

What can Lithuania offer for its Security?: Foreign Policy Dilemmas in Lithuania's Relations with the United States

Diana Jurgelevičiūtė*

Abstract

Strategic partnership between states is a reciprocal exchange built on mutual commitment. The significance of the United States to Lithuania is unquestionable. However, why should the U.S. care about Lithuania? The emphasis on the U.S. interests and policies allows ignoring the question about Lithuania's engagement and input into the partnership. Therefore, this article asks how does Lithuania contribute to the strategic partnership with the U.S.? To be precise, does Lithuania support and pledge its allegiance to the U.S. when this support goes beyond the limits of direct responsibilities of strategic partner, or even enters into a conflict with other important responsibilities or interests of the state?

Keywords

Lithuanian foreign policy, United States interests, strategic partnership, UN General Assembly, voting.

Introduction

Friendly bilateral ties, close cooperation and strategic partnership, defining relations between Lithuania and the United States (U.S.) for almost two last decades, are generally based on reciprocal national interests as well as benefits; this is an exchange built on mutual commitment¹. If a strategic partnership between states is conceptualised as a reciprocal exchange, the question then arises: What does this partnership give to each side – Lithuania and the U.S.? On one hand,

¹ The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any state governmental entity.

* **Diana Jurgelevičiūtė** holds PhD in Political Science from Vilnius University and is a lecturer at the Institute of International Relations and Political Science at Vilnius University (e-mail: diana.jurgeleviciute@gmail.com).

a small state like Lithuania may be treated as a major beneficiary enjoying ‘the shade of the hegemony’², as it gains vital security assurances from the U.S. On the other hand, it is sometimes highlighted that Lithuania is not the only one that benefits from the partnership. According to the President of the Republic of Lithuania, Dalia Grybauskaitė, ‘on the regional level, the Baltic States have been and will remain strategically important to the U.S.’³.

The significance of the U.S. to Lithuania is unquestionable, however, why should the U.S. care about Lithuania? Taking into account that Lithuania is a small state with very limited resources and capabilities, one looks into the strategic goals of the U.S. There is a reason to believe that the benefits of the bilateral partnership for the States stem not so much from Lithuania’s goodwill or efforts but from the interests of the U.S. as a great power. In other words, the U.S. concerns for Lithuania arise out of its own strategic calculations. However, an emphasis on the U.S. interests and policies allows ignoring the question about Lithuania’s engagement and input into the partnership. What does Lithuania propose to the U.S. when it claims the ‘strategic partnership’?⁴ First, the verb ‘to propose’ is chosen deliberately to indicate the proactive Lithuanian foreign policy, instead of the word ‘to give’, which implies favourable but passive nature of the partner. Second, the question is not merely about the formal and declarative dimension of strategic partnership⁵, but about factual support and active contribution made by Lithuania in the partnership with the States.

Third, there is another good reason to ask what Lithuania is able ‘to propose’ to the U.S. Normally small states seek strategic partnership out of the rational and pragmatic interest to strengthen their international position and increase gains. Even if taking this realist assumption for granted, one cannot ignore that strategic partnerships entail not only egoistic calculations but a normative element⁶ as well,

² Kęstutis Paulauskas, “Lietuva JAV hegemonijos pavėsyje” (Lithuania in the Shadow of the United States Hegemony), *Politologija* 45, (2007): 149–156.

³ “D. Grybauskaitė: Baltijos šalys yra ir išlieka strategiškai svarbios JAV” (D. Grybauskaitė: Baltic States Have Been and Will Remain Strategically Important to the United States), L24.lt, August 29, 2013, <http://l24.lt/politika/item/16972-d-grybauskaite-baltijos-salys-yra-ir-islieka-strategiskai-svarbios-jav>.

⁴ For example, Lithuania’s National security strategies since 2002. From the point of view of the United States see: John F. Tefft, “Lithuania and the United States: an Evolving Partnership”, *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review* 1–2, no 11–12 (2003).

⁵ Krzysztof Bałon, “Co to jest partnerstwo strategiczne?” (What is the Strategic Partnership?), *Biuletyn Polskiego instytutu spraw międzynarodowych* 34 (2001), 413, http://www.pism.pl/files/?id_plik=281.

⁶ Luis Blanco, “Strategic Partnership: a New Form of Association in International Relations”, *Third Global International Studies Conference*, Porto (2011), http://www.wiscnetwork.org/porto2011/papers/WISC_2011-523.pdf.

embedded in affinity and mutual commitment: 'The extraordinary closeness of the subjects comes from the mutual share of common strategic goals, and belief that a long-term cooperation effectively facilitates its implementation'⁷. In short, mutual trust and loyalty are obligatory conditions of a strategic partnership.⁸ Therefore, the assistance that Lithuania is able to offer to its strategic partner indicates its loyalty and reinforces the bilateral partnership.

Of course, the question how Lithuania can strengthen its commitment and ties with the U.S. has been open since the beginning of Lithuania's membership in the NATO in 2004. Lithuania fosters this cooperation, but in most cases this is done primarily out of its own self-interest, based on reasoning of *realpolitik*. For example, the Lithuanian-U.S. strategic partnership was put in practice with joint military exercises in the Baltic region, U.S. support for NATO's Baltic air policing mission operating out of Šiauliai airbase as well as support for the Vilnius-based Energy Security Centre of Excellence⁹. However, the very fact of cooperation and engagement does not reveal much about Lithuania's commitment as a strategic partner as long as this engagement is of service to Lithuania's interests first and foremost. In this article, it is proposed that Lithuania's engagement and commitment to the strategic partner are tested in critical moments, when the U.S. need international support, and Lithuania offers its positive response even without direct, obvious and critical benefits and even if this support requires considerable effort (to do something) or costs (to sacrifice something)¹⁰.

Therefore, this article raises the following question: how does Lithuania contribute to the strategic partnership with the U.S.? To be precise, does Lithuania support and pledge its allegiance to the U.S. when this support goes beyond the limits of direct responsibilities of strategic partner, or even enters into a conflict with other important responsibilities or interests of the state? In order to answer this question, the major task is to identify how Lithuanian foreign policy deals with international issues that are highly relevant to the U.S., but have low relevance to Lithuania itself. The first part of this article is designed to review the existing research on Lithuanian-U.S. relations and to outline the criteria against which Lithuania's

⁷ Lucyna Czechowska, "The Concept of Strategic Partnership as an Input in the Modern Alliance Theory", *The Copernicus Journal of Political Studies* 2, no 4 (2013), 37.

⁸ Czechowska, "Strategic Partnership," 51.

⁹ LR Vyriausybės nutarimas Nr. 347 Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės 2011 metų veiklos ataskaitos pateikimo Lietuvos Respublikos Seimui (Governmental Resolution of the Republic of Lithuania No. 347 – 2011 Report by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania), March, 28, 2012.

¹⁰ Lithuania's participation in the antiterrorist campaign after 9/11 terrorist attacks and interrelated costs, risks and disapproval by other EU countries is a great example of such state behaviour.

contribution to the strategic partnership will be evaluated. Then empirical cases of Lithuania's contribution to the partnership and the support for the U.S. during the year 2004–2014 (a decade after Lithuania's formal membership in the transatlantic community) are explored in greater detail: the second part of the article covers the cases where support to the U.S. requires from Lithuania some additional effort or involves cost, and the third part presents the cases in which the realisation of strategic partnership requires to go beyond Lithuania's obvious foreign policy interests.

Past and present of Lithuania–U.S. relations

The launch of the strategic partnership between Lithuania and the U.S. goes back to the meeting in Washington in 1998, when the Baltic countries and the States signed the Charter of Partnership and Cooperation under which the U.S. committed itself to support Lithuania's aspiration to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). After the NATO enlargement in 2004, the aspiration became a reality, and two approaches about the future of cooperation between Lithuania and the U.S. emerged. The first claimed that efforts must be taken to keep the U.S. interested in Lithuania, and even closer relations with this great power should be developed¹¹. According to this approach, the long-term gains would outweigh the cost, such as contribution with financial and human resources to the U.S. international peacekeeping operations and democracy promotion¹². Geopolitical thinking and theory of realism suggest that Lithuania must bandwagon with the U.S., otherwise it will disappear as an independent actor of international relations¹³. Besides geopolitical reasons for Lithuania to focus on the U.S., the pro-

¹¹ Renatas Norkus, "Lithuania's Foreign and Security Policy Agenda Beyond 2004: Challenges and Opportunities", *Baltic Defence Review* 1, no 9 (2003): 114–125; Linas Linkevičius, "Life after Enlargement", *Baltic Defence Review* 1, no 9 (2003): 102–107; Raimundas Lopata and Nortautas Statkus, "Empires, the World Order and Small States", *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review 2005*, Vilnius: Strategic Research Centre of the General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania (2006): 27–52; Vaidotas Urbelis, "Changes in US Global Strategy and their Implications for Lithuania", *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review 2002*, Vilnius: Strategic Research Centre of the General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania (2003): 37–68; Vaidotas Urbelis, *Lietuvos vieta JAV didžiojoje strategijoje* (The Place of Lithuania in the U. S. Global Strategy) (Vilnius: Generolo Jono Žemaičio Lietuvos karo akademija), 2005; Vilijus Ivanauskas et al., *Lietuvos ir JAV santykių perspektyvos* (The Future of the Lithuania-United States Relations) (Vilnius: Rytų Europos studijų centras), 2014; *Lithuania's Security and Foreign Policy Strategy* (Vilnius: CSIS Eastern Europe Project, IIRPS), 2002.

