Developments in the Hungarian Security Policy: Key Actors, Institutions and Decision-making

Péter Rada[1]

Abstract

After almost fifty years, the change of system gave an opportunity to Hungary to join the West again and to begin the long and exhausting transition from a socialist style decision-making structure to a modern institutional system that is compatible with NATO and the EU, which organisations Hungary intended to join. Even though the success of the Euro-Atlantic integration is beyond question, during the transition Hungary met several obstacles and problems that needed to be solved. Hungary has needed to balance between remaining a reliable and worthy ally and the low defence budget. The chapter describes and evaluates the evolution of the Hungarian security policy since 1989 and also assesses the decision-making process, the changing legal environment in the security sector. Finally, the chapter analyses the Hungarian participation in Kosovo and in the counter-ISIL mission.

Introduction

2019 marks a multi-anniversary in Hungarian foreign and security policy. This is when Hungary celebrates the 30th anniversary of leaving the socialist block and the beginning of democratic reforms; in 2019 Hungary – together with Poland and the Czech Republic – have joined the NATO 20 years ago; 2019 was also the 15th anniversary of the EU's "big bang" enlargement; furthermore, 2019 is the 70th anniversary of the signing of the Washington Treaty. These anniversaries mark the commemoration of the symbolically as well as practically most important milestones in the development of the Hungarian foreign and security policy. The regime change gave an opportunity to re-join the West after almost five decades. The doors were practically closed by the great power agreement in Yalta on the post-war reconstruction of Europe. Joining the transatlantic institutions gave back Hungary what was taken during and after the Second World War and the opportunity opened up for the country to (again) become a full and now hopefully permanent member of the Western value and interest com-

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[1] Péter Rada, PhD has been the acting Vice-Dean for Academic and International Affairs of the Faculty of European and International Studies at the National University of Public Service. Earlier he served as the Congressional Liaison Officer at the Hungarian Embassy in Washington, D.C. between 2015 and 2017. Prior to this assignment he worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and also in academia at several Hungarian and foreign universities.

munity. The interests of the other countries in the region were similar, and the Euro-Atlantic integration had no real alternative. When realising this, Hungary initiated closer Central European cooperation and luckily, the political leaders in Poland and Czechoslovakia came to similar conclusions that provided a solid basis for (re)initiating the Visegrád Cooperation.

The newly democratising countries had many headaches when trying to designate their respective countries' future and find the best ways of restructuring their polities, economies and societies. Hungary also had several options to evaluate before stepping on the road of Euro-Atlantic integration. There were and still are some open questions whether NATO, the American alliance, or the EU indeed serve the real Hungarian self-interests. Despite some diverging voices, in 2018, the majority of the Central European countries – and this is especially true in Hungary – are pro-NATO (and pro-EU) and have generally better views of the United States than the Western Europeans. Their populations are in favour of strengthening the Euro-Atlantic alliance. It is often mentioned that Atlanticism is failing but actual opinion polls cannot back the fears of a waning feeling towards the Western security institutions (Nézőpont Intézet 2017).

The success of Central and Eastern Europe's Euro-Atlantic integration is beyond question even though there are many challenges beyond the surface. NATO regained some momentum after the Russian invasion of Crimea but the Alliance still lacks a clear mission and struggles to provide an unmistakable point of reference for the "new members". During the Cold War, NATO's clear mission was to defend the territory of the European allies against the Soviet aggression and enhance their integration. Since 1989, many changes have happened and the lines between the different tasks became blurred. Maintaining stability in Europe, spreading Western values, managing crises and combatting terrorism even "out of area" all emerged as priorities for the renewed and extended alliance. On the other hand, the end of the Cold War met European reluctance to keep up pre-1991 levels of defence spending. The European use of "peace dividends" created a permanent source of friction between the two coasts of the Atlantic and heavy debates on burden sharing. The new NATO members – including Hungary – needed to balance between the low defence budget and proving their importance for the Americans geopolitically, or as a reliable ally in Iraq, or Afghanistan (Bugajski–Teleki 2007). Nevertheless, the changing role of the United States in Europe and the rebalancing, or pivot, to Asia since the beginning of the early years of the Obama Administration were all cautionary signals.

The growing feeling of being "left behind" became a general phenomenon in CEE. The parallel process of the American disengagement and the EU's internal crisis created space for at times unfounded criticism towards the Central European allies, especially regarding domestic affairs.[2] Honest and equal dialogue is also in the vital interest of the "old members" of the Euro-Atlantic institutions because the original organising paradigms of Western Europe are in crisis (due to illegal migration crisis, Russian aggression and radicalisation and terrorism). The Central and Eastern European countries have behaved as canaries in the coalmine for the West and have reacted to the changes in the international

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[2]   See for instance Victoria Nuland Assistant Secretary of State's harsh criticism in 2014 (Hungarian Spectrum 2014). It is also interesting and not a nice move in diplomacy that the U.S. Embassy in Budapest – led then by Andre Goodfriend chargé d'affaires – translated the whole speech and published it immediately.

security environment quickly; however, these countries have had the least time to integrate to the Western values and institutions (Kron et al. 2013, 9).

