

**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF PUBLIC SERVICE**  
**Doctoral School of Military Sciences**

István Kun Szabó:

**The development and interrelations of the voluntary  
reserve system and defence education**

Authorial booklet on a Doctoral (PhD) dissertation  
(THESIS BOOKLET)

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## 1. Formulation of the scientific problem

The system of defence is fundamentally based on three pillars: on the Hungarian Defence Forces, on the police and disaster management forces, on membership in the allied systems, and on the citizens' commitment to the defence of the homeland, on their willingness and their real capability of action.

In my dissertation I introduced the concept of national defence human capital, which I divided into two other public and social dimensions. The state dimension covers organizations guaranteeing the security of the state and its citizens, such as the military, the police and the disaster management, who are continually prepared to perform their duties, and, if necessary, represent a real defence capability. The social dimension of national defence human capital is made up of conscious and able-bodied citizens with knowledge that can be used for defence purposes, who may, if necessary, be able to act effectively.

During my research, I sought the answer to the researcher's question on how to develop the social dimension of national defence human capital, whether there are historical antecedents and international examples of it, and how members of the Hungarian society can be involved in the national defence system currently working on a voluntary basis to effectively contribute to the development of national self-defence capability.

In connection with this, in my dissertation, I examine what the state has done, is doing and can do to strengthen the relationship between national defence and society, how it has involved and is involving members of the society in the service of national defence.

## 2. The researcher's hypotheses

I started the research with the assumption that self-care of the Hungarian defence, the sensitization and involvement of the members of society in the cause of defence of the country, that is, the formation of national defence human capital has certainly been of paramount importance in the course of history.

My second assumption was that the defence education activity is not just being realized, but it can also look back on a century-old history both in Hungary and other countries.

In connection with this, as the third hypothesis to prove, I have stated that there may be historical and international examples that can provide models to be utilized with different emphasis but also according to the challenges and needs of our age.

My fourth hypothesis was that in the case of the maintenance of an armed force based on the principle of volunteering, in addition to the existing capacities of the Hungarian Defence Forces, it is necessary to systematically develop the national self-defence capacity, which has shown significant shortcomings since the transition to an all-volunteer force.

### **3. Objectives of the research**

I defined one of the objectives of my research as an attempt to find out the existence of some kind of permanence, a driving force that could be a prerequisite for the effective functioning of national defence in the ever-changing, multifaceted and often predetermined relationship system of the country and the society, examined also from historical perspectives.

I also aimed at examining the ways in which countries with a cultural orientation similar to that of our country apply methods to strengthen the relationship between society and national defence, which ultimately strengthen their national self-defence capability and thus their national security.

### **4. Methods of research**

Before I started writing the dissertation, I conducted a wide-ranging collection of domestic and international literature, analysed and systematized the acquired information and applied the method of empirical analysis.

Using the tool of longitudinal analysis, I examined the main driving forces of the relationship between defence and society, and I have identified messages that can be utilized in this day and age as well.

In addition to library and archival research, I systematized and compared the most important findings in the publications related to this topic, I continued with discussions with domestic civil and military experts, analysed, summarized and integrated the results of available public opinion polls.

For the past one and a half decades, the analysis of official documents was also an essential part of the research, providing an opportunity to factually present current processes and trends.

I conducted targeted interviews with military leaders and scientific specialists on the development of the system of relationships between the armed forces and society, on the development of the reserve system and defence education.

The research was closed on June 30, 2017, so the dissertation contains an analysis and evaluation of the preceding events, documents and processes. I considered the proposals made at the workshop held on 6 September 2018, and I applied the requested clarifications to the dissertation.

## **5. The structure of the dissertation and the description of the study carried out**

Following the Introduction, the dissertation consists of six content sections at the end of which I summarize the partial results of the research work and formulate partial conclusions.

In Chapter 1, I examine the development of the national self-defence capability from the perspective of the reserve forces, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the transition to an all-volunteer armed force. In this context, I primarily explore the principles of organizing armed forces that were decisive from the point of view of the attitude of society to the army, the development of the Hungarian defence culture.

