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**The role of the Baltic States in the United States-European Union
relations**

Bachelor's thesis

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ABSTRACT

The Baltics have always fought for their position on the world map. Being small in terms of size, in the past, has not been to their advantage, but as of recent times, their size has been the reason why they are becoming more prosperous. This paper will be discussing the role which they play in the relation between the United States and the European Union.

It will be looking at this relation from the angle of Russia being a threat to the power of the European Union and the United States. Hence the importance of the Baltic States because both the United States and the European Union are aware that Russia' Putin still has undisclosed plans for the Baltic States and other smaller European nations, whom were once under the Soviet rule. With both the United States and the European Union are aware of the possible threat, which Russia posses for both the United States status as the global policeman and the security of the smaller European Nations for the European Union.

All these including the strategic development which has been continuously ongoing within the Baltic as the three states which Encompass the Baltic region have been known to be growing both economically and strategically. Which earned them the name New Europeans. Although the Baltics do not like the name, they still embody the values which, according to the United States and the European Union, the smaller European states should possess. With all these in place, the Baltic States are bound to have a certain degree of importance in the relationship between the United States and the European Union, which we can see the deployment of NATO troops in the security of the Baltic States.

Keywords: Baltic States, United States, European Union, Russian Threat, Demcracy, Russian Interest

List of Abbreviations

NATO- North Alliance Treaty Organization

CEE- Central Eastern European Countries

INTRODUCTION

Historically speaking, the vulnerability of the Baltic States has always been defined by their history, geography and size. The Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have in common about fifty years of being under Soviet occupation. Which according to historical accounts were a traumatic period with occurrences of mass exiles, forced collectivization and cultural and language Russification. Geographically, the Baltic States are the most exposed to Russia with Estonia and Latvia bordering Russia to the East and Lithuania bordering Kaliningrad in the West. For the same History with Russia, previously Soviet Union shares with the Baltic States, the United States and the European Union have come to Understand that the new Europeans, will be very important diplomatic allies. Despite being small, the Baltic States have been able to cultivate some degree of importance on the International scale, with Estonia leading the forefront of the North Alliance Treaty Organization in terms of cyber defence, Latvia having a strong joint terminal attack controllers and explosive ordinance disposal and Lithuania boasting a rather impressive special operations forces. The Baltic States having become important on the international scale, have become important to both the United States and the European Union hence playing a role in the relations between both super Nations. This paper will be examining the role, the Baltics play, and how they affect the relations between the European Union and the United States. On the eve of the Iraq war, in the year 2003, the United States secretary of defence, Donald Rumsfeld made an informative distinction between what was considered as the new European countries well-disposed to the United States and what was deemed as the old countries, resistant to the interests of the United States.

The group classified as the new order, was mainly associated with the new members on the North Alliance Treaty Organization (NATO). Simultaneously, the Franco-German axis was used as a personification of the old order. Washington's perspective of the new order of Europeans have since the tragic events of 9/11 and the creation of the transatlantic rift, gained a very important role in reshaping the relationship between Europe and the West. The New Europe is considered and understood to be an acolyte of the United States, whose is destined to repair the political divide across the Atlantic. The Enticement of the United States has started waning in the central European countries, but the Baltic States have remained the most trustful Europeans as far as Washington is concerned. Nevertheless, the Baltic States have felt

uncomfortable with the label of the new Europeans placed on them by Washington, their mentor. Making it seem like the part of Europe previously referred to as being docile, marginal and peripheral is espousing a voice of its own, choosing to no longer accept external tags, hence beginning to define themselves as something special. This change gave them a more discursive power to contribute to the European configuration and transform themselves into an intermediary between Brussels and Washington instead of just being pupil of the United States.

This paper will be looking at the role which the Baltic States have in the United States Policy and what kind of expectations are held regarding the Baltic States. Which seems impossible since the three countries that make up the Baltic States are seldom mentioned especially in the foreign policy documents of the United States and they are mostly just treated as a small part of a much larger group of new Europeans. Therefore, focusing on the Baltic States requires a broader approach and understanding of the dealing of the Central Eastern European Countries (CEE), Russia, the New Europe and the Wider Europe. The United States government has in the past been known to use the power of naming and signifying when introducing the new divisions of Europe, but it seems irrelevant to ask if it truly possess the power to do this.

In the bi-polar post-cold war world, the border between the west and the east was sharp and exclusive. Europe was at that time defined by its eastern border, while the west was considered as a generally American-led landmass. When the cold war ended, it blurred the division between the East-West and the East. Although the West is widely famously known as the victors of the cold war, the fading illusion of an omnipresent rival also posed a challenge to the dominating vision of the West with the rapidly consolidating European identity associated with the enlargement of the European Union into the Eastern European countries. These have all contributed in some way to the apparent split in the West. This has consequently paved the way for Western border to become stronger in its ability to define Europe, while the East slowly loses its signifier power creating a new western border which thus far has not been drawn sharply (Delanty & Rumford 2005, p. 32). Multiple varied opinions about the west have emerged following the Iraqi war and the beginning of the war on terror. The west does not possess the same uniformed community of values that it possessed during the cold war, and this has made more grounds for discursive struggles between the United States, Europe and the New and Old Europeans (Kagan 2003).