The evolution of the Hungarian security policy since 1989

Between 1945 and 1989, Hungary spent more than four decades "experimenting" with the Soviet style defence and political structures. The consequence of the inorganic development was the unquestionable desire of the new political elite in 1990 to develop new defence structures, even designing a new basic approach to security policy. Even though the Hungarian Republic was officially declared in October 1989 and the first democratic elections were held in April 1990, the Soviet Union still existed and there were no expectations among the Hungarian political elite that the "big brother" will collapse any time soon. Consequently, the military-defence planning option of staying close to the Soviet Union was not out of question. Also before 1991, Hungary could not neglect the option of self-defence, either (Csiki et al. 2014, 107).[3] Nevertheless, Hungary's main goal from 1989 was to leave the Warsaw Pact and make the Soviet troops leave the country. Due to Hungary's initiative and efforts, the Warsaw Pact ceased to exist in 1991 and the Soviet/Russian orientation was dropped from the agenda (Csiki et al. 2014, 43–45). The option of neutrality – which idea was routed in the 1956 revolution and freedom fight and the Austrian example – was also rather short lived and it became clear that the great power security guarantees have no alternative in the Central European geopolitical realities. The NATO and EU membership became an absolute priority and no political power questioned it in Hungary after the war in Yugoslavia broke out (Csiki et al. 2014, 14, 83–84).

The 1990s was the period for rebuilding the genuine Hungarian identity in the constantly changing international environment after the end of the Soviet influence and before joining the West. The socialist period artificially kept the lid on the national, ethnic, or religious differences and conflicts that also came to the surface in Central Europe. Consequently, parallel to the Euro-Atlantic integration, the need for increased regional security and political cooperation appeared on the agenda. The status of the Hungarian minorities abroad, their protection and the functioning relations with Slovakia and Romania were prerequisites of Western integration. The Central European post-socialist countries needed to change, transform and reform comprehensively their defence and security sectors in the last three decades: firstly, at the end of the Cold War; secondly, after the successful Euro-Atlantic integration; and thirdly, after the new financial realities of the global financial crisis (Csiki et al. 2014, 12; Ušiak 2013, 8).

The first Hungarian Prime Minister József Antall initiated the Visegrád Cooperation in 1991, which became a platform for a joint approach to the EU and NATO. The simultaneous

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[3]   By 1991, the Antall Government faced at least two major security challenges that transformed the security policy decision-making, or at least influenced the Hungarian elite's thinking on security: the war in Hungary's southern neighbourhood broke out; and an attempted coup failed in Moscow. As a reaction, the Minister of Defence Lajos Für introduced the concept of "concentric defence". It was based on the recognition that Hungary is weaker militarily than most of its neighbours and the geographical position of the army needs to reflect the new realities. The defence forces need to be ready to defend the country from any attack from any direction.

development of the pan-European security infrastructure was also a subsidiary option that was supported by the Hungarian political elite – both the government and the opposition. The regional collective security – at least on paper – was guaranteed by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe after the Helsinki Final Act. Although the Helsinki Process basically involved all of the security actors in the Euro-Atlantic region, the cooperation was not real and was not institutionalised until 1994, when, in Budapest, the Process became the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. The idea of "collective security from Vancouver to Vladivostok" was indeed attractive but its real implementation and maintenance has had several problems since the beginning, therefore it could not become an alternative for NATO or the EU (Csiki 2013; Szálkai 2016). Consequently, the Euro-Atlantic integration became one of the main priorities of the Hungarian foreign and security policy. The Antall Government formulated the frames of the Hungarian priorities, which have enjoyed broad support in the political elite and with some alteration are still valid today. The main pillars of the Hungarian foreign and security policy were: 1. joining NATO and the EU as soon as possible; 2. good neighbourly relations; 3. protection of the Hungarian minorities living abroad (Csiki et al. 2014, 100–101).

