

ABSTRACT from the thesis

**TRANSFORMATION OF THE MILITARY FORCE
IN THE LIGHT OF SECURITY CHALLENGES EMERGING
IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE COLD WAR**

**The transformation of the Hungarian Home Defence Force from the change of
social system to NATO membership
(1989-1999)**

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With the demise of socialist ideology, its supportive and defending military bloc, the Warsaw Pact (WP), lost its reason for existence and WP member states declared the termination of the Treaty 1st July 1991 in Prague.¹ Consequently, the military mission and standing defence plans of the WP became irrelevant for the Hungarian People's Army (HPA) - later renamed as the Hungarian Defence Forces (HDF) - and the HPA was transformed into a national military force after the Republic of Hungary regained its independence. The defence of the sovereignty and territorial integrity became the basic mission for the military as it had been stated in a new democratic Constitution passed by the Parliament 23rd October 1989.² The Constitution also stipulated the principles of the application of military force in and outside of the country as well as the prerogatives for the civilian control over the military. Following these constitutional amendments, the 1993 Law on National Defence (Law No. CX.) redefined the basic principles of national defence and its execution. In 1993 the status quo of the national defence establishment got to a stage when the transformation of HDF became an integral part of a legally binding national security decision making (NSDM) process, despite the fact that the entire NSDM started effectively functioning only in the second half of 1990s. As a result of this decade long process, the HDF were successfully transformed from a WP military into a NATO compatible defence force.

This thesis analyses the relevant issues of the transformation of the military in the light of security challenges emerging in the aftermath of the Cold War. According to the theory of the thesis, there is causation between features, quantitative characteristics and the emerging security threats. It is difficult to set up unequivocal proportionality between these security threats and the military force and other means (such as security guarantees) used for threat deterrence. It is more appropriate to assess to what extent these real world

¹ 25th February 1991 during its meeting held in Budapest the member states signed the Protocol on the Termination of the Warsaw Pact as of 1st April 1991. During the session of the Political Consultative Committee of the WP held in Prague the member states approved the Protocol on the Termination of the Treaty on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance signed 14th May 1955 in Warsaw. On behalf of the Republic of Hungary the Protocol was signed by the Hungarian Prime Minister, Jozsef Antall.

² The Constitution of the Republic of Hungary (Law No. XX. of 1949) and its Amendments of 23rd October 1989 stipulate in the Section No. 40/A. § (1) that; "the basic mission of the Hungarian defence forces (the Hungarian People's Army and the Hungarian Border Guard) is the armed defence of the country".

security threats and challenges are being coped with. Security threats that are not deterred constitute risk to the country's security. The ten-year period after the end of the Cold War (between 1989 and 1999) analysed in the thesis can basically be prevalingly characterized with home defence duties for the HDF. The basic tasks of HDF embraced: the establishment of independent national defence capabilities; the contribution to the regional security environment envisaged by the Euro-Atlantic integration objectives; the implementation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) and the implementation of military tasks deriving from regional security threats. Basically, these four missions affected the phases of the transformation of HPA and HDF. Each of these tasks - to varying degree - had its own implications regarding force transformation. The constitutional task of home defence was a permanent mission during the analysed period, however other considerations were also taken into account in the transformation attempts, such as the resources devoted to home defence; the principles of national security and defence policy and the fact that the actual steps of force transformation did not always enjoy political or political-military consensus. The creation of a homogenous European security landscape (that basically meant the establishment of strategic inability to launch unexpected large scale conventional attack against any country in Europe, which was achieved through force cutbacks envisaged in CFE Treaty by reaching the preset up national ceilings in different categories of conventional armament) and the entire implementation process of the Treaty aimed at providing verification guarantees, coincided with the establishment of independent national home defence capabilities (between 1990-1994). Tasks deriving from the Euro-Atlantic integration objectives, the implementation of NATO's Partnership for Peace Programme and the fulfilment of Minimum Military Requirements necessary for joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization guided transformation efforts between 1994-1998.

The treatise is based on the analysis of three basic simultaneous processes, first of which is the political and military transformation of NATO, the second is the process of evolution of the national security and defence policy of the Republic of Hungary, and finally the process of military transformation, including the continuous assessment of military high brass and the mutual influence between defence and security principles and force transformation steps. This kind of analysis is possible to conduct since Euro-Atlantic integration (including NATO and European Union membership) was the leading foreign policy priority in the 1990s that guided the whole NATO integration process, that lead to NATO membership for the Republic of Hungary in March 1999. *The analysis basically focuses on the coherency and synergy between these three political and military processes. This means that the intention of the PhD student was to discover and define to what extent the NATO formulated political and military requirements and expectations were transferred into the Hungarian national security and defence policy principles and to what degree this national interpretation guided and affected the planning and implementation of the actual force transformation process.*

Hypothesis and methodology

The methodology of the thesis is comparative theoretical analysis in order to define the patterns and principles of synergy, interdependence and interaction of the above described political and military processes, and also to get evidence for supremacy and superiority of NATO political and military transformation as the guiding affect in determining the objectives of the Hungarian defence and security policy. Assuming the role, importance and materialization of democratic and civilian oversight over the military and the defence establishment, the treatise identified the ways and directions military transformation was affected in order to establish a NATO-compatible- and structured military force. If one can assume that these processes are mutually affective and reliant, the extent of interdependence and interaction can be judged based on tangible military requirements deriving from each of the processes, their coherence or divergence.