It becomes relevant to understand the labelling of the Baltic States as new Europeans as part of a much wider effort to redefine the west and the transatlantic community. Contradictory to

previous studies on the foreign policy of the Baltic Region (Kuus 2004, Malksoo 2006). Lehti 2007, argues that to understand the role of the Baltic States in the relationship between the European Union and The United States, the Baltic States should not be examined only in the context of Europe but also the transatlantic community's notion of the west. Opening up an alternative view of the Baltic case, which does not accentuate the continuation of the 'othering' or of being an outsider in Europe, rather it introduces a more active Baltic region, freed from the Eastern labelling, symbolizing positivity and eccentricity in relations with Western Europe (Lehti 2007, pp88-98). Which has also offered the Baltics a chance at playing a more active role. To determine the Role the Baltic State plays in the European-United States relations, a research on how unique the Baltics are and how their self-identification parallels with the expectancy of the United States, with major concentration on the foreign policy treatises. For this research, policy documents are treated as speech acts, which narrates what kind role the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania want to play in the international arena and what kind of nation State they want to be seen as. Which has already been discussed by authors Ringmar 1996 and Waever 2002.

Brief History of the Baltics

The Baltic States is not considered to be a politically or culturally homogenous entity. The concept of the Baltic State did not emerge until the year 1918. Which was after the Russian empire collapsed in 1917. Political leaders of the community of people located in the eastern shore of the Baltic sea, made an attempt to create independent states which was named Eesti, Latvija, and Lietuva, which are more known today as Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Each state declared their independence on separate days with Lithuania leading the charge, declaring independence on the 16th of February and Estonia following suite, on the 24th of February and Latvia on the 18th of November in 1918. However, they area was still under the control of the Germans and the national council was hardly considered to be ruling an independent state. The combined result of the collapse of Soviet Russia during the cold war and developments of the Nineteenth century, both ideologically and politically, aided the emergence of the Baltic States. This paper will not dwell a lot on the History of the Baltic States, but to understand the relationship between the Baltic States, the European Union, the United States and Russia, it is vital to Understand a little bit of the History of the Baltic States. It is also important in understanding the political struggle of the Baltic States, which has mostly been caused by their

geopolitical ambition of Russia, who the United States have been fighting to keep from obtaining their overtly ambitious political standings (Gerner, K, & Hedlund, S 2018).

The United States has always tried to suppress Russia, especially when it comes to protecting the interest of the Baltic States, who they have come to realize is one of their ally. Russia, from history have proved time and again that they are and will forever be interested in re-acquiring the Baltic States due to the strategic location and the large amount of displaced Russian nationals living within the Baltics. Being Members of NATO and allies of the United States, scholars have theorized that the Baltic States play different roles for the relationship between the United States and the European Union. Hence the purpose of this paper. In this thesis, the questions, the researcher would like to answer are,

- 1) what is the role of the Baltic States in the relationship between the United States and the European Union.
- 2) How important is the Role of the Baltics in the Relations between the United States and the European Union?

The scope of the study

With great location geographically, the Baltic States, who are members of the European Union and NATO have always been seen to be too small to have a voice in Transatlantic affairs. The purpose of the thesis will be to decipher the role the Baltics States play in the relationship between the European Union and the West. Scholars have theorized that because the Baltic States all look up to the United States, they act as acolytes or fore bearers of the West, mimicking the foreign policies of the United States while making it work in a European setting. Others have stipulated that they act more like missionaries, teaching the rest of Europe how to act more Western. This paper will be looking at book claims and analysing them to best formulate a thesis on what the actual role of the Baltic State is in the relations between the United States and the European Union.

This paper will be divided into three parts. The first part will be used to discuss the importance of the Baltic States in the foreign policy of the United States, this chapter will play the part of explaining how the united States view the Baltic States, answering the Questions, how important is the Baltic States to the United States and Does the United States think the Baltic

States are important when it comes to their vision of a future Europe. The goal of this chapter is to set a precedent that shows from thorough research the Baltic States being important Pawns in the Diplomatic framework of the United States. The next chapter will be used to analyse the role of the Baltic States in the relations between the European Union and the United States. After laying the foundation of showing the esteem regarded the Baltic States by the United State, this chapter will explain the role of the of the Baltic State as either an acolyte of a Missionary. The final chapter will be a summary of the findings in the previous two chapters, stating with certainty the role the Baltic States play and to what degree if possible.

