantic structures (the so-called active membership policy). Lithuania's

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<sup>4</sup> V. Ušackas, "Strengthening the US-Lithuania Partnership: Lithuanian Perspective", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2003, no. 11–12; E. Nekrašas, R. Bružilas, "Transatlantic Relations: Lithuanian Perspective", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2003, no. 11–12; E. Nekrašas, "Lithuanian Foreign Policy: Concepts, Achievements and Predicaments", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2004, no. 13–14, pp. 29–35; G. Miniotaitė, "Search for Identity in Modern Foreign Policy of Lithuania: between the Northern and Eastern Dimensions?", *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review*, 2004 (Vilnius, 2005), pp. 79–81; id., "Europos normatyvinė galia" ir Lietuvos užsienio politika", *Politologija*, 2006, no. 3, pp. 3–19; L. Jonavičius, "Geopolitical Projections of New Lithuanian Foreign Policy", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2006, no. 17, pp. 17–23 and 28; G. Vaščenkaitė, "The Discrepancy of Lithuanian Foreign Policy: 'Normative' Deeds for the 'Realpolitik' Needs?", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2011, no. 25, pp. 35–37.

participation in the war on terror was to be maintained. The resolution also mentioned the desire to develop co-operation with countries located to the east of the EU border.<sup>5</sup>

The doctrine of the *new foreign policy* was formally presented in May 2004. Its main author was Antanas Valionis, since 2000 the minister of foreign affairs in successive governments, a former doctoral student of the University of Warsaw, and also the ambassador of Lithuania to Poland. The circles surrounding Valdas Adamkus as well as Artūras Paulauskas, the speaker of the Seimas, temporarily also performing the duties of the head of state, also played an important role in the development of the project. It was Paulauskas who presented the result in his speech at the University of Vilnius on 24 May 2004.<sup>6</sup> The speaker emphasized that, under the given international conditions, Lithuania could not afford passive foreign policy. Only owing to an active attitude would it gain influence on the events in the world that affected the future of the homeland. Paulauskas announced that Vilnius wished to fully participate in the privileges and obligations resulting from Lithuania's accession to NATO and the European Union. He declared further participation in NATO's anti-terrorism activities, as well as the desire to strengthen the Euro-Atlantic alliance. The speaker of the Seimas presented a vision of Lithuania as a country which "through the quality of its EU and NATO membership" and good neighbourly policy would become a regional leader. In co-operation with other countries in the region, based on the strategic partnership with Poland, the Vilnius centre would then play the role of a generator of new political initiatives. Lithuania's aim was also to gain influence on the European Union's policy towards the post-Soviet East. Paulauskas expressed his special interest in the development of European co-operation with Kaliningrad Oblast. Vilnius would willingly mediate not only in relations with Russian Kaliningrad, but also in contacts with Belarus. The result should be to make Belarus "a predictable, democratic and independent European state". According to Paulauskas, Ukraine should also be an "inseparable part of the region, the European Union and NATO". The speaker declared support for the reform efforts undertaken by Kiev on the road towards Euro-Atlantic integration. The address of the speaker of the Lithuanian Seimas also included a declaration of the strengthening of co-operation with the other Baltic states. For Latvia and Estonia, as well as for the Nordic states, Lithuania intended to play the role of a bridge facilitating contacts with the Central European and Black Sea states.

While the echoes of Paulauskas's speech could still be heard, in June 2004 presidential election was held in Lithuania, the result of which, theoretically, could

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<sup>5</sup> Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas. Rezolucija "Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos užsienio politikos krypčių Lietuvai tapus visateise NATO nare ir Europos Sąjungos nare, 1 May 2004, [http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc\\_l?p\\_id=232592](http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=232592) (accessed: 8 September 2016).

<sup>6</sup> Laikinojo Prezidento A. Paulausko kalba Vilniaus universitete "Naujoji Lietuvos užsienio politika", 24 May 2004, [www3.lrs.lt/docs2/QTCQWRPZ.DOC](http://www3.lrs.lt/docs2/QTCQWRPZ.DOC) (accessed: 8 September 2016).

have questioned the *new foreign policy*.<sup>7</sup> Eventually, the former president, Valdas Adamkus, won in the second round. The result of the election was positively accepted in the world and definitively ended the period of political crisis. Adamkus made it clear that he fully endorsed the vision presented by Paulauskas. It was also no secret that the president, still before taking up the office for the second time, was the inspirer and patron of the concept. The period of its implementation coincided with Adamkus's second term of office (2004–2009). The president was the *spiritus movens* of the undertaking, a symbol, implementer and defender of the strategy adopted by Lithuanian diplomacy. In the second half of his term of office, when the chosen direction became subject to ever-sharper criticism, the president guaranteed its continuation, independently of the changing government teams or political circumstances. In mid-July 2004, shortly after re-assuming office, President Adamkus, in his speech to the heads of diplomatic missions accredited to Vilnius, reaffirmed his will to pursue active international policy based on Euro-Atlantic structures, the strategic partnership with Poland, and close co-operation with Ukraine. Lithuania was to strive to expand democracy in the East and play the role of a “centre of gravity”, using its central geographic location and own experience. Belarus, Moldova and the Transcaucasian states were the main addressees of these endeavours. Adamkus also mentioned the need to preserve good neighbourly relations with Russia. However, as was apparent from the context, Lithuania was not interested in keeping them at all costs.<sup>8</sup>

Lithuania was still awaiting the general election in autumn 2004. Just before it, the main political parties decided to conclude an agreement on the main objectives of foreign policy in the years 2004–2008. The implementation of the objectives set out in the concept of *new foreign policy* was declared, regardless of any possible changes to the line-up of political parties in the parliament.<sup>9</sup> Eventually, after the general election, power remained in the hands of the current centre-left coalition. Algirdas Brazauskas was re-elected Prime Minister, with Antanas Valionis as minister of foreign affairs, and Artūras Paulauskas as speaker of the Seimas. In November, in its special resolution, the newly elected Seimas confirmed its support for the direction of the efforts made by the government and the president to increase the international prestige of Lithuania.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The first round of the presidential election on 13 June 2004 was held together with the first elections to the European Parliament in Lithuania.

<sup>8</sup> V. Adamkus, “Lithuania as a Centre of Regional Cooperation”, *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2004, no. 13–14, pp. 17–20; id., *Paskutinė kadencija*, Vilnius, 2011, pp. 89–90.

<sup>9</sup> “Agreement Between Political Parties of the Republic of Lithuania of the Main Foreign Goals and Objectives of Lithuania for 2004–2008”, *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2004, no. 13–14, pp. 106–112.

<sup>10</sup> *Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas. Rezolucija “Dėl valstybės užsienio politikos krypčių tęstinumo”*, 16 November 2004, [http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc\\_l?p\\_id=245450](http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=245450) (accessed: 8 September 2016).



