



LITHUANIA PREPARES FOR HYBRID WAR

By John R. Haines



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The more powerful enemy can be vanquished...by the most thorough, careful, attentive, skillful, and obligatory use of any—even the smallest—rift between the enemies [...] and also by taking advantage of any, even the smallest, opportunity of winning a mass ally, even though this ally is temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional. Those who do not understand this reveal a failure to understand even the smallest grain of Marxism, of modern scientific socialism in general.¹

-Vladimir Il'ich Lenin, *No Compromises?*

Mickiewicz or Mickevičius? For years, Lithuanian citizens of Polish origin have been asking for the right to keep their names in Polish spelling. Is it just a question of name? The situation of the national minorities in Lithuania has been discussed by world and regional organisations for already over ten years. And still it creates tensions between Vilnius and Warsaw.²

-Nouvelle Europe, *The Polish national minority in Lithuania : three reports later.*

A few weeks ago, *Pravda* published a vitriolic denunciation of Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė:

[Her] recent outburst of emotional anti-Russian rhetoric seems very odd given her biography. [...] The Soviet education system gave her the opportunity to graduate from the prestigious St. Petersburg State University. In 1983, Grybauskaitė became a member of the Communist Party—though it didn't accept just anyone. Perhaps this privilege was due to the fact that for many years, her father worked for the NKVD, the KGB's forerunner. There's no evidence she joined against her will. So, was she really a committed socialist? Or did she simply decide to use Party membership as a

¹ Vladimir I. Lenin (1920; 1964). "No Compromises?" in "Left-Wing" Communism: an Infantile Disorder." *Collected Works, XXXI* (Moscow: Progress Publishers), pp. 70-71.

² While Article 37 of the Lithuanian Constitution specifies that "Citizens who belong to ethnic communities shall have the right to foster their language, culture and customs," the term *ethnic communities* was criticized a decade ago for being too vague. ["Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities". February 2003 Opinion on Lithuania]. In February 1995, Lithuania joined the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

springboard for her career? In any case, it's unlikely she dreamt of spending her entire life working as an apparatchik.³

The commentary concludes sardonically, "It's fair to assume these anti-Russian outbursts are just as 'sincere' as Grybauskaitė's once-passionate belief in communist ideals."

For its part, Lithuania is warning that Russia is preparing for a hybrid war—a class of warfare "President Putin understands better than any other Russian leader."⁴ One of the best articulations of hybrid warfare is by Margarita Šešelgytė of Lithuania's Vilnius University.

During the crisis in Crimea, the mass media have learned a new buzzword—hybrid war—to label operations of insignia-less 'green men' on Ukrainian soil. But in fact, neither the concept nor the essence of the operations was completely original.

The activities of the 'green men' and the separatists in Ukraine could be described as hybrid warfare according to a number of criteria. [...] However, the main innovation in this conflict is not the use of irregular forces but rather the hybrid instruments of attack used by the Russian side. Along with the military dimension, a broad array of political, economic, information, and cyber instruments are employed to reach political goals. These instruments are used interchangeably to expose vulnerabilities...and to undermine the government's credibility.⁵

Major General Jonas Vytautas Zukas, Lithuania's defense chief, defined some of those instruments last October, including "manipulating national minorities, provocations, attacks by non-state armed groups, illegal border crossing, [and] breach of military transit procedures."⁶ Russia also positioned military aircraft at the Baranovič and Lida airfields in western Belarus that could reach Lithuania's (and NATO's) Šiauliai airbase in ten minutes, too quick for aircraft positioned there to react.⁷



Source: <http://www.infoplease.com/atlas/country/lithuania.html>.

While it may (to some) appear improvised, there is a coherence and consistency to hybrid war. For Russia, "all conflicts are actually means to political ends—the actual forces used are irrelevant—[and] in the modern realities, Russia must look increasingly to non-military instruments."⁸ The key element to understand is that hybrid war is essentially staged in the minds

³ "Кто довел президента Литвы до истерики" ("Who's behind the Lithuanian president's hysterics?"). *Pravda.ru* [published online in Russian 25 February 2015]. <http://www.pravda.ru/world/formerussr/latvia/25-02-2015/1250027-president-0/>. Last accessed 1 March 2015.

⁴ Fiona Hill (2015). "Lull in Putin's 'hybrid war'." *The Japan Times* [published online in English 2 March 2015]. <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2015/03/02/commentary/world-commentary/lull-in-putins-hybrid-war/#.VPT9iSIN38s>. Last accessed 2 March 2015.

⁵ Margarita Šešelgytė (2014). "Can Hybrid War Become the Main Security Challenge for Eastern Europe?" *European Leadership Network* (17 October 2014). http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/can-hybrid-war-become-the-main-security-challenge-for-eastern-europe_2025.html. Last accessed 2 March 2015.

⁶ "Lithuania creates response force to prevent Ukraine scenario." *Agence France-Press* [published online in English 13 October 2014]. <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/141013/lithuania-creates-response-force-prevent-ukraine-scenario>. Last accessed 3 March 2015.

⁷ "Russia bringing attack aircraft into Belarus." *Postimees* [published online in English 29 July 2014]. <http://news.postimees.ee/2871637/russia-bringing-attack-aircraft-into-belarus>. Last accessed 3 March 2015.