Hungary spearheaded the regional efforts of changing the regional security architecture (Asmus 2004). As it was mentioned above, Hungary initiated the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, letting the next steps of integration become reality sooner: Hungary stated in 1991 that the country abandons its obligations and rather considers the 1991 NATO Strategic Concept the leading example and framework. In the Euro-Atlantic integration process – even though the EU membership seemed to be a closer reality – NATO accession became the first step after the Balkan wars broke out. The war in the former Yugoslavia held direct consequences for Hungary because of the large number of Hungarians in Vojvodina, the refugees arriving to Hungary and several instances of provocations by rump-Yugoslavia. The Visegrád countries actively participated in the newly established North Atlantic Cooperation Council from 1991 and in the Partnership for Peace from 1994.[4]

Simultaneously with the integration process, Hungary sought to form a (new) security/strategic culture and abandon the reflexes of the Hungarian People's Army which had no real historic roots and was artificially created as a subordinate of the Soviet Red Army. In order to have clear directions, Hungary adopted several policy and security documents at the beginning of the 1990s. In 1993, the Hungarian Parliament adopted two basic documents: 1. Basic Principles of Security Policy of Hungary (11/1993); 2. Basic Principles of Defence (27/1993). Based on these documents, the Parliament also adopted Act CX of 1993 on National Defence (1993. évi CX.). All these documents reflected the new realities and calculated with the new strategic alliances and the new security architecture after the Cold War, with the perspective of seeking full Euro-Atlantic integration. It included the efforts to reform the defence sector and the Hungarian Defence forces to be able to deal with the "new security threats" and effectively participate in international crisis management mis-

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[4] Hungary actively participated in the IFOR and later SFOR missions in Bosnia. Earlier the Hungarian Parliament authorised for AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) aircraft to use the Hungarian air space and a logistical airfield. Similar AWACS aircraft patrolled over Hungary to deter Serbian aggression earlier during the war (Csiki et al. 2014, 120–122; Asmus 2004).

sions especially in the close neighbourhood, the Western Balkans. The documents stressed the importance of the full adaptation of international law, the regulations of international organisations in which Hungary was member (or intended to join): the United Nations, the OSCE, or the Council of Europe. The documents clearly reflected the Hungarian political intention that Hungary prefers political solutions in crisis situations to military ones. The documents also needed to take into account Hungary's special geostrategic situation and the very important fact that a large part of the Hungarian nation lived in the neighbouring countries, thus specific security risks have emerged which were not completely under the control of the Hungarian Government (Csiki et al. 2014, 108–110).

Developing military capabilities and reforming the Hungarian Defence Forces had several limits. Beyond the financial and economic burdens, Hungary has been a party to international agreements, most importantly the *Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe,* which was adopted in 1990. The full transformation of the armed forces supported the quick integration process, but on the other hand – because Hungary did not expect large-scale military conflict in Europe – self-defence by own military capabilities was also very important. During the Balkan wars, in 1992 NATO already gave security guarantees (1993. évi CX; Szenes 2017, 31).

Before the NATO accession, not surprisingly, there was a need for fine-tuning the above mentioned documents that led to the formation of a comprehensive security policy framework in 1998: *The Basic Principles of Security and Defence Policy of the Republic of Hungary* (94/1998). The new document emphasised that Hungary's security policy goal is to be an equal member in NATO and that Hungary intends to participate in solving international problems as not simply a consumer of security. This of course needed to continue with and enhance the reform of the Hungarian military (Csiki et al. 2014, 148; Szenes 2017, 31).

For Hungary, NATO meant that the country would become a close ally of the United States for the first time in its history. Not surprisingly, Hungary's orientation, similarly to the other new Central European members, Poland and the Czech Republic, was more pro-American than that of the other Western allies within NATO, and Hungary has supported the American out of area military missions at times in spite of the harsh criticism by Western European nations. On the other hand, Washington also needed the new reliable allies due to several factors, most importantly the geopolitical reality in the Western Balkans in the 1990s. Even though the Visegrád countries expected quicker accession, finally – 12 days before Yugoslavia's bombing due to atrocities and ethnic cleansing in Kosovo – the three countries could join NATO on 12 March 1999. After joining NATO, the strategic goals of Hungary were diversified. Hungary focused on fulfilling the NATO obligations and trying to share the burdens (e.g. Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq), but the pursuit for the EU membership gained political priority. Hungary's strategic geopolitical position provided room for manoeuvre to increase the protection for instance for the Hungarian minorities abroad and to focus on aspects of internal security as well. Hungary has supported the development of a strong European Security and Defence Policy by utilising NATO capabilities (Szenes 2017, 32–37). Nevertheless, similarly to the other countries in the region and in Europe, the Hungarian defence spending relatively declined in the 2000s. This trend continued until 2012. In 2012 the government decided that the defence spending per GDP will grow 0.1% each year after 2016, and that by 2022 Hungary must reach defence spending equivalent to 1.39% of GDP (1046/2012).