Chapter 2 deals with standard European models of reserve forces, with particular reference to the systems in place in the United Kingdom and France. These two internationally operating models, which I believe are standard, include many elements that can be adapted to the domestic environment as well.

In Chapter 3, I analyse the situation of the reserve system from 2004 to the present day. In this chapter, I examine in detail the domestic directions of the devel-

opment of the voluntary reserve system and the ideas for the establishment of territorial defence forces.

In Chapter 4, I look at the development of the relationship between Hungarian society and national defence from the perspective of defence education. Historical examples demonstrate that this area, that is, the education of young people in defence matters has been continually present in the life of Hungarian society.

In Chapter 5, after an international review, I outline in detail the British cadet system and the system of national defence education in France as two active European defence education models.

In Chapter 6, I examine the evolution of national defence education from the transition to an all-volunteer armed force to the present day. An overview and clarification of the concepts of patriotic education - defence education is followed by the examination and evaluation of the youth education program of the Ministry of Defence which ran between 2004 and 2016, and I examine the circumstances and the potential of the Defence Sports Federation established in 2017. The summary of this chapter includes the conceptual scheme that could allow members of society to get involved, to the greatest possible extent, in national defence affairs by adopting a systemic approach to national defence education activities.

At the end of the dissertation, I summarize the partial results of each chapter, drawing conclusions from them. I formulate the new scientific results I have contemplated in the research and make recommendations on further possibilities for using the dissertation.

## 6. Summarized conclusions

When writing my dissertation, I formulated a research question made up of three parts, to which I was searching for an answer based on scientific research:

1. How can the capable social dimension of the human capital of national defence be developed?
2. Are there any precedents, international and historical examples of this?
3. How can members of the Hungarian society be involved in a system of national defence that is currently operating on a voluntary basis in order to substantially contribute to the improvement of national self-defence capability?

With regard to the organization of the armed forces and ensuring the setting up of reserves, I came to the conclusion that in Hungary the system of relationships between defence and society was based on the underlying general obligation to do national service imposed by law and the related military service in a conscripted army at all times. Although the principle of volunteering could sometimes be found in the organization of the Hungarian army, the support of the defence issue on a voluntary basis was not an integral part of Hungarian social culture.

Based on the results of the research placed in a historical perspective, I found that the complement of the armed forces was continually hampered, and in many cases, there was a lack of civic willingness, even though the army was complemented on the basis of the general obligation to do national service in the armed forces. In addition, it also became apparent that due to compulsory military service, a significant part of the members of society acquired the knowledge related to national defence.

Based on this, I find it proven that the transition to the all-volunteer army has created a radically new situation with no historical antecedents for our country, both from the point of view of the state and society.

Following the presentation of the general characteristics of reserve forces for several countries, I carried out a detailed examination of the reserve systems of two European all-volunteer forces, those of the UK and France. Based on the results of my research, I have proved that both countries maintain a multi-component reserve system that is supported by a wide-ranging social incentive system including elements that can be accepted and utilised by employers and employees alike.

Looking at the process of developing the domestic voluntary reserve system, I came to the conclusion that the question of establishing a voluntary reserve force had appeared in state-level public thinking well before the suspension of compulsory military service. There have been several attempts to create voluntary reserve forces as an independent organization, but ultimately these ideas were never given greater scope, other than theoretical consideration.

The voluntary reserve system was created as part of the Hungarian Defence Forces, as an element of the battle order, simultaneously with the transition to all-volunteer military forces. However, the complement of the system with human resources, and thus with real capabilities, started only much later, after 2010. During this period, detailed elaboration and clarification of related legal frameworks was

developed, as well as the development of elements of the incentive system that was considered by the public sector to be viable.

As a result of changes in the operational experience of the first few years and changes in the security environment, the development of the voluntary reserve system began in 2016, which resulted in the creation of a reserve component organized according to the territorial defence principle, as well as two previously non-existent support elements, the Voluntary Defence Initial Training, and the National Defence Sports Federation, a public body which supports patriotic and defence education.

During the review, elaboration and evaluation of the processes leading to the present situation, I came to the conclusion that the establishment and development of a voluntary reserve system appeared as a clear demand and task for the government leadership, and despite serious inadequacies due to initial and objective constraints, substantial progress has been made in this area.