⁸ General Valery V. Gerasimov (2013). "Ценность Науки В Предвидении" ("The Predictive Value of Science"). *Военно-промышленный курьер*

of the target population, the toxic effects of which, a former Latvian defense minister noted, "are there for all to see in Ukraine."⁹ Russia has been notably successful so far if the results of a late March 2014 poll conducted by the weekly magazine *Veidas* are to be believed. The poll shows that 87 percent of respondents "believe that Russia could attempt to occupy Lithuania or part of it."¹⁰

"The past is a weapon to some. Its ghosts are friends to many."¹¹

In the minds of Russian leaders, the European and American foreign policy establishments caricature Russian geopolitical interests. That caricature might fairly be described as follows:

While Russian geopolitics may appear, at one and the same time, pragmatically nationalist and identity-perpetuating, it is in reality "only *Realpolitik* discourse about regaining control over the 'near abroad'."¹² It has been used to reinvigorate the idea of Russian civilizational distinctiveness—"a needed response to 'Atlanticism'"¹³ that is intended to characterize the post-Soviet space as a whole—and to lend credence to it.¹⁴ Russia's is a zero-sum geopolitics, one of conflict and competition as opposed to benevolent, positive-sum cooperation. It is dependent upon the failures of Western efforts, particularly those of the United States. In this view:

Russia's post-Soviet recourse to geopolitics...reflected a thoroughly traditional stance of viewing the world through the prism of the balance of power and an age-old concern with reinstating Russia as a great power in possession of its own sphere of influence.¹⁵

The clear implication is that Russian policy—activist, assertive and interventionist—is thoroughly anachronistic, irrational, and in the end, illegitimate. Similarly, Russia's geopolitics-informed understanding of power and security—simply put, controlling territory—is expressed as a nostalgic and crude nationalism that demands the reintegration of the post-Soviet space through Russia's continuing politico-military primacy in the region.¹⁶ It is an anachronism in conflict with the modern view that "geopolitical expansion and empire-building are outdated forms of international conduct [...] and that interests have to be promoted through multilateral approaches and participation in international institutions."¹⁷

The recent *Pravda* commentary took an interesting tack. If "the dogmatic assertion that Russia is the successor-state to the Soviet Union" preemptively delegitimizes any Russian assertion of interests in its near-abroad, are Western nations, too, held accountable?

The belligerent EU ruling elites are undoubtedly pleased to hear the ex-communist Grybauskaitė constantly demand action to counter Russia's 'open and brutal aggression,' her warnings that 'Russia is trying to rewrite the post-war borders of Europe.' But wait! Remember how Lithuania acquired

[published online in Russian 5 March 2013]. http://vpk-news.ru/sites/default/files/pdf/VPK_08_476.pdf. Last accessed 4 February 2014. Gerasimov is Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Russia, and first Deputy Defense Minister. The *Voyenno-promyshlennyi kur'yer* ("Military-Industrial Courier") is a Russian language weekly newspaper.

⁹ Imants Viesturs Liegis (2014). "Reacting to Russia." *European Leadership Network* (8 October 2014).

http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/reacting-to-russia_1985.html. Last accessed 2 March 2015.

¹⁰ "87% Lithuanians are certain that Russia could attack." *The Lithuania Tribute* [published online in English 26 March 2014].

<http://www.lithuaniatribune.com/65834/87-lithuanians-are-certain-that-russia-may-attack-201465834/>. Last accessed 3 March 2015.

¹¹ From a poem by an anonymous author.

¹² Pavel Baev (1997). "Russia's Departure from Empire: Self-Assertiveness and a New Retreat." In *Geopolitics in post-Wall Europe: Security, Territory and Identity*. Ola Tunander, Pavel Baev & Victoria Ingrid Einagel, Eds. (London: SAGE, 1997), p. 182.

¹³ James H. Billington (2004). *Russia in Search of Itself*. (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), p. 72.

¹⁴ Baev (1997), *op cit.*, p. 182.

¹⁵ Natalia Morozova (2011). "The Politics of Russian Post-Soviet Identity: Geopolitics, Eurasianism, and Beyond." Submitted to Central European University Department of International Relations and European Studies (15 August 2011).

<http://ires.ceu.edu/sites/ires.ceu.hu/files/attachment/basicpage/526/morozova.pdf>. Last accessed 2 March 2015. The author credits Morozova's development of ideas summarized in the preceding paragraph.

¹⁶ Mette Skak (1996). *From Empire to Anarchy: Post-Communist Foreign Policy and International Relations*. (London: Hurst & Company), p. 143.

¹⁷ The text in blue is by the author. The ending quote is from Gertjan Dijckink (1996). *National Identity and Geopolitical Visions: Maps of Pride and Pain*. (New York: Routledge), p. 103.

