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HUNGARY A MEMBER OF NATO
The road membership of NATO 1990-1999

by

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ABSTRACT

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For centuries, Hungary has been at the center of European history, politics and culture. The Cold War, however, artificially divided Europe, and cut Hungary off from the Western half of the continent. We have come a long way in a rather short of period of time with historical standards. The first democratic government formed after the 1990 elections set the goal for the country to reintegrate into the community of free and democratic states that have provided well-being for their citizens.

We have been at home in Europe for more than thousand years. Not only in terms of geography, but also because of our culture, our traditions and the basic values that we stand for. However, our endeavors for integration could be realized because of the circumstances that had emerged after World War II. The chance finally came in 1990 with the peaceful revolution that swept over Central and Eastern Europe, in which Hungary played an active part.

The Political change and NATO-membership are two very significant events of current history of Hungary. 1990 and 1999. This nine-year period was short ,however our tasks were problematic. We had created a NEW HUNGARY! The way was difficult and sometimes painful. This paper examines how the Hungary and Hungarian Armed Forces have changed from the Cold War Warsaw Pact focus to the democratic focus of NATO. The paper will focus on the integration of Hungary into North Atlantic Treaty from both a political and military perspective. Particular attention will be given to the roles Hungary has played in the lot of international exercises, PfP program and peacekeeping missions. Finally, the conclusion will be provided by former Hungarian Prime Minister's (Viktor Orban) words.

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**HUNGARY A MEMBER OF NATO
THE ROAD TO MEMBERSHIP OF NATO (1990-1999)**

SORT RETROSPECTIVE:

In April 1989, Hungary was a member of political and military structure of the Warsaw Pact and of COMECON, Soviet troops were stationed on the territory of Hungary. The number of troops in the Hungarian Army was around 150,000 in peacetime. The magnitude of Hungarian military expenditure was higher than 3.5% of GDP although this figure was not made public. Hungary was ruled by a one-party system and an economy based on centralized planning.



FIGURE 1. NEIGHBOR COUNTRIES OF HUNGARY IN 1989.

The country bordered five neighbors, Czechoslovakia, USSR, Romania, Yugoslavia, Austria. Hungary was located among four socialist countries: Soviet Union, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia. Three of these (Yugoslavia was neutral point of view military), belonged to the Warsaw Pact. In addition, Hungary had one neutral neighbor country, Austria.

During this period the Hungarian security policy generally was:

- to live in peaceful cooperation with other countries,
- to build a socialist system among the people within the framework of Marxist and Leninist principles.

DECISION:

The first determined steps were aimed at regaining the country's sovereignty and freedom of international action. From the summer of 1990 on – in co-operation with its Visegrad partners, that is, Czechoslovakia and Poland – Hungary suggested the review of the Warsaw Treaty and subsequently, its dissolution, which finally took place in summer of 1991. Simultaneously, Hungary succeeded in bringing about the complete withdrawal of Soviet troops. Hungary also played an active role disbanding COMECON, the economic organization of the collapsing empire.

Parallel to that and recognizing the opportunity offered by the historic momentum, Hungary started the process of catching up with the community of developed Western democracies.

The formulation of the triad of foreign policy priorities identified by the Antall-administration (1990-1994) – Euro-Atlantic integration, a policy of good-neighborliness ensuring regional stability and a national policy that included support for the Hungarian communities living abroad – did not only apply to but one parliamentary cycle. Any Hungarian government that has since been in office considered and continues to consider these goals as of primary importance.

March 8, 1993 Prime Minister Jozsef Antall informs Secretary General Manfred Wornier of Hungary's intention to join NATO.

HUNGARY IN 2003:

Hungary is member of NATO and preparations for accession to the European Union (2004). The NATO-led peace support operation in Bosnia has been proceeding for several years with Hungarian soldiers doing their duty under a multinational command while US, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian and Finnish soldiers carry out their tasks on Hungarian territory. The Hungarian Defense Forces has been reduced to 50,000 troops in peacetime. The magnitude of defense expenditure has also been reduced to 1.75% of GDP (2002). This figure is public, of course, since the Hungarian Armed Forces are placed under strict democratic and civilian control. Hungary is characterized by a stable parliamentary democracy and free market economy. It borders seven countries of which five have gained or regained their independent statehood in the course of the past decade.



FIGURE 2. NEIGHBOR COUNTRIES OF HUNGARY IN 2003.

