

Alliance of the Baltic States in the System of Collective Security

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Summary

The formation of a new world order is primarily caused by new conditions and military operations on the European continent. The intensification of military-political tension led to the formation of new centers of power and gravity, which in turn led to the concentration of weapons and general militarization. Changes in the world order as a result of military conflicts and an increase in hot spots in the world, an increase in threats and the formation of centers of military gravity, the inability of existing institutions to resolve the situation lead to the need to develop new security mechanisms. Studies show that in the current situation, the countries of the Baltic countries are especially actively increasing their level of technologization of the army and militarization in general. The creation of any alliance is always conditioned by the presence of external threats. Naturally, the increase in the number of threats creates preconditions for the development of new forms of cooperation within existing military alliances. It seems obvious that due to the current situation in the context of the military conflict and military aggression of Russia in Ukraine, as well as its constant threats, including to the Baltic countries, there is a need to form a certain alliance that can protect the eastern border of Europe and form a certain border between European countries and aggressor countries. The Baltic countries are actively involved in these processes, in addition, it is the Baltic countries that can enter the new military alliance proposed by Britain, which will unite Poland, Ukraine, the Baltic countries and, possibly, Great Britain.

Keywords:

a regional security, Baltic-Black Sea Union, security system, prerequisites for the formation

JEL Classification: F01, F15, F42

1. Introduction

The current geopolitical situation is developing under the decisive influence of such processes as globalization, regionalization, digitalization, virtualization and networkization of most of the interconnections and relations between national and global actors of different levels. In addition, a distinctive feature is extreme turbulence: the situation and the balance of power in the world are changing very rapidly. What we knew or believed a year ago may change significantly or even lose its meaning in new circumstances. The deployment of a hotbed of instability in the Middle East

(Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, Syria), the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, regional military conflicts in the Balkans, and, finally, Russia's unjustified aggression in Ukraine. Undoubtedly, all these events are milestones in the formation of not only a new world order, but in general - global civilizational shifts.

Traditionally, security was thought to depend on military power. It was assumed that the aggressor could be «recaptured» from the «fence», the border, and the defense capability was proportional to military power. Obviously, this is no longer a viable option, which is confirmed by regular violations of international acts and documents, for example, on the confrontation between nuclear and non-nuclear countries, the use of prohibited types of weapons, etc. No country can defend itself in this way in a situation where nuclear weapons can be used from both sides, or the military potential is unequal. In addition, conventional warfare in modern societies results in extensive destruction on both sides. Thus, security cannot be achieved through unilateral national policies, but rather requires agreement and cooperation.

The formation of a collective security system takes place in new conditions of world formation. Changes in the world order as a result of military conflicts and an increase in hot spots in the world, an increase in threats and the formation of centers of military gravity, the inability of existing institutions to resolve the situation lead to the need to develop new security mechanisms.

2. Analysis of recent researches and publications.

The study of the formation of defense economics is the basis of a significant number of works by the following scientists: Fabrizio Tassinari analyzed the key features of militarization in the European region (Fabrizio Tassinari, 2005), Aydin M. studied the features of the Eastern European region within the framework of the concept of the Baltic-Black Sea region (Aydin M., 2005), Georgievskaja J. explored the possibilities of building a kind of "shield" in Europe, which will be designed to limit the influence of Russia (Georgievskaja J., 2020), the

formation of the defense economy is studied in the work of Watts B. (Watts B., 2015), the historical aspects of the formation of the European defense system are studied in the works of Rose A. K., Spiegel M. M. (Rose A.K., Spiegel M.M., 2009).

3. Previously unsettled problem constituent.

However, the change in the modern world order in view of the Russian invasion and the formation of a new military-political union requires a study of the preconditions and possibilities of such cooperation, which is especially relevant for the relatively small Baltic countries.

4. The main purpose

The main purpose of the article is to identify the key features of Baltic regional militarization in the modern world and the role of the Baltic region in the formation of a new military-political alliance, to identify key centers for the formation of regional associations, and especially in Eastern Europe.