Vilnius and Memel.¹⁸ Is Grybauskaitė really that ignorant, or instead, is she willfully distorting well-known historical facts? Does she really not remember how the European Union provoked the collapse of multi-ethnic Yugoslavia in the 1990s? After that geopolitical dismemberment, the EU dictated how Balkan states' borders were re-drawn. It certainly wasn't Russia.¹⁹

It then tries to turn the argument—if all successor-states bear responsibility for historic wrongs, then so, too, does Lithuania—to dislocate and condition Lithuanian identity:

Grybauskaitė might also thank the Federal Republic of Germany, as the Third Reich's successor-state, for eradicating Lithuania's Jews. In 1939, more than 260,000 Jews lived in Lithuania. By 1945, just 26,000 remained. "The Jewish Question" in Lithuania was settled by the Third Reich, which today is admired by Lithuanian ultra-nationalists.²⁰

The analogy, if obscene,²¹ is nonetheless instructive. Jacques Derrida wrote, "If language never escapes from analogy...it freely takes up its own destruction."²² He was addressing the intentional use of language to subvert language, to decenter and turn it back on itself. Peter Pomerantsev called it "the menace of unreality,"²³ a term he used to characterize "how the Kremlin weaponizes information, culture and money."²⁴ An article published on the Russian government news portal *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* quoted approvingly State Duma Speaker Sergei Naryshkin that while "until recently, it seemed that dialogue and the quest for understanding would become a norm of international relations," it is now the case that "NATO's eastward expansion has returned a state of war to Europe."²⁵ That war—an information or "hybrid" one—defines Russian actions in its near-abroad.

Playing the 'Polish Card' in Russia's Hybrid War against Lithuania²⁶

"The regime is moving towards the censorship of dreams."
-Pussy Riot, *Putin Zassal*

¹⁸ The article answers its own question: "If Soviet leader Joseph Stalin had not persevered in the Tehran and Yalta talks with Churchill and Roosevelt regarding Eastern Europe's post-war borders, Lithuania's capital would still be Kaunas. Stalin insisted that Poland's border move west, to the Oder and Neisse Rivers, so that Polish Vilna and German Memel became part of Lithuania. Without Memel, modern Lithuania would not have the deepwater ice-free port of Klaipėda. In retrospect, Vilna could just as easily have been made part of present-day Belarus, and Memel part of Kaliningrad. So on behalf of the modern Lithuania, Grybauskaitė should be eternally grateful to Supreme Commander Stalin for his tenacity in dealing with geopolitical issues seventy years ago.

¹⁹ "Кто довел президента Литвы до истерики" ("Who's behind the Lithuanian president's hysterics?"). *Pravda.ru* [published online in Russian 25 February 2015]. <http://www.pravda.ru/world/formerussr/latvia/25-02-2015/1250027-president-0/>. Last accessed 1 March 2015.

²⁰ See fn(3).

²¹ Russian exploitation of Shoah crimes against Lithuanian Jews is especially repugnant given "the war after the war" in Lithuania went on until the early 1950s. When the Soviet Union re-occupied Lithuania and the other Baltic states in 1944, a resistance movement formed known as the *Miško broliai* or "Forest Brothers." Soviet efforts to repress the resistance resulted in 186,000 Lithuanians jailed or arrested and 118,000 deported, of whom 53,000 died during captivity or as a consequence of their deportation. According to one account, "The guerillas were portrayed as Jewish murderers and criminal—enemies of the Lithuanian people—as oppose to freedom fighters." In June 2005, the Russian Foreign Affairs Ministry denounced the Forest Brothers as "bandit formations" and in May 2013, President Putin recognized NKVD veterans of the units that took part in the repression. See: Jakob Ljungman (2014). "The Russian information war on Lithuania." *The Lithuania Tribune* [published online in English 21 August 2014]. <http://en.delfi.lt/lithuania/society/the-russian-information-war-in-lithuania.d?id=65615450>. Last accessed 3 March 2015.

²² Jacques Derrida (1967; 2011). *Voice and Phenomenon: Introduction to the Problem of the Sign in Husserl's Phenomenology*. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press), pp. 12- 13.

²³ Legatum Institute (2014). "The Menace of Unreality: Combatting Russian Disinformation in the 21st Century." [published online in English 20 October 2014].

²⁴ Peter Pomerantsev (2014). "The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money." *The Interpreter* [published online in English 22 November 2014]. <http://www.interpretermag.com/the-menace-of-unreality-how-the-kremlin-weaponizes-information-culture-and-money/>. Last accessed 1 March 2015.

²⁵ "Нарышкин обвинил Запад в заигрывании с пронацистскими силами" ("Naryshkin accused the West of flirting with pro-Nazi forces"). *Российская газета* [published online in Russian 25 February 2015]. <http://www.rg.ru/2015/02/25/zaigrivanie-site.html>. Last accessed 2 March 2015.

²⁶ From the title of a recent commentary published by the Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group [Ukrainian: Харківської правозахисної групи. Ukrainian transl.: *Kharkivs'koyi pravozakhysnoyi hrupy*], one of Ukraine's oldest and most active human rights organizations. Halya Coynash (2015). "Moscow suspected of playing 'Polish Card' in Hybrid War against Lithuania". *Права Людини в Україні (Human Rights in Ukraine)*. [published online in English 24 February 2015]. <http://khpg.org/index.php?id=1424708157>. Last accessed 2 March 2015.