As a consequence of the EU accession in 2004, many laws and regulations changed. One of the most visible changes was the abolition of general conscription and the establishment of a full

professional army. The Hungarian Parliament adopted three security/strategic basic documents reflecting NATO membership and the EU accession: 1. in 2002 the *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Hungary* (2144/2002); 2. in 2004 again the *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Hungary* (2073/2004); 3. in 2009 the *National Military Strategy* (1009/2009; NKS 2009). The second document followed quickly the first one, and according to the government, it was needed because of the EU membership and the very quickly changing security environment. We should also note the domestic party political interests behind it. The first document was adopted under the FIDESZ government and the Socialist-led government wanted to have an own document from the first day after their electoral victory in 2002. The adoption of Act CV 2004 on National Defence and the Hungarian Defence Forces (2004. évi CV) followed the second document. These documents reflected the realities of the 2000s, the 1999 NATO Strategic Concept and the international security environment after the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, as well as the 2003 European Security Strategy. The documents clearly state that the primary guarantor of security is NATO (and the United States) and Hungary gradually intends to reform the armed forces to become a capable expeditionary force, and Hungary continues the transition to collective defence. The documents listed many new security challenges but did not count with major traditional military conflict in Europe. However, it is worth mentioning that these documents already noted that Hungary's security may be challenged by unstable regions and illegal migration, and also mentioned Ukraine as a potential source of future conflict. After joining the Schengen Zone in 2007, a new security task emerged as a priority: the protection of the EU's external Schengen border. Also, these documents were the first that explicitly mentioned Hungary's energy security as a top priority and mentioned Russia as a threat with a view to it. The 2009 military strategy further added that one of Hungary's main goals is to support further Euro-Atlantic enlargement, especially in the Western Balkans.

During the Balkan wars, Hungary enjoyed a strategic position within NATO. In this period, the U.S. security policy focused on Europe. This changed in the 2000s, after 9/11 – U.S. attention turned away from Europe. The criticism towards the slow Hungarian military reforms and the slow restructuring of the security infrastructure was compensated for by the geostrategic position of the country and the Hungarian participation in NATO's missions in Bosnia and Kosovo.

At the time of the 9/11 attacks, Hungary needed to react quickly and the government declared that Hungary fully supports NATO and the United States. Hungary did not provide combat troops to Operation Enduring Freedom but supported all NATO activities in Afghanistan and has been present there since 2003 when the alliance took over the responsibility for the leadership of the International Security Assistance Force, the UN-mandated stabilisation force in the country. Hungary stuck to NATO's Afghanistan principle: "in together, out together"; and Hungary – although sometimes reluctantly – remained in Afghanistan as part of the new Resolute Support Mission after the International Security Assistance Force completed its mission in December 2014. The Hungarian military has performed beyond strength in the U.S.-led NATO missions, not only in Afghanistan, but also in Kosovo (KFOR) and in the NATO mission in Iraq. It was necessary as Hungary wanted to prove that even with a low (and shrinking) defence budget, the country was still an important ally and could accomplish difficult out of area missions. The Hungarian risk-taking, the loyalty and the full support of NATO was very much appreciated in Washington and helped to settle many debates and weaken criticism in the coming years (Csiki et al. 2014, 164–168).

After the 2010 elections, FIDESZ gained a two-thirds majority and the new government initiated significant changes in Hungary's security and defence policy. The government decided to increase defence spending and the Parliament also adopted two new strategic documents. The Hungarian Government committed to a yearly 0.1%/GDP increase of the defence budget from 2016, after adopting the most recent National Security Strategy (2012) (NBS 2012) and the National Military Strategy (2012) (NKS 2012). Furthermore, the new foreign policy strategy was also adopted (KS 2011). These strategic documents emphasised again, similarly to the earlier documents, that a conventional military attack against Hungary is not probable as Hungary does not have any military adversaries, but unconventional security threats are serious. Hungary needs to pay special attention to the minority rights and the status of Hungarians living abroad. The documents stress again the importance of proper preparation for managing migration because Hungary has special responsibilities related to the external border of the Schengen area. The strategies also set the ambition level for the Hungarian Defence Forces in the frames of global burden sharing in NATO and the EU, and set the number of deployable troops to 1,000 at any time upon request of these organisations and the allies. The National Security Strategy also urged the formulation of sectoral security strategies regarding the different dimensions of security threats (Tálas 2014, 13–16; Csiki 2014, 59–61). The 2013 *National Cyber Security Strategy of Hungary* is a good example for this (1139/2013).

