

NATO gives, NATO takes away

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The news that NATO gradually expands its presence in the Baltic States has become common and does not surprise. The territory of these countries is actively used in military purposes.

Allies, and the United States in particular, are set to further step up its military presence in Lithuania. Thus, Washington is to change the status of US forces in Lithuania to “a persistent rotational presence”, the US Embassy in Vilnius said on December 7.

“In Lithuania, this initially includes transitioning the episodic deployments of an armoured battalion-sized element and field artillery battery to a persistent rotational presence,” it added.

The US battalion has been deployed at the Pabradė training area close to Vilnius since 2019, with longer or shorter breaks between rotations.

Vilnius considers such presence as protection from possible military aggression. It did not notice how quickly dependence on foreign assistance has become deeper. Lithuania tries its best to create necessary infrastructure for the deployment and wastes a lot of money. Recently, it has become known that Lithuania significantly ups defence spending in 2023 budget bill.

At the beginning of December, Chief of Defence of the Republic of Lithuania Valdemaras Rupšys said that American soldiers are satisfied with the conditions in Lithuania, but it is planned to improve them even more.

The more so, the NATO Support and Procurement Agency is cooperating with the Ministry of National Defence on numerous

projects for Armed Forces modernization, infrastructure for Lithuanian and Allied forces and acquisition of military equipment and weaponry as well.

For example, a Permanent Logistics Support Area development project is launched in Rukla in September to ensure good service conditions for the NATO enhanced Forward Presence Battalion Battle Group.

The project plan encompasses construction of maintenance facility, administrative quarters, technical service and maintenance facility, warehouses, and other buildings of logistical purpose. The Lithuanian side has already cleared the territory, demolished unnecessary buildings, took care of environmental requirements, soil preparation, overflow of Ruklelė creek. Road network will be refurbished, new plumbing constructed, a solar photovoltaic power station for the needs of the Permanent Logistics Support Area will be built, as well as physical and electronic security systems.

All these actions contravene the local population's interests. The traditional agricultural lands as well as forested areas and meadows are turning into military training grounds. These territories become inaccessible to locals and, moreover, harm the environment.

It could happen so, that there will be no need for Lithuania to defend its territory because this territory no longer belongs to it.

Author: Adomas Abromaitis

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