

THE MILITARY-TECHNICAL DIMENSION OF THE UKRAINE-LITHUANIA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP IN THE CONTEXT OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR

ВІЙСЬКОВО-ТЕХНІЧНИЙ ВИМІР СТРАТЕГІЧНОГО ПАРТНЕРСТВА УКРАЇНА-ЛИТВА У КОНТЕКСТІ РОСІЙСЬКО-УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ВІЙНИ

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The article analyzes the peculiarities of the international cooperation between Ukraine and Lithuania in the military-technical sphere, considers the achievements of the past and the current state, and also outlines the prospects of the future strategic partnership in the specified sphere, which will provide an opportunity to transform the military cooperation between the partner countries in the conditions of the military invasion of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine (in particular, in the conditions of a long-standing hybrid war, joint security challenges and real threats from the Russian Federation).

An important role in the development of cooperation between Ukraine and Lithuania in the 21st century is played by cooperation in the military-technical sphere, which is a key component of both national security and security in the European region. It was found that the agreement on military cooperation between the states, concluded in 2000 and updated in 2011, is a comprehensive document that provides for the development of strategic partnership in this field. In particular, the result of this cooperation was the creation in 2015 of the joint Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian brigade "LITPOLUKRBRIG". The main directions of cooperation between Ukraine and the Republic of Lithuania in the context of military-technical cooperation under the auspices of NATO, which contributes to the Euro-Atlantic movement of Ukraine, in particular, through the provision of consultations on issues of a defense nature, are characterized; conducting joint exercises; participation in peacekeeping missions, adaptation of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to NATO standards in order to obtain membership in the Alliance; modernization of Ukrainian defense and security complexes. At the moment, there is an intensification and deepening of Ukrainian-Lithuanian cooperation in the military-technical sphere in connection with the armed aggression of the Russian Federation. It was found that an important aspect of Ukrainian-Lithuanian relations is also military-technical assistance from the Lithuanian government to the Armed Forces of Ukraine with heavy weapons. Treatment and rehabilitation of Ukrainian servicemen is another manifestation of this cooperation.

Prospects for cooperation between Ukraine and the Republic of Lithuania in the context of military-technical cooperation in the future are outlined, in particular regarding the issue of sharing experience in effectively countering hybrid threats with the development of a system for their early warning. It was determined that for official Kyiv, the strategic partnership with Lithuania is developing in several dimensions, such as: diplomatic, financial and military, in particular the exchange of experience in the military-technical sphere, the development of a joint proactive policy to identify security challenges and threats, military-humanitarian assistance etc. Military experts believe that the provision of military-technical assistance to Ukraine has turned into a powerful lever of geopolitical deterrence, which makes Ukraine's negotiating position much stronger.

Key words: Ukraine, Republic of Lithuania, military-technical cooperation, Armed Forces of Ukraine, weapons, military aid.

У статті проаналізовано особливості міжнародної співпраці України та Литви у військово-технічній сфері, розглянуто досягнення минулого, сучасного стану, а також окреслено перспективи майбутнього стратегічного партнерства у зазначеній сфері, що дасть можливість здійснити трансформацію військового співробітництва між країнами-партнерами в умовах військового вторгнення Російської Федерації на територію України (зокрема в умовах давно існуючої гібридної війни, спільних безпекових викликів та реальних загроз із боку РФ).