THE NEW WAY AFTER 1990:

Along with Czech Republic and Poland, Hungary was among the first countries of Central and Eastern Europe invited to start talks on NATO-accession. The invitation unambiguously proved that Hungary took advantage of the opportunities offered by social and political changes of the early 1990s and also that, having regained its sovereignty, Hungary made right decisions on security policy goals and the means to achieve them. A consensus emerged among the parties represented in Parliament on the well-known triple set of goals – Euro-Atlantic integration, development of good-neighborly relations and support to the interests of the Hungarian communities living abroad – that remain valid today.

IN THE INTERNATIONAL THEATER UNTIL THE MADRID SUMMIT:

In the new situation, Hungary took every opportunity to fill the newly opened maneuvering space in foreign policy with substance. Besides domestic economic and political stabilization, it engaged in a significant development of bilateral and regional relations, taking an active stance in the international organizations and trying to develop ever closer relations with the institutions of Euro-Atlantic integration by means of a consistent policy. This was already recognized by the states of the Euro-Atlantic region when Hungary had the opportunity to exercise the position of Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe from December 1994 to December 1995. During the one-year presidency, Hungary proved to be able to not only represent its national interests in an effective manner but also to assume the representation of the security interests of its immediate region as well as Europe.

In addition, Hungary was a member of the U.N. Security Council between 1992 and 1994. At the end of 1998, it assumed the Presidency of the Council of Europe. Beginning in October 1998, Hungary became the Chairman of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) for a year. Hungary has since 1994 been bound to the European Union by an association agreement and started EU accession talks on 10 November 1998. Since 1996 it has also been a member of OECD, takes part in the activities of all major international non-proliferation regimes and is party to all relevant international agreements on arms control and disarmament. Hungary participates actively in numerous international peacekeeping activities under the auspices of the United Nations and other international organizations.

Hungarian presence in the North Atlantic Co-operation Council (NACC) and its participation in the Partnership for Peace program (PfP) launched by NATO in January 1994 have played a determinant role in rapprochement to the Alliance. NACC, as well as its successor, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, have played an invaluable role in particular in the field of political consultations while PfP has done the same in establishing co-operation with the Alliance and the creation of the necessary conditions to that end. Hungary has from the start taken advantage of the principle of self-differentiation PfP stands for, and of all the opportunities for co-operation offered by PfP (exercises, education and training in- and outside the country, seminars, etc.). Particular importance must be attributed to Hungarian participation in the PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP) which envisaged the creation of the capacities required for non-Article 5 operations to be carried out with the participation of partner states (humanitarian and peace support operations). To sum up, Partnership for Peace has been the primary means of preparation for membership up to accession.

In September 1995, the Alliance issued its so-called Enlargement Study including, the political and military criteria required for accession. Hungary officially declared its intention to join NATO on 29 January 1996, becoming the first of the former Warsaw Pact states to do so.

Hungary submitted a Discussion Paper on 8 April 1996. This document served as the basis of the Hungarian position which had previously been outlined in 1996-97 during the intensified dialogue between Hungary that took place. In the course of this dialogue, NATO became convinced that on the basis of the criteria of accession identified in the Study on NATO Enlargement, Hungary is able and willing to fulfill the obligations of Alliance membership. It followed the rule of law, had both a stable parliamentary democracy and a functioning market economy, where solid democratic and civilian control of the armed forces is being exercised and had established military capabilities required for co-operation with NATO. This process was formally concluded of Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic by the Madrid summit on 8 July 1997 where the Heads of State and Government invited these three states to start accession talks.

THE WAY AFTER THE MADRID SUMMIT:

The period that followed the Madrid summit was also of outstanding importance preparation for membership. Less spectacular but perhaps the important element of preparation, Hungary joined the NATO defense planning process which plays a central role in identifying and developing the forces and capabilities required for the implementation of NATO's tasks in the field of collective defense. Hungary completed the NATO Defense Planning Questionnaire soon after Madrid, and developed the Target Force Goals identified the main directions for the development of Hungarian armed forces in the medium term in co-operation with NATO's experts. These goals extend to virtually all fields of the development of armed forces. These include:

- language training,
- high level command, control and communication (C3),
- host nation support,
- inclusion in NATO's integrated air defense system,
- 5
- the preparation of reaction forces,
- participation in NATO's strategic intelligence information exchange.