Research methodology

To understand the role of the Baltic States in the relations between the United States and the European Union, a qualitative approach will be implemented. to arrive at a conclusion, the signs of the emerging policy of transformation between the Baltic States, from small States to smart States, inherently increasing the role they play in European Affairs. This information will then be compared with the policies and efforts of the major States which include Washington, Brussels and even Moscow (due to its closeness in border to the Baltic States and it being a major player in the International setting) to use discursive power over the marginal Baltic States. According to author Shields (1991), being marginal is defined as being either on, near to or beyond the edge of the core spaces of political life and thus necessitates limited power and subjectivity. Where power is understood to be situated in the middle of the international system. Hence States that lie on the margin are considered to be monotonous (Shields 1991). Considering the constructivist school of thought, margins are not objective facts but are considered social constructions and central to the construction, is the power to name, signify and create margins (which is central to the construction core) (Shields 1991). Thus, instead of seeing the label of marginality as a harmful label denying partisanship and power, marginality may also be re-conceptualized as a resource and a site of action (Browning, Joenniemi 2004). It is not unusual for marginal States to define themselves as place of innovation (Ardener, 1987, pp. 38–54) or for other countries to see them as experimentation sites, which has been the case for Northern Europe during the post-Cold war period (Browning 2003). The Baltic States have offered a new example of States no longer satisfied to just accepting the marginality imposed by others and are actively seeking to create a distance between them and the marginal category, making it important to understand how much power they have in influencing the relations

between the United States and Europe. Although it will be possible to predict how many countries support the foreign Policy of the United States around the Franco-German core. But nowadays, it is generally used to characterize the members of the European Union in the East.

Research Method

In order to arrive at a conclusion, this research will be making use of the Qualitative method of gathering data. the Qualitative method will be a suitable strategy because the main conclusion of the paper will be arrived at by making several connections between already published journals, articles and books gotten from the library and over the internet.

1. THE BALTIC STATES IN THE FOREIGN POLICY OF UNITED STATES.

The famous speech given by Rumsfeld created a political rhetoric which became part of the split of Europe into the old and new. Creating the identity of new Europeans for the Baltic States who were before then identified as either eastern European or Post-Soviet States. Giving the States new label, also mean that a new interpretation of the States characteristics was becoming accepted. But it was not clarified what exactly the term new meant in the new label. Before the speech rendered by Rumsfeld, the term new Europe was mainly used to describe the whole of post-cold war Europe, which for example was still the definition provided by Robert Kagan (2002) to show that the whole of Europe was undergoing a change. Ni the same way, the United States-Baltic charter which was signed in 1998, used the idea of a new Europe to describe the direction of change for the whole Europe. The term itself has a longer history and had already been introduced to times in the previous century. The first being the time immediately preceding the first world war, also known as the war to end all wars, and the second appearance, was the Nazis, claiming a fundamentally new order and shape of Europe during the second world war. The recent incarnation of the term is very closely similar to the first appearance of the term some 90 years ago. It was introduced by an article, which focused on issues in the lands of the Hapsburg, Ottomans and Romanovs, which was published in London between the years 1916 and 1920. The aim of the journal was to give visibility to those part of Europe situated in the west and promoting peace which considered national principles in the territories of the previously multi-ethnic empires. So, the term at that time was a symbol of justified and righteous order, as it was only attainable through self-determination and the reformation of the European map in the east. It also marked the end of the multinational era and the beginning of the nation States.

The more present notion of the term new Europe, usually depicts an introduction of a vision or mission of transformation from one Europe to another. Apart from the post-communist States of the east that have recently become members of the European Union and NATO. It can also be use d to describe those European State, who feel comfortable with the foreign policy of the United States leadership, like the Great Brittan and Denmark. Ruminatively, the term new Europe can be normatively used to refer to the new direction the whole European Union is heading to paved by the Euro-Atlanticists (Sikorski 2003). Although the political relevance of

dividing Europe into the old and new is gradually declining since the introduction by Rumsfeld, it has remained in usage particularly with the United States. an example where the term new Europe was used is in a review titled in simple tense "the new Europe review" posted on the internet. this review helped form part of the new media policy of the United States. it was originally classified organizationally under the Eurasia division of the Voice of America, which was part of the international broadcasting bureau that was responsible for maintaining the non-military United States government-funded International broadcast services. thus, the review became incorporated into the official policy of the United States government regardless if it offers a stage for limited number of politicians and academics from the so-called new Europe. The review was originally published in the 16 languages spoken in the region between Berlin and Moscow, the Baltic States and the black seas, and in English. the explanation of the first issue in 2004 was what to call the region which was no longer the eastern Europe of the cold war but not yet the fully integrated portion of the European Union, to which many States in this region aspire to be. and here again the term New Europe comes up as being the best term to description. The interest of the United States in supporting development and democratization towards the allies of the western world and free market is asserted. The new Europe is more important to Washington than the old Europe because the United States need friends, allies, partners and fellow promoters of the same ideology which define the west, which the regions classified as the new Europe. much like its predecessor, 90 years ago, the new Europe introduced an order of righteousness and a stage meant to engage new European Politicians in support of the project as was the case after the first world war, the aims may appear noble, but in the end, it propagates a future set by a dominant great power which at that time was the United Kingdom and now is the United States. in 2006, the review mysteriously disappeared apparently it was not a desired tool of foreign policy anymore.