¹² Lopata and Statkus, "Empires".

¹³ Nortautas Statkus and Kęstutis Paulauskas, *Tarp geopolitikos ir postmoderno: kur link sukti Lietuvos*

American foreign policy of Lithuania was supported with references to historical and cultural links between two countries and a large diaspora of Lithuanian Americans¹⁴. However, when arguing in favour of this cooperation, it was also admitted that the relations between Lithuania and the U.S. have not been settled, well established and straightforward, and there were many policy areas where Lithuania should strengthen its relations with the U.S.¹⁵.

According to the second approach on the future partnership, relations between Lithuania and the U.S. were fragile, thus Lithuania had to better strengthen its cooperation with the European allies¹⁶. It was argued that the U.S. was not the only provider of Lithuania's security, and the focus on the U.S. 'was not adequate to the importance of the U.S. to Lithuania's national identity and security, economic and cultural interests'¹⁷. The security and identity nexus in the Lithuania-U.S. relations indicated that there was no reason to turn to 'coexistence' or 'conflict'; however, it was obvious that 'cooperation' would not transform into 'integration'¹⁸. Here cooperation was treated with caution even when looking from the point of view of national interests, for example, the unconditional support for the George W. Bush's foreign policy, carried out by military means, was considered unwise¹⁹. Moreover, it was argued that Lithuania should focus not only on the security but also on the welfare: such security in the broad sense was provided not by the U.S. and NATO, but by the EU, thus Lithuania should pay more attention to the Western allies in Europe – Germany, France and the United Kingdom – and to defend its interests in the EU²⁰.

The prospects for Lithuania-U.S. relations depend on Lithuania's foreign policy opportunities and interests. The opportunities are mainly affected by 'the U.S. geopolitical code – what interests and in which regions are articulated and defended'²¹. It is upon the will of the U.S. political elite if Europe, Middle East

užsienio politikai? (Between Geopolitics and Postmodernism: Which Way for Lithuania's Foreign Policy) (Vilnius: the General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania), 2008, 36–37.

¹⁴ Norkus, "Lithuania's Foreign," 118.

¹⁵ Ivanauskas et al, *Lietuvos ir JAV*.

¹⁶ Evaldas Nekrašas, "Kritiniai pamąstymai apie Lietuvos užsienio politiką" (Critical Thoughts about Lithuania's Foreign Policy), *Politologija* 54 (2009): 123–142; Statkus and Paulauskas, *Tarp geopolitikos*.

¹⁷ Statkus and Paulauskas, *Tarp geopolitikos*, 39.

¹⁸ Kęstutis Paulauskas, *Kieno saugumas? Kuri tapatybė? Kritinės saugumo studijos ir Lietuvos užsienio politika*, (Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla), 2010, 177–178.

¹⁹ Nekrašas, "Kritiniai pamąstymai," 133–134.

²⁰ Nekrašas, "Kritiniai pamąstymai," 141–142.

²¹ Ivanauskas et al, *Lietuvos ir JAV*, 35.

or Asia will become a top priority region, and whether their decisions concerning international security will be made unilaterally or in multilateral forums.

Due to the Lithuania's status as a small state and the global scale of U.S. interests, relations between these two countries are often perceived and addressed not on a bilateral arena, but in various multilateral and regional contexts: what is the impact of the clash between the American, European and Russian interests on Lithuania's foreign and security policy²²; how do Lithuania and other Central and Eastern European countries act as influence agents of the U.S. against Russia and the EU²³; how does Lithuania act in the context of U.S.-Russia relations as the only country capable of and interested in balancing Russia's influence in the Baltic countries²⁴; how can the U.S. role in the NATO explain the U.S. position towards Lithuania and other countries in the region (when the Alliance is a key instrument of the U.S. foreign policy in the region)²⁵, etc.

To sum up, situations and cases when Lithuania's voice could be important to the U.S., the following policy areas should be outlined: first, Lithuania's influence on the EU decisions concerning the transatlantic partnership, second, Lithuania's support for the U.S. policy in Eurasia, third, Lithuania's participation in the international operations, and development of economic relations²⁶. The issues of great interest in relations with Lithuania have been outlined in U.S. official statements: these are global defence and security, global development, economic, energy and environmental cooperation, educational and cultural ties²⁷. Lithuania's

²² Lopata and Statkus, "Empires"; Egidijus Motieka, Nortautas Statkus and Jonas Daniliauskas, "Global Geopolitical Developments and Opportunities for Lithuania's Foreign Policy", *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review 2004*, Vilnius: Strategic Research Centre of the General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania (2005): 27–66; Kęstutis Paulauskas, *JAV gynybos pramonės raida ir poveikis santykiams su Europa* (The Development of the U. S. Defense Industry and the Implications on Relations with Europe) (Vilnius: Lietuvos Respublikos Krašto apsaugos ministerijos Leidybos ir informacinio aprūpinimo tarnyba), 2004.

²³ Česlovas Laurinavičius, Egidijus Motieka and Nortautas Statkus, *Baltijos valstybių geopolitikos bruožai. XX amžius* (The Geopolitical Features of the Baltic States) (Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos instituto leidykla), 2005.

²⁴ Laurinavičius, Motieka and Statkus, *Baltijos valstybių*, 226–227.

²⁵ Urbelis, *Lietuvos vieta JAV*, 32; Evaldas Nekrašas, "NATO globalioje saugumo architektūroje" (NATO in the Global Security Architecture), in *Beieškant NATO Lietuvoje: pasiekimai, nesėkmės, perspektyvos* (In Search of NATO in Lithuania: Achievements, Failures, and Prospects), eds. Dovilė Jakniūnaitė and Kęstutis Paulauskas (Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2010), 180–195.

²⁶ Urbelis, *Lietuvos vieta JAV*, 159–162, 171–175; Vaidotas Urbelis, "U. S. Strategy Towards Lithuania: a Regional Approach", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review* 1–2, no 11–12 (2003), 54–55.

²⁷ "Fact Sheet: The United States and Lithuania – NATO Allies and Global Partners", *Statements & Releases*, The White House President Barack Obama, August 30, 2013, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/08/30/fact-sheet-united-states-and-lithuania-nato-allies-and-global-partners>; "Fact Sheet: The United States and Lithuania – NATO Allies and Global Partners", *Statements &*

neighbourhood with Belarus and Kaliningrad region of Russia, Lithuanian initiatives to reduce Russian influence in the post-Soviet space, the support for the U.S. anti-missile defence system in Europe, to name a few factors in the development of the partnership, are of high importance to the U.S. However, these issues have been even more relevant for Lithuania's national security. Meanwhile, as mentioned above, the viability of strategic partnership emerges in critical moments when partners' policies diverge and states face serious dilemmas; in our case, these are moments when Lithuania must choose one of several equally important alternatives – either to back the U.S. or leave its strategic partner behind.

The analysis of Lithuania's allegiance to the U.S. as the strategic partner focuses on three instances of state action: Lithuania supports, does not support or does nothing to support the U.S. Doing nothing or abstaining from the direct support can also suggest (although not so strongly as in the first two cases) that Lithuania discreetly supports or opposes the U.S. (depending on the case). When Lithuania supports the U.S. foreign policy, the following options are possible: (a) Lithuania supports the U.S. when it makes no difference to Lithuania's interests (there is no cost or benefit); (b) Lithuania supports the U.S. in spite of significant consequences – political disagreements with other countries or any other costs (financial, human resources, etc.).

Since Lithuania is an EU member, most pressing dilemmas that may challenge Lithuania's strategic partnership with the U.S. can be provoked by the U.S.-EU disputes. The notable example was the clash between U.S. and Europe over the intervention in Iraq in 2003, when 'the transatlantic rift thus made its appearance as a crack within Europe itself'²⁸ dividing the pro-American and anti-American countries: the Central and Eastern European countries regarded the U.S. as the main security provider and 'they do not believe that European "core" nations, though also members of NATO, would have either the will or the power to come to their defence in case of need'²⁹. Thus the analysis with the focus on foreign policy dilemmas enables to identify the 'substantial content' of the U.S.-Lithuania strategic partnership, and to move beyond addressing the partnership in terms of the needs of and the benefits to the Lithuanian security and foreign policy.