As mentioned above, all of the Hungarian governments paid special attention that Hungary participates in military missions, mostly in NATO frames (Marton–Wagner 2017, 148–159). The goal was to deploy around 1,000 troops in the different missions. Hungary has participated in all of NATO's missions that included land forces and peacekeepers since the accession to the alliance in 1999. The Hungarian troops have been present in Bosnia (in IFOR, SFOR and also in the EUFOR mission of the European Union), in Kosovo (KFOR), in Albania (AFOR) and in Macedonia; in Afghanistan and in the Iraq Training Mission (Csiki et al. 2014, 164–181). The latest new mission for the Hungarian soldiers is the active participation in the global coalition countering ISIL (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant). According to the mandate set out by the Hungarian Parliament, Hungary has participated in the coalition's mission with 150 troops on the ground in Iraq near Erbil, whose main task is to support the work of the Iraqi Training Support Contingent. In 2017, the Hungarian Government (approved by the Parliament) decided to extend the mission's mandate beyond 2017 and to send an additional 50 troops to Iraq to help fight ISIL.[5]

Beyond the troops on the ground, Hungary has hosted the main operating base of the Strategic Airlift Capacity (three C-17 aircraft) in Pápa since 2007, the NATO Centre of Excellence for Military Medicine in Budapest since 2009, and the NATO Force Integration Unit in Székesfehérvár since 2016 (Szálkai 2016). Furthermore, Hungary has participated in the Baltic air-policing mission since 2015 and agreed to fulfil similar tasks in Slovenia. Despite the Hungarian efforts, criticism of Hungary remained common due to the falling defence spending. The burden sharing has been a general debate within NATO in the last decades and it became even stronger after Donald Trump was elected President of the United States. Trump made many comments already during the campaign that he would not tolerate any free-riders within NATO, and that all of the members needed to achieve the 2%/GDP level of defence spending soon (Bremmer 2017). For Hungary it is a worrying signal,

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[5] For more details see the next chapter.

because it is an open question how long Hungary can balance the low defence budget with future promises and a heavy presence (in per capita terms) in the international missions.

Legal regulations and decision-making in the Hungarian security policy

Even though Hungary began the reforms as soon as it was possible, almost 20 years after the NATO accession the modernisation of the Hungarian Defence Forces and the security planning and decision-making structure still need further development, especially in the field of compatibility and interoperability. This is most visible in the quality and amount of military equipment, which is clearly a financial question, about which nobody should be surprised when the defence budget has constantly decreased in real terms. This is the only area in defence cooperation where the United States expresses heavy criticism (Magyarics 2014).

The last almost three decades have brought many dilemmas and contradictions to the surface, which have created ambiguous environment for the decision-makers. It has been very complicated for the politicians even with the best intentions to vote for clear options while the interests of the great powers have been in constant change, the international security environment and architecture have changed significantly and those Euro-Atlantic institutions have also undergone serious evolution to which Hungary intended to integrate. For Hungary (similarly to the other countries in the region) the most difficult dilemma has been how to maintain good neighbourly relations and a functioning V4, while remaining a trusted ally for the United States, while not forgetting the German (economic) interests; and while also not alienating Russia which still has mutual interests and important stakes in our region. This complexity has seemed to be not particularly well understood by Western allies, and this has led to misunderstandings, ill-founded criticism and, on the other hand, it has given Russia opportunity to exploit the friction, for instance by using energy ties as a policy tool. In 2018, even after many years of full membership in the Euro-Atlantic community, the full picture is no less unpredictable. The relations among the great powers and our regions and Hungary's relations to these powers still make the security situation complicated and bring many debates to the surface (Kalan 2016).

The legal regulations and the decision-making processes in Hungary were intended to follow the above mentioned changes but the adaptation has usually been slow. The eventual legal basis of the security policy decision-making was the Constitution. Consequently, the first task of the legislation was to amend the 1949 Communist constitution that eventually happened in 1989, with the adaptation of Law XXXI (1989. évi XXXI). The goal was to build democratic structures, stability within the armed forces, and to strengthen the civilian control. The amended constitution fundamentally changed the security and defence architecture and regulated the decision-making until the adoption and ratification of the Fundamental Law of Hungary in 2011 (Alaptörvény 2011).

The classic hierarchy of the strategic/decision-making documents – the Fundamental Law; the law on national defence; the law on military service; government decrees; ministerial decrees; doctrines – appeared only after the fundamental changes in the Hungarian legal system made this possible (Szenes 2017, 39). The security policy principles stem from Hungary's special geopolitical situation and from the fact that the Hungarian foreign

policy cannot be interpreted without understanding the international environment and the international institutions in which Hungary became a member (UN Charter, the Washington Treaty, EU treaties). Today, the most important document of Hungary's principles-based foreign and security policy is the Fundamental Law of Hungary which itself underlines the most important basic principles: peace, security, democracy, protection of human rights and minorities, including the Hungarian minorities abroad. The foreign policy goals are formulated in line with these principles, and consequently, Hungary's national interests to achieve these goals (Csiki et al. 2014, 16–17).