The first note of the *new foreign policy* was the participation of President Adamkus in the overcoming of the crisis in Ukraine at the turn of 2004 and 2005, known as the Orange Revolution. The immediate cause of the events was the abuse during the second round of the presidential election. The opposition leaders centred around the defeated candidate, Viktor Yushchenko, demanded that the election should be repeated. In December 2004, demonstrations of many thousands began in Kiev, to which the authorities reacted by introducing a state of emergency. There was a sudden increase in tension. Russia demonstrated support for the victor, Viktor Yanukovich, while most Western countries appealed for a new election. The outgoing Ukrainian president, Leonid Kuchma, asked the presidents of Poland and Lithuania, Aleksander Kwaśniewski and Valdas Adamkus, for mediation between the conflicting parties. Finally, Yushchenko won in the repeated second round of the election. Still during the Ukrainian crisis, on Adamkus's initiative, an international conference of experts was held in Vilnius in December 2004, who unequivocally opted to draw Ukraine and other post-Soviet states into the orbit of civilizational or political influence of the West. At that time, the Lithuanian president expressed his conviction that the Orange Revolution would have repercussions throughout the entire region. It should be the key to the process of Russia's democratization and lead to similar trends in Moldova, Georgia and Belarus. Creating the conditions necessary for this victory was to be the main message of Lithuanian Eastern policy from then on.<sup>11</sup>

The success of mediation in Kiev was a great prestige success of Lithuanian diplomacy. However, Prime Minister Brazauskas criticised the initiative. The head of the government almost ostentatiously distanced himself from the *new foreign policy*. Both the prime minister and some members of the ruling coalition often suggested that they did not like the excessively confrontational nature of the relations with Russia, as well as the ever-increasing activity of the president, his "stirring up" in politics. In addition, dissatisfaction in the government coalition was prompted by the demands for a significant increase in MFA spending. It was planned to increase the number of diplomatic staff in partner countries (e.g. in Poland) and to invest in new offices of diplomatic missions.<sup>12</sup>

The good co-operation between the president and the Minister Antanas Valionis was fundamental for the planned diplomatic offensive. The position of the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the government seemed secure owing to the unequivocal support of the presidential palace. Adamkus highly valued the

<sup>11</sup> Adamkus: "oranžinė revoliucija" palies visą Rytų Europą, 30 December 2004, <http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/world/adamkus-oranzine-revoliucija-palies-visa-rytu-europa.d?id=5739942> (accessed: 9 September 2016); R. Lopata, L. Bieliniš, V. Sirutavičius, I. Stanytė-Toločkienė, *Lietuvos užsienio politikos rytų kryptis. Santykių su Rusijos Federacijos Kaliningrado sritimi, Baltarusija ir Ukraina perspektyva*, Vilnius 2007, pp. 138–139.

<sup>12</sup> A. Bačiulis, "Prezidentas tapo 'didžiojuoju stabilizatoriumi'", *Veidas*, 2006, no. 30; J. Kučinskaitė, "Netekę pasitikėjimo pareigūnai skiriami ambasadoriais", *Veidas*, 2006, no. 39.

competences and ideas of the head of diplomacy.<sup>13</sup> Unexpectedly, in early 2005, *Atgimimas* weekly reported that, still under the Soviet rule, the minister was a KGB reserve officer. The lustration scandal undermined Valionis's credibility. Voices were raised in the press according to which the scandal was a Russian provocation, since Moscow was keen to compromise the inconvenient member of the Lithuanian government. Finally, in early 2006, the minister resigned. The political turmoil around the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs coincided with the beginning of a serious crisis in the governing coalition. In mid-2006, the government resigned in an atmosphere of scandal, and Brazauskas announced the definitive end of his political career. It was with great difficulty that another centre-left coalition was created in the Seimas. Brazauskas's associate, Gediminas Kirkilas, became Prime Minister. Petras Vaitiekūnas, a professional diplomat, until then an ambassador to Belarus, became the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The weakness of the ruling system favoured the further strengthening of the president's position in political life. The heads of the government and diplomacy unanimously declared their close co-operation with Valdas Adamkus and the continuation of the foreign policy advocated by him.<sup>14</sup>

In the principles of the *new foreign policy*, the relations with Warsaw were defined as vital. It also meant the recognition of Poland as the leader of Central and Eastern Europe (invested with this role by the USA) and the promoter of the Baltic States. In this arrangement, Vilnius reserved the function of the most important collaborator of Warsaw.<sup>15</sup> Relations with Poland were important especially in the Russian context. Russia unambiguously made it clear that it recognized the Baltic region as part of the post-Soviet area dependent on it. This did not change even after the accession of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia to NATO and the EU. In order to regain control, the Kremlin used the method of exerting ruthless economic pressure. The Baltic states were still almost entirely dependent on Russian energy resources. In the case of Lithuania, the prospect of its dependence on importing electricity from Russia was especially threatening. The only major producer and exporter of energy in the entire region was the Lithuanian nuclear power plant in Ignalina, which Vilnius had undertaken to close down in the EU accession treaty. Lithuania, therefore, faced the need for increased energy purchases from outside, mainly from Kaliningrad Oblast. For security reasons, it was desirable to look for suppliers from the West. However, the Baltic states still belonged to the common power system of the former USSR and did not have a connection with the UCTE (*Union for the Coordination of Transmission of Electricity*) system operating in the European Union. The only solution was the construction of the so-called power

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<sup>13</sup> V. Adamkus, *Paskutinė kadencija*, pp. 145 and 318.

<sup>14</sup> A. Bačiulis, "Tylus darbininkas", *Veidas*, 2006, no. 21; V. Stasytė, "Premjero postas Kirkilui augina sparnus", *Lietuvos Žinios*, 31 July 2006.

<sup>15</sup> Miniotaite, *Search for Identity*, p. 83.



bridges with the West. Due to geographical conditions, it was most advantageous to obtain a connection with Poland, which had synchronized its system with the UCTE already in the mid-1990s.<sup>16</sup>

Ensuring energy security based on Poland became one of Lithuania's priorities. However, despite the very good personal relations between the Presidents Adamkus and Kwaśniewski, the Polish side initially treated the idea of expanding co-operation with Lithuania with reserve. The causes included, among others, Russia's very sharp reaction to Poland's involvement in Ukraine and the resistance of Polish business circles to the construction of an energy link with the East.<sup>17</sup> Political changes in Poland came in aid of the Lithuanian aspirations. In September 2005, the Polish general election was won by right-wing parties. The strongest party was Prawo i Sprawiedliwość [Law and Justice] (PiS), led by the brothers Jarosław and Lech Kaczyński. Only a few weeks later, Lech Kaczyński won the presidential election. Poland quickly made it clear that it was interested in the strengthening of relations with Lithuania.<sup>18</sup> Using Washington's implied blessing, Warsaw was more and more boldly challenging Moscow, intending to drive Russian influence away from Eastern Europe. Thus, the relations with Lithuania were included in the priorities of Polish Eastern policy. The involvement of Poland also increased throughout the entire Baltic Sea region.

The purchase of the refinery in Mažeikiai by Polski Koncern Naftowy [Polish Oil Concern] ORLEN (PKN Orlen) became a touchstone and the most important manifestation (and, in the opinion of supporters, a real jewel) of Lithuanian-Polish political co-operation. In 2002, Williams International sold its shares in the Lithuanian company to the Russian Yukos, led by Mikhail Khodorkovsky. However, after Khodorkovsky's arrest at the Kremlin's order (in 2003), Yukos was in serious trouble. As a result, the concern was forced to sell Mažeikiai's shares. The Lithuanian government enjoyed the right of pre-emption, which they intended to use while putting the refinery for sale again. The authorities in Vilnius once again faced the dilemma of choosing the investor. Several companies, including PKN Orlen, had launched their bids, but initially the Polish company was not seriously considered, as it did not have its own oil deposits. The Russian authorities, however, spared no effort to convince the Lithuanians to sell Mažeikiai to the Lukoil concern. On the other hand, President Adamkus opposed the Russian bid for political reasons.

