

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF PUBLIC SERVICE
Doctoral School of Military Sciences

Szegő László:

**Examining the United States National Military Strategies after the
Cold War**

Doctoral (PhD) dissertation author review
(THESIS)

Supervisor:
Dr. Tibor Babos PhD

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DEFINITION OF THE SCIENTIFIC PROBLEM

The rapid change in the nature of warfare after the Cold War was due, among other reasons, to globalization and the extremely rapid development of technology and information technology. The rate of progress is made, which shortens the processes that have taken place over long decades and centuries to decades. The computing capacity of processors is doubling every year, bringing about previously unimaginable changes in industry and in the military industry. Development, given the new law of quantum computers (Neven's Law), according to which the increase in computing power far exceeds that of traditional computers and is doubling exponentially, and it is not expected to stop in the future, and we must be prepared for its consequences.

The history of the United States, by its very nature, is a success story, or at least it can be said that the country has made the best of its resources so far. He had fought two great wars and a Cold War in the last century, successfully fought all three. The "revolutions" that have taken place in warfare throughout history, triggered by the emergence of new technologies, presuppose an obvious connection between warfare and technological advancement, and therefore military technology is an essential component of military strategies. The military equipment used and the new technological procedures are embedded in military strategies and doctrines, because the availability of the equipment alone can not yield success.

When analyzing US national military strategies after the Cold War, I sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the characteristics of the American strategic thinking, what makes its institutions and documents unique?
2. From a historical perspective, how can the performance of US Cold War strategies be evaluated objectively?
3. How does technological progress influence strategic thinking?
4. What specific changes are being made to technological development in American strategic culture?

HYPOTHESES

During my research, I examined the US military strategies and related documents under the following assumptions:

1. Each country, including the United States, provides unique responses to security challenges, risks, and threats, so that the characteristics of its strategic logic can be determined.
2. There is a complex evaluation method, applying teleological approach by which the US military strategies can be objectively evaluated with after the

implementation. Examining the contents of the strategic documents from the same points of view, their effectiveness can be determined.

3. Advances in technology will generate changes in the methods of combat and military strategies, which can be identified, and conclusions can be drawn from them in order to create strategies for the future.
4. Technological change not only affects the US military strategies, but also shapes its strategic culture. In the context of the relationship between military revolutions and strategy-making, technological development, by its intensity and complexity, acts as a driving force for strategies.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

At the beginning of the research I set the following goals:

1. To study the system and historical development of the American strategic thinking, thereby identifying the characteristics and changes of American strategic culture.
2. Measure the performance of strategies using an appropriate objective evaluation system to determine whether the objectives have been identified and the necessary resources have been allocated to achieving them.
3. To investigate the impact of post-Cold War technological changes on warfare and determine whether they have led to changes in military strategies.
4. By identifying trends based on the analysis and evaluation of military strategy, which is characterized by changes in American strategic culture.

RESEARCH METHODS

In order to write the first chapters of the dissertation, I conducted extensive literature review and processing of both Hungarian and American documents. The material synthesized in this way summarized the results of previous research and added many new perspectives for further research. During the examination of the system of American strategic documents I carried out further analytical research and the processing of the relevant legislation.

Much of my doctoral dissertation is based on the analysis of primary sources, as I have reviewed in detail all of the United States' national military strategies since the Cold War. I found it necessary to present the content of the documents according to Arthur F. Lykke American strategic thinker's theory, categorised by ends, ways, and means. The examination of the strategic environment could not be left out either, since the three objectives, methods and tools cannot be independently conceived out of their natural environment, the international security system. This also required the

examination of other related strategic documents. After the strategies were introduced, they were evaluated. Richard L. Kugler, a renowned US security researcher, has developed and written a complex analytical method (policy analysis) to evaluate individual policies and strategies, including military strategies, based on his experience in strategy and defense planning in the field of national security detailed in his 2006 work. Thus, the summary evaluation of the military strategies was carried out according to the self-selected criterias of the Kugler method, in the same framework for all documents. This ensured that strategies could be evaluated on the basis of the same criterias for future qualitative comparability.

