

# A New NATO Member's Perspective: Hungary's Army and Homeland Security

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*... it said that one who knows the enemy and knows himself will not be endangered in a hundred engagements.<sup>1</sup>*

Sun-Tzu, *The Art of War*

## Foreword

The last decade has brought substantial changes in the security environment for Europe, and the Euro-Atlantic region in general. Hungary has not been immune from these trends. Some aspects of these changes appear on their face to be positive, since the possibility of a purely European war was lessened, and the regional-ethnic conflicts of the 1990s have settled down, at least in a military sense. Nevertheless, new security challenges have emerged—most notably terrorism—that may require military intervention. The Republic of Hungary is currently in the process of developing a National Military Strategy, which—in accordance with the Basic Principle of the Security and Defense Policy,<sup>2</sup> the National Security Strategy,<sup>3</sup> and the Defense Reform<sup>4</sup>—meets the challenges of this new era.

The ultimate goal of maintaining the Hungarian Defense Forces (HDF) is to support the enforcement of Hungary's national security interests. It is imperative, therefore, to clarify the role of the HDF, the principles of engagement, and the primary courses of technical development and funding that will best support that mission.

## Basics of the Defense Policy

Hungary understands its security in a comprehensive manner. Apart from political and military aspects, this includes economic, financial, national security, human rights, information technology, and environmental and legal dimensions as well. Hungary does not consider any state an enemy, and is willing to settle any dispute through the channels of international law and the peaceful tools of diplomacy. The Republic of Hungary's approach to military defense rests on two foundations: national self-defense and

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<sup>1</sup> Sun-Tzu, *The Art of War* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1994), 79.

<sup>2</sup> "Basic Principle of the Security and Defense Policy of the Republic of Hungary," Resolution of the National Assembly 94/1998 (XII.29).

<sup>3</sup> "National Security Strategy of the Republic of Hungary," Governmental Decree 2073/2004.

<sup>4</sup> "Transformation and Establishment of a New Organization Structure of the Hungarian Defense Forces for the Period 2004–2013," Governmental Decree 2236/2003 (X.1).

NATO cooperation. In shaping its defense policy and developing its defense capabilities, Hungary contributes to collective defense, crisis management, and crisis response. Besides these efforts, the Hungarian Defense Forces, in cooperation with other national ministries and organizations, works in the field of homeland defense.

The security challenges currently confronting Hungary appear at multiple levels: global, transnational, regional, in proximate areas, and local. A threat posed by conventional military aggression is not foreseen, even in the long run. Nonetheless, new challenges may arise that will require partial or total military action in response. In the period ahead, there are three main areas of concern:

1. International terrorism and its implications for Hungary;
2. Regional instability and the attendant possible increase in migration and illegal border crossing;
3. Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and the means of their delivery.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from these three primary concerns, there are the national military responsibilities of protecting the civilian infrastructure, supporting civilian authorities in crisis management and response, and providing military support to law enforcement agencies as required by law.

## **General Objectives and Tasks of the Hungarian Defense Forces**

The Defense Forces form an integral part of the state institutional structure in Hungary, and as such are indispensable elements of the nation's security and the enforcement of its national interest. The Hungarian Defense Forces are entrusted with the responsibility to defend the territorial integrity and airspace of Hungary, secure the borders of the state, and project real deterrent force. Furthermore, the armed forces of Hungary collect, process, and secure intelligence, and provide support to civilian authorities in such areas as crisis response, natural disaster consequence management, unexploded ordnance disposal, search and rescue, air-policing, and frequency management.

In the event of a threat to the territorial integrity of Hungary, or in a case where such an attack would need to be repelled, the full scale of the armed forces would be mobilized.<sup>6</sup> In the close vicinity of Hungary, there is the possibility that an internal conflict within a neighboring state might break out, or an extreme conflict situation between states might arise, the purpose of which is not to threaten the territorial integrity of Hungary. In such situations, armed formations or air force units from a neighboring state might cross the Hungarian border, in which case the Hungarian Defense Forces would be called upon to perform a border-guard function.<sup>7</sup>

In cases of natural or industrial disaster, the Hungarian Defense Forces use their existing capabilities to support civilian authorities in prevention and consequence man-

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<sup>5</sup> "Draft of the National Military Strategy of the Republic of Hungary," Sec. 1, para 20.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, Sec 2, para 37.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, Sec 2, para 40.

agement. Managing humanitarian crisis situations and providing help for displaced persons are also tasks in which the armed forces might be called upon to participate.<sup>8</sup>

## Historical Precedents

Between the end of the World War II and the present, the Hungarian military has been engaged on several occasions to deploy its capabilities in domestic matters, but mainly in a peaceful manner. It took part chiefly in disaster relief and consequence management operations; the only exception to this is its role in the 1956 revolution, which will be discussed below.

### *The Cold War Era (1945–1990)*

After World War II, it is hardly possible to speak about an independent Hungarian military because of the presence of the occupying Soviet armed forces. Therefore, any military involvement in domestic contingencies could only have been carried out with the consent of the occupying Soviet forces.