At the turn of 2005 and 2006, the new Polish authorities became interested in purchasing Mažeikiai by PKN Orlen. The business became a matter of talks,

<sup>16</sup> J. Neverovic, "Bezpieczeństwo energetyczne Litwy w świetle współpracy litewsko-polskiej w dziedzinie elektroenergetyki", in: *Państwa bałtyckie i Europy Wschodniej. Reakcja na światowy kryzys gospodarczy i regionalny kryzys gazowy*, eds. K. Falkowski and E. Teichmann, Warszawa, 2010, p. 257.

<sup>17</sup> Adamkus, *Paskutinė kadencija*, p. 379.

<sup>18</sup> B. Vyšniauskaitė, "Svečias jautėsi kaip name", *Lietuvos Rytas*, 15 March 2006; "Lietuvos viešėjo L. Kaczyński", *Veidas*, 2006, no. 11.

among others, during the visit of President Lech Kaczyński to Vilnius in March 2006. The Polish side made it clear that a possible transaction would not only be of business nature. It was primarily about thwarting Russia's plans to dominate the Baltic oil market. The entry of PKN Orlen into Lithuania was an element of the strategy of driving Russian influence away from Eastern Europe. Kaczyński's idea gained the recognition of President Adamkus and of some Lithuanian politicians. The tough negotiations between Yukos, the Lithuanian government, and PKN Orlen, backed by the Polish government, lasted for several months. In mid-May 2006, a preliminary agreement to sell the majority of shares of the Mažeikiai refinery to PKN Orlen was signed. The transaction was formally finalized by the end of the year. Soon, however, the Russians notified about a breakdown of the northern section of the *Druzhba* pipeline, which transported oil to the refinery. It was widely suspected that the breakdown was merely an excuse for the Kremlin to take revenge for the unfavourable final of their efforts to purchase Mažeikiai.<sup>19</sup>

Due to the importance of mutual relations, the Lithuanians closely followed the political situation in Poland. In autumn 2007, there was another political crisis there, which resulted in a snap general election. In October, Platforma Obywatelska [the Civic Platform] (PO) won the vote. The winning party signalled the need to ease the hitherto hard policy against Russia. However, as early as in November 2007, the new Polish Prime Minister, Donald Tusk, traditionally paid his first foreign visit to the Lithuanian capital, where he declared that Lithuania would remain a strategic partner of his country.<sup>20</sup>

Under the *new foreign policy*, Lithuania actively supported pro-Western and reformist forces primarily in Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, and Belarus. Vilnius also attempted to influence the eastern dimension of the European Union's neighbourhood policy and NATO's attitude towards Russia and Eastern Europe. Lithuanian diplomacy was very active in this respect.<sup>21</sup> As early as in April 2005, President Adamkus actively participated in the Chisinau Summit of the GUAM states (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova, and also, temporarily, Uzbekistan),

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<sup>19</sup> After a couple of years, the speculations were confirmed in the messages revealed by the Wikileaks portal, *Wikileaks: to Sieczin wstrzymał dostawy do Możejek*, 19 January 2011, <https://www.forbes.pl/wiadomosci/wikileaks-sieczin-wstrzymal-dostawy-do-mozejek/hm1czsf> (accessed: 15 November 2016).

<sup>20</sup> L. Kasčiūnas, "Lenkiškas galvošukis Lietuvai", *Veidas*, 2007, no. 37; J. Komaras, "Lenkijos premjero D. Tusko diplomatija: Vilnius sostinė No. 1", *Lietuvos Rytas*, 30 November 2007. At the beginning of 2008, Ministers of Economy of the Baltic States and Poland signed a declaration on the intention to build a joint nuclear power plant, while Lithuania and Poland concluded an agreement on the construction of an energy bridge.

<sup>21</sup> V. Adamkus, "Black Sea Vision", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2005, no. 15–16, pp. 7–11; "Joint Statement by the Heads of State of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Lithuania, Moldova, Romania and Ukraine – Building Democracy from the Baltic to the Black Sea, 22 April 2005", *ibid.*, pp. 189–191; V. Cieminytė, "Lithuania: Policy of active membership", *Baltic Security & Defence Review*, 2005, no. 8, pp. 209–213.

during which he encouraged to strengthen the ties with the European Union, the United States and NATO. In August of that year, Adamkus and Kwaśniewski took part in a meeting with the Presidents of Ukraine and Georgia in Crimea. Inspired by Poland and Lithuania, the leaders of Georgia and Ukraine initiated an informal association of states called the Community of Democratic Choice (CDC). In December 2005, a summit of the new organization was organized in Kyiv with the participation of Lithuania, and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe were invited to take part in it. Apart from the founding members, the Baltic States, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania and Slovenia also acceded to it. Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, the USA, as well as the European Union and the OSCE adopted the status of observers. According to the declaration, the main task of the CDC was to promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law.<sup>22</sup>

At the beginning of May 2006, the *Joint Vision of Common Neighbourhood* conference was organized in Vilnius together with the CDC summit. The meeting was co-hosted by Valdas Adamkus and Lech Kaczyński, the new president of Poland. It was also attended by Richard Cheney, Vice-President of the United States, who, in his speech, fiercely criticized Russia's policy, accusing it, among others, of using energy resources to blackmail Eastern European countries. The American politician praised the countries of the region for their integration efforts and progress in the strengthening of democracy. According to Cheney, the founding of the CDC provided a serious alternative to the Commonwealth of Independent States. At the conference, Valdas Adamkus presented the idea of creating the European Democracy Fund, promoting new initiatives.<sup>23</sup>

In 2007, Lithuanian diplomacy in co-operation with its Polish counterpart became involved in the organization of international summits on the energy security of Central and Eastern Europe. In particular, efforts were made to find new suppliers of crude oil and natural gas, and the possibilities of their transportation.<sup>24</sup> In October 2007, another energy summit devoted to the project of constructing a pipeline bypassing Russia was organized in Vilnius. Its result, achieved with the significant participation of Lithuanian diplomacy, was the conclusion of a co-operation agreement in the energy sector between Azerbaijan, Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine.<sup>25</sup> However, its basic objective of becoming permanently independent of Russia in terms of natural resources was not achieved.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned initiatives, Lithuania was attempting to maintain the best possible bilateral relations, especially with Ukraine. Although in 2006 pro-Russian Viktor Yanukovich returned to the position of prime minister

<sup>22</sup> "Lietuvos vadovas kviečia suvienyti Europą", *Lietuvos Žinios*, 3 December 2005.

<sup>23</sup> M. Drunga, "Vilniaus konferencijos atgarsiai pasaulio žiniasklaidoje", *Aikračiai*, 2006, no. 6.