For the final evaluation of national military strategies, I used a unique method I developed, which resulted in the representation of military strategy performance in a coordinate system. I evaluated the examined strategies on the basis of their objectives, the resources assigned to them, and the evaluation of the strategic environment and placed them in a coordinate system. Depending on how realistic the document was about the strategic challenges and threats, I distinguished between underestimated and overestimated strategies. In the target-source relation system we can talk about underambitious/overfunded and over-ambitious/underfunded strategies. Evaluating a grid in a coordinate system produces a standard deviation of strategies. Given that the use of resources is a crucial element in the implementation of military strategies, I analyzed the budget data. I used graphs to show the conclusions and trends.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY CARRIED OUT

For the first time in my dissertation, I review the theory of American strategic thinking and define the concept of strategy that I consider guiding during my research. I'm focusing this to the military strategy. I define the concept of military strategy according to the theory used by the United States military institutions. In the same chapter, I present the system of strategic documents in the United States and place the national military strategy within this framework. I examine American strategic behavior and identify the characteristics of American strategic culture.

To evaluate the strategies, I had to find a suitable methodology that can be used for performance evaluation after the end of the document's life cycle. For this I found the most appropriate Kugler's policy analysis methodology mentioned earlier, and his methods I used – policy analysis and system analysis – I describe in details in a separate chapter.

In order to ensure that the presentation of national military strategies, which are the essence of the dissertation, does not cause significant quantitative imbalances between the chapters, I discuss the examined strategies in two separate sections. The "downsizing" strategies of the 1990s have historically been relatively well

distinguished from the documents issued after September 11, 2001. In two major chapters on national military strategies, I outline the key features of US presidents and their administrations at the time of publication, as well as the key events in the international security system. The American National Military Strategies are presented one by one, in the same perspective for all documents: Strategic Environment Examination, Objectives, Methods and Tools, followed by Summary and Evaluation.

In the fifth chapter of my dissertation I review the concepts of military revolutions and examine their strategic context, and identify the effects of the period's technical developments on US military strategies.

Finally I summarize the conclusions of the chapters, evaluate and place the examined strategies in an illustrative system created by myself for examining the ambition level of the resources/tools/goals. I draw conclusions regarding the development and change of future strategies and strategic culture of the United States. I summarize their applicability to Hungarian military strategic thinking and possible directions of development. I formulate my research findings and make recommendations for their use.

SUMMARIZED CONCLUSIONS

I used the policy analysis methodology developed by Kugler for analyzing and evaluating strategies, which has the special feature of transferring to the field of national security the investigation methods and some of their elements which have already proved their usefulness in other fields, such as the economy. The method can be used to examine strategy documents and their components - policies, defense plans, force development programs - individually or in combination, in order to evaluate and assist in the decision making process and to review and ex-post evaluation of existing strategies.

After analyzing, evaluating, and reviewing the basic elements of US military strategies through policy analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn. It can be stated that the evaluation of the strategic environment and the realistic evaluation of the major security policy processes of the international system - taking into account the specific perceptions of the American strategic culture - have not always been successful even for the US with its highly developed strategic analytical capacity and institutions. The scenarios outlined by strategic thinkers and the conclusions drawn from RAND analyzes have often been refuted, to a lesser or greater extent. This uncertainty has been identified as a feature of the environment that has been taken into account in strategy development.

However, in the light of the events that have taken place, these ratings can be qualified. It can be judged that the results of an environmental review, by correctly

recognizing processes, identifying strategic threats, attaching importance to them, gave a realistic background to the strategy, or neglecting or over-emphasizing certain elements, and threats. Analysis can also determine the extent of this, which can be placed on a line with a zero center and a positive, negative range. If a strategic environmental assessment has given an inadequate assessment and underestimated the strategic challenges, place it in a positive range from zero to negative in the negative direction, if overestimated, indicating a deviation from the "ideal".