Releases, The White House President Barack Obama, September 3, 2014, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/03/fact-sheet-united-states-and-lithuania-nato-allies-and-global-partners>.

²⁸ Algirdas Degutis, "The Transatlantic Rift: Ideological Roots and Implications for Central and Eastern Europe", *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review 2005*, Vilnius: Strategic Research Centre of the General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania (2006), 23.

²⁹ Degutis, "The Transatlantic Rift," 23.

In order to explain what type of action Lithuania has chosen towards the U.S. in critical moments, the next section, first, provides insights into the disagreements between the U.S. and Europe (the EU or its particular member states) which put Lithuania into dilemmas of strategic partnership; second, the section analyses cases of Lithuania's support or opposition to the U.S. when Lithuania bore no apparent national interest in such support or opposition. For this purpose, it is difficult to discover public debates and speeches that reveal the position of Lithuania towards the American partner. Thus the data on Lithuania's voting practice on issues of great importance to the U.S. in the United Nations General Assembly in 2004–2013 is analysed.

Coordination of interests

This section outlines challenges in the U.S.–Lithuania relations in 2004–2014. The cases represent instances when the U.S. had some expectations related to Lithuania's foreign policy decisions, and that had challenged Lithuania to balance international commitments with national interests. The cases are presented in the following order: regulation of transatlantic partnership, sanctions policy, regulations of military missions and the question of Palestine.

Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership Agreement

The negotiations about the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) agreement between the U.S. and the EU began in 2013, and this was one of the major topics during the Lithuanian Presidency of the EU Council. The most active supporters of the agreement were Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom, and France was the leading opponent³⁰. The U.S. had two reasons to encourage European countries to seal the TTIP deal: they aimed to address own domestic economic and social problems and to increase their capacity in the future competition with emerging economies in Asia³¹. The

³⁰ Susi Dennison et al., *European Foreign Policy Scorecard 2014* (London: ECFR), 2014, http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR94_SCORECARD_2014.pdf.

³¹ "U.S. Objectives, U.S. Benefits In the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership: A Detailed View", *Fact Sheets*, Office of the United States Trade Representative, March, 2014, <http://www.ustr.gov/about-us/press-office/press-releases/2014/March/US-Objectives-US-Benefits-In-the-TTIP-a-Detailed-View>.

representatives from the American Chamber of Commerce to the European Union had a straightforward message to the Lithuanian Government: ‘We suggest [...] to maintain the political momentum in the negotiations on TTIP’³².

Lithuania had a positive attitude towards the TTIP agreement as it was seen to stimulate economic growth both in the EU and the U.S. Therefore, according to President Grybauskaitė, ‘Lithuania will do its best to conclude the negotiations as soon as possible’³³. The Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania regarded the contract as a tool to strengthen the transatlantic cooperation, because ‘the strengthening of the transatlantic connection is an important contribution to the European security’³⁴.

However, despite the perceived potential economic gains, the TTIP agreement challenged Lithuania to choose between the national, European and U.S. interests. Namely, the TTIP agreement could prompt to revise the EU restrictions on production, labelling and marketing of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and one of the U.S. claims was to allow the import of products containing GMO to the EU. The use of GMOs is regulated by the national governments, thus the success of the U.S.–EU deal on the matter and Lithuania’s firm position against GMOs could reduce its own economic competitiveness³⁵. Despite this and the interests of the U.S., Lithuania took the so-called conservative approach: since 2010 Lithuania supported the restriction or prohibition of the use of GMO in the EU debates and has repeatedly spoken against GMO in the EU Environmental Council³⁶. However, in discussions with the U.S. or negotiations on the TTIP, Lithuania did not bring this question up. Perhaps it was expected that Lithuania’s interests will be defended by the EU: according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

³² Greta Jankaitytė, “Iššūkis Lietuvai – ES ir JAV laisvos prekybos sutartis” (A Challenge to Lithuania – EU-U. S. Free Trade Agreement), *Ekonomika.lt*, June 2, 2013, <http://ekonomika.balsas.lt/naujiena/issukis-lietuvai-es-ir-jav-laisvos-prekybos-sutartis-39732.html#ixzz3KZNw9TWy>.

³³ “D. Grybauskaitė: Baltijos šalys yra”.

³⁴ “Nuomonė dėl Europos Sąjungos–Rusijos santykių” (Opinion on European Union–Russia Relations), LR Seimo užsienio reikalų komitetas, Vilnius, October 17, 2014, <http://www3.lrs.lt/docs2/SMIEFATH.PDF>.

³⁵ “Ekonominę stagnaciją įveiks prekybos tarp JAV ir ES liberalizavimas?” (Can the Trade Liberalization Between the US and the EU Overcome Economic Stagnation?), *Veidas.lt*, July 25, 2013, <http://www.veidas.lt/ekonomine-stagnacija-iveiks-prekybos-tarp-jav-ir-es-liberalizavimas>.

³⁶ Auksė Skiparytė, “Siūloma skelbti moratoriumą genetiškai modifikuotiems organizmams” (Call for the Ban of Genetically Modified Products), *PolitikosAktualijos.lt*, April 16, 2009, <http://www.politikosaktualijos.lt/archyvas/siuloma-skelbti-moratoriuma-genetiskai-modifikuotiems-organizmams/>; “Lietuva nekeičia pozicijos dėl GMO” (Lithuania does not Change Opinion on GMO), *GMO genetiškai modifikuotų organizmų informacinė sistema*, LR aplinkos ministerijos interneto svetainė, January 27, 2014, <http://gmo.am.lt/page?page=newsItem&id=9d2c34e4-7201-4242-a3b6-11b46d761075>.

‘leaders of the European Union have assured us that the EU quality standards are not negotiable and they will not be reduced’³⁷.

Another issue that became relevant during the TTIP negotiations was data protection. The EU and the U.S. have an agreement on rules of personal data storage and privacy, but, because of different treatment of data protection regulations, transatlantic disagreements emerged about the Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme and the system of airline passenger name retention³⁸. Lithuania has ratified the EU-U.S. agreement on Passenger Name Record Data Transfer in 2008. This was important to the U.S. as the agreement had to be ratified by all EU member states so that the U.S. could cooperate with the EU in combating the threat of terrorism. It was important for Lithuania to support the U.S. as it still struggled for a positive decision on a visa-free travel to the States (and joined the Visa Waiver Program the same year). Therefore, no significant discussion arose in Lithuania, in contrast to its strong reaction to the EU’s attempts to consider the possibility of collecting data on airline passengers³⁹.

The agreement on data protection became relevant once again in the context of the TTIP deal after the disclosure of the U.S. mass surveillance programs that did not bypass the European allies. The EU has warned the U.S. about the possibility to revise the agreement on exchange of data and promised to ensure that the EU data protection standards would not be reduced in the negotiations on the TTIP⁴⁰. According to the European Commission, information about the surveillance activities of the U.S. ‘has had a negative impact on the transatlantic

³⁷ “Artėjant laisvos prekybos sutarčiai tarp Europos Sąjungos ir Amerikos svarbiausia – būti pasirėngusiems” (It is Important to be Prepared as the Negotiations for the Free Trade Agreement Come to an End), *Politika*, Ekonaujienos.lt, April 17, 2014, http://www.ekonaujienos.lt/naujienos/politika_ir_visuomene/politika/S-426/straipsnis/Artejant-laisvos-prekybos-sutarčiai-tarp-Europos-Sąjungos-ir-Amerikos-svarbiausia--buti-pasirengusiems.

³⁸ “Europos Komisija ES ir JAV duomenų apsaugos susitarimu siekia užtikrinti aukštus privatumo standartus” (European Commission Aims to Ensure High Standards of Privacy with the EU-U. S. Data Protection Agreement), *Press Release Details*, European Commission Press Release Database, May, 26, 2010, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-10-609_Lt.htm.

³⁹ “Seimas įtariai žiūri į sumanymą kaupti duomenis apie lėktuvų keleivius” (Seimas is Suspicious about the Collection of Data on Airline Passengers), *Alfa.lt* (BNS), October 21, 2008, <http://www.alfa.lt/straipsnis/202895/>.