Важливу роль у розвитку співпраці України та Литви у XXI столітті відіграє співробітництво у військово-технічній сфері, яке є ключовим компонентом як національної безпеки, так і безпеки у європейському регіоні. З'ясовано, що договір про військово-технічне співробітництво між державами, укладений у 2000 р. та оновлений у 2011 р., є комплексним документом, що передбачає розвиток стратегічного партнерства у даній сфері. Зокрема підсумком даної співпраці стало створення у 2015 р. спільної литовсько-польсько-української бригади «ЛИТПОЛУКРБРИГ». Охарактеризовано основні напрями співробітництва України та Литовської Республіки у контексті військово-технічної співпраці під егідою НАТО, що сприяє євроатлантичному руху України, зокрема, через надання консультацій з питань оборонного характеру; проведення спільних навчань; участь у миротворчих місіях, адаптацію Збройних сил України до стандартів НАТО задля отримання членства в Альянсі; модернізацію українського оборонного й безпекового комплексів. На даний момент спостерігається активізація та поглиблення українсько-литовського співробітництва у військово-технічній сфері у зв'язку зі збройною агресією Російської Федерації. З'ясовано, що важливим аспектом україно-литовських відносин є також військово-технічна допомога з боку уряду Литви Збройним силам України важким озброєнням. Лікування та реабілітація українських військовослужбовців є ще одним проявом даного співробітництва.

Окреслено перспективи співробітництва України та Литовської Республіки у контексті військово-технічної співпраці в подальшому майбутньому, зокрема стосовно питання обміну досвідом щодо ефективного протистояння гібридним загрозам із розробкою системи для їх раннього попередження. Визначено, що для офіційного Києва стратегічне партнерство з Литвою розвивається в декількох вимірах, як-от: у дипломатичному, фінансовому та військовому, зокрема обмін досвідом у військово-технічній площині, розвиток спільної проактивної політики щодо виявлення безпекових викликів і загроз, військово-гуманітарна допомога тощо. Військові експерти вважають, що надання військово-технічної допомоги Україні перетворилося на вагомий важіль геополітичного стримування, який робить переговорну позицію України значно сильнішою.

Ключові слова: Україна, Литовська Республіка, військово-технічна співпраця, Збройні сили України, озброєння, військова допомога.

Formulation of the problem. Transformation of the system of international relations that took place at the beginning of the 21st century, as well as the emergence of a conflict situation in the Eastern European region (in connection with the outbreak of the war in the east of Ukraine in 2014), drew attention to the issues of the modern security space, which should be directed not only for the protection of state particular in the military-technical sovereignty, as well as for the defense of the territorial integrity of the country.

In this regard, the establishment of mutual cooperation with foreign partners, in sphere, is mutually beneficial for the parties, in particular, extremely important for ensuring the adoption of reforms and modernization of the defense sector of Ukraine in accordance with modern European standards.

The relevance of this study is also determined by the need to strengthen the relationship between Ukraine and the Republic of Lithuania in the sphere of guaranteeing the security and integrity not only of the European space, but also the Baltic and Black Sea regions. The possibility of using Lithuania's significant experience, which the country gained while being in international organizations such as NATO and the EU, will allow Ukraine to more confidently oppose Russia's military aggression on its territories.

Thus, it will be appropriate to analyze the peculiarities of international cooperation between Ukraine and Lithuania, in particular in the military-technical sphere, considering the practices developed in the past, as well as the future potential of strategic partnership, which will make possible to transform military-technical cooperation between the partner countries in the conditions of the military invasion of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine. Based on this statement, as well as taking into account Lithuania's demonstrated readiness to provide Ukraine with all the necessary assistance, including in the process of security and defense sector reforms, we must state the priority of Ukrainian-Lithuanian relations to ensure the sustainable development of our state. In this case, their analysis turns into an important task for scientific research, because it presents a vivid example of the development of a strategic partnership in the Baltic-Black Sea region.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The concept of "strategic partnership" has occupied an important place in the empirical field of international cooperation for quite a long time and is char-

acterized by complexity and. However, at the micro level, especially in domestic practice, strategic partnership as a tool of military-technical policy of armed institutes has not received proper development.

It is also necessary to pay attention to the fact that the world is changing today, new spheres and directions of interstate cooperation are emerging very quickly, which fill strategic partnership with new meaning.