<sup>24</sup> E. Grižibauskienė, "Naujas naftos koridorius aplenks Rusiją", *Veidas*, 2007, no. 20.

<sup>25</sup> P. Žielys, *Lietuvos Rytų politika: 2007 metų laimėjimai* (II), <http://www.geopolitika.lt/index.php?artc=2314> (accessed: 10 September 2016).

in Kiev, and the leaders of the recent Orange Revolution had become mired in mutual accusations, Lithuanian diplomacy still recognized President Viktor Yushchenko as the guarantor of the pro-Western direction. President Adamkus visited Kiev several times. In November 2006, a declaration was signed in which Lithuania pledged to support Ukraine in its efforts to become a member of the EU, and in its rapprochement with NATO.<sup>26</sup> In August 2006 and April 2007, the Lithuanian Prime Minister Gediminas Kirkilas visited the Ukrainian capital. The pretext was the signature of co-operation agreements between the ministries of defence and home affairs, and the agreement on fighting terrorism. Unofficially, however, it was about winning Kiev for the project of constructing a new nuclear power plant at the Baltic Sea. Unsuccessfully, Kirkilas also offered Lithuanian mediation in the conflict between Yushchenko and Yanukovych.<sup>27</sup> In May 2008, during Viktor Yushchenko's visit to Lithuania, the willingness to maintain the Lithuanian-Ukrainian strategic partnership was declared.

An equally important addressee of the *new foreign policy* was neighbouring Belarus, but in this case the context was much more complex. Lithuania traditionally sought to maintain good relations, among others, due to the close economic ties between the two countries. For example: a serious source of Lithuanian income was the charges for Belarusian transit and the use of the port in Klaipėda. In 2005, mutual relations were not spoiled even by the relocation of the seat of the European Humanities University from the Belarussian to the Lithuanian capital. The EU-funded university decided to move to Vilnius because of the restrictions on didactic and scientific activity imposed by the Belarusian authorities.<sup>28</sup> Before the presidential election in Belarus in 2006, Valdas Adamkus openly supported Aleksandr Milinkevich, the candidate of the anti-Lukashenko opposition. Although according to official data the election was won by Lukashenko, the EU considered it to have been rigged and announced that economic sanctions would be imposed on Minsk. As for the practices used under the *new foreign policy*, Lithuania's reaction was markedly restrained. The Lithuanian Seimas adopted a resolution against the Belarusian electoral fraud, but nearly half of its members did not attend the vote. Brazauskas's government was also against the interference in the internal affairs of the neighbouring state. As a result, a compromise solution was found. After consultations with President Adamkus, Minister Valionis announced that although the Belarusian election did not meet democratic standards, relations between Vilnius

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<sup>26</sup> B. Vyšniauskaitė, "Kalbėjo ir apie politiką, ir apie bites", *Lietuvos Rytas*, 13 March 2006; id., "V. Adamkus kelionė po Ukrainą kontrastų keliu", *Lietuvos Rytas*, 17 November 2006.

<sup>27</sup> *Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės ir Ukrainos Ministrų Kabineto susitarimas dėl bendradarbiavimo kovojant su nusikalstamumu ir tarptautiniu terorizmu*, 12 April 2007, [http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc\\_l?p\\_id=314721&p\\_query=&p\\_tr2=](http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=314721&p_query=&p_tr2=) (accessed: 10 September 2016); "G. Kirkilas – pas V. Janukovičių", *Respublika*, 11 August 2006.

<sup>28</sup> D. Melyantsou, A. Kazakevich, "Belarus Relations with Ukraine and Lithuania before and after the 2006 Presidential Elections", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2008, no. 20, p. 54.

and Minsk would remain pragmatic. He said, however, that Lithuania would continue to support the process of building civil society in the neighbouring country.<sup>29</sup> The Lithuanian capital actually remained an important centre of activity for the Belarusian opposition, and the construction of an independent, democratic and economically open Belarus was still an official objective of Lithuanian foreign policy.<sup>30</sup>

At the turn of 2006 and 2007, there were a number of misunderstandings in Russian–Belarusian relations. Using its monopoly position in the supply of energy resources, Moscow did not spare even its closest ally. In response, Belarus began sending signals attesting to its desire for a rapprochement with the West. It also started searching for alternative suppliers of crude oil. Under these circumstances, the role of Lithuania increased as a natural intermediary in contacts with the EU and as the transit country for raw materials delivered by sea. The idea was immediately followed up in Vilnius. Already in February 2007, President Adamkus declared that the port of Klaipėda was ready for the transshipment and dispatch of oil, and that Lithuania would gladly accept the role of Belarus's advocate in the EU.<sup>31</sup> At the end of 2008, after Lukashenko's amnesty for political prisoners, Vilnius called on its European partners to stop the policy of isolating Minsk. In 2009, Lithuania was the second EU country (after Italy) which, after a long period of international ostracism, was visited by the Belarusian president, Alexander Lukashenko.<sup>32</sup>

Relations with Russia were a point of reference for the *new foreign policy*. The Kremlin was extremely negative about the *new foreign policy* and vigorously counteracted its effects.<sup>33</sup> Already the involvement of President Adamkus in the Ukrainian Orange Revolution provoked Russian irritation. Other initiatives, often of symbolic nature, such as the decision of the Lithuanian president to refuse to participate in the Moscow celebrations of the end of World War II, produced similar results. On the Russian side, equally ostentatious was the omission of the

<sup>29</sup> Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas. Rezolucija "Dėl Baltarusijos Prezidento rinkimų", 21 March 2006; [http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc\\_l?p\\_id=272182](http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=272182) (accessed: 10 September 2016); Lietuvos Respublikos Seimo Stenogramas, session of 23 March 2006, [http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter2/dokpaieska.showdoc\\_l?p\\_id=272674](http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter2/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=272674) (accessed: 10 September 2016).

<sup>30</sup> N. Statkus, K. Paulauskas, *Tarp geopolitikos ir postmodernokur link sukti Lietuvos užsienio politikai?*, Vilnius, 2008, p. 60.

<sup>31</sup> D. Melyantsou, A. Kazakevich, "Belarus Relations with Ukraine and Lithuania before and after the 2006 Presidential Elections", pp. 58–61; R. Muraškina, "Saugumo karininkui – mirties nuosprendis", *Lietuvos Rytas*, 24 August 2006.

<sup>32</sup> J. Siedlecka-Siwuda, *Stosunki między Litwą i Białorusią w okresie Partnerstwa Wschodniego 2008–2010*, 14 January 2011, <http://www.psz.pl/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=35957> (accessed: 10 September 2016); Ł. Kobeszko, *Litwa chce dalszego zbliżenia Białorusi i UE*, 27 January 2009; [http://www.psz.pl/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=16659](http://www.psz.pl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=16659) (accessed: 10 September 2016).