The Danish international relations theorist Ole Wæver argues that “difference only collapses into opposition in special situations.”²⁷ One way to foment those conditions is the use of wedge strategies, a long established practice to prevent hostile alliances from forming or to disperse those that have formed. In some sense the obverse of Russia's recurring paranoia over the presence of ethnic *klin'ya* or “wedges” within its own territory,²⁸ many analysts point to Russia's growing willingness to use ethnic groups in the near-abroad as a political wedge. The *Pravda* commentary continues:

In all her tirades, Grybauskaitė never misses the chance to point out Russia's failure to protect human rights. To paraphrase the Latin proverb *Terra terram accusat*, 'people living in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.' Lithuania, it seems, is not so eager to share all the beliefs and practices of Western European democracies. For example, Lithuania's Polish-speaking citizens live under constant government pressure to give up their cultural identity and language. Meanwhile, in and around Vilnius, Polish is spoken by more than 50 percent of the population.²⁹

This statement is not totally without foundation if a November 2013 report by the European Foundation for Human Rights—a non-governmental organization established in 2010 to protect and promote the rights of ethnic minorities living in Lithuania, particularly the Polish minority—is to be believed:

At the onset, the EFHR wishes to emphasise one of the main conclusions of this Report: the position of minorities has generally—and unfortunately—not improved markedly since Lithuania's independence gained in 1990 or the ratification of the FCNM [*Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities*] on 17 February 2000 and Lithuania's accession to the European Union in 2004. It is unfortunate because one would expect a trend towards increased compliance with Lithuania's treaty obligations after ratification and the impact of more than 12 years of monitoring and recommendations by the FCNM's Advisory Committee of Experts. This has unfortunately not happened.³⁰

As Lenin wrote, the smallest rift is useful, even if it is temporary and conditional. *Defence24* is a news portal focusing on Polish defense and security issues. It recently asserted that "Moscow is preparing a hybrid conflict with Vilnius," and went on to speculate whether Russia would use ethnic Poles instrumentally to destabilize the region, or worse, to establish a pretense for a Crimea-like intervention into Lithuania launched from Russian Kaliningrad.³¹ It questions whether the effort by Lithuania's ethnic Poles to find common cause politically with ethnic Russians "is a clever political strategy...or an action inspired by the Kremlin?" A Ukrainian human rights group noted the appearance in cyberspace of the heretofore unknown *Wileńska Republika Ludowa* ("Vilnius People's Republic"), a name clearly intended to reference self-declared "people's republics" in Ukraine's Donets'k and Luhansk regions.³²

While some are quick to minimize these fears, others are more cautious. The Polish language business news portal *Forsal* recently published an article—provocatively titled "The sum of all fears. Lithuania trembles before 'the little green men' from Russia"—in which it avers that "one realistic scenario is where a group claiming to represent local Poles occupies a

²⁷ Ole Wæver (2002). "Identity, Communities and Foreign Policy: Discourse Analysis as Foreign Policy Theory." In *European Integration and National Identity*, Lene Hansen & Ole Wæver, eds. (London: Routledge), pp. 26-27.

²⁸ For an illuminating discussion of this issue, the author recommends Paul Goble (2015). "Zelyonyi Klin' isn't Only Ukrainian 'Wedge' in Russia, and Some in Moscow are Nervous." *The Interpreter* [published online in English 12 June 2014]. <http://www.interpretermag.com/zelenyi-klin-isnt-only-ukrainian-wedge-in-russia-and-some-in-moscow-are-nervous/>. Last accessed 2 March 2015.

²⁹ See fn(3).

³⁰ European Foundation of Human Rights (2013). "Alternative NGO Report on Lithuania's Implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities." http://efhr.eu/hdd/EFHR_Shadow_Report_Lithuania_19_November_2013.pdf. Last accessed 2 March 2015.

³¹ Piotr Maciążek (2015). "Moskwa przygotowuje konflikt hybrydowy z Wilnem. Wykorzysta litewskich Polaków?" ("Moscow is preparing a hybrid conflict with Vilnius. Will it use Lithuania's Poles?"). *Defence24.pl* [published online in Polish 18 February 2015]. http://www.defence24.pl/analiza_moskwa-przygotowuje-konflikt-hybrydowy-z-wilnem-wykorzysta-litewskich-polakow. Last accessed 2 March 2015.

³² For the Wileńska Republika Ludowa Facebook page (in Polish), see: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Wileńska-Republika-Ludowa-Виленская-Народная-Республика/1017190118295964>. Last accessed 2 March 2015. The *Lwowska Republika Ludowa* ("The People's Republic of Lviv") has a similar Polish language Facebook page. The self-proclaimed "people's republic" claims territory in historic Galicia in the area of northwest Ukraine's Lviv Oblast bordering Poland. In April 2014, *The Voice of Russia* published widely-dismissed claims that Poles in Ukraine's Zhytomyrs'ka Oblast were demanding autonomy. [http://sputniknews.com/voiceofrussia/2014_04_24/Ukrainian-territories-used-to-belong-to-Poland-turned-into-base-for-the-nationalistic-movement-7324/]. Last accessed 2 March 2014.

government building in Vilnius and demands a plebiscite on the region's autonomy."³³ What may seem like an intemperate comment comes only a few months after reports:

The conflict between Lithuania and Poland, which share a 104-kilometer (65-mile) border, has escalated over the past two weeks after Poland's ambassadors to Lithuania and Latvia criticized the treatment of ethnic Poles in the local media. Lithuania's Foreign Ministry responded that the statements [that 'Polish Foreign Minister Radula Sikorski said Lithuania failed to live up to commitments to ethnic Poles and Polish investors'] were inaccurate and inappropriate for diplomats.³⁴

What if...?