According to Zhovkva I., strategic partnership for the state is a special tool of its foreign policy, using which it coordinates its actions in the international arena with other states; at the same time, the use of such a tool and the coincidence of the strategic interests of two or more countries in several areas lead to the emergence of a special type of interstate cooperation between them [1].

Among the authors who show interest in this topic, should be noted M. Zamikula [2], G. Lutsyshyn [4], R. Marceniuk [5], K. Mohylnytska [6] I. Turyanitsa [8], and others.

An extremely important part of the sources based on the researched issues such as intergovernmental agreements – of general as well as those that solve specific practical issues, for instance the cooperation of peacekeepers or the operation of the combined units which form the normative basis of bilateral cooperation [10; 11; 12; 13. 14; 15]. Publications in mass media also contain useful information and specialized publications on defense topics.

Highlighting previously unsettled parts of the general problem. International cooperation in the military-technical sphere is one of the key elements of the development of the national armed forces of Ukraine, as well as a powerful tool for increasing the defense capability of our country, particularly in the context of Russian aggression. In the conditions of the intensification of the course towards Euro-Atlantic integration, cooperation with the member countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is turning into an important modernization component of the state defense policy. After all, in the conditions of the occupation of part of the Ukrainian territory and the continuation of hostilities in the east and south of Ukraine, the improvement of the national defense capability directly depends on military and technical support. The Republic of Lithuania has become an extremely important partner for Ukraine in this field for a number of reasons.

Forming the goals of the article. The aim of the study is a comprehensive analysis of the features and prospects of the strategic partnership of Ukraine and Lithuania in the military-technical sphere. In accordance with the aim, the following tasks have been formulated: to reveal the specifics of cooperation of the mentioned type of cooperation; identify the threats and challenges facing the strategic partnership of Ukraine and Lithuania in this area; to outline the main prospects and possible scenarios for the development of strategic partnership between countries in the military-technical field.

Presentation of the main material of the study. Relations between Ukraine and Lithuania have a long history and acquired a completely different meaning in 1991 with the restoration of national states after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Diplomatic relations between Ukraine and the Republic of Lithuania were established on December 12, 1991. An important role in the development of cooperation between Ukraine and Lithuania in the 21st century is played by cooperation in the military-technical sphere, which is an important component of both national security and security in the European region.

It is about cooperation to improve the compliance of the Armed Forces with NATO standards and their ability to cooperate with the military forces of the Alliance member countries, participation in joint peacekeeping operations, and provision of multifaceted assistance to Ukraine in the face of aggression from the Russian Federation.

However, the agreement on military cooperation between the states was concluded only in 2000 and updated in 2011 and is a complex document that provides for the development of strategic partnership in this area [15]. Analyzing officially available materials, regulatory documents, information of national ministries of defense and executive authorities, available statistical information, interviews of authorized persons, mass media reports, we can tentatively periodize these relationships in the periods under study depending on their intensity [4, p. 109]:

1) The formation of Ukrainian-Lithuanian cooperation in the military sphere, in particular, the signing of mutual obligations, the conclusion of relevant interdepartmental agreements directly related to cooperation in the military sphere (2000–2004).

2) The development of cooperation with Lithuania's accession to NATO, the promotion of Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic movement, in particular, through the provision of consultations on defense matters, the adaptation of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to NATO standards in order to obtain membership in the Alliance, cooperation within the framework of Ukraine's dialogue with NATO, the modernization of the Ukrainian defense and security environment (2004–2010).

3) Weakening of cooperation and all Euro-Atlantic programs (with the election in February 2010 of

Ukrainian President V. Yanukovich), when Ukraine postponed its decision to join NATO. The agreement on the creation of an international military formation was postponed indefinitely. The curtailment of a clear European integration course affected relations (2010–2014).

4) Activation and deepening of Ukrainian-Lithuanian cooperation in the military sphere, compliance with international security standards in connection with the armed aggression of the Russian Federation, violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine; its occupation of the Ukrainian Crimea and parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and the creation of the DPR/LPR under its control in the latter. Creation of a joint military formation. Expanding areas of cooperation (2014–2021).