In the spirit of preparation, Hungary has established intensive contacts with NATO authorities, both civilian and military. Taking advantage of the opportunities offered by NATO, it

engaged its Leadership in the work of NATO's committees as early as 1998, so as to be able, as the result of preparations thereby ensured, to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by membership. At the same time, 1998 already saw many Hungarian officers and NCOs joining the work of major and subordinate NATO-commands.

The important element of integration has been the comprehensive legal harmonization, the most spectacular element of which is the codification of the Washington Treaty in the Hungarian legal system. The first, smaller package which included the minimum legal amendments to implement the obligations stemming from the Treaty (such as the establishment of the National Security Authority and the amendment of the Law on the Protection of Classified Information) was already approved by Parliament at the end of 1998. This process is long and very difficult. It continues even as this is being written.

TWO IMPORTANT HUNGARIAN DOCUMENTS:

Two very important Hungarian documents must be noted. The basic principles of security policy approved by the National Assembly on 12 March 1993 demonstrate that one of the main endeavors of Hungarian security policy is the rapprochement and subsequent membership in the institutions of Western European integration. The basic principles of national defense adopted on 14 April 1993 in accordance with the basic principles of security policy, on the other hand, confirm that the guarantees of the country's security can in the long run only be ensured through the institutional framework of multifaceted co-operation. The Nation's goals are therefore to effectively co-operate with the already existing international security organizations and accession to NATO and the European Union.

THE HUNGARIAN DEFENSE FORCES: FROM PREPARATION TO FULL INTEROPERABILITY

With the disappearance of the bipolar world order, the transformed European security environment and the subsequent change of system in Hungary created a new situation for the Hungarian Defense Forces at the beginning of the 1990s.

At the moment of when the intention regarding membership in NATO was deduced, the Hungarian Defense Forces were completely unsuited and unprepared for accession to the North Atlantic Alliance even though the process of transforming the armed forces had already started as early as the mid-1980s. The primary goal of the measures that had been taken was to remove the shortcomings observed during the operation of the armed forces. To that end, the command system was changed, the number of battle order elements was reduced and

organizational structure based on the army corps and brigade system was introduced. However, no reductions took place in terms of the manpower or technical equipment.

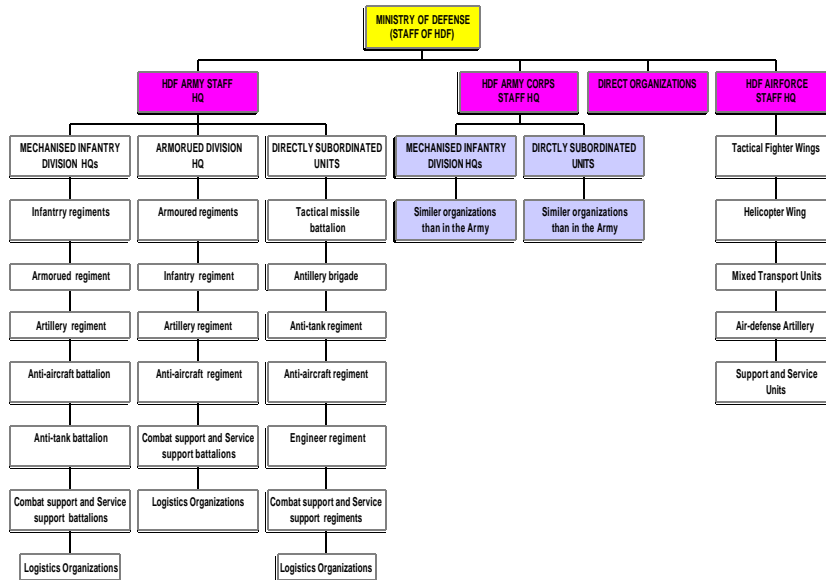


FIGURE 3. HUNGARIAN PEOPLE'S ARMY STRUCTURE UNTIL 1987.

By 1989, however, it became obvious that the country was not in a position to finance an army that counted 150 000 troops in peacetime and more 300 000 troops in wartime. Therefore, as a first step, a decision was made to reduce the number of troops by 9 %. Later, in November 1989, a subsequent decision reduced the number of armed personnel by 30-35 %. The further deterioration of the country's economic situation clearly demonstrated such a large force could not be maintained.