We see NATO's airplanes, we hear them overhead, and it reassures us a bit—but will they really protect us? [T]hese thoughts keep coming into my head: What if...?³⁵
-unnamed Lithuanian citizen.

In late January, the Lithuanian Defense Ministry published a manual titled, *What you need to know: emergency preparedness and readiness in times of war*.³⁶ Marijus Girša wrote a skeptical commentary in the conservative daily, *Lietuvos Žinios*:

The word 'threat' has become part of our everyday [...] Popular news portals race to interpret everything that might be harmful as imminent threats, and politicians speak menacingly of them. [...] The [Defense Ministry's] publication was presented as a valuable, 100-page booklet full of specific, concrete advice about what to do if war breaks out. Some of it is supposed to be 'effective in fighting the enemy's use of so-called hybrid methods of war'. So, we'll whip our enemies with this booklet, but what the Defense Minister says is most important is to keep a cool head and don't panic.³⁷

Girša continues with an allusion to a recent incident in the Lithuanian port of Klaipėda³⁸ in which a suburban home was defaced by anti-Russian graffiti.³⁹ The property belongs to the daughter of Seimas⁴⁰ member Irina Rozova. She sits as a member of the Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania, a political party that caucuses with another party, the Union of Russians in Lithuania.⁴¹ Calling the incident "an ugly and pathetic provocation," Rozova alleged it was retribution for attending a rally

³³ "Suma wszystkich strachów. Litwa drży przed 'zielonymi ludzikami' z Rosji" ("The sum of all fears. Lithuania trembles before 'the little green men' from Russia"). *Forsal.pl* [published online in Polish 21 February 2015]. <http://forsal.pl/artykuly/854772,suma-wszystkich-strachow-litwa-drzy-przed-zielonymi-ludzikami-z-rosji.html>. Last accessed 2 March 2015.

³⁴ "Lithuanian Premier Says Poland Making 'Hurtful' Comments." *Bloomberg Business* [published online in English 28 October 2014]. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2010-10-28/lithuania-says-poland-making-hurtful-accusations-as-ethnic-row-escalates>. Last accessed 2 March 2015.

³⁵ Monika Griebeler (2015). "Die litauische Furcht vor Russland" ("Lithuania's fear of Russia"). *Deutsche Welle* [published online in German 24 May 2014]. <http://www.dw.de/die-litauische-furcht-vor-russland/a-17656222>. Last accessed 2 March 2015.

³⁶ Republic of Lithuania Ministry of National Defense (2015). *Ką turime žinoti apie pasirengimą ekstremaliosiomis situacijoms ir karo metui (What you need to know: emergency preparedness and readiness in times of war.)*, <http://www.transp.lt/files/uploads/katurimezinoti.pdf>. Last accessed 27 February 2015. Other translators state the manual's title as "How To Act In Extreme Situations or Instances of War."

³⁷ Marijus Girša (2015). "Populiariausių grėsmių dešimtukas" ("The ten most popular threats"). *Lietuvos Žinios* [published online in Lithuanian, 20 January 2015]. <http://lzinios.lt/lzinios/komentarai/populiariausiu-gresmiu-desimtukas/195125>. Last accessed 27 February 2015.

³⁸ Klaipėda was incorporated into the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1945. The leading ice-free port in the Eastern Baltic area, Klaipėda was the Soviet Union's primary European marine facility. It featured a commercial seaport, important shipyards, and facilities to ferry military equipment and personnel. The city was alternately part of Lithuanian *Klaipėdos kraštas* and Prussian *Memelland* for nearly 800 years. In the past century, it belonged to Lithuania except for two periods when it was part of the Weimar Republic's Free Prussian State (1918-1920); and later, annexed by Nazi Germany (1939-1945). Hitler spoke in Klaipėda (Memel) on 24 March 1939, the day after the Lithuanian government acceded to a German ultimatum.

³⁹ The incident involved a spray painted Soviet-era red star and the slogans *Rusai eik namo* ("Russians go home"), *Laisvė Lietuvai* ("Freedom for Lithuania"), and *Rusai ne* ("No to Russians") on the home of Rozova's daughter, Valeria Ščerbinė. See: "Seimo narės dukters namas ištepliotas antirusiškais užrašais" ("Member of Parliament's daughter's house defaced with anti-Russian inscriptions"). *Žinios.lt* [published online in Lithuanian 29 January 2015]. <http://zinios.tv3.lt/lietuva/zinia/2015/01/29/seimo-nares-dukters-namas-istepliotas-antirusiskais-uzrasais> Last accessed 27 February 2015.

⁴⁰ The Seimas [Lithuanian: *Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas*] is Lithuania's unicameral parliament.