5. Results and discussions.

In the modern context, there is a need to build a radically new system of regional, collective, pan-European and even global security. The starting point for this new configuration of international security will be Ukraine and the agreements that will be adopted after the end of hostilities. In any case, regardless of this, it is necessary to clearly understand the potential of the Black Sea region in terms of both developing cooperation and building the North-South vertical, the Baltic-Black Sea axis. It is quite obvious that all previously created institutions will definitely be reviewed in a new context, since they will either have to disappear, or be transformed, or acquire a radically new purpose and mission.

The idea to connect both regions into one axis arose in the beginning of the 20th century in Riga. It was proposed to create a confederation of states in order to develop cooperation in the fields of defense, economics, banking and foreign policy within the framework of such countries as Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Belarus and Ukraine. The Baltic countries in the modern world are becoming not just active participants in the processes of collective security, but also receive the status of guarantors of such a status due to the presence of aggressor countries in the neighborhood, which are Russia and Belarus. A distinctive feature of the Baltic region in comparison with the Black Sea is the lower level of

conflict. In the latter, there are long-term conflicts between Armenia and Azerbaijan (over Nagorno-Karabakh), between Russia and Georgia, and Transnistria. In addition to these sluggish stories, the conflict brought about by Russian aggression in Crimea, Donbass and Ukraine as a whole is of a completely different urgency. However, although unlike the Black Sea region, the history of the Baltic Sea has not been as bitter, the significance of the northern sea routes is no less important in the global transport and economic space. In connection with the open aggression of Russia against Ukraine, the open support of Belarus for such an invasion by the world community, various options and models for the formation of a collective security system are being considered, including the issue of creating a Baltic-Black Sea Union or a union of the Baltic countries, Poland and Ukraine. All countries that are part of the Black Sea - Baltic Sea bloc occupy fairly high positions in the global ranking of military power, but large countries occupy high positions. Let's consider individual indicators of the Baltic countries, partner countries and aggressor countries (Table 1).

Table 1: Positions of individual countries according to the Global Fire Power rating (2022 Military Strength..., 2022)

Rank	Country	Value
2	Russia	0,0501
22	Ukraine	0,3266
24	Poland	0,4179
52	Belarus	0,8169
85	Lithuania	1,7083
94	Latvia	2,2758
108	Estonia	2,6558

One can note a rather high level of dynamism of this index and the absence of certain types of weapons in the index itself, for example, weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, chemical, biological and other types of weapons), including high-tech weapons of a new type. In general, the Index includes a significant number of indicators that determine the country's capabilities in one form or another of military activity, in addition, for countries that do not have a water border, the presence of maritime transport is not taken into account, since it does not take part in the formation of the country's military power. In general, the rating analyzes more than 50 individual indicators to assess the military power of the country. At the same time, the indicators quite widely analyze the country's capabilities, from macroeconomic indicators to geographical ones. In this context, the chances of countries are equalized in the format of competition, the lower the indicator, the closer it is to 0, the higher the military potential of the country (2022 Military Strength..., 2022).

However, it is worth noting that against the backdrop of increasing confrontation and pressure in the region, the Baltic countries have significantly increased their performance and the number of troops or paramilitary formations, heavy weapons, mainly armored personnel carriers. We can note a significant increase in the level of militarization of the Baltic countries, as well as throughout Eastern Europe (Fig. 1).

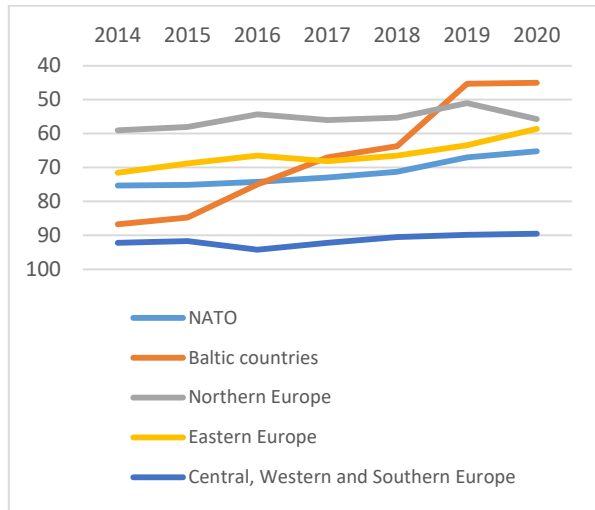


Figure 1 - Dynamics of the positions of regions in the Global Militarisation Index, 2021¹

We can note that it is the Baltic countries that demonstrate the greatest dynamics and an increase in the level of militarization, and the countries of Eastern Europe are in second place in terms of dynamics. The Militarisation Index (GMI) displays the militarization and readiness of a country for armed conflict, researched and compiled by the Bonn International Center for Conflict Studies. This index assesses the level of military spending and GDP and health care spending. Thus, the total number of armed forces is compared with the number of doctors, and the quantity and quality of heavy weapons is also the object of study (Global Militarisation..., 2020).