Based on the Iraqi interventions, looking at events from a historical perspective, at the end of the Cold War, in the "end of history" mood outlined by Francis Fukuyama, strategic analysts did not expect or anticipate such a conflict in the Gulf region. The fact that Iraq is actually using military force has surprised analysts, even though the evaluations included "the likelihood of a resurgence of ancient controversies". However, we now know that Iraq was devoid of weapons of mass destruction and production capacity at the time of the 2003 invasion, so the threat posed by the country was overestimated. The US perception of the threat posed by North Korea over the past decades was an accurate assessment. Based on a threat assessment relied on intelligence information, the United States provided tailor-made strategic responses to the challenge posed by North Korea, with sanctions that blocked the progress of its nuclear program and the successful development of the regime, and with effective deterrence to military action. Based on these, we can place the two individual evaluations on the self-constructed numerical line below.

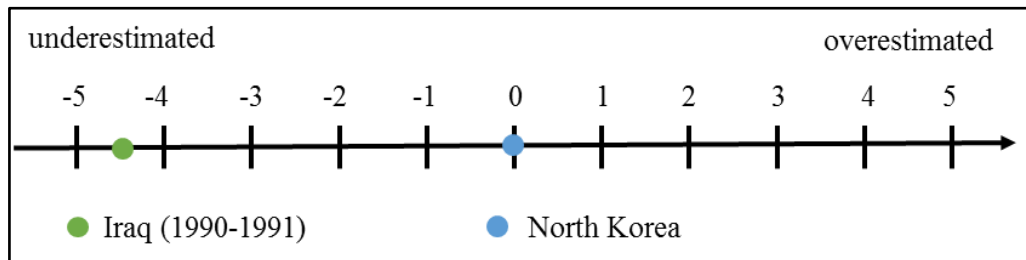


Figure No. 1: Plot of the evaluation of the strategic environment

By examining the environmental assessments of each strategy in their complexity, and by qualifying their elements, the entire strategy can be positioned on the axis with a resulting value, visually displaying their effectiveness:

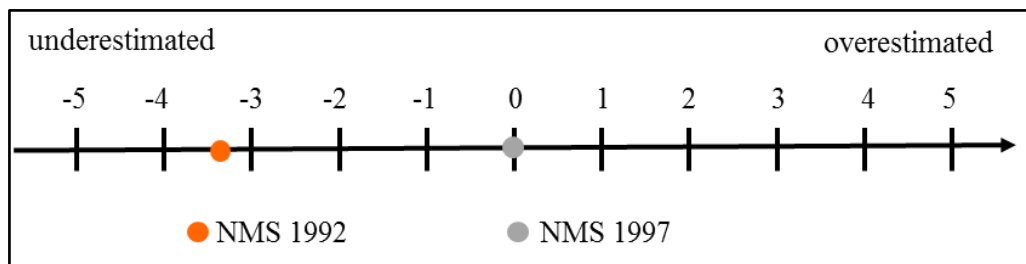


Figure No. 2: Plot of strategies

From the point of view of ex-post evaluation, a characteristic feature of strategies is efficient resource management, as the strategy aims to achieve victory (with goals that promote it) with the least possible use of resources. Did the strategy allocate adequate resources for implementation, and was the objective and level of ambition proportional to the available resources and assets of the country? Throughout history, we have seen countless examples where ambition level was not commensurate with resources or where the right strategy was not appropriated. In the business world, it is also critical for shareholders to have appropriate resources at their disposal maximizing the return on investment.

The "weight" of the actors of the international system can be calculated and ranked using system analysis methods. Their strategies can be subsequently be judged relative to the level of ambitions/goals of resources/tools and plotted on one axis. This results in strategies of underfunded/highly ambitious in negative, and overfunded/lowly ambitious strategies in a positive direction from the center. Standing this axis vertically and placing it on our previous axis produces a coordinate system with two axes, resulting in a planar dispersion of the strategies. The ideal strategy is in the origin.