Concerning the analysis of these parallel processes, it must be noted that the analysis and assessment of official and unofficial documents drafted, approved and implemented during the period between 1989-1999 constitutes the most important area of the academic work summarized in the thesis. In addition, personal consultations with the main civilian and military decision makers of that period has fundamentally contributed to the proper understanding of NSDM and military reorganization processes and their mutual influence. It is worth noting, that the PhD student experienced the biggest difficulties in analysing the processes and documents of 1990-1993 timeframe when the entire NSDM system just started evolving. At the same time, the spheres of authority and deriving practical activities of NSDM players (the Parliament, the Parliamentary Defence Committee, the Government, the Ministry of Defence, the HDF and their leadership) were not legally synchronized, thus the actual force transformation process became obscured and cumbersome. The NSDM documents or the documents guiding the practical steps of force transformation sometime carried unofficial character, and consequently it was difficult to identify them and rely on them as official sources of information. This made citations and references more difficult and also impeded the drawing of conclusions and identifying patterns and principles.

The national NSDM processes and military transformation attempts carried ensuing character, but during the period analysed in the thesis there were tangible security threats to Hungary, which had an immediate and direct influence on all transformation attempts. Among those the Balkan war and Balkan regional instability inflicted the heaviest influence on force transformation and had serious short and long term impacts. Minimum Military Requirements necessary for obtaining NATO membership also constitute an area of analysis, since they were altered according to the size and structure of the respective militaries (Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary) joining NATO in 1999. The starting point for analysis is the end of the Cold War and the conditions created by this time. The thesis analyses the entire ten-year period broken up into three separate and distinguished phases. Accordingly, the starting and end points of the phases relate to the junctions of NSDM evolution. The three phases are the following:

- 1991-1994: the establishment of national defence organization and capabilities;
- 1995-1997: restructuring of the home defence force based on the mid-term reorganization plan;

- 1998-1999: preconditions for joining NATO and stabilization of force structure.

The outline of the thesis

INTRODUCTION

1. General description of the topic
2. Facts and arguments
3. Importance of the topic
4. Hypothesis, methodology and assumed scientific conclusions

ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE

1. NATO's adaptation after the end of the Cold War
2. Changes in national security policy, the Balkan threat
3. Implementation of defensive doctrine, contribution to European security
4. Conclusions

RESTRUCTURING THE DEFENCE FORCE BASED ON THE MID-TERM REORGANIZATION PLAN

1. NATO as partner and guarantor of European security, new security challenges and possible allies
2. Formation of new security landscape, NATO orientation gains strength, road plan for NATO membership
3. Quantitative stage of force restructuring, contradiction between the size and affordability of the force, transition towards NATO requirements and capabilities
4. Conclusions

PRECONDITION FOR JOINING NATO, TEMPORARY STABILIZATION OF THE FORCE

1. NATO is ready for enlargement. Change of paradigm, new challenges
2. Alignment with the Alliance, Minimum Military Requirements and political commitments
3. NATO-oriented defence restructuring, preparing for membership, need for qualitative changes in HDF
4. Conclusions

CONCLUSIONS

1. Overall conclusions
2. Scientific results and recommendations

Hypothesise

1. It is possible to analyse in a complex way the reorganization of the Hungarian military based on the assessment of the political-military transformation of NATO; the regional security environment; and NSDM priorities and objectives.
2. There is causation between political-military transformation of NATO, priorities of the Hungarian NSDM system and the actual restructuring of the Hungarian military establishment. These policy and executive processes are based upon each other and it is possible to make conclusions on the principles of these interactive processes.
3. It is possible to draw conclusions and set up principles between the size, structure and posture of the military and direct or indirect security threats. Presumably, the most direct security challenge has the most significant influence of force transformation priorities.
4. The Hungarian force transformation based on the implementation of defensive military doctrine drafted late 1989 proved the correctness of the assumptions made after the end of the Cold War. The assumptions made in the post-Cold War security environment urged the establishment of a new (defensive) type military organization; demanded the synchronization between the size, upgrade and affordability of the defence force (expecting a substantial force cutback in the 1990s); and forecasted that even a smaller, but modernized military force would require higher defence spending.