When examining the past of the educational activity related to national defence, I came to the conclusion that defence education activity itself had an influence on the development of the social aspect of national defence at all times. In this regard, it became clear during my research that it was not a newly emerged area, but at the same time as the formation of a standing army, and partly before that, the state leadership recognized the importance of patriotic and defence education.

In a century and a half - two centuries in the history of our country, the patriotic and defence education activities were carried out twice in an organizational framework controlled and managed by the state. The Levente /Young Paladin/ movement, active from the 1920s, as well as the Hungarian Defence Association and predecessor institutions established before the regime-change, meant the basis for this. Although the two organizations were established in different historical eras, their common feature was to ensure national coverage, to provide membership on a statutory basis, furthermore a significant part of the activities were based on sport. Similarly, both organizations had a significant political-ideological influence in the given era, which, at the same time as the change of political systems, also determined the operation of these organizations. At the same time, both organizations contributed to the fact that a significant part of the members of society acquired the basic knowledge and behaviour patterns necessary for self- and community defence.

As an outstanding international example, I have analysed the elements of patriotic and national defence education in Great Britain and France and have drawn conclusions from the operational experience, which can be utilized for the benefit of our country. The systems operated by these two countries testify to the fact that patriotic and defence education is worth being given priority. They substantiate the attitudes of the upcoming generations of society to their homeland and its defence and provide young people with knowledge through which they can become useful and active members of society. In addition, they have a pre-qualification that can be utilized for defence purposes, which, if necessary, allows faster and more efficient training and increases their survival capabilities.

During my research on the current state of patriotic and defence education, I discovered uncertainties around the conceptual framework of the area and clarified them at systemic level. I came to the conclusion that, in terms of the target system of patriotic and defence education, they are mutually supportive in one direction, but without patriotic education there is no point in talking about national defence education. As the two areas are interconnected in many points, the main differences can be found in the system of tools they use. In this respect, defence education has used and uses much more practical elements than patriotic education, including the knowledge that can be used for conscious citizenship, for defence, and even for military life.

Examining the current status of Hungarian patriotic and defence education, I have come to the conclusion that certain elements of the system work in our country, too. Patriotic education is present on all three levels of the educational system and from the higher classes of the primary school up, the possibilities of the national defence education have also been established. In this area, it is clear that although there are still white spots in terms of country-wide coverage, the number of educational institutions involved in national defence education is expanding, therefore the tools of defence education reach more and more students.

The introduction of two new national defence education components, the Voluntary Defence Initial Training and the public body of the Home Defence Sports Federation, as I see it, allows the widest range of society to be included in national defence.

Based on the above, I have received an answer to the research question asked at the beginning of the scientific research and dissertation.



I have identified two ways of creating a social dimension of the national defence human capital during the course of history: enforcement by legal provisions or volunteering.

I have shown that this has a remarkable historical background in both domestic and international examples.

I have proved that members of the Hungarian society can be effectively involved in the system of voluntary defence of the country, by continuously monitoring the changes in society and properly influencing them, a system of interfaces must be created, including the reserve system and the institutional framework and content of the national defence education, which basically determines the shaping of society's approach to national defence. Stopping the divergence of the armed forces and society and reversing processes in a positive direction is, in my view, indispensable.

To sum up, on the basis of my scientific research, I believe that besides the armed forces, one of the fundamental elements of guaranteeing national security is the development of the reserve system on a territorial basis and the complex, systematic organization and implementation of the patriotic and defence education of young people. These areas can only contribute to the development of national self-defence capability, to the development of the social dimension of a capable national defence human capital and can also be used to address different social problems, such as the convergence of marginalized or criminalized individuals and groups.

## 7. New scientific achievements

As a result of my studies as a doctoral student at the National University of Public Service and as a result of my research work, I consider the following in my dissertation as a new scientific achievement:

1. By collecting, organizing, analysing and synthesizing domestic and international literary sources I have demonstrated the paramount importance of creating national defence human capital, as this will make the foundation for increasing national self-defence capability more effective.

2. I am the first one in this country to summarize the characteristics and specifics of the structure and functioning of the voluntary reserve and defence education systems of Great Britain and France with scientific need and I set up analogies and

presented useful examples to facilitate the further development of the Hungarian voluntary reserve system and the national defence education field.