<sup>33</sup> I. Kempe, "Russia, the EU and the Baltic States. Filling in a Strategic white spot on the European Map", in: *Russia, the EU and the Baltic States. Enhancing the Potential Cooperation*, eds. M. Buhbe, I. Kempe, Moscow, 2005, p. 4; H. Bukowiecka, *Politics of the Russian Federation in the Baltic Sea Region*, Toruń, 2012, pp. 202–303.

presidents of Lithuania and Poland in its invitations to the celebration of the 750th anniversary of the founding of Kaliningrad, held in July 2005. Lithuania was deeply affected by Russia's growing political and economic pressure. The authorities in Vilnius retaliated by promising to take concrete action against Moscow in the European Union and NATO.<sup>34</sup>

In September 2005, Lithuanian public opinion was electrified by a meaningful incident. A Russian military aircraft Su-27, flying from St. Petersburg to Kaliningrad, crashed near Kaunas. The pilot managed to eject before the catastrophe and was detained by the Lithuanian security service. The aircraft armed with missiles violated the Lithuanian airspace, simultaneously demonstrating the deficiencies of the NATO defence system of the Baltic States. The Russian media immediately accused Lithuania of shooting down the aircraft, to which the Lithuanian media replied with accusations of the pilot's conducting a spy mission. Vilnius demanded NATO's firm reaction.<sup>35</sup> As resulted from the subsequent findings, the fighter deviated from its course and found itself over Lithuania most likely due to a technical breakdown that eventually led to the catastrophe. Right after the accident, the Russians immediately demanded the release of the wreck and of the pilot, and intended to send their rescue helicopters to Lithuania. However, the Lithuanian government did not agree, for the intention was that NATO specialists were to examine the wreckage first. Vilnius did not succumb to the pressure from Moscow. Ultimately, it was possible to read the information from the black boxes only owing to the help of Ukrainian experts. Upon the completion of the investigation, the pilot was released, and the wreckage of the aircraft was delivered to Russia, which not only issued an official apology for the incident, but also paid Lithuania € 19,000.00 in compensation.<sup>36</sup> Despite the amicable settlement, the incident caused a big shock in Lithuania, yet again painfully exposing the helplessness of the country when faced with a potential Russian threat. Impressed by the events of 13 October 2005, the Lithuanian Seimas adopted a resolution demanding the demilitarization of Kaliningrad Oblast.<sup>37</sup> Russia categorically refused any discussion on this subject. As already mentioned, in 2006, the sales of the refinery in Mažeikiai was finalized against the Kremlin's intentions, which resulted in turning off the tap with Russian oil. In retaliation, Lithuania announced its intention to start the repair of the

<sup>34</sup> G. Vitkus, *Tarp Lietuvos ir Rusijos – šaltasis karas*, 6 October 2007, <http://www.geopolitika.lt/?artc=1236> (accessed: 10 September 2016); A. Bačiulis, "Lietuva su Rusija kovoja ne darbais, o žodžiais", *Veidas*, 2008, no. 39.

<sup>35</sup> T. Valčius, "Naikintuvo Su-27 pilotui pritruko 25 laipsnių", *Respublika*, 1 October 2005; V. Trojanovas *imituodavo oro erdvės pažeidėją*, 20 September 2005, <http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/crime/vtrojanovas-imituodavo-oro-erdves-pazeideja.d?id=7521492> (accessed: 11 September 2016).

<sup>36</sup> D. Jurgelevičiūtė, "Information Security in Lithuania: the Problem of May 9th and the Crash of Russian Fighter", in: *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review* 2006, Vilnius, 2007, pp. 269–271.

<sup>37</sup> *Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas*. Rezolucija "Dėl incidento su Rusijos kariniu orlaiviu SU-27", 13 October 2005, [http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc\\_l?p\\_id=263491](http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=263491) (accessed: 11 September 2016).



railway line used for transit to Kaliningrad Oblast. That year, there were numerous incidents in the form of violations of the Lithuanian airspace, as well as the mutual expulsion of diplomats.<sup>38</sup>

In the first half of 2008, Lithuanian diplomacy became involved in a dispute over Russia in the European Union forum. Two years earlier, Lithuania had supported Poland's position on the blockade of the EU-Russia agreement. To Warsaw's demands to lift the embargo on Polish meat, Vilnius had added its own request for the resumption of oil supplies via the *Druzhba* pipeline. At the beginning of 2008, after reaching a compromise, Poland withdrew its veto. Thus, Lithuania was left alone in its position. President Adamkus, upholding previous allegations against Moscow and suggesting that the European Union was pursuing too submissive a policy, began to be seen in Europe as the last swordsman of the Cold War. At that time, Adamkus called for making the EU agreement with Russia conditional on the change of Moscow's attitude towards Georgia and Moldova. He also demanded that Brussels take action to promote energy security of the new Member States. In addition, he demanded that pressure be put on Russia to clarify the crimes of the Soviet OMON in Lithuania in 1991. In the spring of 2008, EU diplomacy put in a lot of effort to break the Lithuanian resistance. Lithuania even managed to force through the inclusion of some of its demands into the EU's negotiating package with Russia. In reality, Vilnius, more and more isolated, was rather looking for a way out of this awkward situation. At the end of May, with no publicity, the opposition was withdrawn, thus allowing Brussels to engage in talks with Moscow.<sup>39</sup>

Vilnius repeatedly appeared as an advocate of Georgian interests. For example, in 2005, Lithuania co-founded the so-called New Group of Georgia's Friends, which also brought together Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia and the Czech Republic. The objective of the agreement at the level of heads of diplomacy was to support Tbilisi's efforts to achieve Euro-Atlantic integration. In September 2007, the group's annual meeting was held in Vilnius. At the NATO summit in Bucharest in April 2008, Lithuania, along with the other Baltic states, attempted to force through a decision on the launch of membership negotiations with Georgia and Ukraine. Vilnius also fully supported Tbilisi's position on the need to re-connect the rebellious South Ossetia to Georgia.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> "Maskvos repertuare – tie patys žodžiai", *Lietuvos Rytas*, 24 March 2006.

<sup>39</sup> L. Kasčiūnas, "Ar Lietuva plaukus prieš stovę?", *Veidas*, 2008, no. 5; R. Janužytė, "Lietuva įsiterpė tarp Rusijos ir ES", *Veidas*, 2008, no. 18; Ž. Pavilionis, "Lithuanian Position Regarding the EU Mandate on Negotiations with Russia: Seeking a New Quality of EU-Russian Relations", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2008, no. 21, pp. 174–181; H. Bukowiecka, "Stanowisko Litwy wobec negocjacji porozumienia ramowego UE-Rosja", *Biuletyn Polskiego Instytutu Spraw Międzynarodowych*, 2008, no. 21 [http://www.pism.pl/files/?id\\_plik=653](http://www.pism.pl/files/?id_plik=653) (accessed 11 September 2016).

<sup>40</sup> R. Kazlauskas, "Gruzijos euroatlantinė perspektyva nubrėžta Vilniuje", *Veidas*, 2007, no. 38; R. Janužytė, "Lietuvos parama Ukrainai ir Gruzijai: nuda ar rizika?", *Veidas*, 2008, no. 15.