Nevertheless, events in the Soviet Union indicated potential major changes in Soviet policy in 1955 and early 1956. These included the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's pilgrimage to visit Tito in May 1955; the signing of the Austria State Treaty in May 1955, which led to Soviet military withdrawal from and neutralization of Austria; and the acceptance of Finland's neutrality in September 1955. As one historian has written of the potential implications of these events,

It appeared logical to believe in Hungary that, since policies of Austria and Finland were acceptable to the Soviet Union, Hungary could adapt their examples into a political concept that would be tolerated by the Soviet Union and at the same time would elicit Western support.<sup>9</sup>

The political situation in the Soviet Union had a profound impact on Hungarian domestic politics. Political changes in the Soviet Union in 1953 and the split in the Hungarian Communist Party resulted in changes in Hungarian politics as well. Imre Nagy, the then Prime Minister, announced several economic reforms, namely abolishing the forced joining of *kolkhozes* and increasing consumer goods production, along with abolishing political terror. But the prevailing conditions of the era did not allow Nagy to fulfill his goals. The political wind changed in the Soviet Union in 1955, but the cause of the failure of Nagy's economic reforms was mainly due to a lack of resources, which neither Western countries nor the Soviet Union were ready to provide. The first symptom of overt rebellion against Soviet rule in Hungary appeared in the fall of 1955. Moreover, "people now demanded tangible improvements [in economics], and the Poznan [Poland] riot in June 1956 showed that violent outbreak was no longer unthinkable."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., Sec 2, para 47.

<sup>9</sup> B.K. Király and Paul Jónás, *The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 in Retrospect* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 41.

<sup>10</sup> Imre Kovács, *Facts About Hungary* (New York: Waldon Press, 1958), 78.

On 23 October 1956, a peaceful students' demonstration took place in Budapest, at the Bem Statue<sup>11</sup> and at the Polish Embassy. Police tried to disperse the demonstration when students tried to break in to the radio station to broadcast their demands. Army troops, which were already on alert, were supposed to suppress the demonstration, but they refused to open fire on their compatriots, and joined them instead.<sup>12</sup> On 26 October, Imre Nagy began to negotiate the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Budapest (and eventually from all of Hungary), and gave order to the military not to clash with Soviet troops. One of the miracles of the revolution at this point was that the Hungarian People Army's units had not actively taken any side. Nevertheless, in Mosómagyaróvár the military lost its "virginity." Insurgents, in an attempt to acquire weapons, attacked an Army barrack. The commander of the barrack ordered his troops to fire in self-defense, leaving twenty-three insurgents dead. In the meantime, at the request of the Ministry of Defense, the 37<sup>th</sup> Motorized Infantry Regiment from Kiskunhalas approached the suburbs of Budapest, where it met resistance from insurgents. The six-hour battle resulted in one hundred dead and many injured.

Although Soviet troops were supposed to leave Budapest, on 30 October they still remained in the city. The Soviet leadership, under cover of further negotiations, sent more reinforcements to Hungary. The Soviets took no chances, using 11 divisions and 2000 tanks. At 5:30 AM on 4 November, Prime Minister Nagy went on the air to announce a full-scale Soviet attack on Budapest: "At dawn this morning Soviet forces attacked our capital city. ... Our forces are in action."<sup>13</sup>

The outcome is well known. "The clashes between revolutionaries and Soviet troops resulted in heavy casualties: 2,500 Hungarian lost their lives (1950 in Budapest) and about 20,000 were injured. The Soviet Army lost about 2,000 men, including those who fraternized with Hungarians."<sup>14</sup> However, when the revolt first broke out, the government made the right decisions, first of all not giving the order for military units to crush the demonstrators, and second, to not fight the overwhelming Soviet military force. Quite surprisingly, these decisions resulted in a high respect for the military, since "the Hungarian Army either joined the revolutionists or remained intact."<sup>15</sup>

After the 1956 revolt, the Hungarian armed forces were mainly used in domestic affairs as augmentation forces in disaster relief. Cases of this sort of work are numerous. The most notable example was the flood of the Tisza River in 1970. The military provided thousands of troops as manpower, as well as heavy equipment.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Jozef Bem was a Polish-born revolutionary hero during the Hungarian revolution in 1848–49, commanding the Hungarian Defense Forces.

<sup>12</sup> Imre Takács, *The Hungarian Revolution of 1956* (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, 2001), p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> Király and Jónás, *The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 in Retrospect*, 55.

<sup>14</sup> Zoltán D. Bányi, *Soldiers and Politics in Eastern Europe, 1945–90* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 64.

<sup>15</sup> Király Béla, *Facts on Hungary* (New York: Waldon Press, 1957), 54.

<sup>16</sup> The HDF provided transport helicopters and amphibious vehicles for disaster relief.

In 1979, military units around Szeged were used to put out a fire caused by an oil-well explosion in Algyő. In winter 1986, only the Hungarian military, using its heavy armored vehicles, could sustain a normal flow of vital goods into the rural area in the vicinity of Székesfehérvár and Várpalota due to extremely heavy snowfall.

Although it was not the originally intended use for military resources, until the 1990s the Hungarian military's conscript corps was used in the "domestic economic area," meaning substituting and augmenting the agricultural work force during the harvest season. Military units were put to work harvesting grapes, potatoes, corn, and apples.

A more tangible use of military capabilities was minesweeping and unexploded ordnance disposal. Since Hungary was a theatre of substantial military engagements during World War II, its territory remained heavily littered with unexploded grenades, bombs, and mines after the war. The areas around Székesfehérvár, Lake Balaton, Debrecen, and Budapest, where the heaviest battles took place, provided work for bomb-disposal experts for many years.<sup>17</sup>

### *Post-Cold War Examples (1990–2001)*

The period from 1990–2001, with the end of the Cold War and the attendant changes in the regional security environment, did not alter the main function of the Hungarian Defense Forces. Even in this new era, the new Hungarian Constitution stated, "The main responsibility of the armed forces is the military defense of the homeland and the fulfillment of collective defense tasks deriving from international obligations."<sup>18</sup> The constitution elaborated further on the military's role: "In domestic contingencies the armed forces could be deployed only in declared state of emergency according to constitutional regulation in the following situations: attempts to overthrow constitutional order or seize power with arms, or in events that endanger life and property of citizens, providing police forces are not in position to cope with."<sup>19</sup>