⁴⁰ “JAV ir ES pradėjo įtemptas derybas dėl prekybos ir šnipinėjimo” (The U. S.-EU Talks on Trade and Surveillance Have Begun), *Delfi.lt* (BNS), July 9, 2013, <http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/world/jav-ir-es-pradejo-itemptas-derybas-del-prekybos-ir-snipinejimo.d?id=61808625#ixzz3KuHSIRi2>; “European Parliament Resolution of 4 July 2013 on the US National Security Agency Surveillance Programme, Surveillance Bodies in Various Member States and Their Impact on EU Citizens’ privacy”, European Parliament, July 4, 2013, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0322+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>.

relations⁴¹. France urged to postpone negotiations on the TTIP deal. Lithuania's local deliberations and critical statements (for example, by members of the National Security and Defence Committee of Seimas⁴²) about the U.S. program of spying on allies were relatively moderate and did not reach the international public.

Here Lithuania's stance was favourable to the strategic partner because Lithuania did not raise 'uncomfortable' questions and urged other allies to meet at the negotiating table: 'Lithuania has taken urgent steps to initiate a dialogue with the U.S. on data protection'⁴³. Calls to stop TTIP negotiations because of the revealed U.S. surveillance program were named as 'irresponsible' by the Lithuanian foreign minister Linas Linkevičius who declared the TTIP agreement to be Lithuania's top priority⁴⁴. According to Lithuanian President Grybauskaitė, 'the transatlantic partnership is, was and will be important. [...] it is necessary to find the right balance between personal data protection [...] and international security issues'⁴⁵.

To sum up, during the U.S. and the EU negotiations on the TTIP deal Lithuania had to balance many issues. Lithuania was an active supporter of the TTIP but had to consider compromises on the regulation of GMOs. Although during the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU Lithuania was obliged to make the statement on data protection and information security, this duty also allowed the state to hide behind the veil of a 'neutral mediator' – the role required by the Presidency status (nevertheless, by that time Lithuania had already ratified the EU agreement on the data transfer favourable to the U.S.).

⁴¹ "European Commission Calls on the U.S. to Restore Trust in EU-U.S. Data Flows", *Press Release Details*, European Commission Press Release Database, November 27, 2013, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-1166_en.htm.

⁴² Vytautas Valentiničius, "JAV žvalgybos užmojai siutina Europą, lietuviai nuolankiai tyli" (US Intelligence Ambitions Infuriate Europe, Lithuanians Stay in Humble Silence), *Lrytas.lt*, June 12, 2013, <http://www.lrytas.lt/pasaulis/ivykiai/jav-zvalgybos-uzmojai-siutina-europa-lietuviai-nuolankiai-tyli.htm?p=2>.

⁴³ "Atvira Europa" (Open Europe), *Pranešimai spaudai*, Lietuvos pirmininkavimas ES Tarybai 2013, January 8, 2014, <http://www.eu2013.lt/lt/atvira-europa>.

⁴⁴ "NSA Scandal: 'Stopping TTIP Negotiations is Irresponsible', Argues Lithuanian Foreign Minister", *Video gallery*, Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2013, November 8, 2013, <http://www.eu2013.lt/en/video/nsa-scandal-stopping-ttip-negotiations-is-irresponsible-argues-lithuanian-foreign-minister>.

⁴⁵ "Prezidentė: transatlantinė partnerystė svarbi, nepaisant pranešimų apie JAV šnipinėjimus" (President: the Transatlantic Partnership is Important Despite Reports of US Spying), *Žinių radijas*, October 25, 2013, <http://www.ziniuradijas.lt/naujiena/2013/10/25/prezidente-transatlantine-partneryste-svarbi-nepaisant-pranesimu-apie-jav-snipinejimus/25158>.

The arms embargo on China

In 2003–2005, the EU considered lifting the arms embargo against China that operated since 1989⁴⁶. After Lithuania entered the EU, it had to decide which group of countries – the U.S. or the EU – it would support on this issue because the States opposed the idea of lifting the arms embargo. The High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, described the arms embargo as ‘unfair’ and ‘anachronistic’⁴⁷. The idea to lift the embargo was promoted by France and Germany in order to improve trade relations with China (although they changed their opinion later), as well as by Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Greece, Italy and the United Kingdom, and Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden opposed⁴⁸. France demanded the voting to take place before the EU enlargement: in order to lift the arms embargo, the unanimous decision of the EU member states was needed, and it was feared that the new pro-American EU members will compromise the vote⁴⁹. The decision to lift the arms embargo was to be adopted in 2005, but failed when the United Kingdom and other countries refused to accept it⁵⁰. The U.S. opposed the lifting of the arms embargo against China, since it would increase the regional instability and ignore human rights issues. There were indications that the U.S. may restrict military cooperation with Europe in the case of policy revision: U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Political and Military Affairs John Hillen cautioned that any action by the EU to lift its arms embargo against China would ‘raise a major obstacle to future U.S. defence cooperation with Europe’⁵¹.

⁴⁶ See Martynas Lukoševičius, “European Union Sanctions Policy”, *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review* 2009–2010, Vilnius: Strategic Research Center of the General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania (2010): 81–112.

⁴⁷ Greg Austin, *The 1989 China Arms Ban: Putting Europe’s Position to Congress* (London: Foreign Policy Centre, 2005), <http://fpc.org.uk/fsblob/444.pdf>.

⁴⁸ Andrew Rettman, “Leaked Cable Shows Fragility of EU Arms Ban on China”, *China–EU Relations*, EUobserver.com, July 25, 2011, <http://euobserver.com/china/32658>.

⁴⁹ Frank Ching, “Changing Dynamics In EU-China Arms Relations”, *China Brief* 4, no 5 (2004), [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=3631&no_cache=1#.VH3KyGcafAM](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=3631&no_cache=1#.VH3KyGcafAM).

⁵⁰ Frans Paul van der Putten, “The EU Arms Embargo, Taiwan, and Security Interdependence Between China, Europe and the United States”, *The Indian Journal of Asian Affairs* (2007): 1–9, http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/20070700_cscp_art_putten.pdf.

⁵¹ Edward Alden and Demetri Sevastopulo, “Lugar Threat on EU Arms Sales to China”, *Financial Times*, February 21, 2005, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/4750f584-83ad-11d9-bee3-00000e2511c8.html#axzz3KkXx456V>; “U.S. Opposes Any Lifting of EU Embargo on Arms Sales to China”, IIP Digital, November 8, 2005, <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2005/11/20051108163611tjkcollub0.6486322.html#axzz3KkUuBs5K>.

Lithuania discussed the lifting of arms embargo against China in meetings with the U.S. representatives⁵². The state found itself in quite a complicated situation. Voting 'against' the lifting of embargo would have discredited the initiative of the 'old' EU member states. However, voting 'in favour' could jeopardise relations with the U.S. and also have a direct negative impact on the security of Lithuania, if the U.S. were to decide to restrict their defence cooperation with the EU countries and Lithuania. Finally, Lithuania has chosen to support the major EU states, and Lithuanian diplomats unofficially declared that 'Lithuania would not destroy the consensus in the EU on the arms embargo against China, if such consensus was reached'⁵³. The under-secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Albinas Januška, was even more straightforward, he doubted whether the lifting of the arms embargo was in the interests of Lithuania's security, and assumed, that 'Lithuania "would be raped" to accept the lifting of arms embargo against China, because it was important to the French and German interests'⁵⁴. After the meeting with the Chinese foreign minister Li Zhaoxing, the Lithuanian foreign minister Antanas Valionis declared that it was 'upon the European Union to decide when and under what conditions the embargo would be lifted'⁵⁵.

On the one hand, the transfer of responsibility to the EU was advantageous to Lithuania in relations with both the U.S. and China, and it came out as a surprise for the 'old' EU countries that feared the unconstructive behaviour of the new pro-American member states. On the other hand, being aware that some EU countries opposed the lifting of the arms embargo and thus precluded the consensus, Lithuania could be more supportive to the U.S. approach without the apprehension of compromising the European initiative.

⁵² "G. Kirkilui suprantamas JAV nerimas dėl galimo ES ginklų embargo Kinijai atšaukimo" (G. Kirkilas Understands the US Concerns About Lifting the EU Arms Embargo Against China), Delfi.lt (BNS), March 16, 2005, <http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/world/gkirkilui-suprantamas-jav-nerimas-del-galimo-es-ginklu-embargo-kinijai-atsaukimo.d?id=6266202>; "Lietuvos krašto apsaugos ministras susitiko su JAV gynybos sekretoriumi" (Lithuanian Defence Minister met the US Secretary of Defence), *Naujienų archyvas*, LR krašto apsaugos ministerijos interneto svetainė, March 16, 2005, http://www.kam.lt/lt/naujienos_874/archyvas_930/ziniu_archyvas_2005_metai/ziniu_archyvas_2005_-_03/lietuvos_krasto_apsaugos_ministras_susitiko_su_jav_gynybos_sekretoriumi.html?pbck=20.