⁴¹ The Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania [(Lithuanian: *Lietuvos lenkų rinkimų akcija (LLRA)*. Polish: *Akcja Wyborcza Polaków na Litwie (AWPL)*] is a center-right political party representing the interests of ethnic Poles, who represent some 7 percent of Lithuania's population. Two years after

the previous day to commemorate the seventieth anniversary Klaipėda's liberation from Nazi occupation by the Soviet Army. Eugenijus Gentvilas, a European Parliament member, said he "doesn't rule out the possibility that the perpetrators are associated with external forces who accuse everyone of fascism except themselves."⁴² Former Minister of National Defense Rasa Juknevičienė claimed the vandalism was transparently a Russian provocation, "since it was in every sense only useful to them."⁴³ With "misinformation and propaganda that are part on an ongoing information war," Klaipėda's mayor, Vytautas Grubliauskas, said the incident "has nothing to do with Lithuania and inter-ethnic relations in Klaipėda."⁴⁴

Girša concludes his commentary with this observation:

Let's not fool ourselves. No books or practical advice will help us identify and combat real threats if we can't overcome our inner demons. After all, they pose the greatest threat.⁴⁵

Those "inner demons" were in full display elsewhere. Some claimed the Klaipėda incident was a provocation intent on showing that Russians are "a disadvantaged minority in Lithuania."⁴⁶ Arvydas Anušauskas⁴⁷ dismissed the incident as "a puppet show, where we only see and hear what they want us to." Anušauskas' "they" is Russia's foreign intelligence service, the SVF,⁴⁸ which he claimed uses ethnic minorities to inflame the political situation in Lithuania. "The slogans weren't professional," he said, "Next time, they'll have to write in proper Lithuanian." He speculated the perpetrators were likely affiliated with the Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania (known by the acronym "LLRA") or its ally, the Union of Russians in Lithuania (known by the acronym "LRS"), either of which might expect to gain "a political advantage."⁴⁹

Valiuškevičiūtė's *Lyrta*s article continues that "At almost the same time" as the Klaipėda incident:

The People's Republic of Vilnius started a Facebook page that openly talks about the need for 'little green men'⁵⁰ in the Vilnius region. You ask why? In order to protect the interests of Vilnius' Polish minority.⁵¹

increasing its seats in the Seima from 3 to 8 in the 2012 election, the LLRA was exited from the then-five party governing bloc in August 2014. The LLRA was not formed as a parliamentary party, so its Seimas members traditionally caucus with the Union of Russians in Lithuania [Lithuanian: *Lietuvos rusų sąjunga* (LRS). Russian: Союз русских Литвы. Russian transl.: *Soyuz russkikh Litvy*], with which the LLRA has an alliance. The LRS is an ethnic Russian political party which in August 2011 entered into an "agreement on cooperative and collaboration" with the branch of the political party United Russia in neighboring Kaliningrad. [see: http://wikileaks.org/gifiles/docs/28/2886103_re-eurasia-lithuania-europe-lithuanian-russian-union-united.html. Last accessed 27 February 2015] Russian President Dmitry Medvedev appointed the leader of United Russia's Kaliningrad branch, Nikolay Tsukanov, governor of Kaliningrad Oblast in August 2010. Kaliningrad Oblast is a Russian Baltic Sea exclave sandwiched between Lithuania and Poland.

⁴² "Ant Seimo narės dukters namo sienos – užrašas „rusai eik namo“ ("Member of Parliament's daughter's house painted with inscription 'Russians go home)'). *Alfa.lt* [published online in Lithuanian 29 January 2015]. <http://www.alfa.lt/straipsnis/49796781/ant-seimo-nares-dukters-namo-sienos-uzrasas-rusai-eik-namo>. Last accessed 27 February 2015. The quoted text reads in the original Lithuanian: "Tai yra bjauri ir apgailėtina provokacija. Neatmesčiau galimybės, kad jos organizatoriai gali būti susiję su tomis išorės jėgomis, kurios kaltina fašizmu visus, išskyrus save."

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Girša (2015), *op cit.*

⁴⁶ Evelina Valiuškevičiūtė (2015). "Bandoma supjudyti lietuvius, lenkus ir rusus. Ar pavyks?" ("An attempt to make mischief between Lithuanians, Poles, and Russians. Will it succeed?"). *Lyrta*s.lt [published online in Lithuanian 31 January 2015]. <http://www.lyrtas.lt/lietuvos-diena/aktualijos/bandoma-supjudyti-lietuvius-lenkus-ir-rusus-ar-pavyks.htm>. Last accessed 27 February 2015.

⁴⁷ Anušauskas is a parliamentary member of the Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrats (TS-LKD) group in the Seimas, where he sits on the Committee on National Security and Defense.

⁴⁸ The Foreign Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation [Russian: Служба внешней разведки (СВР). Russian transl.: *Sluzhba vneshney razvedki* (SVR)] is Russia's foreign intelligence agency.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* That being said, the only town with a majority Russian population is Visaginas, a town in northeastern Lithuanian near the three-point border with Latvia and Belarus. Visaginas was purposefully-built in the mid-1970s for workers at the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant on the shores of Lake Visaginas. It was founded as Sniečkus, after Antanas Sniečkus, a former first secretary of the Lithuanian Communist Party. In the 2014 presidential election, a significant majority of Visaginas voters supported the leader of the LLRA, Polish-born candidate Valdemar Tomaševski, instead of the incumbent, Dalia Grybauskaitė, who was reelected.

⁵⁰ The term "little green men" is a Ukrainian colloquialism that refers to seemingly professional soldiers in Russia-style combat uniforms with Russian weapons but without identifying insignia. They first appeared during the March 2014 Crimea crisis, during which President Vladimir Putin denied that they were Russian and claimed they were "local self-defense units." A 30 January 2015 post on the *Wileńska Republika Ludowa* Facebook page exemplifies Valiuškevičiūtė's point: "Polskie zielone ludziki działają na rzecz WRL już od 2011 roku" (Polish little green men have been doing the WRL's the work since 2011").