Complementing this with my own evaluation and demonstration method, I present Kugler's policy analysis methodology for evaluated American military strategies. The United States' 1992 National Military Strategy was a document that fit into the system of strategic documents, appreciated the security environment, and assigned appropriate methods and means to accomplish its objectives. However, the Soviet threat, which disappeared after the end of the Cold War, remained significantly overestimated, despite the expanding ambitions of the United States. Given the technological modernization that has been accomplished, and the budget cuts that have been foreseen, as well as the social problems associated with the dismantling of troops, the United States missed a historic opportunity to significantly reduce or redeploy its defense budget.

While the 1992 strategy was said to be over-planned or under-ambitious, the 1995 document shows that the force was not significantly reduced, but that the level of ambitions was raised. In order to make the global presence credible, the ability to tackle two major conflicts has emerged to deter regional aggressors. The Bottom-Up Review, by identifying additional reduction margins, supported the implementation of the strategy and promoted modernization.

On the basis of a small increase in budget and ambition and a realistic assessment of the strategic environment, the 1997 National Military Strategy was a carefully crafted well balanced strategy with realistic and ambitious long-term outlook.

The 2004 NMS, the first strategy following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, has performed well: the United States has not been hit by any further external attacks, and, while incurring extraordinary operational costs, the engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan has yielded results. The results, given the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and the rebalancing of power in Afghanistan as a result of the reduction of Allied troops, did not prove to be long-lasting, but not due to strategy, not even to implementation. Taking into account the nature of the fight against terrorism, the period 2004-2011, as measured by the number of trained local security forces, the size of government-controlled areas, the number of terrorist leaders killed and the number of terrorist acts prevented, was successful. However, another strategic option could have produced similar or better results at the same cost, with fewer casualties. The military strategy "served" the Bush administration's neo-conservative strategic stance, actively using diplomatic and military tools to deal with crises, seeking to build a constructive relationship with emerging powers and expanding economic prosperity in the world. The military strategy institutionalizes the actions taken since September 11, 2001, the threat posed by individuals, the preventive strike, and the protection of American soil from strategic approaches. With the changing nature of warfare, cooperation with partners, including Allies, permanent regional and coalition partners, and international organizations has continued to intensify in all areas. The strategy was considered to be an over-ambitious, although under-resourced, strategy that provided a near realistic threat assessment.

The development of the 2011 National Military Strategy, tightening by the operational pace and the effects of the economic crisis, yielded a more restrained strategy, differing in structure from the previous ones. It did not assign appropriate tools to the objectives, did not even describe the characteristics of the desired force, but rather explained the reasons for the moderation. Never had such a cooperative strategy been issued, and the emerging powers felt the weakness and started to rally. In practice, the US-announced focus to the Pacific ("rebalance") has not been filled with content. This is not to say that the United States' global role or global capacity has been called into question, but rather that a document has been issued following an over-ambitious strategy to ensure a process of regeneration facing real barriers.

The 2015 strategy was well aware of changes in the strategic environment and the shrinking of the United States' technological superiority and the immediate threat of losing its competitive edge. It provided a balanced assessment of the strategic environment, with friction with emerging powers significantly increasing over the years. Due to the continuing scarcity of defense resources, it was not possible to implement what was described in the strategy, leading to real superpower competition. In terms of ambition, we talk about over-ambitioned strategy.

Due to the confidential nature of the 2018 strategy and the fact that it has barely more than a year since its release, it cannot be fully evaluated, although trends are predictable. In the strategic context, it has acknowledged the loss of US competitive advantage, which forces the US to compete with Russia and China, and addresses other threats in place. It also recognizes that the US Armed Forces has reached its limits, reshaping the principles of the Armed Forces accordingly, and further appreciates the role of allied partners, urging them to take responsibility and burdens. One of its most important realizations is that military edge can only be achieved through the innovative use of advanced technology, which requires careful military development and planning. Based on environmental assessment and budget trends, the strategy could be well implemented, but the "greatness" and strategic advantage visioned by President Trump would consume almost unlimited resources, which already predicts the strategy to be underfunded.