Having regained national sovereignty, the Government of the Republic of Hungary set itself the goal of establishing a national army that would be smaller in numbers, more efficient and up-to-date, and based on a defensive posture.

IMPORTANT POLITICAL DECISIONS (FIRST STEPS):

The period between 1990 and 1994 could basically be considered as the initial phase of preparing for NATO membership. This was the time when political decisions required for the establishment of an independent defense force were taken:

- the new principles of security policy and national defense were elaborated,

- the Constitution was amended,
- the National Defense Law was adopted,
- conscript military service was reduced to 12 months,
- unarmed, civilian service was introduced,
- army chaplains took up their work.

The Defense Forces received new uniforms and a system of symbols was established that corresponded to national traditions. Troop traditions were revived in a new way to give them the role they deserved. By 1990 the Hungarian armed forces were renamed “Magyar Honvedseg – Hungarian Defense Forces” , which was the name of the troops that fought in the Hungarian revolution in 1848-49 and which gave expression to the deep emotional attachment and self-sacrificing love for the mother country. This period witnessed a significant development of the armed forces’ international relations. Training and further training of career personnel was introduced in Western educational institutions, contributing significantly to the change of attitude and of the way of thinking.

In 1995 was the very important step. It was the first time in the history of the Hungarian armed forces, the National Assembly made an important decision on the image of the armed forces and what was required for the defense of the country as well as its character of this reformed army. The goal was also established to restructure the draft-based system, valid since 1868, into a mixed system built on voluntary service as well as conscription.

Based on the decisions taken by the Government and the National Assembly and as the result of a painful process, the first major phase of restructuring the Hungarian Defense Forces consisted of overwhelmingly quantitative changes. It was completed by the end of 1997. From late 1995 on, Hungarian Forces had been significantly reduced the number of peacetime personnel from 150,000 in 1987 to 61,000 by late 1997. The Hungarian Defense Forces were about to change from a threat-oriented massive army into a smaller-size capacity-oriented armed force.

This change is accompanied by a change of military culture and professional philosophy. About 50 % of all military organizations have been dissolved. More than 100 military facilities have been closed. A force concentration of peacetime organizations took place, with the formerly scattered branch units concentrated into one garrison each. The duration of compulsory armed military service was reduced to 9 months.

AFTER THE BASIC STEPS:

Essential structural and organizational changes took place as a result of further significant reforms. Staff structures interoperable with NATO were established down to the level of independent battalions. Command, control and communication systems were transformed. As of 1 September 1997, the Joint Staff of the Hungarian Defense Forces was established, as were the staffs of the different branches fulfilling classical staff functions in accordance with the practice of NATO member countries. The structure of the Hungarian Defense Forces was changed and the Ground Forces and Air Forces established. Military forces were divided into three different categories, that is:

- Reaction Forces,
- Main Defense Forces,
- National Augmentation Forces.

Reaction Forces include immediate reaction and rapid reaction units. Their numbers make domestic application possible even in peacetime. The tasks of the Reaction Forces include, alert services, participation in crisis management, the fulfillment of international obligations and participation in natural disaster relief. The group of Reaction Forces includes highly manned immediate reaction and rapid reaction forces that are capable of participating in independent domestic military operations, as well as in military operations abroad as part of international contingents.

Further tasks related to national defense are assigned in case of necessity to the Main Defense Forces. They include combat, combat support as well as territorial defense and reserve units which could participate mainly in a domestic environment independently or in military operations in the framework of NATO-co-operation.

National Augmentation Forces: Their tasks include the provision of conditions required for the reception of and host nation support for incoming NATO-troops. Forces assigned to such tasks are called host nation support forces.

The compulsory military service was likely to be maintained for a long time. (The mandatory service will be abolished in 2005. The new law was created by Hungarian National Assemble on February 2003.)

One significant development in the course of preparation for NATO membership has been the initiation of the transformation of a regular, framework-type Armed Forces into an Army with a mixed system, that is, one consisting of both volunteer and enlisted forces. The professional character of the armed forces has been strengthened. The percentage of contracted personnel was increased. The establishment of the pillars of a new system of promotion for officers was started, as was the development of a new NCO-corps assigned with new types of tasks.