October 1990 saw the development of a relatively dangerous situation. After the decision of the government to drastically increase fuel prices, private entrepreneur taxi-drivers blockaded the main roads entering Budapest. This groundswell of civil disobedience gained additional force within hours, when taxi-drivers from the capital were joined by drivers in other cities, as well as private car drivers. Almost half of the country was paralyzed. The police were reluctant to disperse the demonstrators, mainly because the public sided with the drivers. Negotiations between representatives of the government and the demonstrators resulted in minor success for the government: only

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<sup>17</sup> On average, bomb-disposal units have been called upon over 3000 times per year. In 2004, their activities included disposing of more than 5500 artillery shells, 1366 mortar grenades, and 1326 hand grenades.

<sup>18</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Hungary (XX. Law of 1949), 40/A§, Section 1. The amendment to the Constitution of 8 November 2004 stipulates that the "armed forces" constitutes only the Hungarian Defense Forces. The Border Guard became part of the law enforcement agencies.

<sup>19</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Hungary (XX. Law of 1949), 40/B§, Section 1.

emergency vehicles were allowed to pass the impromptu roadblocks. Since the blockades threatened the normal flow of products vital to the public, the government—and most especially the Minister of Interior—wanted to invoke Section 1, Article 40/B§ of the Constitution without any prior declaration of the constitutionally mandated period. General Kálmán Lőrinc, then Commander of the Hungarian Defense Forces, announced he would resign from his post once the unconstitutional order for the deployment of military units to disperse the roadblocks was given. The tension was eased through further negotiations, which resulted in the withdrawal of the government's decision on increased fuel prices.

In 1990, Iraq occupied Kuwait, an event that has had a deep impact on world politics. The 1991 Gulf War and its implications in terms of international terrorism imposed a new task for the armed forces. Due to terrorist threats, the defense of important installations had to be heightened, a task for which the police did not have sufficient manpower. So border guard squads, which at that time were part of the armed forces, were sent as reinforcements to protect critical infrastructure.<sup>20</sup>

Another noteworthy example of the activity of the Hungarian armed forces' domestic deployment was the Balkan Wars. The broadening crisis in the former Yugoslavia, which was the result of the dissolution of the state of Yugoslavia,<sup>21</sup> culminated in the First Balkan War in July 1991. Military engagements in close proximity to the Hungarian border affected the interests of the Republic of Hungary. Therefore, a governmental decree stipulated the establishment of rapid-reaction military formations that would be able to immediately close Hungary's borders. Because of this new task, the Border Guard Directorates of Nagykanizsa, Pécs, and Kiskunhalas deployed two companies respectively to the most endangered part of the border in November 1991. The Hungarian Defense Forces provided trained personnel and specialized military hardware to the border guard. Companies were given armored personnel carriers and anti-tank equipment. In the event of defensive operations, the companies' Standard Operational Procedures (SOP) would have been identical to Army SOP for mechanized infantry formations.<sup>22</sup>

During the second wave of the Balkan War, in 1995, border guard units were organized into battalion formation and equipped with military armament and technology. These units were tasked with military defense operations; only with the de-escalation of the security situation in the former Yugoslavia did they take up border police functions. Thus a special conflict-management organization was established that combined border policing and military tactical defense function and was able to rapidly secure

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<sup>20</sup> Border guard squads were deployed together with police regiments and Republican Guard regiments.

<sup>21</sup> 3065/1991 Governmental Decree. This order states that, besides securing borders, the functions of such formations are border policing and law enforcement. In Sándor Hopácsi, *Border Guard Formation at EU Accession*, available at [www.zmka.hu/kulso/mhht/hadtudomany/2003/1/horpacsiferenc/chapter1.htm](http://www.zmka.hu/kulso/mhht/hadtudomany/2003/1/horpacsiferenc/chapter1.htm).

<sup>22</sup> Some Chapters of the Standard Operational Procedures (SOP) for the border guards are the same as in the Army's Field Manual, except law enforcement procedures.

the nation's borders, react to border violations, and manage, limit, and repel military action.<sup>23</sup> After consolidating the situation and signing the Dayton Agreement, further rearmament of the border guard units took place, with several new armored personnel carriers put into service.<sup>24</sup>

Border guard units were not the only Hungarian units given assignments during the Balkan Wars. Due to the above-mentioned terrorist threat, a mobile radar company was deployed near the Yugoslavian border, and the Szentgyörgyi Dezső Tactical Fighting Regiment was given an order to enforce a no-fly zone over and near the nuclear plant at Paks. The Air Missile Defense unit in Kalocsa was also put on heightened alert status to provide air defense to Paks and the southern border of Hungary.

