

Lithuania's foreign policy has excessive historical extra weight — historian

VILNIUS, May 28, BNS — Lithuania's foreign policy has excessive historical political extra weight, which keeps it from maintaining good relations, says historian Algimantas Kasparavicius.

"Our foreign policy simply has the historical extra weight it can no longer carry. In the sake of 'fair' history, our figures are ready to make historical forgeries and fight the world from Moscow to Vienna or Tel Aviv," Kasparavicius of the Institute of Lithuanian History said in an interview published in the weekly magazine Veidas on Monday.

"The majority of alleged or real foreign policy problems have to do with history: relations with Russia, Poland and, from last summer — with Austria and Israel," he said.

In Kasparavicius' words, many other countries have historical disagreements, however, the disputes do not dictate foreign policy in other states.

"Britain and France will never agree on Napoleon's victories, founding of the US is viewed in one light in France and in a different light in Britain, however, the history does not dictate the foreign policy of Washington D.C., Paris and London," the historian added.

In his opinion, "a moral compensation in the form of today's Russia officially recognizing the fact of the Baltic occupation" would be the best compensation for the damages caused by the half-century Soviet rule over Lithuania. Kasparavicius said Lithuania should learn from the Polish example of building relations with Russia.

After Dalia Grybauskaite was elected as Lithuania's president, "Lithuania has merely a presentation of foreign policy," said Kasparavicius, adding that, regardless of the president's statements about highly successful outcome of the NATO summit, they are "a result of the favorable international conjuncture rather than our efforts."

"Yes, the US president hugged our president, just like he did leaders of other states. This is not politics, it is merely diplomatic etiquette, which is risky to overestimate, as we know from history,"

he added.

Kasparavicius dismissed as "inadequate" the president's statement in Chicago that Poland was trading good relations with Russia for those with Lithuania.

"The international community will always look strangely at a country that is unhappy with good ties between its neighbors. There is no place for envy here," he added.

In Kasparavicius' words, Lithuania "has fully turned its back on the main EU core, thus ignoring the countries in charge of EU policies — Germany and France."

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