⁵¹ The Vilnius People's Republic (Polish: *Wileńska Republika Ludowa*)

According to the *Wileńska Republika Ludowa* Facebook page:

We are not 'Russians'. We are not 'Putin's provocateurs'. We are Polish patriots, and as such, we seek cooperation among Lithuania's Poles, Belarusians, and Russians. We strive to throw off the yoke of the chauvinist Samogitian⁵² government that discriminates against minorities and persecutes them.⁵³

The group's views were quickly eschewed by other Lithuanian Poles such as Edward Trusewicz of the Union of Poles in Lithuania, who dismissed it as a "cheap provocation" and "incitement to ethnic hatred."⁵⁴ Anušauskas demanded Lithuania's Prosecutor General identify the persons behind the Polish-language Facebook account, alleging "Russia's special services' methods are evident."⁵⁵

An interesting, if distinctly minority, view cautions against succumbing to hybrid war provocations. In a commentary titled "National Minorities Policy," political scientist Kęstutis Girnius wrote, "You should not overstate the importance of disputes with ethnic minorities, nor rush to a judgment that they indicate disloyalty or the hidden hand of Moscow."⁵⁶ Yet of all the alternatives available to address the grievances of its ethnic minorities, "the Lithuanian government has chosen to ignore them." "Actions like revoking authorization for Russian Culture Day in Vilnius," he continued, "allow Moscow propagandists to say that it was done to limit the rights of Russians and to discriminate against them, that Russians are treated as second-class citizens, and that Russians should understand that Lithuania can never become their homeland." While it is true that the Russian language remains an important tool for spreading Russian influence in the Baltic States, Girnius may have a point. Consider how the Lithuanian government's actions were refracted in the recent *Pravda* commentary:

President Grybauskaitė now wants the Lithuanian Parliament to pass a law to criminalize the act of spreading "hostile propaganda and disinformation," In effect, all anti-Dalia public opinions will henceforth be considered to be anti-Lithuanian and subject to criminal prosecution.⁵⁷

⁵² Samogitia [Lithuanian: *Žemaitija*] is an ethnographic region in northwest Lithuania between Latvia and Russian Kaliningrad.



⁵³ "Прыхільнікі «Віленскай Народнай Рэспублікі» пішучь пра пераслед беларусаў" ("Lithuania: 'Vilnius People's Republic' supporters write about the persecution of Belarusians" Discriminated Poles, Russians, Belarusians' urge to found Vilnius People's Republic"). *Белсат* [published online in Belarusian 3 February 2015]. <http://www.belsat.eu/be/articles/pryhilniki-vilenskaj-narodnaj-respubliki-pishuc-pra-perasled-belarusa/>. Last accessed 28 February 2015. Belsat is a Belarusian state-run satellite television channel. The headline changes (from the original Belarusian and from the Russian-language edition) in Belsat's own English-language translation, which reads "Lithuania: Discriminated Poles, Russians, Belarusians' urge to found Vilnius People's Republic."

⁵⁴ Anna Pawłowska (2015). "Chcą na Wileńszczyźnie "polskich zielonych ludzików". I podszycją się pod legalną organizację" ("They want Polish 'little green men' in Vilnius. I prefer to be a legitimate organization"). *Gazeta Wyborcza* [published online in Polish 2 February 2012]. http://wyborcza.pl/1,75478,17346094,Chca_na_Wilenszczyznie__polskich_zielonych_ludzikow__.html. Last accessed 28 February 2015.

⁵⁵ "Прыхільнікі «Віленскай Народнай Рэспублікі» пішучь пра пераслед беларусаў" ("Lithuania: 'Vilnius People's Republic' supporters write about the persecution of Belarusians" Discriminated Poles, Russians, Belarusians' urge to found Vilnius People's Republic"). *Белсат* [published online in Belarusian 3 February 2015]. <http://www.belsat.eu/be/articles/pryhilniki-vilenskaj-narodnaj-respubliki-pishuc-pra-perasled-belarusa/>. Last accessed 28 February 2015. Belsat is a Belarusian state-run satellite television channel. The headline changes (from the original Belarusian and from the Russian-language edition) in Belsat's own English-language translation, which reads "Lithuania: Discriminated Poles, Russians, Belarusians' urge to found Vilnius People's Republic."

⁵⁶ Kęstutis Girnius (2015). "Tautinių mažumų politika." *Izinius.lt* [published online in Lithuanian 25 June 2014].

<http://izinius.lt/izinius/komentarai/tautiniu-mazumu-politika/182425>. Last accessed 3 March 2015. Regarding Moscow's "hidden hand," one Lithuanian media portal described as "pointless"⁵⁶ the 2014 action by Lithuania's Radio and Television Commission to suspend cable television broadcasts of the Russian stations RTR Planeta and NTV Mir on the grounds that they were disseminating enemy propaganda. See: "Draudimų vėzdas visada smogia kitu galu" ("Prohibitions are a two-ended mace"). *Lrytas.lt* [published online in Lithuanian 9 April 2014].