1998 and 1999 were marked by severe flooding in Hungary. During the fall of 1998, the upper Tisza River and its various branches saw the heaviest level of flooding of the twentieth century. The government declared a state of emergency, and military helicopters and amphibious vehicles provided help to those in need. In March 1999, in the middle section of the Tisza River, near Szolnok, a third-degree flood warning was issued. The police, military personnel, and members of the State Catastrophe Management Directorate worked together to prevent the flood waters from breaching the dyke. The military provided two hundred men and three amphibious vehicles to carry sandbags to the most remote and dangerous places.<sup>25</sup>

### *Post-9/11 (2001–present)*

After the events of September 2001, public interest (not surprisingly) turned to the question of the defense of nuclear plants, as well as of Hungary's national borders. The physical defense of such plants was increased everywhere in the world. Balázs Kováts, the head of the visitors' center at the nuclear plant in Paks, said:

In Paks, objective, subjective, and technological means are in place and functioning to defend the nuclear plant. Understandably, the organization of the security and defense system of the plant is restricted, yet it conforms to strict security regulations. There is a no-fly zone in and around the airspace of Paks, and air defense is provided.<sup>26</sup>

In 2002, heavy flooding occurred throughout the entire catchment basin of the Danube River, which affected Hungary along with much of the rest of Central Europe. This is what Minister of Defense Ferenc Juhász said in his appreciation address to the personnel involved in the flood abatement effort:

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<sup>23</sup> Sándor Hopácsi, *Border Guard Formation at EU Accession*, available at: [www.zmka.hu/kulso/mhnt/hadtudomany/2003/1/horpacsferenc/chapter1.htm](http://www.zmka.hu/kulso/mhnt/hadtudomany/2003/1/horpacsferenc/chapter1.htm).

<sup>24</sup> 68 Russian BTR-80 armored personnel carriers were distributed among the border guard units. At this point they have never been used in operations.

<sup>25</sup> Maj. László Komjáthy, *Flooding on the Tisza River 1830–2001* (Budapest: BM Katasztrófavédelmi Oktatási Központ, 2002), 3.

<sup>26</sup> Announcement of visitors center at the Paks nuclear plant regarding the attacks of 11 September 2001.

In August an incredible heavy flood took place on the Danube River. ... At the beginning, work was concentrated on the Mosoni-Danube branch of the river. The 12<sup>th</sup> Air-Defense Missile Regiment provided 400 personnel... Close to Budapest, 250 personnel of the György Klapka Mechanized Infantry Brigade helped in flood-prevention... In the most endangered area of Esztergom, Nagymaros, Vác, [and] Szentendre 830 personnel from the Central Training Command, 1<sup>st</sup> Mixed Regiment and Central NCO Training School provided help in protecting civilian goods. In the Budapest area, 620 personnel from the 87<sup>th</sup> Tactical Helicopter Regiment, 89<sup>th</sup> Mixed Transport Air Mobile Regiment and Budapest Garrison carried out flood-prevention activities. Besides personnel, 22 helicopters from the 89<sup>th</sup> Mixed Transport Air Mobile Regiment and the 87<sup>th</sup> Tactical Helicopter Regiment respectively and ten amphibious and one engineering vehicle from the 37<sup>th</sup> Ferenc Rákóczi Engineering Brigade provided help.<sup>27</sup>

### **National Policies and Legal Authority for the Employment of Forces in Domestic Contingencies**

The main guidelines for Hungary's security and defense policy and crisis management are determined by the constitution, and on a more detailed level by the following documents and acts approved by the parliament:

- Basic Principle of the Security and Defense Policy of the Republic of Hungary;
- National Security Strategy of the Republic of Hungary;
- Defense Act.<sup>28</sup>

The 8 November 2004 amendment to the constitution established a new qualified period, which it defined as a *preventive defense situation*. This is important because a new stipulation within the constitution abolished military conscription. The main significance of the amendment is that, in peacetime, compulsory military service is abandoned; in a preventive defense situation it is left up to the National Assembly to reintroduce the draft, while in a state of attack on the state all male citizens have to serve. At the same time, the Defense Act defines the armed forces as the Hungarian Defense Forces only, and puts the Border Guard into the category of public order defense organizations.

It is important to note that, in peacetime—i.e. without the declaration of any kind of qualified period—generally no person or authority has the right to employ military forces in domestic contingencies. However, the Constitution of the Republic of

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<sup>27</sup> Excerpt from Mr. Juhász's appreciation address to personnel taking part in flood-prevention activities in August 2002, available at: [http://www.honvedelem.hu/Archivum\\_index.php](http://www.honvedelem.hu/Archivum_index.php).

<sup>28</sup> "On Defense and Hungarian Defense Forces," Law of the National Assembly, CV/2004 (8 November 2004).



Hungary defines certain qualified periods that are exceptions to this rule. They are as follows (see Table 1 as well):<sup>29</sup>

- Preventive defense situation;<sup>30</sup>
- State of emergency;<sup>31</sup>
- Surprise attack;<sup>32</sup>
- State of danger;<sup>33</sup>
- State of alert.

The Defense Act articulates the complexity of homeland defense in the most obvious way when it says: “Homeland defense is an issue of national concern.”<sup>34</sup> In order to sustain its homeland defense capabilities, the Republic of Hungary relies on its own power, i.e., the resources of the national economy, the preparedness of its armed forces and public order defense organizations, and its citizens’ patriotic commitment.

When establishing the system of homeland defense, the possibility of the outbreak of war has to be taken into consideration for planning purposes. The organizational system and measures must be designed accordingly. It is easy to understand that the preparation and planning for a situation of war includes preparation for the prevention of smaller and simpler dangers, and consequence management as well. The rationale behind the establishment and operation of the national defense system is as follows:

- Enforcement of the constitutional state;

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<sup>29</sup> Brig. Gen. Sándor Patyi and Lt. Col. László Tóth, “Cooperation of Civilian and Military Structures in Crisis Management,” in *Conference on Civil-Military Relations in the Context of an Evolving NATO*, ed. Lt. Col. Ferenc Sipos (Budapest: MSZH Printing Office, 1997), 78.

<sup>30</sup> “On the Amendment to the XX/1949 Law (Constitution),” Law of the National Assembly, CIV/2004 (8 November 2004). This law stipulates that § 19, Section 3 is amended with clause (n), which says that “[The National Assembly] in event of imminent external armed attack, or in order to fulfill international obligations, declares [or sustains] preventive defense situation and authorizes the Government to employ necessary measures.”