⁵³ "G. Kirkilui suprantamas JAV nerimas".

⁵⁴ "A. Januška: per pastaruosius metus Lietuvos ir ES interesų suvokimas ne kartą išsiskyrė" (A. Januška: in the Past Year There Were Disagreements Between Lithuania and the EU), Bernardinai.lt (BNS), May 11, 2005, <http://www.bernardinai.lt/archyvas/straipsnis/13593>.

⁵⁵ "Ginklų embargo Kinijai atšaukimas – ES reikalas" (Lifting Arms Embargo Against China is the EU Business), Zebra.lt (BNS), August 18, 2005, <http://zebra.15min.lt/lt/naujienos/lietuva/ginklu-embargo-kinijai-atsaukimas-es-reikalas-74133.html>.

In 2010–2011 discussions on the lifting of the embargo against China were resumed by the then EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton⁵⁶. The potential supporters included France and Spain, as well as Greece, Malta, Romania, Bulgaria and possibly Cyprus⁵⁷; the United Kingdom and other countries were in opposition⁵⁸. The U.S. confirmed that it still upheld the Hillen's policy stance, expressed back in 2005, to limit their military cooperation with Europe if the EU lifted the embargo.

Lithuania's position on the arms embargo against China was not traceable in the renewed public debate. Such a stance and former humble Lithuanian support to the EU (despite having a different policy position) could indicate that Lithuania did not support the U.S. on this matter.

Trade embargo against Cuba

The U.S. imposed and extended economic sanctions against Cuba in 1960–1962⁵⁹, and although in 2009 the States eased some restrictions, they still hold to the position not to recall sanctions until the Cuban regime takes the path of change⁶⁰. In contrast, the EU believes that changes in Cuba should be encouraged by establishing closer cooperation, and urges the U.S. to lift the embargo. In 2008, the EU lifted economic sanctions against Cuba, imposed since 2003, and resumed a dialogue with the Cuban government⁶¹.

Most of the states around the world do not support the U.S. sanctions against Cuba. In 2013, the UN General Assembly voted for the resolution to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba for the 22nd consecutive

⁵⁶ Andrew Rettman, "Ashton pragmatic on China in EU foreign policy blueprint", *China–EU Relations*, EUobserver.com, December 17, 2010, <http://euobserver.com/china/31538>.

⁵⁷ Charlemagne, "The EU and Arms for China", *EU China arms embargo*, Economist.com, February 1, 2010, http://www.economist.com/blogs/charlemagne/2010/02/eu_china_arms_embargo.

⁵⁸ Sally McNamara, Walter Lohman, "EU's Arms Embargo on China: David Cameron Must Continue to Back the Ban", *WebMemo #3097 on China*, The Heritage Foundation, January 18, 2011, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2011/01/eus-arms-embargo-on-china-david-cameron-must-continue-to-back-the-ban>.

⁵⁹ Gary Clyde Hufbauer et. al., "Case Studies in Economic Sanctions and Terrorism: Case 60-3 US v. Cuba (1960–: Castro)", Peterson Institute for International Economics (2011), <http://www.iie.com/publications/papers/sanctions-cuba-60-3.pdf>.

⁶⁰ Mark Tran, "EU Scraps Sanctions Against Cuba", *Theguardian.com*, June 20, 2008, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/jun/20/cuba.eu>.

⁶¹ Jan Grauls, "EU Statement – United Nations General Assembly: US Embargo Against Cuba", Statement on behalf of the European Union, New York, October 26, 2010, http://eu-un.europa.eu/articles/en/article_10266_en.htm.

year: only Israel supported the States (three other microstates abstained), and the remaining 188 voted in favour⁶². In the UN General Assembly Lithuania supports the lifting of the economic embargo against Cuba, and its policy towards Cuba is guided by the European Council's common position, which regulates the EU's relations with Cuba since 1996⁶³.

In 2007, Cuba initiated diplomatic cooperation with Lithuania, and in the same year the resolution to establish diplomatic relations with Cuba was registered in the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania. However, the relations were not established until the debate resumed in 2013: Lithuania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that Lithuania was the only EU country that had not established diplomatic relations with Cuba. This was important because Lithuania was preparing for the Presidency of the Council of the EU and could not ignore that 'the EU is Cuba's second most important trading partner and the biggest investor in the country'; the state also aimed to be elected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, and Cuba could cast the vote in favour of Lithuania⁶⁴. Members of the parliamentary opposition from the Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrats party opposed cooperation with Cuba as this, in their opinion, would have contradicted the priorities of Lithuania's Presidency of the Council and would have undermined Lithuania's relations with the U.S., thus the U.S. had to be consulted before carrying out such actions and policy revisions⁶⁵.

However, the fear that the diplomatic relations with Cuba would harm Lithuanian relations with the U.S. was futile in practice. On the 26 September 2013, when diplomatic relations with Cuba were established, Lithuania together with other EU member states' foreign ministers successfully took part in a discussion on international security issues with the U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry⁶⁶. Thus

⁶² "General Assembly Demands End to Cuba Blockade for Twenty-Second Year as Speakers Voice Concern over Impact on Third Countries", United Nations. Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, October 29, 2013, <http://www.un.org/press/en/2013/ga11445.doc.htm>.

⁶³ "URM pareiškimas dėl santykių su Kuba" (MFA Statement on Relations with Cuba), *Naujienos*, LR užsienio reikalų ministerijos interneto svetainė, July 12, 2010, <http://www.urm.lt/default/lt/naujienos/urm-pareiškimas-del-santykiu-su-kuba>.

⁶⁴ "Dėl diplomatinį santykių užmezgimo su Kubos Respublika" (Statement on the Establishment of Relations with Cuba), LR Vyriausybės interneto svetainė, August 20, 2013, http://www.lrv.lt/Posed_medz/2013/130904/19.pdf.

⁶⁵ Audronius Ažubalis, Kęstutis Masiulis and Emanuelis Zingeris, "Lietuvos Respublikos Seimo Užsienio reikalų komiteto narių atskirosi nuomonė" (Dissenting Opinion by the Members of the Seimas Committee on Foreign Affairs), LR Seimo interneto svetainė, July 13, 2013, http://www3.lrs.lt/docs3/kad5/w5_istorija.show5-p_r=4931&p_d=61477&p_k=1.html.

⁶⁶ "Niujorke – ES pareiškimas dėl branduolinio nusiginklavimo, užmegzti diplomatiniai santykiai su dar trimis šalimis" (In New York - The EU Statement on Nuclear Disarmament, Diplomatic Relations

although the economic embargo against Cuba was very important for the U.S., most countries in the world did not support it and Lithuania aligned with them without loss in its strategic partnership.

The arms embargo and military operation in Syria

As noted by George Friedman, ‘one of the most important aspects of the Syrian crisis is what it tells us about the state of U.S.-European relations and of relations among European countries’⁶⁷. In 2013, the United Kingdom and France sought to lift the EU arms embargo that was established on the Syrian rebels in 2011⁶⁸, and also urged Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to begin peace talks. By ensuring the support of Italy and Spain and the neutral position of Germany, the United Kingdom and France have lifted the EU arms embargo against the Syrian opposition (but not against the Syrian regime)⁶⁹. The lifting of arms embargo against rebels was supported by the U.S., although the States supplied the Syrian opposition with only non-lethal weapons⁷⁰. Austria, the Czech Republic, Sweden, Finland and Romania were against the lifting of the arms embargo.

Lithuania also questioned the benefits of lifting the embargo and called for a political solution to the Syrian crisis. According to foreign minister Linkevičius, Lithuania expressed a ‘cautious’ position and a view that more weapons will not bring more security in the region⁷¹. Before the voting in the EU Foreign Affairs

Established with Three Countries), Lietuvos pirmininkavimas ES Tarybai 2013, September 27, 2013, <http://www.eu2013.lt/lt/naujienos/niujorkees-pareiskimas-del-branduolinio-nusiginklavimo-uzmegzti-diplomatiniai-santytkiai-su-dar-trimis-salimis>.

⁶⁷ George Friedman, “The Thin US-European relationship”, Euractive.com, September 26, 2013, <http://www.euractiv.com/global-europe/us-european-relationship-analysis-530725>.

⁶⁸ “EU Arms Embargo on Syria”, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, November 13, 2013, http://www.sipri.org/databases/embargoes/eu_arms_embargoes/syria_LAS/eu-embargo-on-Syria.

⁶⁹ “Council Decision 2013/255/CFSP of May 31, 2013”, EUR-Lex. Access to European Union Law, June 1, 2013, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32013D0255>.

