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Lithuanian Mercenaries Dispatched to Syria by Private Security Companies on Contract to NATO

By Nikolai Malishevski

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It is no secret that Lithuania gave refuge to some courageous fellows from NATO in Šiauliai, whose job it was to patrol the airspaces of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. On the very next day after the guys from NATO appeared, the hospitable people of Šiauliai, evidently in celebration, attacked them and beat them up. The blood of those injured ran into Lithuanian soil. One can therefore justifiably argue that the integration of Lithuania and NATO is a friendship sealed with blood.

The attack on NATO troops was not an isolated incident. Similar attacks are repeated periodically on all European members of the alliance, who also swap duty periodically. Ethnic Lithuanians have beaten up visiting NATO soldiers – from Belgium, Denmark, Britain and others – more than once... A short anecdote has even been written on the reasons why and the ratio of those attacking and those attacked in Lithuania: «Why did you attack first?» an officer asks a dozen NATO soldiers who had been beaten up by three Lithuanians during the night. The NATO soldiers reply: «We thought there were only two of them, but then a third one suddenly appeared».

According to a statement by Lithuania's Police Commissioner General Vytautas Grigaravicius, attacks on NATO soldiers «are one of the consequences of alcohol consumption», which in comparison to Western prices costs practically nothing in today's Lithuania. However, the

problems being faced by NATO while guarding the Baltic skies is not just limited to attacks and an excessive amount of cheap alcohol. In Lithuania, where the population is falling dramatically following the collapse of the USSR but prostitution is becoming a legal «business», they are also experiencing severe discrimination from local ladies of the night. The same Police Commissioner General complained to journalists that Lithuanian prostitutes were selling themselves to NATO soldiers at an inflated rate of more than three times as much. This is obviously pure discrimination, bearing in mind that the list of services being offered by the prostitutes remains the same.

After becoming a member of NATO, Lithuania immediately began to increase the number of its troops abroad – Euro-Atlantic solidarity called for it. The country's then president, Valdas Adamkus, who incidentally had both US and Lithuanian citizenship and was as fond of NATO troops as he was of some of his own countrymen, passed a special resolution to prolong the involvement of Lithuanians in «international operations» in the Persian Gulf, the Balkans, and Central and Southern Asia. He apparently believed it was better to fight bad Muslims in their own country than good NATO soldiers at home.

For many years now, hundreds of Lithuanian guys have been signing up for «peacekeeping operations» and getting killed in hotspots like Iraq, Kosovo and Afghanistan. At the present time, Americans are currently organising the recruitment of mercenaries in Lithuania for dispatch to Syria. Private security companies (PSC) in Lithuania are directly involved in the recruitment drive. These companies have already distinguished themselves in their selection of personnel to assist in the conduct of NATO military exercises in Lithuania, as well as in business dealings carried out by Americans in Afghanistan through Lithuania. American private security companies accustomed to carrying out the dirty work of security agencies both in «hotspots» and during terrorist attacks on American soil itself are also being used.

High unemployment and a low standard of living in Lithuania, especially among the Russian population, are creating a good climate for enlistment. It will suffice to mention that even according to official, clearly underestimated, figures from the Lithuanian Department of Statistics, this level is such that over the past decade, the country's population has fallen by more than 10 percent and continues to fall. Upon receiving their initial payment, many mercenaries from Lithuania, for some reason believing they will be able to survive in Syria, agree to take the rest of the money after the start of their contract.

In mid-September, nearly 50 Lithuanian mercenaries were selected and are getting ready to board chartered flights from Lithuania to Turkey together with small groups of tourists. A preference is given to people aged between 25 and 40 who have carried out contracted military service in Western armies. Special forces operatives, military engineers, radio and electrical engineers and HGV drivers are the most sought after. In other words, specialists who can be used in both military actions and in post-conflict situations under the aegis of the occupation and puppet authorities (to deliver supplies, safeguard critical facilities and Western specialists, help with the creation and training of law enforcement bodies etc.)

As things stand now, on the one hand, Washington is seemingly in agreement with Moscow with regard to the Russian-American Framework Agreement on the liquidation of Syria's chemical

weapons which rules out military intervention, while on the other it is training up cannon fodder for a military invasion and service staff for the ensuing occupation regime in a country «liberated» from legitimate authorities.

Among those being sought for enlistment in Lithuania, they want people who can speak Russian fluently and have both Lithuanian and Russian citizenship... It is quite possible that in time, the West will «discover» a sensational fact regarding the «involvement of Russian volunteers» fighting alongside Syrian rebels for human rights. At the very least, this would cloud relations between Damascus and Moscow; at most, it would weaken the front of international support for Syria.

Even if the truth about the victims of the next prepared provocation becomes known to the general public in Lithuania, it will always be possible to explain to the Lithuanian electorate that it is the price for being part of global civilisation and universal human values. Or even easier: remember that the death of one person is a tragedy, while the death of many is a statistic.