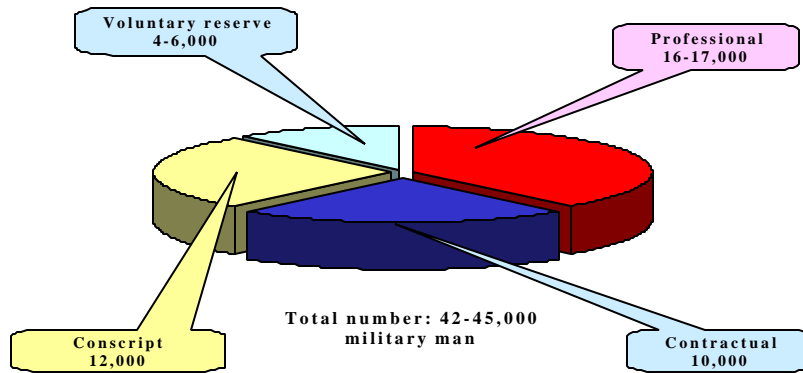


FIGURE 4. THE PLAN FOR FUTURE HUNGARIAN ARMED FORCES NUMBER. (1998)

Large-scale language training was started for officers and NCOs. Assigned forces of the Hungarian Home Defense Forces started their preparations for participation in NATO Reaction Forces. The alertness and mobilization system of the Hungarian Defense Forces was transformed according to NATO-standards. The applicability of alert forces was improved in accordance with NATO-expectations. The bases of host nation support capabilities to receive NATO troops were established as well.

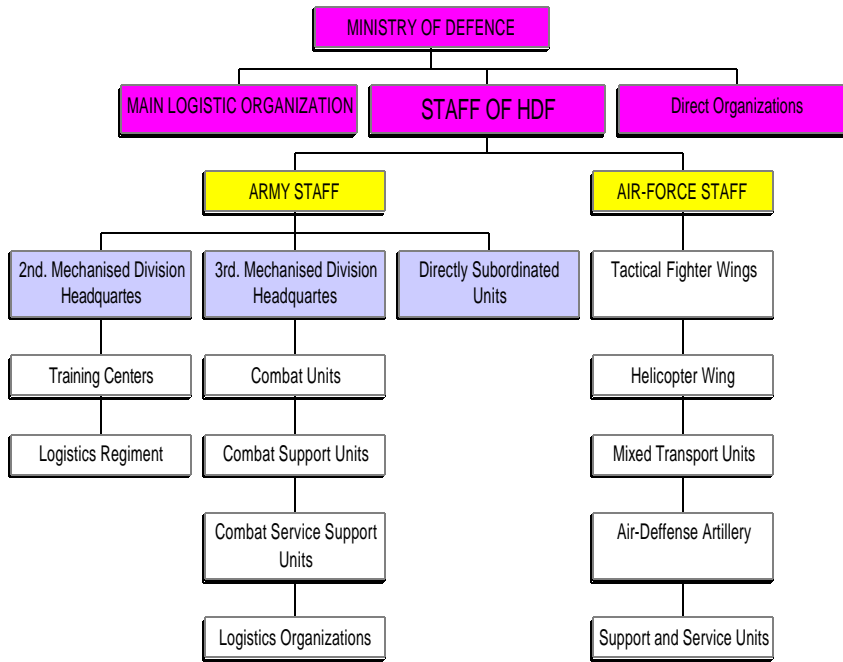


FIGURE 5. ORGANIZATION OF THE HUNGARIAN DEFENSE FORCES 1997-2001

THE INDIVIDUAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM:

The Individual Partnership Program (IPP) was adopted which determined the concrete co-operation between NATO and the Republic of Hungary and within which significant importance was attributed to such issues as the civilian control of the Hungarian Defense Forces, defense planning issues, airspace control, defense procurement, logistics and standardization, interoperability, training and education and the participation of the Hungarian Defense Forces in NATO/PfP exercises. In the framework of the Individual Partnership Program, Hungary became involved in the work of all working committees that had been opened by NATO to partner countries.