⁷⁰ Charlotte McDonald-Gibson, “Syria Arms Embargo Lifted: Britain and France Force EU to Relax Ban on Supplying Weapons to Rebels”, *The Independent*, May 28, 2011, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/politics/syria-arms-embargo-lifted-britain-and-france-force-eu-to-relax-ban-on-supplying-weapons-to-rebels-8633597.html>; “European Union to Lift Arms Embargo on Syrian Opposition”, Foxnews.com, May 28, 2013, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/05/28/european-union-to-lift-arms-embargo-on-syrian-opposition/>.

⁷¹ “Užsienio reikalų ministras Linas Linkevičius: ‘Arabų pavasaris’ virsta ‘Arabų žiema’” (Foreign Minister Linas Linkevičius: ‘Arab spring’ turns into ‘Arab winter’), 15min.lt (“Laisvoji banga”),

Council, Linkevičius visited Israel and Palestine, and they both emphasised that 'the embargo should stay', while Turkey expressed the opposite stance⁷². When considering the arms embargo against Syria, Lithuania stated that the EU should articulate a coherent position with respect to all existing groups in the region. The Lithuanian position was in line with the provisions of the U.S. At that time the EU considered Hamas (but not Hezbollah's military wing) a terrorist organisation but during the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council in 2013 the Hezbollah's military wing was proclaimed a terrorist organization, too.

Another dilemma for Lithuania arose when considering a response to the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The U.S. called for a military response against the Syrian regime and was supported by France and the United Kingdom (the latter departed after a failure to receive Parliamentary authorisation). Poland refused to support the U.S. and Germany was waiting for the mandate of the UN, the EU or the NATO. The U.S. tried to secure support for the military intervention during the meeting of the EU foreign ministers in Vilnius in autumn 2013⁷³. Even though the EU did not support the direct military intervention, the U.S. Secretary of State Kerry declared that 'There are a number of countries, in the double digits, who are prepared to take military action' and this was more countries than could actually be used 'in the kind of military action being contemplated'⁷⁴.

During the Presidency of the Council of the EU, Lithuania wanted 'the European Union position to be coordinated as much as possible'⁷⁵. The state was cautious, emphasized the search for a common EU solution, aimed to discuss the issue with the U.S. and to coordinate the differences between the EU, at the same time refraining from public statements. According to foreign minister Linkevičius, EU's 'C[atherine] Ashton is authorized to speak about this'⁷⁶. Lithuania urged to

May 29, 2013, <http://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/uzsienio-reikalu-ministras-linas-linkevicius-i-konflikta-sirijoje-zvelgiu-itin-atsargiai-56-339916#ixzz3Kea7dLDv>.

⁷² "Užsienio reikalų ministras Linas Linkevičius".

⁷³ Karen DeYoung, "European Union Backs 'Strong' but not Immediate Response to Syrian Attack", *The Washington Post*, September 7, 2013, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/european-union-backs-strong-but-not-immediate-response-to-syrian-attack/2013/09/07/9761eadc-17d4-11e3-961c-f22d3aaf19ab_story.html.

⁷⁴ "Kerry Says Support for Action Against Syria is Growing", BBC, September 7, 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24004836>.

⁷⁵ Eglė Samoškaitė, "Lietuva irgi turi poziciją dėl Sirijos" (Lithuania Has a Stance on Syria), Delfi.lt, August 28, 2013, <http://www.delfi.lt/news/lithuania/lietuva-irgi-turi-pozicija-del-sirijos.d?id=62184507#ixzz3KaZ8CdSk>.

⁷⁶ Romualdas Bakutis, "Linkevičius: apie Siriją kalbėti turi ne Lietuva, o ES" (Linkevičius: EU Must Talk About Syria not Lithuania), Alfa.lt, September 5, 2013, <http://www.alfa.lt/straipsnis/15152703/linkevicius-apie-sirija-kalbeti-turi-ne-lietuva-o-es#ixzz3KjrNwBJK>.

use political means to solve the Syrian issue, thus in the EU debate showing no active support to the U.S. which called for military means. Diverse attitudes of the EU member states towards the military intervention in Syria and the status of Lithuania as the EU Presidency country allowed Lithuania abstain from exposing which side it supported.

The military operation in Libya

In 2011, international military intervention in Libya was launched. The United Kingdom and France urged to resort to military measures to rescue civilians and stop the regime, however, the U.S. remained undecided initially⁷⁷. When the UN Security Council adopted resolutions on actions in Libya, the U.S., the United Kingdom and France took the lead of the coalition and were joined by Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Italy, Norway, Qatar and Spain. Countries like Germany, Poland, Bulgaria, Sweden, Luxembourg and other refused to contribute to the UN sanctioned mission in Libya, arguing that the objectives of the intervention were ill-defined and the mission was not led by the NATO. Since the beginning of the military actions, the U.S. aimed at conveying the responsibility for the mission to the international community. Thus the U.S. leadership lasted for a short period of time.

Within the few days before the official U.S. statement about military measures to be taken, Lithuanian President Grybauskaitė took part in the meeting of the European Council and said the following in regard to the use of force in Libya: 'Many countries, including Lithuania, assume that this cannot be done without the UN Security Council's resolution and the Arab League's consent'; she also urged the EU 'to prevent the humanitarian crisis'⁷⁸. Lithuania supported the NATO-led military operation in Libya and the propositions of EU's humanitarian operations. Attributing to the lack of resources, Lithuania offered its contribution only to humanitarian missions.

Nevertheless, a month later, a high political resonance followed the public statement of Lithuanian President Grybauskaitė who expressed doubts about

⁷⁷ Madelene Lindström and Kristina Zetterlund, *Setting the Stage for the Military Intervention in Libya. Decisions Made and Their Implications for the EU and NATO* (FOI Atlantic Security – European Crisis Management), 2012, 41–44, <http://www.foi.se/Global/V%C3%A5r%20kunskap/S%C3%A4kerhetspolitiska%20studier/Europa%20och%20Nordamerika/foir3498.pdf>.

⁷⁸ "Lietuvos Respublikos Prezidentė Dalia Grybauskaitė dalyvavo neeilinėje Europos Vadovų Taryboje Briuselyje" (Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė Participated in the Meeting of the European Council in Brussels), *Prezidentės veikla*, LR Prezidentūros interneto svetainė, March 11, 2011, http://www.president.lt/lt/prezidento_veikla/vizitai/uzsienyje/2011_m._kovo_11_d._lietuvos_respublikos_prezidente_dalia_grybauskaite_dalyvavo_neeilineje_europos_vadovu_taryboje_briuselyje.html.

the aims of military intervention in Libya: ‘The military operations have clearly exceeded the UN mandate. They were authorised to establish a no-fly zone and to protect the population’⁷⁹. Later on this allegation was explained as referring ‘not only to the need of military, but also humanitarian, political and diplomatic measures’⁸⁰, and Lithuania’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed that ‘Lithuania approved the provisions of the UN Security Council Resolutions 1970 and 1973 and supported their implementation’⁸¹. It is worth noting that a couple of weeks prior to the statement of Lithuanian President, the U.S. President Barack Obama emphasised that, in accordance with the UN mandate, the U.S. goal was to defend the Libyan people and to establish a no-fly zone: ‘If we tried to overthrow Qaddafi by force, our coalition would splinter’, and there was no interest of going down the same road as in Iraq⁸².

To sum up, it can be noted that Lithuania did not ask for or promote a special U.S. contribution in solving the crisis in Libya. Given the reluctance of the U.S. to participate in the intervention, it can be concluded that Lithuania was favourable to the States in terms of abstaining from the pressure to engage (just as France or the United Kingdom did) and calling to deal with the humanitarian crisis without the change of the Libyan political regime. The controversial rhetoric of Lithuanian Presidency actually did not contradict the general line of U.S. military disengagement.

⁷⁹ Anna Gabriel, “Prezidentės Dalios Grybauskaitės interviu Austrijos dienraščiui ‘Die Presse’: ‘Operacija Libijoje peržengia JT mandata (su Anna Gabriel)’” (President Dalia Grybauskaitė gave an interview to the Austrian daily ‘Die Presse’: Military Action in Lybia overstepped the UN’s mandate (with Anna Gabriel)), *Interviu spaudoje*, LR Prezidentūros interneto svetainė, April 11, 2011, http://www.president.lt/lt/prezidento_veikla/prezidente_ziniasklaidoje/prezidente_ziniasklaidoje_385/prezidentes_dalios_grybauskaites_interviu_austrijos_dienrasciui_die_presse_operacija_libijoje_perzengia_jt_mandata.html.