According to the Militarization Index, there is also an increase in militarization in Eastern Europe, territorial disputes are intensifying, for example, the unresolved conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, North Ossetia and Abkhazia, Transnistria, Chechnya, where Russia acts both as an arms exporter and as an active party to the conflict. It should be noted that in Europe the most militarized countries are Armenia, Russia, Greece, Cyprus,

Azerbaijan, Belarus, Montenegro, Turkey, Ukraine and Finland (Table 2).

Table 2: The most militarized countries in Europe, 2020 (Global Militarisation (a)..., 2020)

Country	global Expenditure Index		global Personnel Index		global Heavy Weapons Index		GMI value		Rank	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Armenia	2,2	3,1	1,7	1,9	2,3	2,4	310,1	377	2	5
Russia	2,1	3,2	0,9	0,9	2,7	2,8	285,1	353	8	10
Greece	1,6	2,3	1,1	1,2	2,7	2,7	269,1	318	12	14
Cyprus	1,2	1,8	1,5	1,6	2,7	2,8	268,2	316	13	15
Azerbaijan	2,1	4,1	0,9	0,6	2,1	2,1	254,8	389	16	3
Belarus	1,0	1,4	1,4	1,5	2,3	2,3	231,8	269	17	24
Montenegro	1,0	1,9	1,5	1,5	1,3	1,6	226,4	258	18	26
Turkey	1,8	2,7	0,7	0,7	2,0	2,0	223,8	278	20	22
Ukraine	1,9	3,0	0,8	0,5	1,8	1,9	221,6	305	22	16
Finland	1,1		0,7		2,3		203,0		29	
Estonia		2,1		0,6		2,1		247		30

An increase in the level of militarization can also be observed in the Baltic countries, so Latvia in 2014 ranked 129th, in 2019 the country took 60th place, significantly improving its performance. Lithuania has increased its position by 50 points (from 82 in 2019 to 32 in 2019). Both countries have significantly increased their military spending, and if in 2014 they invested 0.9% of GDP, then in 2019 this figure is 2%. Estonia improved its position during this period by 10 places (from 42 to 32) and increased by 0.2% in spending (from 1.9% in 2014 to 2.1% in 2019). In general, for NATO countries, military spending is 2% (Global Militarisation (b)..., 2020).

In general, the Baltic countries, due to their size, do not occupy sufficiently high positions in the ranking of the Global Military Power Index or the Global Militarisation Index, however, the attention of these countries to the military sector is close, for example, behind the «Personnel Index» indicator (Table 3).

Table 3: Positions of countries on the sub-indicator «Personnel Index»

Country	Total population	Available Manpower	Fit-for-Service	Reaching MIL age Annually	Active personnel	Tot Military Personnel	Reserve personnel	Paramilitary
Russia	9	9	10	17	5	0,9	15	11
Ukraine	34	29	32	48	20	1,1	15	27
Poland	37	34	33	49	31	0,4	140	40

UK, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Spain

¹ **Baltic countries:** Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania; **Northern Europe:** Denmark, Finland, Sweden; **Eastern Europe:** Bulgaria, Croatia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Hungary; **Central, Western and Southern Europe:** Belgium, Germany, France,

Belarus	87	80	79	93	48	4,7	14	19
Lithuania	127	120	118	127	66	1,5	36	43
Latvia	135	133	132	135	82	1,6	36	45
Estonia	137	136	136	136	82	2,8	37	38

Source: systematized by authors based on Global Fire Power

Although the Baltic countries do not have a sufficient reserve of their own military forces, it should be taken into account that the Baltic countries are NATO members and receive significant support from the alliance. For example, there are 16 thousand active military personnel in Lithuania, 15 thousand reservists and 11 thousand paramilitary formations (2022 Lithuania Military Strength..., 2022). At the same time, the largest aggressor country, Russia, has 850 thousand active personnel, 250 thousand reserve and 250 thousand military or paramilitary formations (2022 Russia Military Strength..., 2022). The ratio of the military forces of the Baltic countries, a comparative analysis with partner countries can be seen in Fig.2.