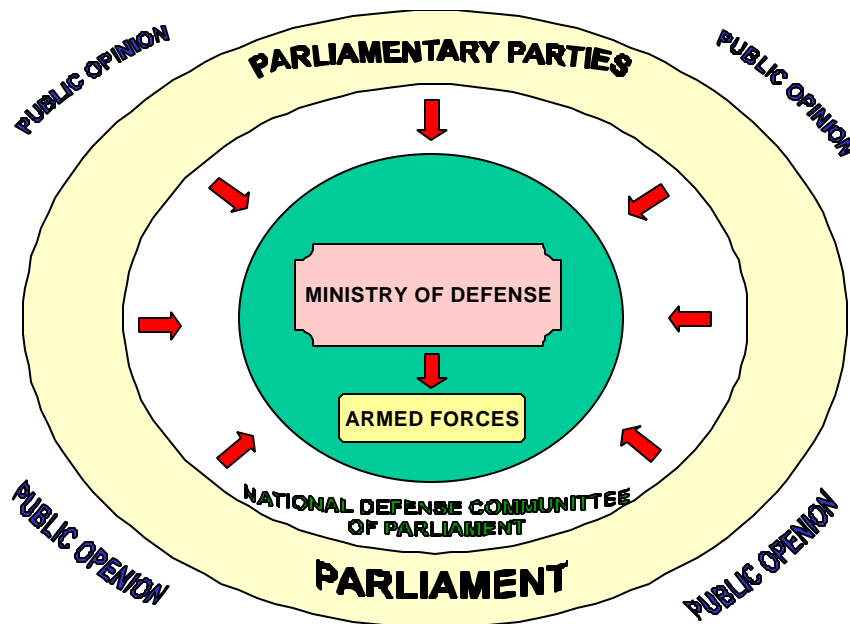


FIGURE 6. CIVIL CONTROL IN THE HUNGARIAN DEFENSE FORCES NOWADAYS.

“PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE” AND HUNGARIAN DEFENSE FORCES:

A qualitatively new chapter was opened in the relationship between Hungary and NATO and in the preparation of Hungary for NATO-membership with the “Partnership for Peace” /PfP/ program which was launched by the summit meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the NATO member countries held in Brussels on 10-11 January 1994. Hungary reacted quickly and positively and already on 8 February it announced its accession to this initiative. On 6 June 1994, the representative of the Hungarian government handed over in Brussels the “Presentation Document” compiled by the Hungarian side in which the latter committed itself to concrete military co-operation and made the entire Hungarian armed forces available to that end. In accordance with this offer, virtually the entire armed force has subsequently been participating in PfP co-operation. In the document the Hungarian Defense Forces committed themselves, to fulfilling the interoperability objectives defined by NATO by the end of the period from 1995 to 1997. This included, among others, interoperability of search-and-rescue operation and airspace management systems, uniformization of flight procedures, interoperability of communication systems, language requirements for staff officers, the provision of liaison teams to forces offered for co-operation and the deployment of a NATO-compatible identification (friend and foe) system. The offer also contained a commitment to develop Hungarian forces assigned to PfP-co-operation into rapid reaction

forces, the quality, quantity and state of alertness of which would be sufficient to deter a limited-scale surprise attack and to carry other non-warlike tasks.

PfP EXERCISES:

- 1995: "CO-OPERATIVE LIGHT" and "COMBAT RESCUE",
- 1996: "CO-OPERATIVE CHANGE" and staff exercise "TRIMIGRANT" were held in Hungary,
- 1997: a Hungarian sub-unit consisting of 46 troops traveled to the United States to participate in exercise "CO-OPERATIVE NUGGET 97 " in which 18 PfP-partner and 5 NATO-member countries took part,
- 1998: Hungary hosted a PfP command post exercise code-named "CO-OPERATIVE LANTERN"

Hungarian soldiers and observers took part in numerous exercises abroad, mostly in neighboring countries but also in other European and overseas countries. Participation in such exercises facilitated familiarization with NATO planning methods and tactical procedures and provided an opportunity for exercising co-operation among staffs.

IN IFOR-SFOR MISSIONS:

Of great importance from the point of view of preparations for NATO-membership has been the participation of the Hungarian Defense Forces in the peacemaking activities carried out in Bosnia which covered the following three fields:

1. The Hungarian Defense Forces are contributing to the implementation of the tasks laid out in the Dayton Peace Agreement with an engineering contingent at battalion level. The contingent numbered 416 troops during the IFOR-operation and 316 troops during the ongoing SFOR-operation. In the course of the IFOR/SFOR operation, the Hungarian engineering contingent has carried out 200 tasks of different types and magnitudes. It has constructed 22 bridges and a total of 65 kilometers of railroads and taken part in the reconstruction of public main roads. In addition, it has carried out activities in the field of mine clearing, removal of snow and ice and has searched a total of 102,000 square meters for explosives. One event of outstanding importance was the participation in the restoration of formerly blown up "Old Bridge" in Mostar. Our engineering contingent has succeeded in adapting and finding its place in the multinational formations and through its performance earned respect and praise for itself as well as for the Hungarian Defense Forces and the Republic of Hungary.