1.1. The Baltic States as Healers of the Broken West.

After the dissolvment of the old opponent to the west, which was the cold war east, the power to create the New Europe, was a part of a larger process of defining the strength of the United States. a rift was created between the United States and Europe by the emergence of the Iraq war, which has opened a diverging comprehension of the best course of reaction in case of terrorist threats. Thus, leading to multiple reports being released in the year 2002 focusing on the broken nature of the west (Calleo 2004), the division in the west (Moisi 2003), and even as

further as being corrupt (Fukuyama 2002). This line of thought was originally initiated by author Robert Kagan, in his articles 'power and weakness' and 'the book of paradise and power' in which he likened Americans to fictional Martians and Europeans to Venusians, to demonstrate the fundamental difference between the United States and Europe. He also argued that the American people view the world through the lens of the Hobbesian school of thought while the Europeans see the world through the ideologies of the Kantian school of thought. When the main argument about bringing and sustaining world order, the European are seen as a weak, impotent and naïve power, in contrast to the United States, which has remained the only powerful and influential nation with the capability and willingness to solve problems of the international community. It is widely believed that Europeans live in the lure of post-modernity, while the rest of the world strictly realpolitik environment, where power is crucial. Since the Iraq war, Kagan's argument has been popularized and used as a description of the emerging rift in Transatlantic relations (Khanna 2004).

Dassu and Menotti (2005), States that the American force, which was once a unifying force, is now a divisive factor in Europe. (Dassu, Menotti 2005). The division, clearly obvious, between the Euro-Atlanticists led by the United Kingdom and the Euro-Gaullists within the Franco-German core. The disagreement, mostly centers on enlargement, which to the Euro-Atlanticists, is the best foreign policy but is viewed with suspicion by the Euro-Gaullists, who instead prefer to focus their attention on strengthening the original policy. To this group, the notion of new Europe is not however, entirely compatible. Naming new Europe was obviously part of the disagreement between the faction's debate and a tool for sustaining the disagreement within the European Union. Simultaneously, investing in this concept offers the possibility of redefining the whole of Europe and thus keeping the old west interconnected by finding new spokesmen in Europe that support the new European dynamics in the European Foreign policy. New Europe can thus be referred to as the protégé of the United States in Europe, whose role is to serve the interest of the United States, by creating a sustainable influence on the policies of the European Union (Joenniemi 2005). In the grand new strategy of the United States, institutionalized alliance systems like the NATO have suffered diminishing roles as they are being replaced by more flexible and adaptable alliances, which are created for specific missions as noticed in the case of Iraq (Rhodes 2004, Allin 2004, Jones 2004). It is generally believed that to heal the broken west, the new Europe's role as loyal supporters of a unified American-led west is vital especially within Europe. According to both Bugajski and Teleki (2005), the primary goal envisaged by the CEE States, include repairing the political bridge across the

Atlantic. In their article, published in the Washington quarterly, they described the world from the Washington perspective. NATO is seen as the glue that holds together the two sides of the Atlantic, but as the role of permanent institutions is being reduced, new alliances are increasingly being wanted and according to the authors, it will be for the best interest of the united States to ensure it has loyal allies within the European Union. (keep in mind that they would prefer that the CEE countries will be successful in both strengthening the European Union's security and reinforcing the transatlantic connection). The authors theorize that Eastern enlargement, may affect the transatlantic relationship in one of two ways, the first way, the Inclusionist view, enlargement is seen as a means for deepening European integration and reinforcing the role of Europe an equal on the global stage. Creating a more understood opposition and a separation from the policy of the United States. While the disillusionist point of view, is that the accession of the CEE countries to the European Union will contribute to creating political disputes, social protests and Economic problems, which will increase skepticism towards the European Union thus alienating the new member States from Brussels. Nevertheless, Euroskeptics are not always staunch Atlanticist and countries like Slovenia, Czech Republic and Slovakia already have a sense of safety and favor neutrality (Bugajski, Teleki 2005).

