

LTG URBÁN LAJOS (Ret.)

The Roles, Missions and Operational Aspects of the Hungarian Reserve Forces

Ph.D. thesis presentation and official review

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1. Research Issues and Hypotheses

At present, Hungary is undergoing a unique and in many respects transitional historical period, within which old foundational elements are dismantled, and new foundations are formulated. The new concepts embody numerous contradictions. This situation is especially true with regard to national defence. In the first instance, national defence cannot be separated from society and societal-economic factors have a direct impact on the operations of the armed forces; and in the second instance, it was the armed forces that underwent the most intensive transformation during the change in regimes. This is manifested by accession into NATO, and the transition to an all-volunteer armed forces format.

During the 8 November 2004 meeting of the Parliament, a majority of the representatives approved Law CIV. 2004, thereby modifying the Constitution, and Law CV. 2004, pertaining to national defence and the armed forces. This provided the legal basis for transition to an all-volunteer military format, and conscription ceased during times of peace.

The following provides the background for the research questions:

a) The uniquely Hungarian solution to eliminate conscription during times of peace was not supported by scholarly analysis concerning the impacts of this decision upon national defence. The potential for reintroducing conscription during times of crisis, and the need to operate a system of mobilization, were considered only in generalities. Thus, the basic concept that during times of crisis active duty peacetime units would be reinforced by trained reservists remains a fiction. The system for the continuous renewal of units through annual cohorts, and the reduction of the military service obligation to the age of 40, has essentially zeroed out the reserves. Volunteer reservists do not provide meaningful capability in either numbers, or quality of training. **Due to regulatory and organizational deficiencies, the Hungarian Armed Forces do not have a system to call-up, train, and operate Reserve Forces.**

b) In recent years the armed forces were significantly reduced in numbers within the context of military reform. In terms of intensity and duration, the active component of the Hungarian Defence Forces cannot do more than token justice with its existing capabilities to a number of operational requirements. The resources necessary to satisfy operational missions outlined in Para. 1. Section 70 of the Law on National Defence - for example, defence of critically important infrastructure, host nation support, crisis abatement, and expeditionary operations - do not exist. **Hungary has not taken advantage of international experiences**

and NATO principles relating to the use of reserves to provide vital and cost-effective support to the active forces during times of necessity.

c) Those responsible for the direction and leadership of the Hungarian Defence Forces have been occupied in recent years primarily by day-to-day operational problems. Little attention has been paid to the employment of scientific organizational development strategies throughout consecutive iterations of military reform. It is relevant to the research thesis, that due to a lack of basic principles, among them clarification of the requirements of territorial defence, military science could not influence the development of defence forces in a meaningful fashion. **As a result, the integrated defence system of Hungary contains significant deficiencies.**

2. Research Objectives

In formulating this research project, I concentrated on the following research objectives:

a) I analyze and evaluate the principles for the organization of the reserves of the Hungarian Armed Forces from 1848 to the present, to validate the need for Reserve Forces. I give priority to the situation following the change in regimes, and the process for the creation of the „volunteer” armed forces. I analyze the attempt to create contemporary armed forces, to identify the reasons for their one-sidedness.

b) I introduce principles, regarding the organization and employment of Reserve Forces within the majority of NATO member nations to provide an example for our own forces. I aim at determining the organizational requirements of Reserve Forces, and in that context, analyze the related concepts, identify the deficiencies, and make recommendations for the development of new organizational concepts.

c) I provide a suitable basis for the development of modern armed forces consisting of active duty (career and contracted), and volunteer reserves, based on contemporary organizational developmental principles. I formulate and expand upon the functional missions and tasks, and the leadership and direction of Reserve Forces capable of employment during times of crisis.

d) Based on relevant research, I analyze and evaluate the existing status of national defence and the attitudes of society, and provide recommendations for improvements.

Based on my domestic and international experiences, I analyze the relevant legal framework, define its contradictions and lack of coherence, and provide recommendations to overcome its deficiencies.

I analyze the resources necessary for the creation and operation of Reserve Forces, and provide recommendations for a rational solution to existing problems.

In summary, I am aiming at the creation and acceptance of a new national defence system synchronized with contemporary requirements, the developing tendencies of the international security system, and with Hungarian national conditions.