2. Apart from troop contributions, the Republic of Hungary has been supporting the peace operation in Bosnia as a host and transit country, by providing infrastructural support. Within

that framework, we place military and civilian facilities at the disposal of participating nations and ensure the necessary conditions for ground, water and air transport and the use of frequencies.

3. We ensure the transit of units taking part in peace operations in Bosnia. For the purpose of co-operation in the framework of PfP, the Hungarian Defense Forces have offered a liaison team consisting of personnel from ground troops as well as sub-units, two peacekeeping companies, the engineering contingent assigned to SFOR, one combat helicopter and one transport helicopter company as well as two search-and-rescue helicopters.

IN INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING ACTIVITIES:

In accordance with NATO's expectations, the Republic of Hungary is taking an active part also in international peacekeeping activities carried out under the aegis of the United Nations and OSCE. Until 1999, a total of almost 500 Hungarian officers, NCOs and contracted soldiers had done duty in international peacekeeping missions in crisis spots throughout the world. In 1995, a Hungarian contingent of 41 personnel started its activities on the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt, while an infantry platoon counting 39 troops is taking part in the UN Mission in Cyprus.

THE REFERENDUM:

The referendum took place on 16 November 1997, with a participation of 49.24 % of all Hungarian citizens entitled to vote. 85.33 % of the turnout voted in favor of Hungary's accession to the North Atlantic alliance and 14.67 % against.

The successful referendum and its spectacularly positive result have left a very deep and favorable impact on "Western" public opinion.

SUMMARY:

Hungary has come a long way in a rather short of period of time, compared to the historical experience of other Nations. The Nation is rightfully proud of its NATO-membership. It is seen as a recognition of all the achievements that the Hungarians have made in the decades, the period left behind, achievements that the Hungarian people may call their own. Due to the change in 1990, Hungary is now living in a democracy under the rule of law, guided by respect for human rights including minority rights. It has established a functioning market economy where three-fourths of the country's assets belongs to private enterprises. Hungary has become a stabilizing factor in the region, a country that no other state must be afraid of and that is ready to co-operate with any neighbor on the basis of normal relations. It has done a lot to normalize

these relations, since good relations are also based on reciprocity, the task was not always easy.

What does Hungary expect from NATO-membership? First and foremost, to guarantee the international conditions for domestic development over the long run. These include peace and adequate preparation for the security challenges of the new millennium. Hungarians know that participation in one of the most successful alliances of modern history is our best guarantee against known and also yet unknown security threats.¹

The results: -New generation of Generals, Officers and NCOs,

-large number of contract soldiers,

-new command and control system,

-new units (They were reorganized >>>NATO system>>>the process is continuing),

-new system for education (National Defense University and its three new campuses, new NCO school),

-new training system for units,

-NATO STANAG is applied,

-new legal environment (the process is continuing),

-lot of Generals, Officers, NCOs are working different NATO headquarters,

-good relationship with Armed Forces of neighbor countries,

-the integration is continuing.

The way of the future: The force development concept can be divided into two five-year cycles. Further advancement, qualitative aspects and full-fledged military integration into NATO will characterize the first cycle that will last from 2004 to 2008. In the second cycle, which will last from 2008 to 2013 to put the emphasis on the qualitative aspect of the armed forces. By the end of that period to have an armed force characterized by a level of security and predictability, one that will be up-to date in each and every respect, consist to an overwhelming extent of career and volunteer forces, be highly motivated and equipped in an updated manner, with a highly computerized command and control system, prepared at the level of all armed services and that will fully operate according to NATO-principles.