Plotting the US National Military Strategies, marked by a year, in the coordinate system representing the ambition level/resources relationship and the strategic environment assessment we got the following chart.

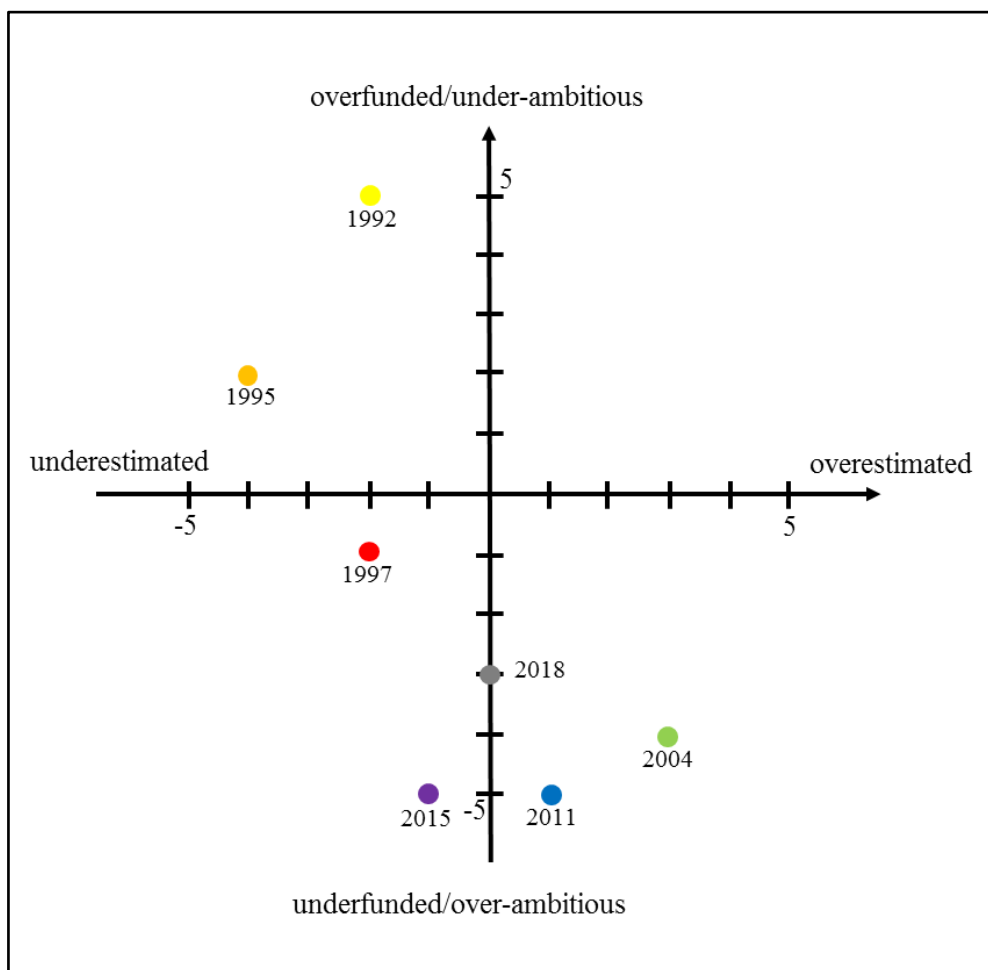


Figure No. 3: Placing strategies in a coordinate system

An overview of the chart shows that the United States had accumulated more military power during the Cold War than was necessary to achieve its later ambitions. Its enormous technological advantage, the superiority of the armed forces, would have served its ambitions on a smaller scale. It can be seen that despite its slightly increasing ambition, its defense resources are constantly depleted. Significant operational costs in Iraq and Afghanistan have ensured that these tasks have been carried out, but after the global financial crisis this has deprived itself of development resources and the US military has "lived up to the future". With the two protracted operations and the ever-increasing challenges, the unchanged global ambitions could no longer be sustained with such funding.