5) Maximum support for Ukraine in all possible issues related to the Russian invasion of the territory of Ukraine (from the first day of February 24 to today) (2022).

In the issue of strategic partnership between countries in the field of military-technical cooperation, it is important to mention the “Bilateral defense cooperation” section of the “White Book” of Lithuania, which identifies only four countries in the world (the USA, Poland, Denmark and Ukraine) with which military cooperation is a priority for Lithuania. In general, cooperation between Ukraine and Lithuania in the format of professional exchange of experience and training of Ukrainian benefits all participants. Its positive results are not one-sided. Lithuanian instructors help the Ukrainian military forces in the transition to the standards of the Euro-Atlantic system of collective security, provide familiarization with the latest tactical developments. At the same time, the practical experience gained by the Armed Forces of Ukraine within the framework of the war with Russia is of interest to Vilnius and is being studied in depth. Thus, if the Lithuanians contribute to ensuring the theoretical and technical raising of the Ukrainian army to the level of world standards, the Ukrainians simultaneously share with their allies their practical experience, which may come in handy in the case of an expansion of Russian aggression in the region [6, p. 124].

In the military-technical sphere, the Republic of Lithuania is interested in using Ukrainian capacities to maintain the Soviet models in service in a combat-ready condition – in the repair and maintenance of equipment and weapons at Ukrainian enterprises. Thus, the maintenance of Lithuanian An-26 military transport aircraft was carried out at the Ukrainian aviation plant in Kyiv [3]. In the conditions of the intensification of the development of the domestic defense industry, Vilnius's interest in intensifying cooperation in this direction, in the field of development of promising projects, has been observed in recent years. In 2017, a memorandum of cooperation was signed between the Ukrainian state concern Ukroboronprom

and the Lithuanian Security and Defense Industry Association, outlining the future vectors of the partnership [7].

Trying to strengthen the Ukrainian potential in countering the aggressor, the Lithuanian authorities are making significant efforts to improve the material and technical support of the Armed Forces. The agreement on military-technical assistance between Lithuania and Ukraine was signed in November 2014. The Republic of Lithuania became the first and only European state to supply Ukraine with lethal weapons during the conflict. The Armed Forces of Ukraine received from Lithuania a batch of Stinger anti-aircraft missile systems, as well as defense ammunition. In 2015-2016, Ukraine received machine guns, ammunition and more than 150 tons of equipment from the Lithuanians. In 2017, Lithuania decided to provide Ukraine with more than 7,000 Kalashnikov assault rifles and about 2 million rounds of ammunition. In 2018, Lithuania expressed its readiness to continue the supply weapons, in particular, to transfer to Ukraine up to 7,000 units of small arms, mortars, machine guns, anti-tank systems and ammunition, the value of which was up to 3 million euros [20]. Vilnius acted as a kind of mediator in the transfer of military aid to Ukraine collected in several Central and Eastern European NATO member states. In this case, the importance of Lithuania as a partner acquires a new quality – because this country has agreed to officially assume duties and responsibilities that testify to an allied attitude and readiness to help Kyiv, and this is perceived as an anti-Russian *démarche* in the Kremlin [6, p. 124]. In February 2019, a decision was made to transfer additional ammunition for small arms to Ukraine – more than one million cartridges worth 255 thousand euros. The Lithuanian side emphasizes that such actions not only correspond to bilateral agreements and the nature of relations between states, but also have strong support from the population of the republic [9].

Another recognized aspect of cooperation is cooperation in training and upgrading the qualifications of military personnel. Since the end of the last century, a training plan for the Lithuanian military has been in effect at the National Academy of Defense of Ukraine named after I. Chernyakhovsky. Today, Lithuanian instructors help in the training of servicemen of the armed forces of Ukraine. Already at the initial stage of Russian aggression in Ukraine, a group of Lithuanian officers acted as advisers to the General Staff of Ukraine and the Command of Special Operations Forces. Vilnius also took part in training units of the revived National Guard of Ukraine. In January 2016, the Lithuanian Ministry of Defense announced that it would join the US-led multinational training group Ukraine. The main goal of participation in the program was to provide professional training for servicemen of the Ukrainian armed forces, to acquaint them with Lithuanian experiences [22].