Although the new Europeans support and are loyal to the United States, they do not however conform to its view, because of the existence of different fundamental security thinking as illustrated by Zaborowski and Longhurst (2003), when they analyzed the role of Poland as a protégé of the United States. They realized that Poland was going to become one of the important player amongst the countries that were once under soviet authority. Which was a very difficult goal to achieve mainly because Poland currently y has its own different Interests. With the dominating idea behind the security thinking of Poland being the past partitioning of Poland by surrounding powers, making the Polish people still view the presence of the United States as something that provides security from its neighbour who are seen as powerful States. The Americans and the Poles therefore differ according to how they comprehend the current situation and prediction for the future. Which may become a complication in the relationship between Poland and the United States, hindering an increased relationship between Europe and the United States. With defense still the important factor in the policy of Poland, which hinders the possibility of Poland playing a vital role in bridging the divide between Europe and Russia. With security thinking being the main force behind traditional European policy making decision, Washington feels the most trustful new Europeans can only be found in the Baltics,

as author Missiroli (2004), Says, ‘the warmer the support for Washington, the more hostile towards Moscow’ (Missiroli 2004). According to Bugajski and Teleki (2005), the Baltic States are the most trustful partner of the United States. For the Baltic States, depend on Washington especially if Moscow, under the authoritarian rule of Vladimir Putin, continues to act assertively at the global level, with the European Union’s security and foreign policy, which is perceived to be lacking in strength, makes it unlikely that pro-Washington stance will weaken in Tallinn, Vilnius and Riga. These little but loyal followers play a significant role for the United States because through them Washington can influence development within the European Union. Former President Bush’s visit to the Baltics, once to Tallinn and twice to Riga and the holding of NATO summits in Riga can be seen as Washington paying compliments to the Baltic States as one of their loyal allies. Catering for the Baltic States, ultimately secures their loyalty in the future. It is important to point out also that over the years, the language of the rhetoric of the United States has changed especially when being directed to the new Europeans. After 9/11, the notion of the west started losing its glory, the United Rhetoric currently is not used as often as it was once used, it has been replaced by the notion of the free world (Jackson 2006, Garton Ash 2004). The United States-Baltic partnership charter, and the Northern European Initiative (which was replaced by the Enhanced Partnership in Northern Europe in 2004) are the only official documents to mention the Baltic States, which raises the question, how important is the role of the Baltics between the relationship of the United States and European Union. The main goals of the Northern European Initiative which was a Clinton administration initiative, was to support the building of Europe, by promoting liberal democratic development in the Baltic States. The program was thought to have been successful only when the Baltic States became part of the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Hinting to the Baltic States playing a prominent role in the relationship between The European Union and the United States.

2. THE ROLE OF THE BALTICS IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE EUROPEAN UNION.

This chapter will be discussing the role which the Baltic States play in the relationship of the European union and United States, interpreting the strategic importance of the Baltic States in respect to the pacts, Northern European Initiative and Enhanced Partnership in Northern Europe. Both programs bring considered successful because of the Baltic States becoming a part of the European Union and The North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Geographically and historically, the Baltic States are very important countries. Thus, with the Enhanced Partnership in Northern Europe program, the Baltic States play the role of Democratic missionaries and help in the eastward expansion of the West. From the perspective of the United States, they were considered as unimportant and countries to be Supported before they became members of the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. After they became members, the idea of the Baltic States was transformed to New Europeans, who have become members of the western community and sovereign actors. This change in idea, came about as the recognition of the importance which the Baltic States possess. To further express the importance of the Baltic States, speeches of notable Western Politicians like President George W Bush, and Senator John McCain were given in the Baltic capitals, to better solidify the notion that the Baltics, are very important especially in forwarding the western ideology into the East. According to rhetoric of the United States, the Baltic States are morally obliged to try and Bring Europe back to the West, in support of Westernization of Europe, by being called the new Europeans, the Baltics, have become true Europeans, as explained by authors Kuus (2002) and Malksoo (2006). The Baltics have always wanted to be part of institutions that define the West (Smith 2003). But Eglitis (2004), has argued that to the Baltics, their soviet past is regarded as an abnormality, and the Balts felt they had some sense of normalcy embodied within the Western Institutions, like NATO and the European Union, creating an image of them being a protégé of the West. Keeping in mind that the ideas of the west is not fixed but fluid (Goble 2005, pp 9-20). Baltic politicians have not always been okay with being classified as new Europeans.