The assessment of the environment reveals the uncertainty of the 1992 pathfinding and then the idealism of the Clinton administration. Later, overestimation of the threats can be observed, the 2011 strategy already includes environmental problems, and in 2015 a realistic assessment was made, which acknowledges the real threats. The 2018 strategy takes the values of the previous strategy as it regards the assessment of the strategic environment, identifies migration as a threat, but at the same time neglects the strengthening of the global threat posed by climate change.

When reviewing the military strategies of the United States and the characteristics of a strategic culture, the relationship between values and the strategic behavior of the United States becomes apparent. This means that core values and societal characteristics influence all elements of strategy and warfare. Strategic decisions are determined by the philosophical, political, cultural and cognitive determinants of a given nation and its leaders, as well as by historical experience and long-term strategic preferences that do not change, or just very slowly. Based on these, I distinguished the characteristics of American strategic culture, which I was able to identify in the military strategies as well. I identified the relationship between values and the strategic behavior of the United States not as determinative but as influential. These factors include the social preference for immediate action and recognition, the search for decisive battles, the use of strong firepower, technological innovation and problem-solving approaches, the responsiveness to new and general changings, the central role of time, the protection of human life - be it your own or your enemy - and the sensitivity to casualties. A patriotic national identity, which is a must-have for everyone, and an American society with an isolationist approach, are key to its success.

The political determination of military strategies is illustrated by the fact that, although the American strategic culture is characterized by the willingness of Americans to fight for values and ideals, there is a change in this regard. Intermittent military interventions over the past 30 years show that strategic decisions based on the

national interests of the United States are legitimized and made the public accepted by moral rhetoric.

I have also been able to identify strategic culture changes caused by technological changes. As a result, technology's preference for technology as a power multiplier will increase in American strategic culture, which will be enhanced by the development of systems using artificial intelligence. Instead of endeavouring to fight decisive battles and using strong firepower, analyzing the information and data available, the US can perform precision strikes – for specific purposes by measuring precision strikes at carefully selected locations and times to achieve the desired effect – and further enhance the use of Special Operational Forces. The ability to use long-range precision strike capability with modern technology reduces the casualties, thus limiting the use of military power to loss sensitivity. The disappearance of the natural protection of the country has eroded the confidence of the American society and political leadership, while at the same time strengthened patriotism. Further revolutionary changes could result in progress in the areas identified in the long-term R&D programs for the third offset strategy. Artificial intelligence and autonomous self-learning machines, by being able to anticipate strategic surprises with their data processing capabilities, human-machine collaboration by facilitating decision-making processes, using advanced human-machine units based on the “swipe” concept, and human network-based semi-autonomous weapon systems that enhance responsiveness and thus provide automatic protection.

Changes will be integrated into operational concepts and will be reflected in the US strategic documents. In setting goals – relying upon the latest developments – the US will enhance using the latest technology and innovative procedures to maintain ambition level. The structure of the force and the nature of the force are constantly changing, and the shift towards jointness is taking a new direction – in the broadest sense – towards joint special operations.

Fighting non-state actors – developing capabilities enhanced by dual-use or leaking technologies – will have a reverse effect, and strategies will require innovative, fast-paced, sometimes breakthrough technologies. Because of the logic of military revolutions the nature of challengers, the multilateral nature of strategies, and interoperability, changes will also be embedded in the strategies of allies and partners. The success of joint developments will lead to cooperation and fusion of defense research networks, and enhanced defense industry cooperation, while increasing the share of R&D expenditure in defense budgets. The activity of acquiring defense technologies will be further strengthened.

NEW SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

1. I analyzed the theory, documents and institutional framework of strategic thinking in the United States, compared it to the general characteristics of American society, and explored their relationships, identifying the characteristics of American strategic culture, with particular reference to scientific and technological evolution.
2. Based on a comparative analysis, I evaluated post-Cold War US national military strategies using a teleological approach, developing a unique evaluation and demonstration system to illustrate the relationship between target-resource relationships and perceptions, which allows for the placement of strategies in an ex post objective evaluation process.
3. Based on my analysis, I have found that technological achievements and strategic documents interact, as the results of technological advances lead to new operational concepts that transform strategic thinking and, on the other hand, the strategic problems force new innovative solutions.
4. My analysis proves that the American strategic culture is changing, and the preference for technology as a multiplier is increasing. This means that instead of searching for decisive battles, using strong firepower and total destruction, precision strikes, special operations forces, autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence are used to reduce casualties and alter military strength also limits US sensitivity to losses.