<sup>31</sup> “Constitution of the Republic of Hungary,” § 19, Sec. 3, clause (i) states: “[The National Assembly] declares a state of emergency in the event of attempting to overthrow constitutional order or seizing power with arms, furthermore in events of natural or industrial disaster.”

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, § 19/E, Sec. 1, states: “In an event of surprise external attack, or for defending the territorial integrity of Hungary by standby national or Alliances air-defense and air force units or to protect the Constitutional order, citizens’ life and property and to sustain public order the Government, guided by the defense plan approved by the President, until the declaration of state of alert, have to act immediately.”

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, § 35, Sec. 1, clause (i) states: “[The Government], in the event of a natural disaster endangering life and property of citizens or for averting consequences of such disaster makes all necessary steps.” See also “On Disaster Prevention,” Law LXXIV/1999, § 2, Section 1, 2 (22 June 1999).

<sup>34</sup> “On Defense and Hungarian Defense Forces,” § 1, Law of the National Assembly, CV/2004 (8 November 2004).

**Table 1: Outline of Qualified Periods**

| <b>Tendency of danger</b>       | <b>External danger</b>                         | <b>Internal social conflict/ disaster</b>  | <b>Disaster</b>  | <b>External danger</b>                     |
|---------------------------------|--|--|------------------|--|
| Constitutional state of affairs | State of war;<br>Danger of war                 | Attempt to overthrow constitutional order, seizure of power using force; Terrorist-like activities; Natural or industrial disaster | Natural disaster | Surprise attack by an external armed group |
| Constitutional qualification    | Preventive defense situation or state of alert | State of emergency   | State of danger  | Constitution § 19/E                        |
| Authority                       | National Defense Council or National Assembly  | President  | Government       | Government                                 |

- Establishment of an integrated system that is able to deal with the qualified periods;
- Implementation of a modular structured system of defensive elements (see Table 2).<sup>35</sup>

The complex system of homeland defense can be divided into military and civilian elements. Military elements of homeland defense include the armed forces (the Hungarian Defense Forces) and those organizations responsible for defending public order (police, fire brigades, border guards, etc.).<sup>36</sup> The basic tasks of the Hungarian Defense Forces are the defense of the country’s independence, territory, inhabitants, and material goods against external attack, along with the defense and protection of Hungary’s airspace.<sup>37</sup>

Apart from the fulfillment of their basic duties, they cooperate in the following areas:

- The protection and defense of institutions that require heightened defense from the point of view of homeland security;<sup>38</sup>
- The fight against international terrorism (with prepared and designated forces);<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Source: Presentation of the Budapest Defense Committee Secretariat.

<sup>36</sup> Amendment to the Constitution, § 4, Section 1, Law of the National Assembly, CIV/2004 (8 November 2004).

<sup>37</sup> “On Defense and Hungarian Defense Forces,” § 70, Section 1, Clause (a), Law of the National Assembly, CV/2004 (8 November 2004).

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., § 70, Section 1, Clause (d).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., § 70, Section 1, Clause (c).

**Table 2: Elements of homeland defense**

| National   | Defense  |
|--|--|
| Civil elements (preparation for defense and national mobilization) | Military element (armed security system)   |
| Defense management   | Hungarian Defense Forces   |
| Civil protection (safeguarding health and property of inhabitants) | Public order defense organizations (Border Guard, Police, Fire Brigades, Catastrophe Prevention Directorate) |
| National economy   |  |

- Averting armed actions or violence committed with arms (as defined in § 40/B, Section (2) of the constitution);<sup>40</sup>
- The disposal of unexploded ordnance;<sup>41</sup>
- Assistance in disaster prevention and relief activities;<sup>42</sup>
- The provision of special military hardware and knowledge to other state institutions (on a reimbursable basis);<sup>43</sup>

The main guarantee of the constitutional use of the armed forces is governed by strict preconditions:

- Military force can be used under stipulated conditions;
- Military force must be used in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution;
- The command of the armed forces is confined to:
  - The parliament;
  - The president;
  - The government;
  - The National Defense Council.

In an event of averting armed actions or violence committed with arms (as defined in § 40/B, Section (2) of the constitution), it is imperative to define the objectives, timeframe, and location of the operation, along with the task, strength, and equipment (weapons) of the units that will be engaged. Deployed forces operate under their own officers' command.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., § 70, Section 1, Clause (f).

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., § 70, Section 1, Clause (g).

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., § 70, Section 1, Clause (h).

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., § 70, Section 1, Clause (i).

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., § 71.

For disaster prevention and relief operations, and the lending of military hardware and knowledge, the chief of defense staff can give the order to deploy up to one hundred personnel for a period up to twenty-one days. The minister of defense authorizes engagements for longer periods, or involving more troops. If the situation requires more than three thousand troops, the minister of defense authorizes the engagement, but he is required to notify the National Assembly.<sup>45</sup>

It is worth noting that the amendment to the constitution stipulates that, “The basic function of the police is to maintain public law and order,” while “the basic function of the Border Guards is to secure the border and carry out border police duties.”<sup>46</sup> Public order defense organizations, besides their basic duties, fulfill defensive tasks similar to those of the armed forces. These include:

- Armed protection of facilities and persons;
- Support of the armed forces in certain activities;
- Participation in civil protection activities;
- Cooperation in fulfilling tasks in qualified periods.<sup>47</sup>

As is stated in the constitution, only the National Assembly, the president, the government, the Defense Council, and the responsible minister (i.e., Minister of Defense) as organs of the management of national defense are authorized to direct military activities for purposes of homeland security. Administratively, Hungary is divided into nineteen counties; the twentieth administrative entity is the capital city, Budapest. Altogether, however, Hungary has about 3150 settlements. To centrally govern all 3150 settlements, nineteen counties, twenty-three districts, and one metropolitan center would be unfeasible in the event of a security-related event.