3. Research Methodology

I consider it a fundamental requirement that this research be scientific, systemic, and based on analysis and synthesis, while validating theoretical formulations with practical experience. I attempted to develop vertical and horizontal relationships within the data, and cohesion between the goals, methods and findings of the study. Employing inductive and analogue tools, I used the following methodology during conduct of the research:

a) *I studied* available international and national written and electronic technical information, and the relevant legal documents.

b) *I analyzed and synthesized* international and national technical documents relating to STANAGS associated with the themes of this study.

c) *I conducted comparative analysis* with regard to nations that have professional militaries, and their experiences with Reserve Forces designed to augment the active forces, with emphasis on nations with armed forces similar in size to those of Hungary.

d) *I synthesized* the principles, and the structural and operational elements of Reserve Forces. I employed statistics to compare and validate the results.

e) *I analyzed and evaluated* the experiences gained during my international and domestic travels.

f) *I participated* in relevant conferences and presentations.

g) *I consulted* with unit commanders and leaders, and incorporated their experiences and my own with regard to the operations and employment of a reserve forces system.

4. Organization of the Thesis

Chapter 1 provides a historical overview of the strength (composition) of the reserve forces of the Hungarian Armed Forces during the last century and a half, with emphasis on the situation, and deficiencies that have arisen due to the creation of the all-volunteer forces effective 1 January 2005.

Chapter 2 provides an analysis of the principles employed in the organization of NATO member reserve forces, their training, and the employment of volunteer reserves. Additionally, it provides an analysis of the experiences of nations similar to Hungary, and provides conclusions with regard to the development of operationally competent Hungarian Reserve Forces.

I introduce the process for creation of volunteer reserve forces in Hungary, and analyze the existing system - and its deficiencies - to provide recommendations for the modification of existing forces and the creation of Reserve Forces.

I systematized the relevant concepts, and through analysis and augmentation, synthesized them with existing situational elements.

Chapter 3 consolidates the organizational principles derived from international and national experiences, which form the basis for the creation of modern, high quality, and economically sustainable Hungarian Defence Forces, augmented by the skills of volunteer Reserve Forces.

I formulated the legal basis, functions, and possible missions and tasks of volunteer Reserve Forces in coordination with the existing and potential future tasks of the Hungarian Armed Forces.

I outlined a new organizational concept, which provides the basis for the economic and effective employment of intellectual and material resources to create Reserve Forces.

Chapter 4 examines the societal acceptability of volunteer reserves, and points to the tasks necessary to create such a system.

In analyzing the legal framework necessary for the creation of Reserve Forces, I determined that the Constitution permits the creation of Defence Forces that include a modern reserve element. However, other laws, sublegal acts, and regulations need to be reformulated according to a comprehensive concept to make this possible.

I proved, that Reserve Forces can be employed to augment active duty forces in times of both peace and crisis, and that their independent employment is also possible. This requires, in part, the creation of a modular training system that is economical in time, money and materials, exploits distance-learning techniques, and is similar to the level of training afforded active duty forces.

In summary, I have clarified that the existing legal framework does not provide a realistic means for the quick augmentation of existing active duty forces in times of crisis, or to reactivate conscripted military service should it become necessary. After the necessary conditions are assured, the solution to these problems lies in the creation of Reserve Forces.

5. Summarized Conclusions

Evidence shows, that even the largest and most developed nations cannot maintain full-time active duty forces sufficient to counter every potential threat to national security. All of the nations surrounding our own have reserves used to augment active duty forces. Within Hungary, consecutive manpower cuts have resulted in a substantial reduction in military forces and the active duty military has fallen below 25,000. With no sustainment, the trained reserves basically evaporated.

The trend in military organizational philosophy within NATO member nations is entirely contrary to this trend, and the ratio between active duty and reserve forces shows a reverse ratio. Active duty forces have been and continue to be reduced in nearly every NATO member nation, but the roles, missions, tasks, and the size of reserve forces are concurrently being increased.

I have proven, that the reduced size of the existing regular forces, and the still formally available reserves, together cannot provide the necessary numbers, or fulfil the missions and tasks enumerated in strategic documents concerning threats to national security. This situation can be alleviated in one of two ways: increasing the peacetime numbers of the active duty forces, or increasing the size of the reserves. At present, a degree of consensus is developing with regard to the need to create viable Reserves Forces.

A general conclusion derived from analysis of international approaches to national reserves shows, that the structure, functions, missions, tasks, ratio, and operational requirements of these forces are all unique. None of these national systems is entirely translatable to the Hungarian experience, but elements of these systems can be adapted in the development of national Reserve Forces.