The role the Baltics play in the relationship between the European union and the United States can be understood from the aspect of their history. As mentioned previously, the Baltic politicians have not been okay with being called new Europeans. In the Interwar era, the youth of the Baltic States was then associated with an expectation of change and a new dawn. It was thought that the future was going to belong to those nations deemed young, because of their virility, on the other hand, other nations were seen to be degenerating. Today, the label of new is often simply used as a term to preserve the ascribed

status of the Baltics. Being new Europeans, means the foreign policy of the Baltic States are openly supportive of the United States. Although, the Baltics have certain characteristics that differentiate them from other post-soviet countries, they also share a lot of characteristics with them too. But the three States geolocation, makes them important allies for the united States. The self-identification of the Baltics makes them fit perfectly into the expectations for the western vision for the European future. The relationship between the Baltic States and the united States can be best explained by the national rhetoric, which believes that the omnipresent nature of the United States is Important (Asmus & Vondra 2005). The Baltic State have high regards for the United States, thus they support the policies of the United States, opposing the Franco-German line. But the Baltic States and the United States did not always have good relations. The United States non-recognition policy was used by politicians of the Baltic States and the United States as a chant to point out the moral obligation towards each other, while not paying attention to the future of the Baltic States (L'Hommedieu 2006). For the Baltic States, especially Estonia and Latvia, the Euro-Atlantic community is considered as a significant identity-coordinate. The Euro-Atlantic space is very important to the identification of the Baltic States. The transatlantic relations between the Baltics and the United States seem identical but there are some differences, the Americans, continuously try to redefine the trans-Atlantic community using the new Europeans which consist mostly of the Baltic States, with the war on Terror being foremost. While the Baltic State's idea of the transatlantic community is defined by an exclusive eastern border against Russia. The Baltics still choose to go along with the war on Terror because it is their moral obligation as members of the western community.

Another significant piece of history that may help explain the role of the Baltic States in the relations between the United States and the European Union is the soviet occupation of the Baltics. Soviet legacy, although diminishing, can still be seen physically seen within the Baltics (Todorova 2004). A series of debate have been ongoing since the collapse of the Soviet Union mostly concerning the annexation of the Baltics. The first debate in 2005, was about a Latvian book which didn't completely acknowledged the mass incarceration of Jews. It is also important to mention that the soviet occupation of the Baltic States was also a security threat and it has dominated the self-identification process of the Baltics (Ilves 2005, pp 191-202). Other countries were annexed by the USSR and the Baltics States have increasingly expressed solidarity with them. After joining the European Union, the Baltics have tried to influence the formulation of the European Union policy towards Russia (Malksoo 2006). The legacy of the Soviet Union is also a problem for the European Union but the way the Baltics understand the importance of a wider Europe differs from the view the older Europeans have. Which makes the Baltic States feel more In line with the United States., although for the United States, the areas of ultimate interests lie in the

greater middle east while for the Baltics, they favor a conceptualized expansion towards the East. The soviet legacy has pushed the Baltics into supporting the enlargement of the European union. Acting as missionaries towards the east. Teaching them how to behave western, which is very important in becoming a member of the European Union and NATO, and also influencing the decisions of the European Union in Russian relations by introducing a Washington created skeptical opinion of Moscow (Malksoo 2006).

2.1. The Strategic Importance of the Baltic States.

The geographical reason the Baltic States are important is because they encompass the Baltic sea. Which from history, has been important to the Russian empire. From the history of naval conflicts of the Soviet Era, Russia has continuously failed to successfully carry out naval attacks. Although, they currently possess three bodies of water, where they can flaunt their influence, they are not able to because most times of the year, the Arctic and Pacific borders are usually frozen, making it almost impossible to navigate, hence limiting the possibility of a Russian led invasion through both channels. The Russian access to the rest of the world from both the Caspian Sea and Black sea is completely blocked. The current only access Russia has to the rest of the World is through the Mediterranean either through the straits of Bosphorus or the Dardanelles located and closely guarded by Turkey. Russia once tried to capture the straits from Turkey, but the Western power came to the aid of Turkey, preventing the usurpation of the straits. Russia has always fought to possess that which it did not always have, which is a port to mount attacks from. Hence the interest in the Baltic States, which has already been established in this paper is strategically important.

Within the Baltic sea, the Baltic States have always enjoyed the privilege that comes with being located in close proximity to the Baltic sea, giving them undeniable claim to a portion of the Baltic sea. Tsar Peter the great understood the importance of having the control of the Baltic sea. He understood that in order for Russia to become a World Power, they would they would need to have a strong naval presence. Which he went on to found in the now capital of Estonia and Latvia, Tallinn and Riga. After the collapse of the now defunct USSR, the Russian empire lost a lot of its geopolitical possessions. Which has been dubbed by Putin as “the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century” with the Baltic States being the leader of former non-Russian republics in the fight for their independence. (Valenta & Valenta, 2018)

2.2. Russian interest as the main reason the relations between the United States and European Union needs the Baltic States.

