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THE NORM OF NON-USAGE AND DETERRENCE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS: INTERACTION OF THE CONCEPTIONS IN CASE OF THE UNITED STATES

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This article aims to take a closer look at the US nuclear weapons posture during the period of 2009–2015. The analysis is based on the norm of the theories pertaining to the non-usage and deterrence of nuclear weapons. The first part of the article, in which chosen theories are reviewed, delivers the conclusion that despite the principal differences, the theoretical combinations of the norms of non-usage and deterrence of nuclear weapons is still possible because of the same aim. In order to find out how the norm and nuclear deterrence interact in practice, the case study in terms of qualitative content analysis is done at the second part of this article. Our case study has shown that the meaning of nuclear deterrence was reconsidered and the form of nuclear weapons non-usage was transformed into a tradition of non-usage because of the process of dynamics. The tradition of non-usage leaves a small chance for nuclear weapons to be used again, which is the necessary condition for the deterrence. From a theoretical point of view, it solves the paradox of norms and deterrence. However, a combination of these concepts seems to be unnatural in practice and it induces a negative effect on the implementation of any credible deterrence.

**POLITICS OF HISTORY IN FRANCE:
FORGETTING THE MEMORY OF ALGERIA**

INESA ULICHINA

This article aims to illuminate France's identity problems related with the acceptance of its Arab population by examining repression of Algerian

war memories in France's governing myth. For this purpose, a case study highlighting politics of history, pursued by the French governing elite, is presented. The main object of the analysis is the politics of history in France.

By over-viewing the concepts of memory and myth, their differences as well as forms of interaction, the article analyses the connection between French state's ongoing denial of Algerian memory and France's identity crisis; also, this article explains the current dynamics of the relationship between the French myth and Algerian memory, which manifests itself through tensions within French identity because of a problematic relationship with its Arab population.

**WHAT DETERMINES THE VOTING OF EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT MEMBERS –
NATIONAL INTEREST OR EP PARTY LINE?**

IEVA SAVICKAITĒ, ROLANDAS TUČAS

The European Parliament has gained more legitimacy power after the Lisbon treaty in 2009. However, it is still unclear how EP members are distributing their votes. Do they vote in accordance to the EP party line or national interest? This scientific paper attempts to look at the MEPs voting related to foreign policy issues that are identified as one of the most sensitive to reach a general consensus by using an updated EU countries position towards the Russia index. This research focuses on roll call results of MEPs related to the EU – the partnership issues with Russia from 2014 to 2015, followed by the annexation of Crimea. Due to this, the scientific paper aims to determine the regional dimension between MEPs (geo) political preferences and the relation to the votes regarding issues with Russia.

**VLADIMIR PUTIN'S REGIME:
THE SYSTEM OF MULTI-LAYERED POWER ELITE GROUPS**

VYTAUTAS KERŠANSKAS

The main argument in the article states that the essential role in the Russian political system is played by various power elite groups. By analysing them, as well as the arbiter of the system Vladimir Putin, one can understand the

functioning of the regime more profoundly. Firstly, the overview of the formation of the political elite in post-Communist Russia is presented. The main driving forces of this process are also presented. It allows the author to frame the main assumptions of the Russian power elite, especially during the rule of Vladimir Putin. Based on the suggested explanation of Russia's political system and power elite grouping model, an overview of the main current actors, both systematic and those acting outside the system, formal and informal, are presented. Systematic actors include actors from the closest circle of Vladimir Putin to the ones who simulate the forces of opposition. Meanwhile, an analysis of the actors outside the system also suggests the main means by which they are eliminated from the political system. It is argued that despite Russia's political system is a certain "black box" that is hard to open and acknowledge, the analysis of power elite groups and their interactions permits one to propose generalisations on the ongoing processes in the political system.