I consider it important, that three basic principles identified as precursors to the development of Reserve Forces in this thesis, are necessary, beginning with the initial phases of organizational development:

- ensuring the availability of necessary equipment,
- a systemic approach to operations, and
- ensuring sustainability in operations.

Even if exact numbers for the development of Reserve Forces cannot be determined immediately, it is nevertheless important that experts conduct an analysis of the threat prior to the enactment of political decisions concerning force development.

The development of Reserve Forces is a project of such dimensions - based on the military reform experiments conducted to date - that a strictly technical **evaluation system** is needed to model the details and elements of the project. It is necessary to determine the interrelationships between the various elements and subsystems, and the resources necessary to operate such a system. The consequences of decisions concerning resource changes need to be identified.

The Hungarian Republic does not require the employment of the armed forces in the traditional sense to counter many of the threats to its security. I believe that **a number of missions and tasks can be assigned to the Reserve Forces** in times of both peace and crisis, as long as these forces receive the necessary level of training. Based on this logic, a division of labours between the structural elements of the military - the backbone represented by the regular and reserve forces - is possible, and would serve to optimize defence expenditures.

Under existing circumstances, **ensuring the necessary equipment, structure, and training** are included among the most difficult tasks of organizational development. Analyses show that the fear of losing a job poses the biggest obstacle in motivating individuals to volunteer for reserve service. As a result, the existing system of voluntary military reserves does not work. Experience points to the fact that to develop reserve forces, attention has to be paid to identifying methodologies that require the least possible sacrifice on the part of volunteers. Additionally, the system needs appropriate motivational elements.

The training of Reserve Forces personnel to accomplish territorial defence tasks requires an entirely new approach. Foreign experiences and analyses show that coordinated and unified practical exercises and long-distance educational methodologies may provide the necessary solution.

Public opinion surveys show, that the population supports the idea of volunteer reserve service, although willingness to assume such responsibilities remains unusually low.

Analysis of the legal system shows, that the Constitution provides an adequate legal basis and the possibility for the improved development of a volunteer reserve system. This provides a suitable basis for the development of Reserve Forces. The sub-legal acts however contain contradictions, and do not provide an unequivocal pathway toward the development of the legal framework for the operation of a volunteer military reserve system. In the interest of creating a comprehensive, unified system, modification of the Law on National Defence and the Law on Military Service becomes indispensable.

From the standpoint of logistics, the existing stocks of the Hungarian Defence Forces can be used to support the reserve system, and to provide sustainment within an integrated, unified military logistics system.

6. New Scientific Results

My doctoral studies and research conducted at the Zrínyi Miklós National Defence University have resulted in the following scientific results:

1) Looking back nearly one and a half centuries, I am the first to gather and systematize material relating to operations and characteristics of Hungarian reserve military service. Based on analysis of international material, I defined the unique elements of the various national military reserve systems, and created analogies concerning Hungarian societal and economic conditions for the creation of such a system.

2) Based on experiences derived from the military reforms following the change in regimes, and analysis of Hungary's geostrategic situation, I synthesized realistic principles for a rational national defence, systems based operations, and sustainable operations, as the basis for the development of a national system of Reserve Forces.

3) I proved that the active duty forces cannot handle traditional and new, threat- based tasks without the maintenance of Reserve Forces during peacetime. Thinking systemically, I determined the indispensable tasks of the Reserve Forces, that comprise part of the national armed forces. Additionally, based on the goals and content of those tasks, I categorized the national defence tasks that can be accomplished by the Reserve Forces.

4) Starting from the requirements of the complex system of national defence, I redefined and specified the various concepts related to the tasks assigned the Reserve Forces.

I formulated recommendations concerning the structure and capabilities of national Reserve Forces, and, based on the national defence tasks, developed recommendations concerning the basing of those forces.

7. Practical application of research results and recommendations

Based on the findings and summarized conclusions noted in the various chapters of this doctoral thesis, I offer the following recommendations for practical application of research results, and for additional independent research:

a) The analysis and findings contained in this thesis provide wide-ranging support for the development of the necessary parliamentary decisions leading to the development of a voluntary reserve force.

b) The international analysis and findings regarding reserve forces should be considered during development of the complex, national system of Reserve Forces. The recommendations should serve to overcome regulatory, structural and operational deficiencies identified in this thesis during the preparation of governmental and military decision documents.

c) Based on the recommendations relating to the organization and basing of national Reserve Forces, additional research should be conducted concerning the development of the necessary leadership system, regulatory system, and the more effective distribution of resources.

d) The findings outlined in this thesis resulting from the review of the Constitution of the Hungarian Republic, of the laws pertaining to defence and military service, and the pertinent regulations, should be taken into account when formulating the reserve and regular components of the armed forces.