In 2017, Lithuanian participation in the training of the Armed Forces was expanded. According to the mandate approved by the Lithuanian Seimas, up to 60 military personnel could be deployed to perform training duties on the territory of our state. As of the end of 2018, more than 20 Lithuanian instructors were involved in such work – they are serving on the territory of the International Peacekeeping and Security Center in Yavoriv and the 142nd Special Forces Training Center in Berdychiv [21]. Паралельно українці навчаються у Литовській військовій академії імені генерала Йонаса Жямайтіса (м. Вільнюс) та Школі підфіцерів литовських збройних сил імені дивізійного генерала Стасіса Раштікиса (м. Каунас). Також Литва фінансує підготовку українських офіцерів в Балтійському оборонному коледжі (BALTDEFCOL), розташованому в м. Тарту, Естонія. At the same time, Ukrainians study at the Lithuanian Military Academy named after General Jonas Žiamaitis (Vilnius) and the School of Non-Commissioned Officers of the Lithuanian Armed Forces named after Major General Stasis Rashtikis (Kaunas). Lithuania also finances the training of Ukrainian officers at the Baltic Defense College (BALTDEFCOL), located in Tartu, Estonia.

At the same time, the Republic of Lithuania is helping in the structural restructuring of the system of planning and management of the Ukrainian armed forces. Lithuania is a member of the international advisory group on security sector reform in the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, which includes the United States, Canada, Great Britain and Poland. Another practical aspect of cooperation is the provision of medical support to the Ukrainian military. Lithuania took on the responsibilities of providing treatment for parts of Ukrainian servicemen who were injured in the conflict zone. They are undergoing rehabilitation at the military medical center in the city of Druskininkai.

Practical cooperation of the armed forces of Ukraine and Lithuania also takes place in the format of participation in peacekeeping operations, including those conducted under the auspices of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Thus, a platoon of the Lithuanian military took part in the KFOR mission in Kosovo. He served as part of the multinational brigade EAST (“East”) of the peacekeeping forces, reporting to the command of the Polish-Ukrainian battalion in the village of Kachanik, 40 kilometers from the city of Pristina. Instead, Ukrainian servicemen (medical personnel) performed their duties as part of the Lithuanian contingent in Afghanistan. They acted on the basis of the technical agreement signed on March 13, 2007 between the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine and the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Lithuania regarding the deployment of peacekeeping personnel of Ukraine to perform tasks as part of the Lithuanian group for the reconstruction of the Afghan province of Ghor, operating within the framework of the Interna-

tional Security Assistance Force in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan [10]. In the future, agreements on cooperation in this format were updated and re-approved – in 2008 [11] and in 2011 [12] (at the same time, certain changes were made to the last document by a special protocol dated June 13, 2014). Thus, we can talk about establishing a time-tested combat partnership between peacekeepers from the two countries [2, p. 58]. On its basis, at the end of the 2000s, a promising initiative to deepen cooperation through the creation of a joint peacekeeping unit appeared. The project was to acquire a tripartite format – with the involvement of Poland as a full-fledged partner. Basic agreements on it were reached during the meeting of EU defense ministers in June 2008. At it, a decision was made to create a joint Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian military unit, which was supposed to bring Ukraine closer to the standards of the North Atlantic Alliance. Further discussion of the issue led to an agreement to form a brigade in which Lithuanian, Polish and Ukrainian military personnel were to serve. On November 16, 2009, a letter of intent on this matter was agreed in Brussels. The document was signed by the Minister of Regional Protection of Lithuania R. Yukniaviciene, acting Minister of Defense of Ukraine V. Ivanenko and Deputy Minister of Defense of Poland S. Komorowski [5, p. 172].