Therefore, since all settlements have their own stakes in homeland defense, they each have their own local Defense Committee. The mayor of each settlement is the chief of the local Defense Committee. He/she, under the guidance of the governor of the county, prepares a local defense plan and is responsible for fulfilling local homeland defense tasks.

These defense plans of the settlements are incorporated into the defense plans of the counties. The main responsible person for the realization of the county defense plan is the county governor, who is directly guided by the national government or the respective minister.

The counties’ defense plans are submitted to the Defense Office of the Ministry of Defense, and together they constitute the country defense plan. Submitted plans are prepared for different contingencies—i.e., natural disaster prevention and relief, chemical and hazardous material incidents, nuclear incidents, and events of armed as-

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, § 72, Section 1.

<sup>46</sup> Amendment to the Constitution, § 4, Section 2, Subsections (2) & (3), Law of the National Assembly, CIV/2004 (8 November 2004).

<sup>47</sup> “On Defense and Hungarian Defense Forces,” § 6, Section 1, and § 42, Section 2, Clauses (b-e), Law of the National Assembly, CV/2004 (8 November 2004).

sault. Altogether, each county has twenty-two prepared plans for foreseeable contingencies. Due to the sensitive nature of the plans, they are classified.

Brig.Gen. Patyi uses a simplified model of the national defense command to show all the actors that play a role in homeland defense, and the chain of command as it exists either in peacetime or in qualified periods.<sup>48</sup> The command of homeland defense efforts, except in situations such as those described in § 19/E of the constitution—i.e. “an armed attack”—rests with the president, the National Assembly, and the government. In the events described in § 19/E of the constitution, the National Assembly declares either a preventive defense situation or a state of alert, and establishes the Defense Council. The Defense Council in turn commands the homeland defense efforts of the Republic of Hungary.<sup>49</sup> The Defense Council consists of the president, the speaker of the parliament, party faction leaders, the prime minister, the ministers, and the chief of the defense staff.

## Types of Available Armed Forces and Public Order Defense Organizations

### *Active Military Forces*

The active military forces of the Republic of Hungary consist of the army, air force and air defense, central logistics and support units, and other organizations, such as the Joint Forces Operational Center, the Budapest Garrison Command, and units directly subordinated to the chief of defense staff and personnel of the Ministry of Defense and its subordinate organizations (see Table 3).<sup>50</sup>

**Table 3: Personnel Strength of the Active Military Forces (as of 1 January 2005)**

| Organization                                      | Officers    | NCOs        | Contracted  | Total        |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Army  | 1357        | 3366        | 4895        | 9618         |
| Air Force, Air Defense                            | 1387        | 2369        | 1836        | 5916         |
| Central Logistic and Support Units                | 917         | 1143        | 507         | 2567         |
| Other Organizations                               | 1716        | 1857        | 939         | 4512         |
| Ministry of Defense and Subordinate Organizations | 2252        | 824         | 0           | 3076         |
| <b>Total</b>                                      | <b>7629</b> | <b>9883</b> | <b>8177</b> | <b>25689</b> |

<sup>48</sup> Brig.Gen. Sándor Patyi and Lt.Col. László Tóth, “Cooperation of Civilian and Military Structures in Crisis Management,” 92.

<sup>49</sup> “On Defense and Hungarian Defense Forces,” § 61, Section 1, Law of the National Assembly, CV/2004 Law (8 November 2004).

<sup>50</sup> Source: Defense Forces’ Military Administration and Data Processing Center.

*Public Order Defense Organizations*

Organizations responsible for defending the public order consist of the police, the Border Guard, fire brigades, and the catastrophe prevention directorate. Their personnel strength is seen in Table 4.<sup>51</sup>

*Reserve Forces*

According to the government's stated intentions regarding the introduction of an all-volunteer military, in peace time it is only possible to serve in the armed forces on a voluntary basis. Perhaps further diminishing the size of the Hungarian military, the reserve forces are also entirely composed of volunteers. The legal basis for these changes is set forth in the constitution and the Defense Act. By the virtue of the Defense Act, the Ministry of Defense's Military Administration and Data Processing Center and reserve commands keep records of eligible male citizens between eighteen and forty years of age for reserve service. These citizens are called "potential reservists," and are grouped into trained and untrained categories, depending on whether have received any military training or not. Recently, in peacetime the Hungarian Defense Forces have had 165 voluntary reserve vacancies, out of which 50–60 have been filled. It is the ministry's intention to raise the level of peacetime reservists to 3000 men in the next two to three years.<sup>52</sup>

However, in a preventive defense situation, after the National Assembly has decided to reintroduce compulsory military service, all male adult citizens are obliged to fulfill their military service duties.<sup>53</sup> This is automatically the case in a state of emergency; no decision by the National Assembly is necessary.

**Table 4: Personnel Strength of the Public Order Defense Organizations  
(as of 1 February 2005)**

| Organization                       | Civil Servants | Active Duty  | Total        |
|------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Police                             | 8612           | 31245        | 39857        |
| Border Guard                       | 1719           | 11573        | 13292        |
| Catastrophe Prevention Directorate | 725            | 1043         | 1768         |
| Local governments' fire brigades   | 405            | 7562         | 7968         |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>11056</b>   | <b>43861</b> | <b>54917</b> |

<sup>51</sup> Source: Human Policy Main Department, Ministry of Interior, Hungary.

