Flag Description: three equal horizontal bands of yellow (top), green, and red.

Background: Independent between the two World Wars, Lithuania was annexed by the USSR in 1940. On 11 March 1990, Lithuania became the first of the Soviet republics to declare its independence, but Moscow did not recognize this proclamation until September of 1991 (following the abortive coup in Moscow). The last Russian troops withdrew in 1993. Lithuania subsequently restructured its economy for integration into Western European institutions; it joined both NATO and the EU in the spring of 2004.

Geography Lithuania: Location: Eastern Europe, bordering the Baltic Sea, between Latvia and Russia. Geographic coordinates: 56 00 N, 24 00 E. Area: total: 65,200 sq km. Area - comparative: slightly larger than West Virginia. Land boundaries: total: 1,612 km. Border countries: Belarus 660 km, Latvia 576 km, Poland 103 km, Russia (Kaliningrad) 273 km. Coastline: 90 km. Climate: transitional, between maritime and continental; wet, moderate winters and summers. Terrain: lowland, many scattered small lakes, fertile soil. Natural resources: peat, arable land, amber. Natural hazards: NA. Environment - current issues: contamination of soil and groundwater with petroleum products and chemicals at military bases. Geography - note: fertile central plains are separated by hilly uplands that are ancient glacial deposits.

Military notes: Armed Forces, Lithuania's "security structure" includes armed forces run by the Ministry of Defense; a domestic police force subordinate to the Ministry of Interior; and a Parliamentary Defense Service that protects the parliament and the president of the republic. Total armed forces in 2006 numbered about approximately 10,000, including a 4,300-member army, 350-member navy, 250-member air force, and the Border Police, with 5,400 guards. The Border Police fall under the jurisdiction of the Interior Ministry; they are responsible for border protection, passport and customs duties, and the interdiction of smuggling and trafficking activities. The core of the Lithuanian force structure is the Iron Wolf Rapid Reaction Brigade, which consists of five battalions and appropriate support elements; while the air force operates 17 fixed wing aircraft and nine helicopters. A coast guard, which is modeled on the United States Coast Guard, is being established. There is also a 12,000-member Home Guard force. The Home Guard is organized on the Scandinavian model and protects borders, strategic facilities, and natural resources. Lithuania's military structure also includes civil defense forces, which provide administrative control of hazardous facilities, transportation, and special rescue services. The national security service is part of the Ministry of Interior and is responsible for the fight against organized crime.

Lithuania cooperates with Estonia and Latvia in the joint infantry battalion BALTBAT and naval squadron BALTRON, as well as with Poland in the LITPOLBAT, all of which are available for peacekeeping operations. Lithuania has deployed troops to Iraq under Polish command, with a mandate through the end of 2007. Since the summer of 2005, Lithuania has also been part of the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, leading a Provincial Reconstruction Team in Ghor province.

Equipment: As of 1994, the army's equipment included fifteen BTR-60 armored personnel carriers (by 2003 this had increased to 27) as well as 11 or 12 BRDM-2 scout cars from Poland.

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1919 Car, Armored, 4x2. Izhorsky-Fiat.
Remarks: Lithuania had one car on hand left behind by Russian forces (see Russia for vehicle details).

193x Car, Armd, 6x4. Landsverk 181.

Remarks: (see Sweden for vehicle details).

1996 Veh, Recce. BRDM-2.
Remarks: 11 BRDM-2s were donated by Poland in 1996 (see Russia for vehicle details).

1996 Carr, Pers, Armd, 8x8. BTR-60PB.
Remarks: 14 vehicles were bought from Russia in 1996, as of 2003 Lithuania had 27 BTR-60PBs on hand, probably from Russian stocks (see Russia for vehicle details).