After joining NATO, Hungary became part of NATO's defence planning and decision-making processes and aimed at actively participating in all NATO missions. Thus the security policy decision-making process, especially regarding the deployment of Hungarian troops abroad, and the everyday coordination required related to it, made it too complicated to include the Parliament in each decision (Tálas 2014, 8). The Constitution needed to be changed accordingly. The Parliament amended the decision-making process and adopted this change in 2003. According to Article 40/C of the Constitution, the government decides on the participation in NATO-led missions. Several other related regulations and laws were also amended. For instance, the government also has the right to deploy Hungarian troops up to six months without prior consent of the Parliament when requested by NATO invoking Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, or in the case of the United Nations calling for help with reference to collective self-defence. In 2006, the Parliament adopted a similar amendment in case of EU missions, and the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty in 2007 also added the EU's missions in the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (Szenes 2017, 39–42).

Today, the Fundamental Law of Hungary is the legal basis of utmost importance. According to Article 45 of the Fundamental Law of Hungary, the role of the Hungarian Defence Forces is to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Hungary. The Hungarian Defence Forces are obliged to fulfil the duties deriving from international agreements regarding collective self-defence and peacekeeping. The functioning of the Hungarian Defence Forces is the responsibility of the government and it is governed by the Parliament, the President of the Republic, the Government, and the Defence Minister. According to Article 47, the Hungarian Parliament decides by a two-thirds majority on foreign military deployments – the only exception is when it is derived from Hungary's membership in NATO or the EU. The system of balance in the economic and financial resources, the political and societal support behind national security is the main objective and task of the Hungarian political elite. The allocation of these resources is the main responsibility of the Hungarian Parliament, while the implementation of the laws and the strategic documents adopted by the Parliament lies with the government (Szenes 2017, 33).[6]

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[6] The Hungarian Defence Forces influence the security policy decision-making process through the flag officers who are integral and important parts of the highest decision-making circles and behave as a strong lobby group during the political decisions. However, due to the strong civilian control, the final responsibility lies with the civilian leaders. In this sense, it was a very important step that the National University of Public Service (or, more precisely, its predecessor, the Zrínyi Miklós National Defence University) decided in 1997 that civilian defence and security policy education needs to be accredited as an independent university degree program and discipline (Szenes 2017, 33).

The decision-making is significantly influenced by the country's strategic culture. After 1989, the Hungarian strategic culture has changed fundamentally due to the fact that Hungary left the Warsaw Pact and strived for quick integration in NATO and the EU. Despite this fact, feeling small has remained part of this culture that has imposed serious limits on decisions on the use of the Hungarian Defence Forces. About security-military questions, usually there is no real and broad debate and the political elites are influenced by domestic political preferences more than by long-term foreign policy and strategic thinking. Consequently, with few exceptions, the Hungarian Government followed geostrategic realities reactively rather than aiming at changing them. Stemming from this, the Hungarian security and defence policy's main focus has remained within the frames of NATO and EU obligations and within the Central European region and the neighbouring countries (Tálas 2014, 3–6).

The consequence of the relatively uninterested Hungarian public and of the belief that security and defence policy is the exclusive domain of the experts, a very narrow circle of advisors and the members of the government have been able to actively shape the Hungarian security and defence policy (Tálas 2014, 7–8). The job of the decision-makers is complex and there are no ready-made answers and blue prints that can be used in every situation because external and internal security are overlapping.[7] The broad definition of security appears in the Fundamental Law of Hungary and the security-strategic documents mentioned earlier. The broad understanding of security gives the opportunity to decision-makers, mainly the government, to deal with challenges and situations as security threats. Securitisation of different problems – such as illegal migration – gives the government space for manoeuvre and flexibility in quickly using all means necessary to manage a given situation.[8]

Despite the fact that the public is not interested in the security and defence policy questions in details, there has been broad consensus in Hungary since the regime change that Hungary's place is in the Euro-Atlantic alliance. The governments and the opposition, the parties in the parliament and the political decision-makers agreed that Hungary can best protect its interests and its citizens (including, and extending to Hungarians abroad) if it joins Western institutions.

The regime change and the transformation of the security policy and the decision-making process and the institutions also demanded the modernisation of the terminology used in the security field. The old Soviet terminology slowly gave place to the modern Western concepts and security theories. Since 1989, national defence ("honvédelem") became the synonym of comprehensive national security and it includes not only the traditional territorial defence, and the related defence capacities, but also the capabilities and readiness to protect the country from new security threats such as the type of threat represented by ISIL, or in disaster management, or when dealing with the consequences of a financial crisis or

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[7]   See the decision about the fence at the Southern border and the protection of it that is not simply a military task but the Ministry of the Interior is also very deeply involved through the Hungarian Immigration Office for instance.