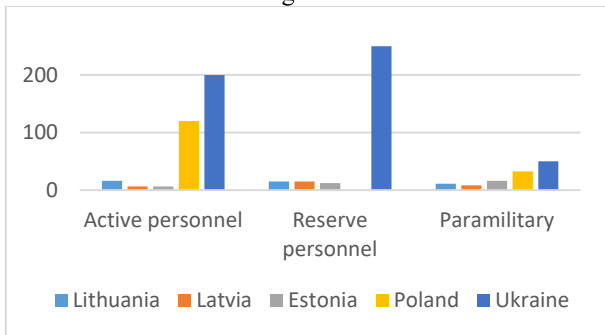


Figure 2: Comparative analysis of the indicator «Manpower» of the Baltic countries and partner countries, people, 2022

As you can see, Estonia has the smallest number of military forces, and even compared to Poland and Ukraine, they do not look convincing in quantitative terms, however, analysis by relative indicators indicates a sufficient level of attention of the leadership of these countries to the army and the security system (Fig. 3).

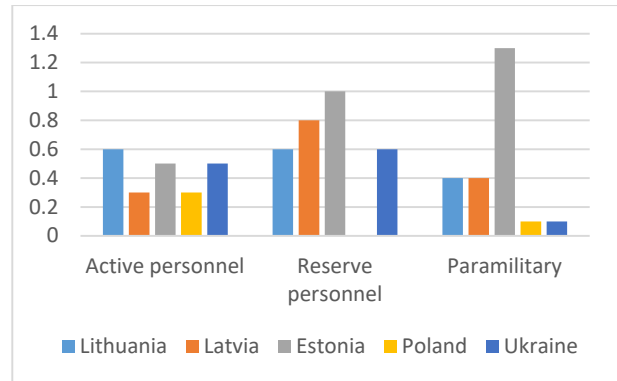


Figure 3: Comparative analysis of relative indicators of the level of provision of human staff in the Baltic countries,%, 2022

As we can see, in relation to the population of these countries, the formation of the army and military personnel is a significant part of the economy of the Baltic countries. And as a result, the number of the military, when converted to the number of inhabitants, is much higher than even in larger countries. However, it is worth considering the fact that these countries are NATO members and have NATO military contingents on their territory. So, since 2017, about a thousand military personnel from Great Britain have been present in Estonia, a thousand military personnel from Canada have been present in Latvia, a thousand military personnel or Germany have been in Lithuania, and about 5 thousand more military personnel from the United States are in constant rotation in the region (NATO in the..., 2017). In addition, the NATO bloc has created coordinating headquarters of the NATO Force Integration Unit, NFIU in six eastern countries of the alliance closest to Russia: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria. These headquarters, numbering several dozen people each, were launched in September 2015. Their main task is to coordinate the transfer and deployment, if necessary, of instant reaction forces and other combat units. In addition, heavy weapons and air defense, as well as naval forces, are deployed in the Baltic countries (Baltops..., 2021). Thus, in the Baltic States, frame countries and contributor countries have been identified (table 4).

Table 4: Presence of NATO countries in the Baltic States (NATO’s military..., 2021)

Host nation	Framework nation	Contributing nations
Estonia	United Kingdom	Denmark and France
Latvia	Canada	Albania, the Czech Republic, Italy, Montenegro, Poland,

		Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain
Lithuania	Germany	Belgium, the Czech Republic, Iceland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Norway
Poland	United States	Croatia, Romania and the United Kingdom

It should be noted that the Baltic countries do not have sufficient military potential compared to the nearest aggressor country, however, even a comparison of NATO countries and Russia as a whole is not convincing enough in terms of quantitative indicators (table 5).