<sup>52</sup> Phone interview with Col. Dr. János Kriszsbai, Deputy Head of MOD Human Policy Department and Col. Ferenc Takács, Deputy J1, Hungarian Defense Forces, on 17 March 2005.

<sup>53</sup> See Amendment to the Constitution, § 6, Section 1, Law of the National Assembly, CIV/2004 (8 November 2004); and "On Defense and Hungarian Defense Forces," § 6, Section 1, and § 83, Section 1, Law of the National Assembly, CV/2004 (8 November 2004).

## Protection of Critical Infrastructure

As a general rule, military forces do not engage in the protection of critical infrastructure in peacetime, except in defense of segments of the military infrastructure that are deemed important from the point of view of homeland security. But the public order defense organizations are responsible for fulfilling their tasks determined by law during peacetime (listed in the previous section).

In the meantime, the armed forces, under the direction of the minister of defense, contribute to the installation and maintenance of critical infrastructure such as medical, transport, and telecommunication networks, and to the operation of air warning, meteorological, and NBCR detection and warning systems.<sup>54</sup> The most visible element of this infrastructure is the military-operated Air-Sovereignty Operation Center (ASOC), which is part of the NATO Integrated Air Defense system and gives a real-time picture of activity in the skies over Europe. ASOC also cooperates with the civilian air-traffic control system, providing a form of a back-up system for civilian air-traffic control. In addition to managing ASOC, the Hungarian Air Force conducts routine air patrolling, provides an air defense capability to the nuclear plant at Paks, and maintains the no-fly zone over that plant.

After 9/11, the National Assembly authorized measures to cope with the terrorist threat with its 62/2001 (IX.25) Decree. With this measure, the government of Hungary attempted to implement the so-called renegade concept into the Defense Act as well. It says in particular:

Forces participating in the air defense of the Republic of Hungary can open warning or destructive fire on an aircraft flying in the airspace of Hungary if:

- a. It uses its weapon system;
- b. It, by any other means, commits life- or property-threatening activity or causes catastrophe;
- c. By any means it is clear that it intends to commit activity mentioned in a), b) and deliberately does not answer to the air defense patrol call.

In such cases air defense patrol or air defense units can open warning or destructive fire only at the command of the Air Force General on duty.<sup>55</sup>

In addition, the military operates the so-called NBCR Detection and Warning System, which is designed to take samples continuously from the air and water. In the event of any contamination, the system makes recommendations on the course of ac-

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<sup>54</sup> “On Defense and Hungarian Defense Forces,” § 52, Section 1, Clause (d), Sub-clause (dc), Law of the National Assembly, CV/2004 (8 November 2004).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, § 132, Section 1, Clauses (a-c) and Section 4.

tion to be taken.<sup>56</sup>

In the case of an armed attack, or as a worst-case scenario for war, a defense plan has been worked out by the chief of defense staff. The plan covers all aspects of the command and control of the armed forces, combat support, and preparation of the country for a defensive operation. The minister of defense, via the prime minister, submits the defense plan to the president for approval. Due to their sensitive nature, details of the defense plan are classified.

## **Other Military Support Activities**

### *Domestic Counterterrorism*

As a rule, the Hungarian military does not participate in domestic counterterrorism activities. Nevertheless, the military performs some kind of counterterrorist function, although it is intended mainly to enhance its own protection.

In Hungary there are five agencies that deal with gathering, processing, and disseminating intelligence. Two among them are under the direct control of the minister of defense: the Military Intelligence Service and the Military Security Service. The Military Intelligence Service collects covert and overt intelligence, mainly abroad. It focuses on the military aspects of national security. Furthermore, it collects information on terrorist organizations capable of posing a threat to military forces.<sup>57</sup> The main task of the Military Security Service, on the other hand, is force protection, including counterterrorist and counterintelligence activities.

The remaining three agencies are civilian national security agencies: the National Security Support Service, the National Security Office, and the Information Agency. The National Security Support Service provides all the necessary technical means to other national security services for performing their duties. It is the responsibility of the National Security Office to perform national security tasks in Hungary, while the Information Agency is responsible for operations abroad.<sup>58</sup>

As a result of the terrorist attacks on 9/11 in the U.S., and later in November 2003 in Istanbul and in March 2004 in Madrid, the government's National Security Cabinet decided to establish the Counterterrorism Coordination Committee (CCC), which includes the Military Intelligence Service, the Military Security Service, the National Security Office, the National Security Support Service, the Information Agency, the police, and the Border Guard. The aim of the CCC is to:

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<sup>56</sup> Interestingly enough, the Hungarian military owns a unique mobile NBC laboratory, which is part of the capability it offers to NATO. Until now, this laboratory has not taken part in action in Hungary. However, as Hungary's contribution to securing the 2004 Olympics in Athens, it was deployed to Greece. The uniqueness of the laboratory is that its deployability conforms with the NRF deployability criteria; it is able to detect any form of known agents within one to six hours.

<sup>57</sup> See [www.kfh.hu/hu/frame/rend.htm](http://www.kfh.hu/hu/frame/rend.htm), visited on 13 February 2005.

<sup>58</sup> See [www.nemzetbiztonsag.hu/szolgalatok.php](http://www.nemzetbiztonsag.hu/szolgalatok.php), visited on 13 February 2005.