[8]   In case of border protection, the Hungarian Parliament amended the Fundamental Law of Hungary and the Law of National Defence after 2015 and authorised the Hungarian Defence Forces to protect the Hungarian borders and engage in border patrol. In 2016, the Hungarian Defence Forces Military Police Centre was established to strengthen the internal security (MTI 2016).

the negative spillover effects of, for instance, the Ukrainian crisis (e.g. for the situation of the Hungarian minority there, or energy security) (Szenes 2017, 7).

The Hungarian participation in KFOR and in the counter-ISIL coalition as examples of decision-making in the foreign and security policy sector

Among many possible examples during the last decades, this chapter will briefly analyse two different decisions: 1. the Hungarian contribution in Kosovo; 2. the Hungarian participation in the counter-ISIL coalition.

The two situations are different: the mission in Kosovo was decided by the government, because – as mentioned above due to NATO accession – the Constitution was amended, and in the case of NATO missions there was no need for the two-thirds majority approval of the Hungarian Parliament; in case of the Iraq/Kurdistan mission, the coalition has been led by the United States and it is not a NATO mission, thus only the Parliament can approve it by a two-thirds majority.

The Balkan crisis and the wars in the Western Balkans put Hungary in a very difficult situation. A large number of Hungarians live in Serbia, and the first Hungarian government had better relations and could share common values with the anti-Milosevic forces, Slovenia and Croatia. Consequently, for Hungary, it was most important not to be involved actively in the conflict and the government tried to emphasise neutrality, while supporting the international organisations' efforts to find a political solution.[9] After the long accession period, Hungary finally joined NATO on 12 March 1999. Only 12 days later, NATO – without the authorisation of the United Nations – launched Operation Allied Force to make Milosevic order the Yugoslav Army back from the province's territory. For Hungary, the decision was difficult and complex due to the lack of UN authorisation, and the presence of the large Hungarian minority in Vojvodina. Even though the operation was launched by NATO, the Hungarian Parliament voted on the Hungarian participation and finally supported it with a large majority. Hungary insisted on not participating in the bombing campaign and asked the allies not to bomb Vojvodina (Csiki et al. 2014, 148–151). After the end of the operation, the UN Security Council finally adopted Resolution 1244 (UNSCR 1244 1999), which authorised NATO to establish KFOR. The Hungarian Parliament quickly decided on the Hungarian participation (with a cap of 350 troops) according to Article 40/B § (1) of the Constitution, and gave the responsibility of implementation and decision-making to the government (55/1999). The original mission for the Hungarian troops was to protect the KFOR Headquarters in Pristina.

On 17 February 2008, Kosovo unilaterally declared its independence and the EU accepted the decision without recognising itself its independence and also without issuing a recommendation for the member states. The Hungarian Government preferred to extend

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9　Between 1992 and 1994, Hungary was a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council where it was represented by Ambassador André Erdős who in 1992 also held the Security Council's rotating presidency (Gömbös 2008).

quick recognition but some other EU members, including two of Hungary's neighbours, Slovakia and Romania, were reluctant and the Hungarian minority in Serbia asked for patience on the issue. Nonetheless, the Government announced the recognition on 19 March 2008 (MTI 2008).

Later on, the government decided to restructure the Hungarian mission and increased the number of troops to 500. For this, it did not need the authorisation of the Parliament in line with Article 40/C § (1) of the Constitution (2076/2008). During the last ten years, the number of deployed troops gradually decreased, but later, in 2015, after the withdrawal of most of the Hungarian military units from Afghanistan, the Government decided to once again increase the deployment level in Kosovo back to around 370. This number means that Hungary has been among the top five leading contributors in KFOR lately. In the second half of 2017, Hungary took over responsibility for the Tactical Reserve Battalion that is now a fully Hungarian unit – furthermore, it is the second time that a Hungarian officer is the Deputy Commander of KFOR.[10]

The participation in KFOR, similarly to other missions in the Western Balkans has been a priority for the Hungarian foreign and security policy. Due to its geographic proximity, the region has always been part of the Hungarian history, and connected to this, the Hungarian foreign policy often made reference to a certain "expertise" in regional matters. On the other hand, Hungary has been keen on proving to the United States and NATO that it is a reliable ally, not a free rider, as proved by the burdens carried in the Western Balkans.

Due to similar reasons, Hungary has been active in the missions led by the United States outside of Europe, too. As it was mentioned earlier, Hungary has been a significant contributor in Afghanistan, was a partner in the NATO-led Iraq mission, and most recently Hungary provides strong support in the mission countering ISIL in Northern Iraq. This operation and the Hungarian participation therein is different as it is not led by NATO, and the authorisation of the Parliament is necessary during the entire mission, such as for modifying any of the details of the deployment.