PRACTICAL RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The dissertation, with a detailed understanding of US strategy and strategic culture, as well as an in-depth analysis of post-Cold War US national military strategies and strategic visions of related presidential cycles, can contribute to the development of Hungarian strategic thinking and can be useful in higher education. The evaluation method described in this dissertation can be used to evaluate other military strategies and to develop strategies.

Despite its successes in Euro-Atlantic integration, Hungary did not integrate or catch up with allies in the defense sphere, especially the United States. For many years, the defense budget has fallen short of NATO's proposed two percent of GDP, and due to the determinants of its use, it has not been able to be utilized properly. The effect of the limited resources was exacerbated by the partial replacement of the obsolete military equipment pool, the delay in its replacement, and the lack of structural reforms.

In my opinion, the strategic institutional system can also be improved. The American strategy approach and the strategy-developing mechanism presented in the

doctoral dissertation could serve as an example for the development of Hungarian practice and the legal system. Based on the advanced American strategic institutional system, it would be advisable to establish a Hungarian, independent, objective, analytical institution similar to the American RAND Corporation, which, in direct contact with military organizations, could use its experience to contribute to the development of Hungarian defense capabilities and strategic thinking.

The changes identified in the dissertation in the United States' strategic culture and strategies will also affect the US foreign and allied policies as well as NATO's strategies. By taking these processes into account, Hungary can benefit from the changes.

According to the research results, due to the direct correlation between technological development and strategies and defense capabilities, special attention should be paid to research and development. Therefore, innovative technology solutions have a strong multiplier effect and should be taken into account when developing Hungarian strategies. Given the increasing defense resources available to the Hungarian Defense Forces, and the American processes described in the dissertation, special attention must be paid to innovation and the establishment of institutions and organizations that are capable of cooperating with innovative civilian actors in the economy.

Budapest, October 10, 2019

László Szegő

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THE AUTHOR'S PROFESSIONAL-SCIENTIFIC BIOGRAPHY

Brigadier General László Szegő, PhD candidate graduated in 1989, he received a military technical qualification as aircraft engineer at the department of György Kilián Aviation Technical High School. He began his career in Szolnok, with technical maintenance of helicopters. His professional career later led him back to the garrison as chief of operations and acting chief of staff of the brigade.

Before joining NATO in 1998, he started working for the NATO Department of the Ministry of Defense, and later for the Department of Defense Policy. His responsibilities included analyzing Alliance strategic documents, developing background materials, and developing collaboration options.

In 2002 he got his masters degree from the Miklós Zrínyi National Defense University as security and defence policy expert. He wrote his thesis on NATO's Partnership for Peace Program. He then (2002-2003) attended postgraduate training at the International Training Course at the Geneva Center for Security Policy. In his English thesis, he examined the free movement of workers within the European Union in the context of the 2004 EU enlargement. In 2015, he graduated with a degree in Electronic Information Security from the National University of Public Service's Faculty of Public Administration, where he dealt with US cyber security strategies.

In 2008, worked at the Sarajevo NATO Command Advisory Group and completed field service as education and training advisor. He worked with the Bosnian Ministry of Defense to develop the new Bosnian army and its training and education system.

Since August 2010, he has been working in his current position in the Office of the President of the Republic, where he is supporting the work of the Commander-in-Chief of the Hungarian Defense Forces as Chief Aide-de-Camp.

In 2010, he applied for and received admission to the Miklós Zrínyi National Defence University Doctoral School of Military Sciences, under the supervision of Colonel Tibor Babos, a private university professor. The candidate acquired the absolutorium in 2014.