On February 4, 2015, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine ratified the intergovernmental agreement on the creation of a unified division of LITPOLUKR-BRYG [14]. One and a half months later, the parliaments of the partner countries – Poland (March 20, 2015) and Lithuania (March 26, 2016) implemented relevant actions. The final transition from the legal to the practical format of solving this issue was marked by the signing by the defense ministers of the three countries of a technical agreement on the detailed aspects of the functioning of the joint military unit, which took place in Lviv on July 24, 2015 [13]. The purpose of the formation of the brigade was defined as: increasing the level of mutual trust and cooperation between the project participants, due to which the security situation in the region is expected to improve; strengthening military cooperation between Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine, with the aim of improving the training of troops and achieving operational interoperability; distribution and implementation of modern standards for planning, supply and use of troops in the general system of training of the Armed Forces; ensuring the national contribution of participating countries to multinational military formations of a high level of readiness, which can participate in peacekeeping operations under the auspices of the UN, NATO, the EU and other international structures based on the mandate of the UN Security Council and in case of approval by national parliaments. Structurally, the brigade consists of an international headquarters and three national battalions. From Lithuania, it

included the personnel of the Ulan battalion of Grand Duchess Birute; from Poland – servicemen of the 21st Pidgalya Rifle Brigade; from Ukraine – fighters of the 80th separate air mobile brigade [5, p. 176]. The total number of units reaches 4.5 thousand people. However, they gather in one place only to conduct exercises and participate in multinational operations. In normal mode, the battalions of the brigade are located on the territory of their countries, and its headquarters is located near the city of Lublin in Poland. The command staff of the brigade is appointed by the constituent countries of the unit on a rotational basis. At the same time, the main management positions – the commander, his deputy and the chief of staff – are evenly distributed among the three states. Since October 2017, the brigade has been named after the Great Hetman of Lithuania Konstantin Ostrozky, an important figure in the history of all three states involved in the project. Its fighters were involved in command and staff exercises on the territory of Poland. They were focused on preparing officers for the challenges and tasks offered by modern military conflicts. At the same time, an important place was given to the development of skills in countering enemy propaganda and working with the local population in the conflict zone – precisely those aspects in which Ukrainian specialists themselves could share with their partners the experience gained in recent years. On January 25, 2016, the headquarters of the brigade began functioning in Lublin. During the year, the unit took part in a number of exercises of various levels, such as “Anaconda-2016” (June 6-17, 2016, Poland) and “Maple Arch 2016” (November 7-21, 2016, Ukraine). Finally, in December 2016, the brigade confirmed the acquisition of full operational capabilities and readiness to perform peacekeeping missions. Today, it is becoming the main platform for developing the operational compatibility of the Ukrainian and Lithuanian armed forces.

With the beginning of a full-scale war on the part of the Russian Federation in Ukraine, Lithuania showed a completely solidary position on the side of our state, providing maximum logistical, military and humanitarian assistance. In particular, in February 2022, Lithuania sent instructors to Ukraine to teach Ukrainian servicemen how to use Stinger anti-aircraft missile systems. In addition, the Latvian government also approved the decision to transfer Stinger MANPADS and other military equipment to Ukraine.

Already in March of this year, two aid packages were formed from the full-time services of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the state reserve of Lithuania – means of civil protection and weapons. Various weapons were sent to Ukraine from the reserve of the statutory bodies of internal affairs of Lithuania in the amount of 1.5 million euros. Also, the Ministry of National Defense and the Armed Forces of Lithuania sent a new batch of military aid to Ukraine: 20 M113 tracked armored person-

nel carriers, 10 military trucks and 10 SUVs for sappers. According to Defense Minister Arvydas Anushauskas, the cost of the new package of military aid to Ukraine is about 15.5 million euros [16].