3. As a synthesis of the conclusions drawn from the scientific analysis of patriotic and national defence education, I developed the principle of the system of national defence education, which allows it to be filled with the proper content.

4. I have demonstrated that a systematic approach is needed to develop the social dimension of domestic national self-defence capability and the associated capable national defence human capital, which is supported by the experience of international samples examined through scientific research, in order to ensure optimum use of available financial and human resources, as well as eliminating possible duplications or latent risks.

As an additional result of my scientific research, I have contributed to the further research of the subject and to a better understanding of the foundations of the processes through a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the voluntary reserve system and the strategic development work on defence education.

## **8. Recommendations for utilizing the dissertation**

In my view, parts and the whole of the dissertation can provide a basis for throwing new light on the processes from a strategic point of view, approaching systematically the importance of national defence issues for members of the society and their state actors. It can help to understand that defence is a national cause not only at the level of words, but at the appropriate level, it is primarily necessary to achieve broad cooperation between state actors and, on the other hand, it is necessary to formulate the views of the members of the society consciously, in a well-designed manner and it also needs to be managed and organized in a way that is acceptable for them.

In my view, the dissertation can be used in teaching at the National University of Public Service during the study of the voluntary reserve system and defence education as well as included in or complementing other curricula of higher education institutions teaching basic knowledge of Home Defence.

Finally, I find the dissertation suitable as a basis for defining future concepts for the development of national self-defence capability and for defining further specific tasks and things to do.

Budapest, 16 October 2018

**István Kun Szabó**

## The author's publications related to the subject matter

István Kun Szabó: Defence education from a strategic approach. In: Defence Review 2017/5. 71-76.

István Kun Szabó: The British reserve system. In: Military Science Review, Year X. Issue 4., 2017, 485-496.

István Kun Szabó: Current issues of the system of relations of defence and society. In: Defence Review 2017/2. 75-83.

István Kun Szabó: Youth and national defence in Hungary. In: Military Science Review, Year XI, Issue 1, 2018, 199-207.

István Kun Szabó: The soldier as a special member of society. In: János Besenyő (editor): Conference on society and defence – Abstracts.

István Kun Szabó: The soldier as a special member of society. Presentation at a Conference on Society and Defence organized by the Defence Staff Scientific Research Workshop. Conference venue and dates: Budapest, 08-09 November 2017. A publication with an identical title will be published in a Special Issue of Defence Review, in the second half of 2018.

István Kun Szabó: Defence education in historical perspectives. In: Military Science Review, Year XI, Issue 3 (under publication)

István Kun Szabó: Scenes of defence education in this day and age. In: Military Science Review, Year XI, Issue 4 (under publication)

## The author's professional-scientific résumé

Major General István Kun Szabó, PhD candidate, started his professional career as a helicopter engineer in Szolnok in 1987, where he later held various levels of command positions. In 2010, he was assigned to re-organize Defence Crown Guard and then became the commander of the Garrison of Budapest. In 2014 he was appointed Deputy State Secretary for Social Affairs of the Ministry of Defence and in 2016-2017 acted as a Commissioner appointed by the Minister of Defence. As ministerial commissioner he focused on developing the voluntary reserve system and then developing and implementing the legal and organizational framework of the Defence Sports Federation. From October 2017, he has served as the Commandant of the Hungarian Armed Forces Medical Centre.

During his military career he continuously educated himself. In 2001, he earned a university degree in military engineering, and in 2007 he successfully completed the Military Leadership Training course. He began his doctoral studies in 2009, and he acquired a leaving certificate (absolatory) in 2013.

His original research topic was “The place and role of aerial support in the integrated fire support system under the NATO principles”, with Colonel Sándor Felházi, DSc as his supervisor. In the meantime, however, his interest in developing his professional career has increasingly turned his attention to examining the relationship between the armed forces and society, and in 2016 he chose a new subject and a supervisor with the permission of the Doctoral Council of the National University of Public Service. Under the supervision of Colonel Tamás Csikány, Professor, DSc, he conducted a scientific examination of the development of the voluntary reserve system and defence education.