For a threat to be realized, three main factors must be present. Those factors include an actors motive to do harm, the capability of an actor to do harm, and the opportunity to do harm. These have been seen to be present in the ever-growing Russian aggression in eastern Europe. As Stated previously in the paper, the Baltic States, as members of both the European Union and NATO is very important geographically to help the United States in keeping Russia under their thumb. And in this context, the bilateral relationship between the United States and its allies in Europe is especially important. As Stated at the beginning of this chapter, for a threat to be recognized as being real, three motives have to be present, in current politics, Russia has had all three of those and their actions have caused the role of the Baltic States to be increasingly important in the relations between the European Union and the United States. This part of the paper will be discussing the motives behind Russian intention and how it affects the relationship between the European Union and The United States. Russia, according to the United States defense intelligent agency, is a threat to the United States hegemonic power. In a 116-page report, the defense agency detailed the military strength of Russia and ho the United States has to be on high alert especially within the Baltic region. According to the Pentagon, Russia sees the United States and its NATO partners as a threat to its geo-political ambitions of re-acquiring the now independent former nations that were once under soviet occupation. (Mellen 2017).

2.3. The Motives of Russia.

For political leaders within the Baltics, Russia has always been a hostile nation. And deducing from the previous experience the Baltic States have had, it is clear beyond doubt that Russia sees the Baltic States as fair game in cyber espionage, which is a new form of hybrid conflict between the United States and Russia. the interests in the Baltics region has been narrowed down to three elements by Russian experts, they include, the acknowledged fear, which seem to be on the increase with the spike in NATO and United States attention within the region. The second is Russia's intention to maintain a status quo in matters of political and economic relations, which would also encompass important trade ties with the Baltic States, which was cut off due to sanctions imposed by the European Union. The third reason protection of Russian

indigenes both within the country and outside. (the Moscow times, 2014). Which Moscow has cited being the reason for their military intervention in the Baltic States. (Khromakov, 2013). From the afore listed reason for Russian intention in the Baltic States, they (the Baltic), have course for alarm. They are however safe from an attack as Russia is not willing to risk the possibility of nuclear war by attacking a member State of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (Trenin, Pukhov, 2016). Since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, the modernization of the Russian militia has been thrust into the spotlight. Furthermore, the military capabilities of Russia is not that far off from the United States, hence the tough competition between both parties. But notwithstanding, an Invasion of the Baltic States, would deal a decisive blow to the security capabilities of the North Atlantic Treaty organization (Johnson, Shlapak, 2016). And as a study showed, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization cannot fully defend its most exposed members even with rotations of additional forces to the region (Johnson, Shlapak, 2016). This however did not dissuade the Russians as no significant action was taken by Moscow as they saw those actions as not posing a real threat. But it should be noted that the recent actions of Russia have not been to threaten the Baltic States but rather in deterring NATO and dominating Ukraine (Kofman, 2016).

CONCLUSION

The Baltics can thus be seen to play the role of the spokesperson for the political west. But that is not only what it does as it also provides western elements to the European Union. However, the importance of the role is still being contemplated because of a possible contradiction which might redefine the entire relationship between the West and the European Union. Pro Americanism of the Baltics is rooted deeply and can be linked to the quest of the Baltic States to be free of fear from their Neighbour Russia. The support of America after the cold war sealed the affection of the Baltics towards the United States, like a duckling imprinting on the first thing it lays its eyes on. This has always played a huge role in defining their role towards the East and the west. Being western by culture, the history of the Baltics has seen multiple occupation by Germans, Danes, Poles and Swedes but none more daunting than the Soviet Union. They have always seen the United States as their Saviour, leading to the adoption of their western like culture. Although miniscule in both size and population, they are very important geopolitically and are strong supporters of economic freedom, liberal democracy and human rights. However, it is clear that

they also play the role of missionary, as Stated in chapter one. Since regaining their independence, the Baltic States have come a long way. From their history of occupation, they seem to be doing well compared to other nations who share similar history. Thus, if utilized efficiently, they can be used to both enlarge the European Union, with pre-groomed European States, who aspire to be like the Baltic States, while ultimately reducing the influence of Russia with the region.

It is obvious that although not apparent, the Baltic States is important to the United States and the Policy makers of Washington, should make it a priority of maintaining a much more closer relations with the Baltic States mainly because they embody many similar beliefs and value which are cherished by the United States, and also the fact that culturally, the United States is linked to the region as a rather significant population is of Baltic origin. As demonstrated by the map below, which illustrates the average concentration of Baltic Americans within each State of the United States (annex 1). The Baltic States can serve as a counterbalance to the Russian occupation within Europe mostly due to their membership within Europe. For the United States, the Baltic stats are very important, and their security is of utmost importance. They are very important because they help in combating the increasing Russian influence in Eastern Europe for the United States.

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ANNEX 1.