8. Credentials relative to this thesis

ARTICLES:

1. Lajos URBÁN: *The Requirement for Reserves Forces in Hungary*. -AARMS 2006/3/ -pp. 477-484.
2. Lajos URBÁN: *The role of reinforcing reserves within the scope of national defence*. AARMS 2007/2/ pp. 219-228.
3. Lajos URBÁN, Ernő ENDRESZ: *Possibilities of NATO membership for the Republic of Hungary*, Joint publication of the ZM National Defence University and the Euro-Atlantic Integration Workgroup.1996. pp. 11-34.
4. Lajos URBÁN: *The future of the Hungarian Armed Forces*, National Defence University Publication. 2005. 9/1. pp. 187-190.
5. Lajos URBÁN: *The role of volunteer reserves in the future Hungarian Armed Forces*, Defence University Publication. 2005. 9/2. pp. 136-144.
6. Lajos URBÁN: *NATO in a changing world*, New Defence Forces Review 2005/5. pp 48-53.
7. Lajos SZIGETI –Lajos Urbán: *Hungarian Armed Forces and reserve soldiers*, New Defence Forces Review, 2006.5. pp. 107-115.
8. Lajos URBÁN: *Reserve forces in peacekeeping operations*, New Defence Forces Review, 2006/10. pp. 38-44.
9. Lajos URBÁN: *The reserve forces of the United States of America*, New Defence Forces Review, 2007/1/ pp. 51-59.
10. Lajos URBÁN: *The land forces reserve of the USA: National Guard*. New Defence Forces Review, 2007/2/ pp. 94-100.
11. Lajos URBÁN: *Reserve forces in the defence system*, New Defence Forces Review, 2007/10. pp. 125-133.

PRESENTATIONS:

1. Lajos URBÁN: *International Conference of the Budapest University of Economic: Strategy of the Euro-Atlantic Integration Workgroup,1997*.
2. Lajos URBÁN: *ZM National Defence University-Malfred Wörner Foundation: Adaptation of NATO doctrines,1997*.
3. Lajos URBÁN: *Szolnok Summer Free University: Participation by the Hungarian Defence Forces in the Partnership for Peace program, 1997*.
4. Lajos URBÁN: *Brunsum, Central and Eastern-European countries and NATO, 1997*.
5. Lajos URBÁN: *General Staff 1-5. Scientific Conference: NATO doctrines and the status of STANAG implementation, 1998*.
6. Lajos URBÁN: *Lakitelek Summer Free University: Strategic Review, 2000*.

9. Technical biography

Name: Urbán Lajos

Education:

1968-1972. Kossuth Lajos Military College
1979-1982. Frunze Military Academy, Soviet Union
1991. British Royal College of Defence Studies, London

Additional Training:

1974. English Language Course
1975. Battalion Commander Course
1978. Russian Language Course
1992. NATO Defence Academy, Rome
1995. Senior International Defence Resource Management Course, Monterey, USA.
2001. NATO Senior Leader Course/The Hague, The Netherlands.
2005. Doctoral Student, ZM National Defence University.

Languages:

Russian upper level
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1972. Motorized Infantry Platoon Commander, Aszód
1974. Motorized Infantry Company Commander, Aszód
1976. Motorized Infantry Battalion Commander, Aszód
1982. Regimental Chief of Staff, Szombathely
1985. Regimental Commander, Kalocsa
1986. Ezredparancsnok, majd dandárparancsnok (Szombathely)/Regimental, later
Brigade Commander (Szombathely)
1990. Deputy Commander, 3d Corps, Cegléd
1992. Military District Commander, Tata
1994. Deputy Land Forces Commander, Székesfehérvár
1996. Director, NATO Integration, Working Group
1998. Deputy Director of Defence Planning.
1999. Deputy Chief of the General Staff.
2001. Commander's Advisor for the Balkans, NATO Southern European Command,
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2002. Military Advisor to the Minister of Defence

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