In April 2022, Lithuania transferred heavy mortars to Ukraine in the fight against Russian aggression. The total cost of all transferred military aid already reaches tens of millions of euros, and the replacement cost can be 5-10 times higher. Among the weapons transferred to Ukraine are MANPADS, anti-tank weapons, grenades, ammunition, machine guns. Lithuania also started training for the first group of Ukrainian military personnel on the use of anti-tank weapons. In addition, specialized teams of Lithuanian doctors arrived in Ukraine, and Lviv region received 4 ambulances [17].

In May 2022, the Ministry of Defense of Lithuania transferred 20 M113 armored personnel carriers, 10 military trucks and 10 SUVs (for demining operations) to Ukraine. The cost of the new package of military aid to Ukraine is about 15.5 million euros. In total, Lithuania's military aid currently amounts to about 100 million euros. As it is known from official sources, Lithuania agreed with the Turkish manufacturer of combat drone Bayraktar on the transfer of additional ammunition to Ukraine [18]. As for today, the Ministry of Defense of Lithuania will soon hand over additional M113 and M577 armored personnel carriers, as well as ammunition, to Ukraine. Lithuania is ready to train military police officers (Military Law Enforcement Service) and demining specialists. In addition, the Lithuanian army will also promote the training of Ukrainian personnel in Great Britain and plans to send up to ten instructors there. During the five months of the Russian-Ukrainian war, Lithuania has already provided Ukraine with a batch of M113s, portable Stinger anti-aircraft systems, anti-tank weapons, body armor and helmets, 120-mm mortars, small arms, ammunition, thermal imagers, drones, anti-drones, surveillance radars, trucks, SUVs, as well as a Bayraktar TB2 attack drone with ammunition. In total, Lithuania's military aid already amounts to 123 million dollars [19].

Conclusions and prospects for further research in this direction. The results of the analysis of practical aspects of Ukrainian-Lithuanian cooperation in the military-technical sphere clearly prove its importance and effectiveness. The nature of bilateral relations demonstrates the readiness of Vilnius to provide

comprehensive assistance not only during military operations during the war, but also in general for the modernization of the domestic security sector of our state. The position of the Lithuanian authorities in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war allows us to talk about Lithuania as one of the most loyal allies of Ukraine. Activation of cooperation in almost all directions (provision of material and technical assistance; support for reforms in the structures of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine; provision of a training mission on Ukrainian territory and exchange of experience; treatment of wounded Ukrainian soldiers; partnership in the field of peacekeeping activities and in the format of the functioning of a unified unit) turns Vilnius into a key partner of Kyiv within the regional space. The acquired positive experience of military cooperation, in particular within the framework of the creation of LITPOLUKRBRIG and participation in joint trainings, can be used during the expansion of regional cooperation to strengthen the security situation in Central and Eastern Europe. In particular, the involvement of Ukraine in the formats of Nordic-Baltic cooperation with the assistance of Lithuania is also desirable. Instead, the experience of the Ukrainian military, gained in the Russian-Ukrainian war, can be borrowed by Lithuania and taken into account for operational planning in the region.

In addition, the military-technical cooperation of states within the framework of NATO and in the formats of bilateral and multilateral cooperation remains promising (further activities of the joint Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian brigade; development of joint mechanisms for the early warning of hybrid threats in an expert circle; exchange of experience in countering security threats in within the framework of holding joint military-political consultations; further provision of material, technical and humanitarian aid to Ukraine, etc.). Special attention should be focused on the development of cooperation between analytical centers, state institutions and non-governmental organizations of Ukraine and Lithuania, which are related to solving the issues of building a system of national stability, in particular in the context of countering Russian aggression, as well as developing a system for its early warning (primarily in cooperation with the Center of Eastern European Studies in Vilnius). In this way, military-technical assistance to Ukraine has turned into a significant factor of geopolitical deterrence.

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