... elevate the cooperation of the National Security Services, enhance protection of persons, installations most threatened from the point of view of terrorism, [and] put under strict surveillance persons and organizations believed to be possible accomplices of terrorist attacks.<sup>59</sup>

### *Civil Disturbances*

In general, the military is not designed to cope with civil disturbances, mainly because, as an American saying stipulates, “If you only have a hammer, you tend to see everything as a nail.” Since the military is specifically prepared for fighting wars, civil riot control is the task of the public order defending organizations, such as the police. Nonetheless, according to § 40/B, Section (2) of the constitution, the military can be deployed to suppress insurgents or disperse demonstrators, but only after the declaration of a qualified period and only if the police cannot cope with the task. In the course of military training, however, some riot control techniques are covered, but only military who are in the preparation phase for Peace Support Operations abroad get comprehensive riot control training.

### *Civil Support*

The most visible and viable civil support function of the Hungarian military is that seen in the “Tisza” Multinational Engineering Battalion that was established on 18 January 2002. The battalion is an 800-strong military formation assembled by troops from Hungary, the Czech Republic, Romania, and Ukraine. Each country contributes no more than 200 men respectively, with no fewer than 100 engineer personnel in each contingent.

The purpose of this “on call” battalion is to perform disaster relief operations within the catchment basin of the Tisza River in cooperation with other agencies and institutions performing relief operations. The battalion operates without arms or ammunition. Instead of fighting, the battalion performs reconnaissance (identification of the extent of a threat, investigating conditions for performing relief operations), flood relief (fortification of river banks, direct rescue of persons and property, evacuation of persons and property from endangered areas, clearing roads, removal of fallen tree trunks, basic diving operations, and building of temporary bridges), or other duties made necessary by unforeseen ecological events.<sup>60</sup> The units designated by Hungary to serve in this formation, from the 5<sup>th</sup> “István Bocskai” Light Infantry Brigade, take part in relief operations on request.

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<sup>59</sup> See [www.nbh.hu/terror.htm](http://www.nbh.hu/terror.htm), visited on 13 February 2005.

<sup>60</sup> Technical Agreement between the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Hungary, the Ministry of National Defense of Romania, the Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic, and the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine concerning the implementation of the agreement between the Government of the Republic of Hungary, the Government of Romania, the Government of the Slovak Republic, and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on the establishment of a Multinational Engineer Battalion, signed on 18 January 2002, in Budapest, Article VI, Section 1-2.

*Peculiarities of Military Support Activities Without Declaration of Qualified Periods*

It was stated above that generally there is no legal basis for the employment of military forces in domestic contingencies. Nevertheless, the amendment to the constitution and the new Defense Act define special occasions when the government of Hungary may employ military forces in domestic contingencies without a formal declaration of qualified periods.

The Amendment to the Constitution stipulates that:

Preventing legislative delay in the Parliament, in case of imminence the government may decide on introduction of preventive defense situation. The government until the decision of the National Assembly, but no more than for sixty days, may take measures to prevent danger.<sup>61</sup>

The above passage means that the government has in its arsenal the ability to take the necessary steps for introducing preventive measures. It is worth noting that measures introduced within the sixty-day period can only affect the state administration, the public order defense organizations, and the Hungarian Armed Forces, with no direct influence on civilians.

The government, in order to fulfill the tasks derived from § 35, Section 1, Clause (m) of the constitution, may introduce measures that usually require the deployment of the military:

- Using military air traffic control in civilian air transport;
- Implementing restricted measures in frequency management and broadcasting;
- Assign designated personnel of the military forces and public order defense organizations and equipment to the defense of critical infrastructure;
- Operational preparation of Hungary's terrain for defense;
- Special counterterrorism operations with designated military forces;
- Tightening entrance procedures of persons and vehicles into installations of the government, the military, and other institutions involved in maintaining homeland security, including restrictions, bans, and evacuation;
- Searching the clothing and vehicles of persons entering into installations of the government, the military, and other institutions involved in maintaining homeland security; searching and destroying objects of unknown origin;
- Tightening border security and control;
- Tightening control of the postal service.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Amendment to the Constitution, § 3, Section 2, Law of the National Assembly, CIV/2004 (8 November 2004). See also: Constitution of the Republic of Hungary, § 35, Sec. 1, clause (m).

<sup>62</sup> "On Defense and Hungarian Defense Forces," § 201, Clause (a-r), Law of the National Assembly, CV/2004 (8 November 2004).

## Conclusion

The ultimate goal of the Hungarian Defense Forces is, according to the constitution and the Defense Act, to defend the country's independence, territory, inhabitants, and material goods against external attack, and to defend and protect the national airspace. In addition to these tasks, the armed forces protect and defend the institutions that require heightened defense from the point of view of homeland security, fight international terrorism with prepared and designated forces, avert armed actions or violence committed with arms (as defined in § 40/B, Section (2) of the constitution), conduct unexploded ordnance disposal, contribute to disaster prevention and relief activities, and provide special military hardware and knowledge to other state institutions.

As a basic rule, the Hungarian military cannot be deployed constitutionally in peacetime in Hungary. However, the constitution defines five qualified periods: preventive defense situations, states of emergency, surprise assault, states of danger, and states of alert. In doing so, it stipulates situations in which the military can play a role in domestic contingencies.

Deployment of the military in peacetime and in qualified periods (except armed attack, as it is defined in §19/E of the constitution) is controlled and conducted by the National Assembly, the president, the government, and the responsible minister. For these contingencies, plans drafted by the local Defense Committees are to be implemented. These plans contain measures (both civilian and military) for all foreseeable contingencies, beginning from fire to disaster prevention and consequence management, including NBCR disaster.

Hungary's armed forces thus have a highly varied and rich experience in assisting the civil authority in a broad range of homeland security missions. As a new NATO member, the civil and military authorities are working very hard to ensure that Hungary is ready and able to carry out all of its assigned missions, including domestic ones.

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