Table 5: Military forces in the Baltic region (Samuel Ramani, 2022)

	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	NATO	Russia
Active personnel	7 100	6 250	22 000	371 650	900 000
Reservists	17 500	11 000	7 100	149 850	2 mill.
Main battle tanks	0	3	0	1136	2840
Infantry fighting vehicles	44	0	22	2522	5220
Artillery	188	100	91	1583	4684
Principal surface combatants	0	0	0	21	31
Attack submarines	0	0	0	15	38
Combat aircraft	0	0	0	434	1160
Attack helicopters	0	0	0	60	394

It is worth considering the quality of weapons and the possibility of their use. Ukraine's experience in direct military confrontation indicates that only the quantitative availability of certain weapons is not a guarantee of victory on the battlefield. In addition, a qualitative comparison of certain types of weapons, such as multiple rocket launchers or heavy weapons with modern guidance systems, indicates the prevalence of new technologies and their undoubted advantage.

The scale of attention of the Baltic countries to the military sector is quite indicative when analyzing the financing parameters (table 6).

Table 6: Military expenditure by country, SIPRI 2021

Country	in constant US\$ m. (SIPRI Arms..., 2021)		as percentage of gross domestic product		as percentage of government spending		per capita in current US\$ (SIPRI military..., 2021)	
	2000	2020	2000	2020	2000	2020	2000	2020
Russia	23584	66838	3,3%	4,3%	10,8%	11,4%	63,0	422,9
Poland	5350	12815	1,8%	2,2%	4,4%	4,4%	81,6	344,2
Ukraine	1185	5995	2,2%	4,1%	6,1%	8,8%	14,3	135,5
Lithuania	290	1135	1,2%	2,1%	3,4%	5,3%	40,1	430,0
Belarus	186	785	1,3%	1,3%	..	30,8%	14,2	89,4
Latvia	134	739	0,9%	2,3%	2,4%	5,2%	29,4	401,3
Estonia	175	687	1,4%	2,3%	3,8%	5,7%	56,0	528,5

As we can see, Russia has the highest spending on the military sector among the analyzed countries. At the same time, in relative terms, for example, as a share of GDP, Russia and Ukraine take the lead, spending more than 4% of GDP. Financing the military sector for individual countries is a priority in the structure of public spending, for example, in Belarus this figure is a record 30%. The financing of the army is quite indicative when analyzing the level of funding in terms of one person, for example, the leading players are changing and it is the Baltic countries that come out on top.

However, it is worth noting that although the ratings are for 2022, they do not take into account the conditions of the conflict in Ukraine, which began in February. Ukraine (and obviously Poland) significantly increased its troops during the hostilities, so if before the war the Ukrainian army numbered up to half a million people together with reservists, then by May 2022, according to experts, it already has up to a million active military personnel, however, an accurate assessment in connection with hostilities is not possible. It is worth noting that the Russian invasion of Ukraine has significantly updated the issue of military potential, military power and weapons for the Baltic countries, which have repeatedly become the object of threats from Russia and Belarus, both separately and as partner countries. Added to this is the question of the presence in the Baltics of an enclave of Russia in the form of the Kaliningrad region. In June 2022, Lithuania restricted the passage to the territory of the Kaliningrad region for rail and freight transport with sanctioned goods through its territory, which became part of the fifth sanctions package against the aggressor country (Russia threatens..., 2021). Such changes in policy led to Lithuanian demands to increase the NATO contingent in the country to ensure security in the presence of threats from Belarus, which is openly called an "additional province" of Russia and whose territory can be freely used by Russian troops for

their needs, including for attacking other countries, as the experience of Ukraine shows (NATO needs..., 2022).

6. Conclusions.

Despite the successes achieved since the Second World War in achieving stable peace and order, we can state a constant increase in the number of new threats to the security of countries and peoples. Singling out such a phenomenon as terrorism as a separate threat. Aggravation of painful imperial ambitions of the Russian Federation. The creation of any alliance is always conditioned by the presence of external threats. Naturally, the increase in the number of threats creates preconditions for the development of new forms of cooperation within existing military alliances. It seems obvious that due to the current situation in the context of the military conflict and military aggression of Russia in Ukraine, as well as its constant threats, including to the Baltic countries, there is a need to form a certain alliance that can protect the eastern border of Europe and form a certain border between European countries and aggressor countries. The Baltic countries are actively involved in these processes, in addition, it is the Baltic countries that can enter the new military alliance proposed by Britain, which will unite Poland, Ukraine, the Baltic countries and, possibly, Great Britain.

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