After the United States initiated the global coalition against ISIL in August 2014 and began air strikes first in Iraq, and later in Syria, Hungary joined the coalition and participated at the high-level and regular counter-ISIL meetings in Washington, and in Europe, and has actively participated in the military working group and the working group on foreign fighters. Furthermore, Hungary offered humanitarian aid – around 70,000 EUR – and military materiel to the Iraqi Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government in 2014 (Marton 2015, 3).

The important UN Resolutions in 2014 (UNSCR 2170; UNSCR 2178) created the international legal basis for a more significant military intervention and eventually the Hungarian Parliament adopted the resolution on 14 April 2014 by a two-thirds majority (17/2015), which authorised the Government to deploy 150 troops in Northern Iraq. A total of 27 countries joined the U.S.-led operation's military segment. Hungary was the biggest contributor from Central Europe and among the overall top 10 as such (McInnis 2016). Originally, the Hungarian troops mainly had force protection tasks in and around the coa-

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[10] Colonel János Csombók became the DCOM of KFOR on 30 July 2017, earlier Brigadier General Ferenc Korom served in this position between 2015 and 2016 (Sárkány 2017).

lition's headquarters near Erbil. The mission's mandated deadline was 31 December 2017. The coalition has 75 allied members at the time of writing this, including many Middle Eastern, African and Asian countries. Furthermore, NATO is also an institutional partner since the 2017 Summit (The Global Coalition s. a.). Hungary increased its contribution and the Hungarian Parliament adopted a new resolution on 14 June 2017 (12/2017), which authorised the deployment of 200 (i.e. 50 additional) troops and extended the mission's mandate until 31 December 2019. Similarly to the earlier decision, the Parliament needed to pass the resolution by a two-thirds majority.

Conclusion

The last decades have brought several significant changes in international relations and it became clear that the security architecture that was designed after the Second World War according to the realities of the early Cold War is outdated. All security organisations needed to adapt to the changes especially after those of the former Soviet bloc ceased to exist. Consequently, the history of the post-socialist countries like Hungary has been characterised by a constant need for change. After the end of the bipolar world, new security challenges emerged and old tensions came to the surface that all threatened stability and peace in Central and Eastern Europe. The dissolution of the multinational entities in case of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union forced the West to realise that history in reality has not ended.

Hungary has faced several parallel challenges and security threats that needed to be managed simultaneously while the political institutions, the economy and society have also undergone significant transformation. Hungary, similarly to the other countries in the region, inherited a massive and relatively large, outdated and ineffective army, which was prepared to stop NATO's advance on the Western border, or, as plans at the time called for this, to participate in offensive manoeuvres against it. From the 1990s, Hungary intended to join this very organisation and Hungarian politicians saw Hungary's security best guaranteed by anchoring the country to the Western institutions. According to this, Hungary needed to build better cooperation in Central Europe, and for the protection of Hungarians abroad, it had to work closely with its neighbours.

These serious challenges had to be met in the context of economic difficulties. The Hungarian defence sector has suffered from very low resources and financial support. The necessary transformation and the planned modernisation of the security sector has been slower than the expectations derived from the level of ambitions designated by the several security and strategic documents adopted during the 1990s and 2000s. NATO's anticipation that all members share the financial burdens and spend at least 2% of their GDP on defence became a distant reality in Hungary as the defence spending decreased in the 2000s.

Beyond the serious economic and financial problems, Hungary has struggled with many conflicts in the political sphere, too. Hungary's main political aim in the last decades has been to join NATO, the EU, and to become an equal member in the Euro-Atlantic organisations. However, the global challenges have changed these institutions, too, and have created friction among the members. After the Cold War, NATO sought a new identity and the U.S. influence has become even stronger. In the last years, the United States criticised even the closest allies for not spending enough on defence. Hungary has also been heav-

ily criticised about being too close to Russia. Washington has not been open to listen to Hungarian arguments in this regard, while in the meantime history has proved that East–West conflict brings only bad consequences for the region.

The modernisation of the Hungarian Defence Forces, the security sector and the security policy decision-making processes have been slow due to the permanent financial problems, the shrinking defence spending, the outdated equipment. The situation is grave if we look at the volatility of the political elite's interests, or the uninterested Hungarian public. Despite many unfortunate trends and the above mentioned challenges in the last years, the Hungarian government's new programs intended to initiate change, and there are some positive signs: the Hungarian government's goal to reach the desired 2% of GDP with its defence spending is signed into law. The government also introduced the "Zrínyi 2026 defence and military development program"[11] to further modernise the defence forces, and the education and training of military personnel. The "Irinyi program",[12] in the meantime, intends to develop the military technology aiming at revitalising the Hungarian military industry and, along with it, independent arms production (Szenes 2017, 25–28).

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[11] The program is a confident document, and the details are not published.

[12] The Irinyi program is also confident. The first models of the Hungarian handguns were presented at a V4 joint military exercise in March 2018.

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