<http://www.lrytas.lt/komentarai/draudimu-vezdas-visada-smogia-kitu-galu.htm>. Last accessed 3 March 2015. The editorial denunciation of the policy begins, "Šiais laikais nėra kvailiesnio užsiėmimo, nei ką nors drausti. Nesvarbu, ar užsimojama prieš pornografinius filmus, ar prieš Maskvos propagandą" ("Nowadays, there's nothing more senseless than to ban something. Whether it's pornographic films or Moscow propaganda.").

⁵⁷ *Pravda* (2015), *op cit.*

Concluding Thoughts: Lithuania & Russian Kaliningrad

Late evening in the Empire
in a destitute province.

-from Joseph Brodsky's *Lithuanian Nocturne*.

The coercive effect of Russian soft power, in Joseph Nye's words, is the ability to manipulate the agenda of political choices.⁵⁸ That being said, to the question of Lithuania's ethnic minorities:

Russian practices emerge in a context that needs to temper judgments. Much of Russia's influence in the Baltics is inherent, the result of Tsarist and Soviet legacies as much as current policies. Russian diasporas and Russian culture have been part of the social matrix...and the survival of transnational affinities is hardly remarkable.⁵⁹

Even Lenin acknowledged the necessity of demonstrating a minimal amount of conciliation.⁶⁰ The ultimate determiner of whether Lithuania's ethnic Poles and Russians constitute a political wedge may be whether the actions of the Lithuanian government unwittingly conform to Moscow's propaganda narrative.

Encapsulating (albeit unintentionally) Russian exertions to hybridize Lithuanian ethnic minorities as a wedge, Russian publisher Oleg Vavilov proclaimed in 2009, "History is the art of interpretation."⁶¹ Russia, as in the past, purports today to seek security and stability in Europe, if only Russia were granted a sphere of influence. The precise boundaries are negotiable, if the West—and first of all Washington—agree to the Russian interpretation of collective security. A key element in Russia's campaign is the rehabilitation of the 1945 Yalta conference, when Western leaders de facto accepted a Russian sphere of influence in Central and Eastern Europe.⁶² Thus the flurry of references to Yalta, including the existential one directed squarely at Lithuania in the recent *Pravda* commentary, viz., "Had Stalin not persevered at Tehran and Yalta with Churchill and Roosevelt regarding Eastern Europe's post-war borders, the capital of Lithuania still would Kaunas."

The Russian economist Yegor Gaidar wrote in his 2009:

It would be naïve to think that communist regimes simply lost control of the situation and failed to persuade citizens to wait, to be patient [...] For Lithuanians who defended their parliament...their reason for undermining the regime was not a clear cut commitment to building a market economy. They no longer wanted to allow leaders they had not elected and organizations they did not respect to decide their fate.⁶³

Lithuania has achieved a remarkable transformation to democracy in an extraordinarily brief time. It stands in stark contrast to its Russian neighbor, the Kaliningrad Oblast—to which the Lithuanian government advanced a political claim in the 1990s, calling it "the Russian-occupied area of Lithuania"—which two decades ago was being held out as a "Baltic Hong Kong." The reality, as one commentary notes, is less "economic miracle" than a geopolitically brittle "Potemkin village."⁶⁴

Returning in conclusion to the new Lithuanian civil defense booklet, it reminds Lithuanians that hybrid war uses information and psychological attacks to break citizens' will to resist. Here, Ukraine's experience is instructive:

⁵⁸ Joseph S. Nye, Jr. (2004). "The Benefits of Soft Power." <http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/4290.html>. Last accessed 3 March 2015.

⁵⁹ Agnia Grigas (2012). "Legacies, Coercion and Soft power: Russian Influence in the Baltic States." *Chatham House Briefing Paper* REP RSP BP 2012/04, p. 13. http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/public/Research/Russia%20and%20Eurasia/0812bp_grigas.pdf. Last accessed 3 March 2015.

⁶⁰ Carole Fink (1984; 1993). *The Genoa Conference: European Diplomacy, 1921-1922*. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press). p. 55.

⁶¹ Pavel Felgenhauer (2009). "Russian Manipulation of History: 'the Art of Interpretation'." *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 6:161 [published online in English 20 August 2009]. http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=35441&cHash=a63224f74d#.VPXtFyIN38t. Last accessed 3 March 2015.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Yegor Gaidar (2012). *Russia: A Long View*. (Cambridge: MIT Press), p. 209.

⁶⁴ Sergey Sukhankin (2014). "A Story of One Unsuccessful 'Island'. Kaliningrad 1991-2010: from 'Baltic Hong Kong' to the Center dependent entity." *Entre el mar Báltico, el mar Negro*. 1 (December 2014), p. 5. http://ddd.uab.cat/pub/tdevorado/tdevorado_a2014v1n1/tdevorado_a2014v1n1p1.pdf. Last accessed 3 March 2015.

Where Crimea was concerned, rather than overt intervention, [...] propaganda...and subterfuge were more effective [...] in the tangled, precarious landscape of an empire that had never quite finished breaking up.⁶⁵

So, for the Lithuanian nation and for its citizens, the message is clear: "Remember if you're taken hostage that you only have one goal—to survive."⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Anna Arutunyan (2015). *The Putin Mystique*. (Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press), p. 299.

⁶⁶ Republic of Lithuania Ministry of National Defense (2015), *op cit.*, p. 83.