At the beginning of August 2008, Georgian troops entered Ossetia. Russian troops not only supported the Ossetians, but also moved their military operations deep into the Georgian territory. Lithuania, like many other countries, recognized these Russian steps as an act of aggression. At the behest of President Adamkus, the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited Tbilisi, followed by the president himself, who took part in an anti-Russian rally in the Georgian capital, along with the Presidents of Poland and Estonia, the Prime Minister of Latvia, and the President of Ukraine. Adamkus called on NATO to act, arguing that idleness could give the Kremlin the green light also for aggression against the Baltic states. In the EU forum, Lithuania called for the freezing of the recently resumed negotiations on a new agreement with Russia, and even called for sanctions. Presidents Kaczyński and Adamkus jointly, though unsuccessfully, also called for the urgent integration of Georgia and Ukraine into the NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP). In the autumn of 2008, when the situation in the Caucasus was somewhat calmed, the centre-left Lithuanian authorities clearly eased their anti-Russian tone. According to commentators, this decision was caused by economic problems. Faced with the growing economic crisis, the Lithuanian authorities were looking for opportunities to intensify their trade with Russia.

The Georgian crisis coincided with the campaign before the election to the Lithuanian Seimas. In the pre-election campaign, especially the conservatives spared no hard rhetoric, accusing the Kremlin of wicked intentions not only towards Georgia, but also Lithuania and the whole of Central and Eastern Europe. Escalating the sense of uncertainty and building an atmosphere of fear of aggression contributed to the electoral victory of the right. Andrius Kubilius, the conservative leader, became the head of the centre-right government in the autumn of 2008. The conservatives did not intend to carry out a revolution in foreign policy. Before the election, they had criticized the way it was conducted rather than its direction. President Adamkus, who welcomed the appointment of Vygaudas Ušackas, a former ambassador to the USA and the United Kingdom, to the position of the head of the Foreign Office, also guarded the established direction.<sup>41</sup> The new minister proved to be a supporter of the firm policy towards Moscow. The head of Lithuanian diplomacy referred to the decision taken by NATO in March 2009 on the resumption of dialogue with Moscow, suspended after the Georgian crisis, as premature. He still declared his country's solidarity with, in his opinion, attacked Georgia.<sup>42</sup> The president's position also remained unchanged. Still in April 2009,

<sup>41</sup> Adamkus, *Paskutinė kadencija*, p. 474; *Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas. Nutarimas dėl Lietuvos Respublikos vyriausybės programos*, 9 December 2008, [http://www.lrvk.lt/bylos/vyriausybes/15-vyr-dok/15\\_vyr\\_programa.pdf](http://www.lrvk.lt/bylos/vyriausybes/15-vyr-dok/15_vyr_programa.pdf) (accessed: 11 September 2016); A. Bačiulis, "Politinis triemtynys grįžte į URM", *Veidas*, 2008, no. 46.

<sup>42</sup> *Szef litewskiej dyplomacji: Stosunki z Rosją "poniżej poziomu dna"*, 4 February 2009, <http://www.psz.pl/tekst-16956/Szef-litewskiej-dyplomacji-Stosunki-z-Rosja-ponizej-poziomu-dna> (accessed: 11 September 2016).

after the meeting of heads of state on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of NATO, Valdas Adamkus, in his televised speech, announced that in fundamental matters any concessions to Russia were still not possible.<sup>43</sup>

Within the framework of the *new foreign policy*, Lithuanian diplomacy sought to exploit the opportunities opening up in contacts with the West. Lithuania's accession to NATO and the European Union was viewed with enthusiasm. The vast majority of political elites and society believed that the country had already become an integral part of the Western world. The hope for rapid and effective modernization was especially connected with the participation in the European structures. It was recognized that it was in the interest of Lithuania to deepen integration processes and strengthen the Community institutions. On 11 November 2004, the Lithuanian Seimas, as the first European parliament, ratified the EU Constitutional Treaty, signed merely two weeks earlier in Rome.<sup>44</sup> In 2007, Lithuanian diplomacy was actively involved in the negotiations of the new reform treaty of the EU. Despite its very good relations with Warsaw, Vilnius supported Poland's efforts to introduce the so-called square root system during the votes in the future Council of the European Union to a limited extent. It was recognized that forcing through this proposal would be beneficial for medium-sized states (such as Poland), while small ones (such as Lithuania) would in fact gain very little. Thus, antagonizing the EU powers was not in Lithuanian interest. The leading political forces were of the opinion that the objective should be to strengthen the prerogatives of the Community institutions, in particular the European Commission, and to deepen the integration processes.<sup>45</sup> Vilnius did not understand the position of opponents of the reform of the Union. In May 2008, the Lithuanian Seimas ratified the Lisbon Treaty by a decisive majority and the President immediately signed the relevant act of law.<sup>46</sup>

In some matters, from the very beginning Lithuania demonstrated a different stance than the main European states, especially France and Germany. The differences in opinions included, in particular, energy security issues and European policy towards the USA and Russia. Together with the other Baltic states, Lithuania

<sup>43</sup> E. Nekrašas, "Refleksje nad litewską polityką zagraniczną", *Politeja*, 2011, no. 16, p. 85.

<sup>44</sup> *Istatymo dėl Sutarties dėl Konstitucijos Europai ratifikavimo*, 11 November 2004, [http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc\\_l?p\\_id=245599](http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=245599) (accessed: 11 September 2016); The Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (European Community) did not eventually come into effect because of its rejection in referenda by France and the Netherlands in 2005.

<sup>45</sup> L. Koščiūnas, A. Lukšas, "Lenkai nepajuto kajmynopeties", *Veidas*, 2007, no. 26; V. Laučius, "A. Ažubalis: 'Aš už tai, kad Briuselis turėtų daugiau valdžios'", *Veidas*, 2007, no. 32. The square root system consisted in the strength of the votes of individual Member States being calculated by means of the square root of the population of the country concerned. According to the Polish authorities, this was a solution more favourable for small and medium-sized countries than the proposed so-called double majority system, favouring large states.

<sup>46</sup> *Lietuvos Respublikos Seimo Stenogramos, a session held on 8 May 2008*, [http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter2/dokpaieska.showdoc\\_l?p\\_id=319547](http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter2/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=319547) (accessed: 12 September 2016).

was striving to establish common elements of the EU energy strategy. For a very long time, Brussels was sceptical about the idea of building a new nuclear power plant in Lithuania, and creating energy bridges. Vilnius also held a grudge against the EU institutions for their tardy reaction to the cutting off of oil supplies to the Mažeikiai refinery. In 2008, Lithuania began to openly express impatience due to the lack of positive results of its efforts to support projects increasing energy security. The Lithuanian *new foreign policy* was not understood in most Western European countries. The almost unconditional support of Vilnius for the controversial, unilateral American policy was seen with disapproval. The accusations of lack of a definite vision of Eastern policy, addressed to its European partners, did not win Vilnius much sympathy. Also, the aforementioned negative impact on the EU initiatives regarding Russia resulted in the Lithuanian position being perceived in Europe as non-constructive, and even confrontational. The relations between Lithuania and Germany suffered most. Vilnius demonstrated an exceptionally negative attitude towards the German-Russian agreement on the construction of the gas pipeline on the bottom of the Baltic Sea. President Adamkus repeatedly criticized the Federal Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, for his rapprochement with Moscow at the expense of the new EU Member States, and deplored his cold attitude towards the policy of the Bush administration. He did not even conceal that in the Bundestag elections in 2005 he was counting on the defeat of the Chancellor and his Social Democratic Party.