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**APPENDIX: CHRONOLOGY OF HUNGARY'S ACCESSION TO NATO
1990-1999**

- 1990 July 18* Prime Minister József Antall visits NATO Headquarters in Brussels. He announces to Secretary General Manfred Wörner: the Hungarian Ambassador accredited to Brussels is assigned to maintain permanent contact with NATO's relevant Authorities.
- 1990 November 22-23* NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner visits Hungary for the first time in the history of the Alliance. President Árpád Göncz and Prime Minister József Antall receive him.
- 1990 November 28-29* The North Atlantic Assembly (NAA), NATO's parliament accords the status of "associate delegation" status to Hungary and other Central Eastern European countries at its plenary meeting in London.
- 1991 December 20* Inaugural meeting of the North Atlantic Co-operation Council attended by Representatives of 16 NATO- countries and 9 former Warsaw Pact countries. It is the first consultative body since World War Two in which countries were against each other during the Cold War belongs to a common security policy framework.
- 1993 October 31* AWACS reconnaissance aircraft under NATO command patrols and monitors the no fly zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina.
- 1994 January 10-11* At the Brussels Summit, NATO launches the Partnership for Peace program. It also releases a Final Declaration on the possibilities of the enlargement of the Alliance in a gradual and evolutionary manner.
- 1994 February 8* Foreign Minister Géza Jeszenszky signs the PfP Framework Document in Brussels.
- 1994 November 15* During their visit to Brussels, Hungarian Foreign Minister László Kovács and Defense Minister György Keleti finalize the bilateral co-operation work program between the Republic of Hungary and NATO.
- 1995 May 26-29* Plenary meeting of the North Atlantic Assembly in Budapest. It is the first time since the establishment of the forum 40 years before that the meeting is held in a non-NATO country.
- 1995 October 14-20* PfP-exercise "Co-operative Light '95" is held in the neighborhood of Újdörög, in the Bakony Hills, Hungary with the participation of 19 nations.
- 1995 December 5* The Hungarian National Assembly approves for Hungary's with participation with an engineering unit in the operation of the Implementation

forces (IFOR) the aim of ensuring the implementation of a peaceful settlement of the crisis in the former Yugoslavia.

1995 December 9 The first American soldiers assigned to the Bosnian peace implementation forces of NATO (IFOR) arrive at Taszár, Somogy county.

1996 February 3 The Hungarian IFOR-contingent stationed at Okucani (416 persons) is transferred to NATO operational command.

1996 July 20-26 NATO-led multinational air exercise "Co-operative Chance '96" is held in Szolnok and Újdörög. (This is the first exercise held in a territory of a country outside NATO's area of responsibility.)

1996 December 17 The Hungarian National Assembly passes a resolution for the participation of a Hungarian Engineering Battalion in the newly established Stabilization Forces (SFOR) in the former Yugoslavia.

1997 May 30 At the Meeting of the North Atlantic Co-operation Council at Foreign Ministers level in Sintra, Portugal, the dissolution of NACC is declared and at same time the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council is established in its place.

1997 July 8 At the Summit Meeting of NATO in Madrid, the Alliance decides to invite the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland for accession talks.

1997 September 10 The first round of the Hungarian-NATO talks on accession is held in Brussels.

1997 November 16 National referendum is held in Hungary. 49.24 % of the 8,019,724 eligible voters took part in the referendum on Hungary's accession to NATO. 85.33 % (3,327,118 persons) of the voters voted "yes".

1997 December 16 The Accession Protocols of Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Poland are signed in Brussels in the presence of the Foreign Ministers of the three invited countries.

1998 February 3 – December 1 The legislation of the 16 NATO-countries ratify the accession protocols of Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland into NATO.

1998 July 24 Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on his official visit to Brussels during has talks with Secretary General Javier Solana on issues related to Hungary's euro-atlantic integration.

1999 January 29 Foreign Minister János Martonyi receives a letter from Javier Solana in which the Secretary General invites Hungary to join NATO and requests Hungary to deposit the instruments of accession.

1999 February 8 Air Sovereignty Operations Center is inaugurated in Veszprém, so the conditions of linking the information system of the Hungarian Air Defense to NATO's Integrated Air Defense System are given.

1999 February 9 The National Assembly votes for Hungary's accession into NATO and the bill proposal on the proclamation of the North Atlantic Treaty with an overwhelming majority of votes (330 yes, 13 no and 1 abstain). The next day President Árpád Göncz signs the Instrument of Accession.

1999 March 12 Foreign Minister János Martonyi – together with his Czech and Polish colleagues – deposits the instruments of accession at the Government of the United States of America in ceremonial circumstances in Independence, Missouri. By this action Hungary officially becomes a member of NATO.

ENDNOTES

¹ A NATO-TAG MAGYARORSZAG: Magyar Koztarsasag Kulugyminiszteriuma Budapest 1999 Pp. 11-12.

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