⁸⁰ “Prezidentės patarėjas: Grybauskaitė remia JT Saugumo Tarybos rezoliuciją Libijos klausimu” (Adviser to the President: Grybauskaitė Approves the UN Security Council Resolution on Libya), *Alfa.lt* (ELTA), May 10, 2011, <http://www.alfa.lt/straipsnis/11290152/prezidentes-patarejas-grybauskaitė-remia-jt-saugumo-tarybos-rezoliucija-libijos-klausimu#ixzz3Kq9oSXL>.

⁸¹ “URM: Lietuva remia JT rezoliucijų įgyvendinimą Libijoje” (MFA: Lithuania Approves the UN Security Council Resolution on Libya), *Delfi.lt* (BNS), May 2, 2011, <http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/urm-lietuva-remia-jt-rezoliuciju-igyvendinima-libijoje.d?id=44992547#ixzz3Kp9KFJ3f>.

⁸² White House, Office of the Press Secretary, “Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on Libya”, *Statements & Releases*, The White House President Barack Obama, March 28, 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/03/28/remarks-president-address-nation-libya>.

The status of Palestine

The Palestinian efforts to join specialised UN organizations in order to receive international recognition has divided the international community. The membership in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is among the issues of international disputes. The U.S. opposed the admission of Palestine to the UNESCO and considered Palestine's quest for its statehood recognition in the UN as a major obstacle to peace talks with Israel. Despite the objections of the U.S., Palestine became the 195th member of UNESCO in 2011. The vote on Palestine's full membership in General Conference of UNESCO's was 107 to 14, with 52 abstentions. The U.S. and Israel voted against the Palestinian membership, and they were joined by Lithuania, Germany, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and Sweden, and some of the world's microstates; the rest of the EU countries abstained or voted 'in favour'.

Lithuania's arguments against the Palestinian membership echoed those of the U.S.: the membership in the UNESCO is 'premature' and hinders the peace talks with Israel. The Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressed that the EU failed to come to a common position on the Palestinian issue: 'This time it [the common position] was not reached, [...] [thus] we expressed the national position', 'Lithuania's position was to be proactive'⁸³. By voting 'against' and standing out in contrast to the (European) majority, Lithuania not only manifested its 'national position' on the Palestine or the Middle East conflict, but also demonstrated its loyalty to the American allies.

Lithuania's support to the U.S. in the United Nations

Voting practices in the UN General Assembly also reveal how Lithuania pledged assurance to the U.S. and solved emerging partnership dilemmas. This part of the article examines Lithuania's voting on issues that directly affected the

⁸³ "URM pareiškimas dėl Palestinos statuso UNESCO" (MFA Statement on Palestinian Status at UNESCO), *Naujienos*, LR užsienio reikalų ministerijos svetainė, November 2, 2011, <http://www.urm.lt/default/lt/naujienos/urm-pareiskimas-del-palestinos-statuso-unesco>; "A. Ažubalis dėl Palestinos: nemanau, kad dauguma visais atvejais teisi" (A. Ažubalis on Palestine: I do not Think that the Majority is Always Right), *Kauno diena* (BNS), November 4, 2011, <http://klaipda.daily.lt/naujienos/salies-pulsas/aazubalis-del-palestinos-nemanau-kad-dauguma-visais-atvejais-teisi-268823#.VIA9T2cafAN>.

U.S. interests during the years 2004–2013. These issues are outlined by U.S. Department of State⁸⁴, and the total number of important votes during the last decade exceeded one hundred.

The quantitative analysis of votes reveals that in 50 per cent of cases Lithuania's voice coincided with that of the States, in 34 per cent of cases Lithuania was neutral (abstained) and only in 16 per cent of cases it voted differently than the U.S. If we split the analysed decade into two periods (2004–2008 and 2009–2013), we will see that during the later period Lithuania opposed the U.S. less, and the voting practices of the two countries overlapped more often (Figure 1)⁸⁵.

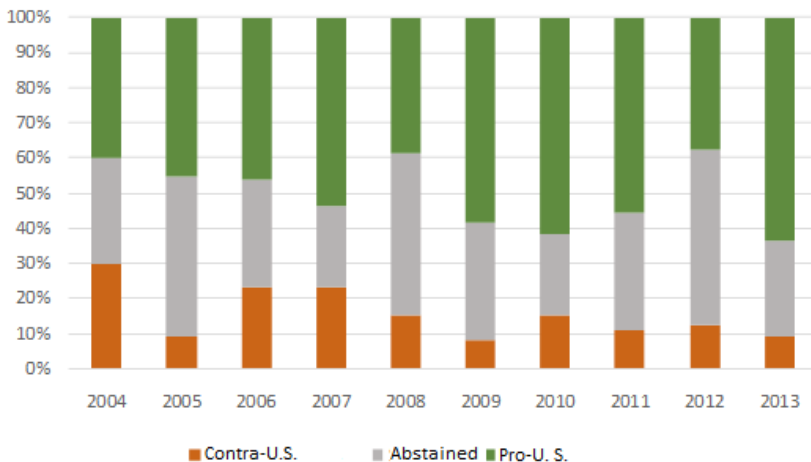


Figure 1: Lithuania's voting in the UN General Assembly in 2004–2013. *Source:* Compiled by the author from the U.S. Department of State database.

Limiting the scope of the analysis to issues discussed in the UN General Assembly at least three times during the indicated decade, the following insights can be made. Lithuania and the U.S. had the same position on human rights (in Iran, North Korea, Myanmar, Syria) and always casted the 'no' vote against the

⁸⁴ When discussing voting practices in the United States, unless stated otherwise, data comes from: "Congressional Reports 1999–2013: Voting Practices in the United Nations", *Bureau of International Organization Affairs*, U.S. Department of State, Latest update: March 2014, <http://www.state.gov/p/io/rls/rpt/index.htm>. Also UN information is used that can be found on UNBISNET, <http://unbisnet.un.org/>.

⁸⁵ This trend could be even stronger if not the year 2008, when Lithuania abstained on 6 issues and voted in favour of moratorium on the death penalty, and the year 2012 when there were only 8 important issues on the U. S. agenda in UN General Assembly (the smallest number during 2004–2013) and Lithuania abstained in a half of the cases.

resolution on 'Combating defamation of religions' by the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which was regarded as defending Islam and the rights of Muslims instead of fostering equality of religions and religious tolerance. During 2009–2013, Lithuania and the States unanimously supported the initiative to continue negotiations on the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and prevention of nuclear terrorism, and in 2007–2013 both countries called for international support of agricultural research and technological development in developing countries⁸⁶. The policy issues on which Lithuania abstained and did not change its position over the years were linked to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Lithuania abstained on these issues for more than 30 times, while the U.S. consistently supported Israel.

In order to understand what kind of policy dilemmas Lithuania faced regarding the partnership with the U.S., a wider context of decisions needs to be assessed. Namely, the question is whether and under what circumstances Lithuania as a member of the Euro-Atlantic community was forced to choose either the U.S. or the EU during 2004–2013. Previous research reveals that EU members cast vote in the UN General Assembly as a cohesive group⁸⁷, thus a divergent vote cannot be passed off unnoticed. Based on historical examples, it was assumed that after the EU enlargement in 2004, the relatively high EU voting cohesion would be temporarily reduced. Vaidotas Urbelis pointed out that before the accession to the EU and the NATO, Lithuania tended to support European countries on global issues (the Palestinian autonomy, the Kyoto Protocol, the International Criminal Court, sanctions against Cuba, the abrogation of Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty), and to stick with the U.S. on transatlantic matters (NATO's out-of-area operations, the EU defence policy and the EU-NATO duplication)⁸⁸.

During the year 2004–2013, in as many as 75 per cent of cases the EU member states voted unanimously on the issues of great importance to the U.S. (see Table 1). A unified EU voice was favourable to the U.S. in 48 per cent of cases, in 15 per cent of cases the EU opposed the States, in 12 per cent of cases the Bloc unanimously abstained, and in one quarter of instances the Europeans revealed no united position. During the analysed period, Cyprus and Malta were the only countries that constantly ignored the unified stance of the remaining 25 EU

⁸⁶ This was one of the first resolutions initiated by Israel that did not tackle Holocaust, however, many countries opposing Israel still did not support it.

⁸⁷ Paul Luif, *EU cohesion in the UN General Assembly*, Occasional Paper 49(01) (Paris: The European Union Institute for Security Studies), 2003; Helen Young, Nicholas Rees, "EU Voting Behaviour in the UN General Assembly, 1990–2002: The EU's Europeanising Tendencies", *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 16 (2005): 193–207.

⁸⁸ Urbelis, "U. S. Strategy Towards Lithuania," 59–60.

member-states (the former consistently supported the Palestinian interests, while other EU countries abstained on these issues). If these two countries are excluded from the analysis, no unanimous decision by the EU countries was reached only in 7 per cent of the cases. Moreover, even in these cases the cohesion of the EU was considerable, and merely a few countries deviated from the majority. In this context, there were four exceptional votes in the UN General Assembly during 2008–2010 and 2012, when the positions of the EU states fundamentally split: some members supported the U.S., some opposed, while the rest chose to abstain (see Table 1).

