

Lithuanian President Likens Putin to Stalin and Hitler

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Lithuania's President Dalia Grybauskaite waves as she arrives at an informal summit of European Union leaders in Brussels, Belgium.

Lithuania's president has likened the tactics of Russian President Vladimir Putin to those employed by Soviet leader Josef Stalin and Nazi leader Adolf Hitler, and said in a magazine interview that Moscow was trying to persuade Baltic states to leave NATO in exchange for cheaper oil or gas.

Former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said in March that Putin's incursion into Crimea was akin to moves Hitler made in the years before the Second World War, though she said the following day that she was not making a comparison.

Asked whether such comparisons to Hitler or Stalin went too far, Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaite told German news magazine Focus on Sunday that "[Putin] uses nationality as a pretext to conquer territory with military means. That's exactly what Stalin and Hitler did.

Such comparisons are spot on."

Grybauskaite said Russia wanted to maintain its influence in territories that were once part of the Soviet Union and added it particularly wanted to keep the Baltic states dependent on it economically and in terms of energy policy.

She said Russia wanted the Baltic states — Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia — to become "unreliable members of NATO and the EU."

"According to our information, there are Russian offers in other Baltic states to reduce the prices for oil or gas if these countries leave NATO," she said.

Grybauskaite said the West should seek to become economically independent of Russia and diversify, because it was "too risky" for countries to continue to depend on Russia.

"Putin has a missionary vision to defend the eastern hemisphere. He has in mind a Russia like that of the time of Catherine the Great. His character has developed strangely," she said.

The West has accused Russia of supporting the insurgency in Russian-speaking eastern Ukraine that followed Moscow's annexation of Crimea.

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[Stop the Hitler Comparisons](#)

[Prince Charles 'Compares Putin With Hitler' in Off-the-Cuff Remark](#)

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