There was a different atmosphere in the relations with the United States. After 2004, Lithuania recognized the United States as the only guarantor of its security. It was believed that the involvement in American initiatives would bring Lithuania notable benefits. First and foremost, President Adamkus, openly called by his fierce critics “an American agent”, was an advocate of such an attitude. During Adamkus’s second term of office, Washington could count on Vilnius’s almost unconditional loyalty. It returned the favour with assurances of solidarity and courtesy gestures. In September 2008, the US Senate passed a resolution in which it recognized the annexation of the Baltic States by the USSR in 1940 as legally groundless. In the same year, the visa requirement for Lithuanian citizens was waived, which Lithuanian diplomacy had been striving for many years. Similar agreements were also concluded with the other Baltic states, while theoretically the most important ally of the United States in Central Europe, i.e. Poland, was still unsuccessfully demanding such a solution.

Lithuanian troops continued to support the Americans in Afghanistan and Iraq. In spring 2005, Lithuania was invited to participate in the so-called Provincial Reconstruction Teams in the Afghan province of Ghor. Drawn from the experience of the Vietnam War, the initiative (developed by military specialists, diplomats and civilian experts) was intended to support efforts to rebuild socio-political and economic life in the country destroyed by conflict. At first, Washington wished for at least symbolic participation in the mission of all the Baltic States, but Estonia and

Latvia were not interested in this form of co-operation. Therefore, only Lithuania took part in the programme. In 2008, the Lithuanian authorities, like Poland, decided not to extend their presence in Iraq. A contingent of about 200 people remained in Afghanistan.<sup>47</sup>

From the beginning, the *new foreign policy* was criticized by some Lithuanian experts and journalists. At the turn of 2004 and 2005, a discussion was initiated by the philosopher and political scientist Evaldas Nekrašas. The author described the vision of Lithuania as a regional leader as megalomaniac. He argued that the attempt to implement the utopian intention could not yield the expected benefits, while it distanced Lithuania from Western Europe and complicated the relations with Moscow.<sup>48</sup> Statements such as these were becoming ever more common. In 2006, a widely commented, critical text by the historian and political scientist Česlovas Laurinavičius appeared.<sup>49</sup> The author recognized the deteriorating of the relations with Russia as the greatest failure. Also in his view, the activities consisting in “exporting democracy” to the post-Soviet states did not strengthen Vilnius’s position, but only provoked Moscow’s hostility. It was no secret that the American administration was behind the concept of “exporting democracy”. But can we really talk about any sort of convergence of Lithuanian and American policy objectives in the post-Soviet area? Or perhaps, Laurinavičius asked, Vilnius actually pursued Washington’s guidelines while neglecting its own strategic interests? In conclusion, the author appealed to the heads of Lithuanian diplomacy for greater assertiveness towards the USA and caution in their policy towards Russia. It was unreasonable to provoke the Kremlin merely to prove one’s own moral superiority. According to Laurinavičius, the policy-makers of Lithuanian foreign policy should eventually begin to differentiate tactics from strategy.

Similar opinions would continually appear from that time on. Experts, journalists, and more and more often also politicians would challenge the Lithuanian “dreams of power,” demonstrating that the scarce economic and demographic potential, civilizational backwardness, raw material dependency, and even banal communication problems made it impossible to play the role of a regional centre. It was recalled that Lithuania, for obvious reasons, could not count on a real partnership with the USA, or even Poland. It was pointed out that because of the difference in their potential, Lithuania did not stand a chance of becoming a real

<sup>47</sup> E. Račius, “The ‘Cultural Awareness’ Factor in the Activities of the Lithuanian PRT in Afghanistan”, *Baltic security & Defence Review* 2007, no. 9, p. 63; id., “Lithuania in the NATO Mission in Afghanistan. Between Idealism and Pragmatism”, *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review*, 2009–2010, Vilnius, 2010, pp. 187–207.

<sup>48</sup> E. Nekrašas, “Lithuanian Foreign Policy: Concepts, Achievements and Predicaments”, *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2004, no. 13–14 pp. 31–33; id., “Kritiniai pamąstai apie Lietuvos užsienio politiką”, *Politologija*, 2009, no. 2, p. 141.

<sup>49</sup> Č. Laurinavičius, “Naujoji Lietuvos užsienio politikos vizija”, *Akiračiai* 2006, no. 10; in English: “New Vision of Lithuania’s Foreign Policy”, *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2006, no. 18.

partner for Poland. Therefore, it was cautioned that Warsaw would inevitably seek to dominate. The accumulation of problems in mutual relations which were unresolved, but only “kicked into the long grass”, e.g. with regard to national minorities, boded ill for the future. The superficial nature of the official contacts also raised doubts. Specialists predicted a threat of Lithuania’s isolation in the event of a change in the line-up of political forces in Poland, or a redefinition of a wider international situation.<sup>50</sup> They also stated that, as a result of the past practices, Lithuania was still outside the mainstream of European policy.<sup>51</sup>

In response, the proponents of the *new foreign policy* pointed out that in the face of the Russian threat Lithuania had limited options for choosing a strategic partner. Counting on Poland was the most rational step under these conditions. Both countries had similar goals. Lithuania and Poland matched each other especially in their attitude towards Russia. Like Vilnius, Warsaw was interested in developing relations also with Minsk and Kiev. Poland remained a close ally of the United States and was among the major EU states. Owing to these connections, Lithuania could also gain importance in international relations. Common projects in the field of energy, leading to the enhancement of energy security, brought notable benefits. From the Lithuanian perspective, President Lech Kaczyński was the guarantor of the best relations with Lithuania, promoting the closest co-operation of Central and Eastern European countries under Polish leadership.<sup>52</sup> President Adamkus and the successive heads of diplomacy consistently defended especially the moral foundations of the *new foreign policy*. The arguments about the need to provide the country with an international position it deserved, the need to expand democracy and “Western values”, were most frequently cited. Even the most derided idea of

<sup>50</sup> E. Motieka, N. Statkus, J. Daniliauskas, “Global Geopolitical Developments And Opportunities for Lithuania’s Foreign Policy”, *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review, 2004*, Vilnius 2005, p. 66; K. Puleikytė, *Lietuvos-Lenkijos strateginė partnerystė: tikrovė ar iliuzija?*, 28 April 2006, <http://www.geopolitika.lt/?artc=443> (accessed: 12 September 2016).

<sup>51</sup> R. Lopata, “Apie Lietuvos užsienio politikos viziją”, *Akiračiai* 2006, no. 11; M. Jurkynas, “Ar priimsime Lenkija į bandra Šiaurės kelią?”, *Lietuvos Rytas* 21 March 2006; N. Statkus, K. Paulauskas, “Lietuvos užsienio politika tarptautinių santykių teorijų ir praktikos kryžkelėje”, *Politologija*, 2006, no. 2; R. Kilius, “Kelios mintys apie Lietuvos užsienio politiką”, *Naujasis Židinys – Aidai* 2007, no. 4; K. Girnius, *Iššūkiai Lietuvos užsienio politikai*, 2 June 2008, <http://www.geopolitika.lt/?artc=2165> (accessed: 12 September 2016); id., *Donkichotiška užsienio ir saugumo politika*, [http://www.alfa.lt/straipsnis/10236844/Donkichotiška.uzsienio.ir.saugumo.politika=2008-11-17\\_08-14/](http://www.alfa.lt/straipsnis/10236844/Donkichotiška.uzsienio.ir.saugumo.politika=2008-11-17_08-14/) (accessed: 12 September 2016); Č. Laurinavičius, R. Lopata, V. Sirutavičius, “Kritinis požiūris į Lietuvos užsienio politiką: kas pasikeitė nuo Augustino Voldemaro laikų?”, *Politologija*, 2009, no. 2; cf. a fuller discussion of the debate at the time: R. Lopata, “Recent Debate on Lithuania’s Foreign Policy”, *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2009, no. 22, pp. 160–171.