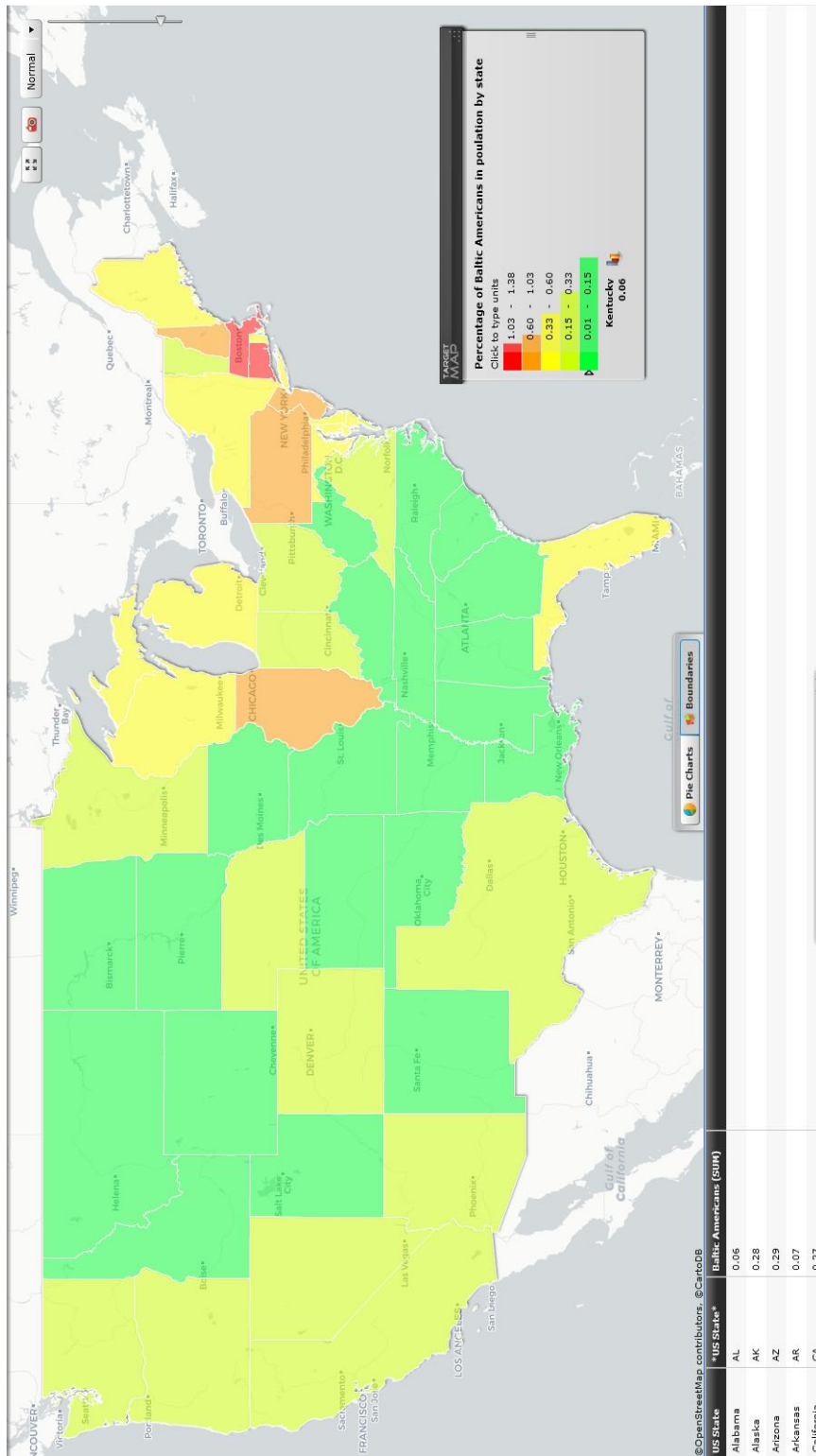


Fig 1. Percentage of Baltic Americans. (Targetmap,2018)

ANNEX 2.

MAP 1

Key Locations in the Baltic Region

- A** Tallinn Miinisadam Port, Estonia. HQ of Baltic Naval Squadron.
- B** Amari Air Base, Estonia. Air base available for NATO missions and training exercises.
- C** Tartu, Estonia. Home of the Baltic Defence College.
- D** Ādaži military base, Latvia. HQ of the Baltic Battalion.
- E** Lielvārde Air Base, Latvia. Air base available for NATO missions and training exercises.
- F** Liepāja, Latvia. Training and Equipment Repair Center for the Baltic Naval Squadron.
- G** Siauliai Air Base, Lithuania. HQ of NATO's Baltic Air Policing Mission.
- H** Neman, Kaliningrad. Site of proposed Russian nuclear power plant.
- I** Karmelava, Lithuania. HQ of the Baltic Air Surveillance Network.
- J** Astravyets, Belarus. Site of proposed Belorussian nuclear power plant.



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Map detailing strategic points in the Baltic (Coffey, 2018).