Transformation phases of the Hungarian Defence Force analyzed in the thesis can be described as follows:

1. *Transformation phase between 1990-1994:* NATO's military requirements defined after the end of the Cold War were irrelevant with regard to HDF and the implementation of defensive type national military strategy temporarily served to preserve the military's WP posture and size. After the end of the Cold War NATO altered its integrated military structure, military capabilities, and readiness level and dismantled capabilities established for attrition warfare. For the independent and truly national Hungarian military the new NATO requirements proved to be irrelevant, since in the post-Cold War regional security environment Hungary needed independent national defence capabilities to deter direct military threats. Instead of cutting back on force size, independent national defence capabilities required more assets and bigger force compared to defence forces implementing their mission in alliances or coalitions, and legitimized the temporary preservation of WP size military. HDF had to be reorganized into a defensive type military organization, which affected its size, structure, posture, equipment, readiness level and also its mobilization system and its scale. Defence capabilities established in NATO countries (reaction forces, main defence forces, augmentation forces) became relevant for the Hungarian military only in the second half of 1990s.

Between 1990-1994 the Balkan crisis and subsequent Balkan war became security threat number one for the Republic of Hungary and thus it had the greatest influence on force reorganization priorities and standards both on short run and long term.

2. *Transformation phase between 1995-1997:* in early 1994 Hungary joined the NATO-launched Partnership for Peace Programme and in addition the HDF participated in joint missions with the Alliance on the Balkans. The requirements deriving from these activities gave clear guidance and orientation in the national efforts of force transformation. Capabilities obtained in real world missions and PfP programmes were utilized by HDF in peace support operations, humanitarian missions and search and rescue activities. Through these capabilities and the capability to provide Host Nation Support for NATO and non-NATO countries in Hungary made NATO's military requirements more relevant for HDF and were absorbed by force transformation programmes. However, these NATO military requirements were not implemented through the entire structure of the military force, since the constitutional task of home defence still enjoyed priority in restructuring and force training in the light of the perceived Balkan threat. Requirements steaming from Euro-Atlantic integration had little affect on establishing necessary military capabilities and the functional anomalies experienced in the military made the country's political and military leadership more aware that there is a significant contradiction between the size, mission, capabilities on hand and affordability on the other. So, this controversy realized in the previous phase still existed. From the perspective of force transformation, the key NSDM players attached huge significance to the Parliamentary approval of the ten-year reorganization plan of HDF in 1995, however the plan needed to be amended since it disregarded NATO requirements necessary to carry out real world peace missions and participate in PfP activities. Mission participation inflicting vast financial burdens on HDF made it absolutely clear that modern force capabilities and their application can not be covered by current defence budget. The contradiction between budget and force needs resulted in significant and premature reduction in force size.
3. *Transformation phase between 1998-1999:* with the NATO membership coming ever closer and implementation of NATO's Minimum Military Requirements overall NATO force requirements became a reality. The real capabilities of HDF deviated from those of the NATO ones to a large extent that made the integration of HDF into NATO's military structure difficult. In addition, the military leadership considered a full spectrum force upgrade a necessary prerequisite for credible and massive contribution to NATO's defence capabilities and Hungary made an overambitious offer in the NATO force planning process. In practice, NATO military requirements were increasingly met in two areas: in the area of Host Nation Support and the readiness level and C2 capabilities of mission assigned military units. As a result of stabilization efforts, by 1998 the number of mission capable military units increased, while the number of combat ready units decreased. Despite of the increasing number of mission capable military elements in the whole structure of the national force, they did not constitute a critical mass to start NATO-oriented full spectrum reorganization. By the end of this phase

transformation efforts did not result in deconflicting the contradiction between the size, capabilities and the defence budget of HDF, since reorganization efforts were not mission-based. As a consequence the newly elected government in 1999 envisaged further serious cutbacks in force size instead of identifying tasks and implementation priorities for HDF.

Scientific conclusions

1. The thesis contains an analysis of NATO's transformation process between the period of 1989-1999 applying new analytical approaches and proved that political and military requirements deriving from that process served as the determining factor in drafting national security and defence policy principles, establishing NSDM process and also taking tangible steps in force transformation in HDF. The thesis proved that the three basic political-military processes manifest more synergy when coming closer to NATO membership. As a result of a more conscious execution of national security and defence policy tasks, the NSDM process became more effective and better regulated.
2. The thesis proved that direct and immediate security threats and their affect on NSDM impact actual force restructuring and modernization steps to a larger degree than indirect security threats and challenges. Based on this premise, it is understandable that the maintenance of force size and structure showed an opposite tendency to overall European trends leaving a deep footprint in the institutional memory of NSDM and all bodies involved in it.
3. The thesis also proved that the assumptions made in 1989 while drafting the new, defensive national military strategy were correct and served as a sound basis for the decade long force transformation efforts which resulted in Hungary's NATO membership. On the other hand the political and military leadership was not sensitive enough to modify the original directions of force transformation despite the changed mission of the military force and all the positive changes in the European and regional security environment leaving room for competing force reorganization ideas and military intentions to safeguard their parochial interest in the force reorganization process.

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Signed by MG Laszlo Makk