<sup>52</sup> Janeliūnas, K. Baubinaite, “In Search for the Optimal Regional Alliance: Strategic Partnership between Lithuania and Poland”, *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review, 2005*, Vilnius, 2006, pp. 76–89; A. Bačiulis, “Naujos geopolitinės architektūros pradžia”, *Veidas*, 2006, no. 19; id., “Nuo karo padėties iki strateginės partnerystės”, *Veidas*, 2006, no. 36.



the regional centre was defended. In the eyes of the supporters of maintaining the current direction, the escalation of the Georgian conflict in 2008 only proved that the fear of Russia was not unfounded. Lithuania, therefore, had to search for support in Washington, because Western Europe turned out to be actually helpless against Moscow.

Since the turn of 2008 and 2009, Lithuania became more and more painfully affected by the global financial crisis. The results of the changing of priorities by the former allies and patrons also became more pronounced. The international situation had changed. Under the influence of new stimuli, weaknesses of the current assumptions of the *new foreign policy* emerged. The change of priorities of American policy was the most painful. In November 2008, the US presidential election was won by the Democratic candidate Barack Obama. From the beginning, the new American president was distancing himself from his predecessor's foreign policy and announced his intention to repair relations with Russia. Soon, the popular phrase of "resetting" them began to be used. The new American administration withdrew from its current practice of supporting pro-Western trends in the post-Soviet area.

The worsening of relations with Poland was equally painful from the Lithuanian perspective. In addition to the ingrained problems that had never completely resolved, there were also new economic misunderstandings and, more and more often, also political ones. The co-operation between the Lithuanian authorities and PKN Orlen was rather coarse. Poland also criticized the tardiness of Lithuanian preparations for the construction of the common nuclear power plant. Warsaw expressed ever more often its dissatisfaction with Lithuania's lack of good will in satisfying the demands recognized by Poland as crucial for the Polish minority in the Vilnius region. At the beginning of 2009, Poland, as expressed by the head of its diplomacy, openly declared its willingness to strengthen its position in the European Union and its intention to participate more broadly in the common security policy. It meant, among other things, its greater resolve to build political partnerships with the leading states of Western Europe at the expense of resigning the role of a pro-American leader in the east of Europe. The Polish government was moving away from the nearly exclusive dependence on the position of Washington with regard to the situation of the state and the region. The American position and the signals coming from Poland undermined Lithuania's *new foreign policy*. The black scenario foreseen by the critics of this concept was coming true.<sup>53</sup>

The shifts in the international arena in 2009 coincided with the end of the second term of office of President Valdas Adamkus. In its course, he visited Poland

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<sup>53</sup> Č. Laurinavičius, R. Lopata, V. Sirutavičius, "Kritinis požiūris į Lietuvos užsienio politiką: kas pasikeitė nuo Augustino Voldemaro laikų?", p. 92; V. Sirijos Gira, *Keturi klausimai būsimam prezidentui apie Lietuvos užsienio politiką*, 1 April 2009, <http://www.delfi.lt/article.php?id=21265070> (accessed: 12 September 2016).

as many as thirteen times, more than any other head of the Lithuanian state. The President visited the European Union and NATO institutions in Brussels as many times. He paid twelve visits to Ukraine. He made six visits to Estonia, five to Latvia and the USA, and four to Georgia. The above list quite well reflected the most important directions of the foreign policy pursued at that time. In the new international situation, almost all potential candidates to succeed Adamkus stressed the need for correction. In the elections held in May 2009, Dalia Grybauskaitė, an economist politically associated with Algirdas Brazauskas, won already in the first round. In the years 2001-2004, Grybauskaitė was the Minister of Finance. In 2004, she became Commissioner for Financial Programming and Budget at the European Commission. At the turn of 2008 and 2009, Ms. Commissioner gained great popularity in Lithuanian society thanks to her criticism of the economic ideas of the government, and also owing to the excellent opinion from Brussels. Still during the election campaign, the candidate for the highest office in the state did not spare criticism of the *new foreign policy*, postulating in particular a departure from the missionary involvement in the East.<sup>54</sup> According to the announced priorities of her presidency, from then on diplomacy was to be *balanced and pragmatic*, aimed at realizing Lithuanian national interests. According to the new holder of the presidential office, Lithuania should lead a multi-vector policy, not limited solely to American guidelines. Grybauskaitė announced a desire to improve relations with Belarus, and to resume dialogue with Russia. Among the countries with which co-operation was to be strengthened, the President most frequently mentioned the Baltic and Scandinavian countries. Sparingly and with reserve did she talk about the prospects for a strategic partnership with Poland, which in the new situation was clearly losing its significance.<sup>55</sup> It was in respect of diplomatic priorities that a conflict with the government soon occurred, which ended with the resignation of Minister Ušackas and the forcing through, by the President, of the definitive departure from the earlier principles of foreign policy.

For the moment, from the perspective of the turn of 2009 and 2010, the balance of the *new foreign policy* seemed unequivocally negative. The attempt to strengthen the regional position of Lithuania based on the USA proved unsuccessful. In particular, the construction of a lasting security system against the potential threat from Russia ended in failure. Relations with the Kremlin became extremely strained. Even the project of a deeper alliance with Poland failed. Lithuania was forced to seek a new place in the changing world, and to fundamentally rethink its current international activity. Much, however, indicates that a deeper evaluation of

<sup>54</sup> V. Volovoj, *D.Grybauskaitė ir naujoji Lietuvos užsienio politika*, 17 March 2009, <http://www.geopolitika.lt/?artc=3230> (accessed: 12 September 2016).

<sup>55</sup> *Lietuvos Respublikos Prezidentė. Prezidento Institucija, Prezidentė Dalia Grybauskaitė, Prioritetai*, [http://www.presidentvol.lt/lt/prezidento\\_institucija/prezidente\\_dalia\\_grybauskaite/prioritetai.html](http://www.presidentvol.lt/lt/prezidento_institucija/prezidente_dalia_grybauskaite/prioritetai.html) (accessed: 12 September 2016); L. Bielinis, *Prezidentė*, Kaunas, 2011, pp. 137–141; A. Bačiulis, “D.Grybauskaitės žadėtas perversmas užsienio politikoje neįvyko”, *Veidas*, 2009, no. 52.

foreign policy during the second term of Valdas Adamkus's presidency will have to take into account the later context, especially the international effects of the Ukrainian crisis of 2014-2016. The ensuing directions and methods of the Russian operations once again clearly demonstrated the limited range of choices available for the Baltic States at the time. Therefore, the concepts and efforts of Lithuanian diplomacy in the years 2004-2009 deserve a balanced review.

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