In 2008–2010 in the UN General Assembly the U.S. voted against three resolutions (A/Res/63/242, A/Res/64/148 and A/Res/65/240), which were based on the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action from the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. In all three cases, the U.S. argued that the Declaration misinterpreted the Israeli–Palestinian problem. For three years, the EU members could not reach an agreement whether to accept the point of view of the U.S., thus Lithuania received more space to manoeuvre. In 2008 five EU members (the Czech Republic, Poland, Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) supported the U.S., while Belgium opposed and the rest of the Bloc, including Lithuania, abstained. In 2009, Lithuania's view did not change even though seven EU countries decided to back up the U.S. (the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Denmark, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands) and no one opposed. However, in 2010, the balance shifted significantly: 14 out of the 27 EU member states, including Lithuania, voted against the resolution and supported the U.S. Thus, eventually Lithuania changed its stance and acted in accordance with the U.S., but only after the balance had shifted inside the EU.

During the analysed period, there were three other policy issues on which Lithuania changed its attitude over time. First, when voting in 2004 on the international trade and development resolutions Lithuania opposed the U.S. claim that the UN should not tackle issues discussed in the WTO as this might create obstacles hindering the Doha Round. In 2005–2006 Lithuania changed its position and abstained, and in 2007 it voted in favour and supported the States. It should be noted that this inconsistency in Lithuania's voting reflected the general trend in the EU bloc and international community⁸⁹. Together with the changes in the EU vote, Lithuania's position has altered accordingly regarding the UN Human Rights Council's reports (in 2007–2008, 2013) and the UN resolutions on the Arms Trade Treaty (in 2006 and 2013). Thus when deciding on the issues

⁸⁹ In 2006 only two UN states voted 'against' on this issue, and in 2007 – already 48 countries.

Table 1: Lithuania's support to the U.S. in comparison with the EU countries during the period of 2004–2013.

Votes by EU member states in UN GA*	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Unified EU support for the U.S.	4	5	6	7	5	6	7	5	2	7	54
Unified EU opposition to the U.S.	2	1	3	3	2	1	2	1	1	1	17
Unified abstention by EU	1	3	2	0	3	1	1	1	0	1	13
EU didnot have a unified position	3	2	2	3	3	4	3	2	5	2	29
Total number of questions	10	11	13	13	13	12	13	9	8	11	113
EU member states that opposed the majority in 2004–2013	Cyprus, Malta, United Kingdom	Cyprus, Malta	Cyprus, Malta	Austria, Cyprus, Malta	Cyprus, Malta; no strong majority on A/Res/63/242	Cyprus, Malta; no strong majority on A/Res/64/148	Cyprus, Malta; no strong majority on A/Res/65/240	Cyprus, Malta	Cyprus, Malta, Ireland, Netherlands, United Kingdom; no strong majority on A/Res/67/19	Cyprus, Malta	7

*Note **: The unified position also includes those cases which missed single members' vote(s) and the rest of the EU states voted in a unanimous manner.

Source: Compiled by the author from the U.S. Department of State database.

of great importance to the U.S. interests, Lithuania demonstrated a vote that was coordinated with the voting of the whole EU bloc.

The general trend of vote in the UN General Assembly in 2004–2013 indicates that Lithuania followed the majority of the EU members, and never became an ‘upstart’ in the eyes of the European partners. When voting in the General Assembly, Lithuania’s support for the U.S. almost always coincided with the EU’s support for the transatlantic ally. Lithuania voted against the will of the U.S. only when it had a strong backing in the EU. Namely, it could afford not to support the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba, because not only Europe, but also most countries of the world encouraged the lifting of the embargo. In 2008 and 2010, Lithuania voted in favour of the moratorium on the death penalty together with the EU bloc, and in 2004 and 2006, it joined the European alignment regarding disarmament resolutions. The permanent neutral stance of Lithuanian on Israeli–Palestinian issues can also be considered as an outcome of the firm neutrality of the EU bloc (excluding Cyprus and Malta).

In 2012, Lithuania faced a crucial dilemma when the UN General Assembly voted on the Palestine as a ‘non-member observer state’ in the United Nations (A/Res/67/19). Lithuania, usually coordinating its vote with the EU, had to predict what kind of majority will form in this particular case. Lithuanian President Grybauskaitė anticipated in public: the EU ‘has no unified standing; according to our knowledge, approximately nine states are in favour and the rest abstain, thus tomorrow Lithuania will abstain’⁹⁰. However, trying to vote with the majority of EU countries, Lithuania miscalculated. 14 EU countries voted to upgrade the status of the Palestinians to that of a ‘non-member observer state’, one state was against and Lithuania together with other 11 EU member states (Estonia, Latvia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK) abstained. In total, 41 members of the UN abstained, thus this case could be considered as Lithuania’s indirect support to the U.S. However, this was not an exceptional and courageous decision: 9 countries voted in accordance to the U.S., including the Czech Republic, which voted against the upgrading of the Palestinian status and stood out as a more loyal European partner than Lithuania⁹¹.

⁹⁰ “Lietuva susilaikys per balsavimą dėl Palestinos statuso Jungtinėse Tautose” (Lithuania will abstain in the vote on the Palestinian status at the United Nations), Bernardinai.lt (BNS), November 28, 2012, <http://www.bernardinai.lt/straipsnis/2012-11-28-lietuva-susilaikys-per-balsavima-del-palestinos-statuso-jungtinese-tautose/91492>.

⁹¹ “General Assembly Votes Overwhelmingly to Accord Palestine ‘Non-Member Observer State’ Status in United Nations”, United Nations, Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, November 29, 2012, <http://www.un.org/press/en/2012/ga11317.doc.htm>.

To summarise Lithuania's voting practice in the UN General Assembly, it can be concluded that in a half of the cases Lithuania's and the U.S. positions coincided, and no significant dilemmas arose as the U.S. and the EU took identical policy positions. In most cases, especially when Lithuania abstained or opposed the U.S., Lithuania exercised a bandwagon with the EU. This trend is illustrated by the fact that eventually Lithuania's stance on some issues has changed but only to reflect the majority position in the EU. The cases that did not have an explicit majority vote in the EU (resolutions A/Res/63/242, A/Res/64/148 and A/Res/65/240) encourage Lithuania to gravitate towards the U.S. but again only when a critical mass of supportive EU countries used to form. In 2012, the General Assembly said a strong 'yes' to Palestine's status of a 'non-member observer state' in the United Nations, but the EU failed to come to a common position. At first glance, Lithuania was favourable to the U.S. as it took a neutral position in this case (did not support Palestine); however, the 'critical mass' factor likewise played out well here. When making this decision, Lithuania had a strong backup from almost a half of the EU member states, including Germany and the United Kingdom, while the Czech Republic even stood out with the direct support to the States.

Conclusions

The aim of this article was to examine whether Lithuania supports the U.S. when this support needs to go beyond the direct responsibilities of strategic partnership or even clashes with other commitments or foreign policy interests of Lithuania. Such an approach to strategic partnership enabled to determine what Lithuania could and did offer to the U.S. in exchange for security guarantees in 2004–2014. It can be concluded that in analysed cases Lithuania's support for the U.S., though strong in declarations, was quite ambiguous in action.

The cases when Lithuania did not support the U.S. on strategically important issues were the economic embargo against Cuba, the abolition of the death penalty and disarmament. Lithuania's abstention from the support was not very significant, because these were the cases when the U.S. did not receive much support from the rest of the international community as well. When solving other issues important to the U.S. – the lifting of the arms embargo against China, the regulation of genetically modified products, the Syrian conflict – Lithuania's foreign policy was passive and not overtly favourable to the U.S. However, Lithuania defended its actions by referring to the common EU position.

The remaining group of cases reveals that Lithuania supported the U.S. on the Middle East (Palestine, Hezbollah, Libya and others) and other issues of global significance, such as human rights and nuclear non-proliferation. Lithuania has pledged allegiance to the U.S. despite the objections of some larger EU countries on the controversial issues of data retention and protection as well as U.S.-Europe negotiations on the TTIP.

The completed analysis suggests that Lithuania developed and balanced relations with both the U.S. and with the EU in 2004–2014. The Lithuanian policy in dealing with the EU foreign and economic issues as well as state's voting in the UN General Assembly represent the pledge of allegiance to the U.S. not only by Lithuania, but also the core of the EU bloc. Accordingly, when Lithuania did not support the U.S., this coincided with the view of the EU majority.