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Occasional Paper No. 9206
May, 1992

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RESTRUCTURING HUNGARIAN CIVIL-MILITARY
RELATIONS, 1988-1990

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Revised version of a chapter from the manuscript
Soldiers and Politics in Eastern Europe, 1945-1990: The Case of Hungary

Prepared for the Conference on
"New Thinking" About European Security:
Restructuring Defense Strategies for the 1990s

March 7-9, 1991
University of Missouri-Columbia
Columbia, Missouri

Supported by a grant from the University of Missouri Weldon Spring Fund

RESTRUCTURING HUNGARIAN CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS, 1988-1990

Introduction

Hungarian politics had undergone dramatic changes in the 1988-1990 period. During 1988 the gradual shift toward democratization that had characterized Hungary since the mid-1980s had rapidly accelerated and left indelible marks on the country's political landscape. By the end of 1990 Hungarian Communists, who had ruled the country since 1948, became politically irrelevant.

The transformation of the political system had profound effects on Hungary's armed forces, civil-military relations, and security situation. The Warsaw Pact, of which Hungary had been a founding member, had become an essentially defunct military organization by 1990 and was abolished altogether in July 1991. In fact, Hungary's new post-Communist government was the first among the Warsaw Pact allies to indicate its intent of withdrawal from the pact. Budapest had succeeded in establishing special diplomatic relations with NATO in 1990, and became a member of NATO's Cooperation Council that was created in November 1991. Furthermore, the prayers of millions of Hungarians were answered when the last Soviet troops had finally left Hungary in June 1991, after 46 years of uninterrupted occupation.

The political transformation of Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Union were concomitant with the surfacing and re-surfacing of security concerns across the region. Hungary's national security has been strongly affected by the civil-war in Yugoslavia on its

southern border and the subsequent emergence of Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina as independent states. At the same time the troublesome treatment of Hungarian minorities in Serbia, Slovakia, and particularly in Romania has not been lost on politicians and security experts.

It could be argued that Hungary, along with Czechoslovakia and Poland, is in a security limbo of sorts. It is no longer a member of the Warsaw Pact--an alliance system that, while in many respects disadvantageous for its non-Soviet members, could guarantee the defense of its territory from external foes--and is incapable of protecting itself from virtually any external threat. Perhaps it is not unreasonable to speculate that Hungary and its East Central European neighbors to the north might be admitted as full members of NATO within the next decade, something they all have expressed an interest in.

In the meantime, Hungary's politicians and soldiers have sought to enhance the country's national security by establishing bilateral military cooperation agreements with former Warsaw Pact allies neighbors.¹ The three East Central European states (often referred to as the "Central European Triangle") have actively explored the possibilities of military cooperation since their first summit meeting in February 1991, in Visegrad, Hungary.² Together with Austria, Italy, and the former Yugoslavia, they have also been members of the Central European Initiative (CEI), a regional organization called the "Hexagonal Group" until its January 1992 summit meeting. Although the CEI is an organization oriented primarily toward economic and cultural cooperation it encourages the addressing of common security concerns as well.

This paper examines the period extending from the May 1988 Conference of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP) until the end of 1990. The political transformation from a single-party paternalistic dictatorship to a multi-party democracy was concomitant with the metamorphosis of civil-military relations. During this period the essential role of the Hungarian armed forces underwent a complete change. One of the main functions of the Hungarian People's Army (HPA) under four decades of Communism was the defense of the party's political monopoly from its internal enemies; the collapse of the regime made this function irrelevant.

This analysis concentrates on the elements of defense policy and military affairs where reforms and processes of transformation were most significant. Part I offers a brief summary of Hungary's political transformation in 1988-1990. Part II analyzes the shift in civil-military relations; Part III focuses on the subsequent democratization and reorganization of the armed forces. Part IV, deals with the international relations of the Hungarian armed forces.

Part I. Political Background: From Communism to Democracy

A. Domestic Politics

Karoly Grosz's emergence as HSWP leader at the May 1988 HSWP Conference was welcomed by large segments of the party membership and even the population because it promised a change from Kadar's reluctance to deal with Hungary's mounting political and economic problems. The new HSWP Politburo remained divided between hard-liners led by Grosz and reform-minded politicians such as Imre Pozsgay and Rezso Nyers. In November 1988 Grosz relinquished the premiership to Miklos Nemeth, a young and capable HSWP

politician. It soon became apparent that Nemeth would strengthen the ranks of reform-Communists.

The measure of public support Grosz enjoyed after May 1988 had considerably eroded by the end of the year following police brutality used against demonstrators in June, and his ill-fated meeting with Romanian President Ceausescu in August.³ Moreover, the fragile balance of power in the Politburo suffered severe blows due to the independent stances of some of its members. In October 1988 Pozsgay implicitly supported the emergence of an alternative movement, the Hungarian Democratic Forum (HDF) by his participation in its founding meeting. Antagonism deepened between the popular Pozsgay and his foes in the Politburo after the reformer declared, apparently without consulting Grosz, that the 1956 Revolution, officially still tagged as a "counter-revolution," was a "popular uprising."

In the meantime, the HSWP's membership declined precipitously. The evolving crisis of Hungarian socialism was to a large degree due to the HSWP leaders' apparent perplexity regarding the changing role and function of ideology. The Central Committee, as Grosz openly admitted, lacked unity of opinion and was beleaguered by "debates about questions of tactics, methodology, and working style."⁴ By March 1989 there were, in fact, three separate parties within the HSWP representing "conservative order," "moderate order," and "socialist reform."⁵ The leadership seemed to have realized that some form of democracy within the party was an essential condition for regaining the membership's support. The limited party reforms introduced in 1989, however, could not alter the overall disenchantment of the rank and file membership.

The government and party leadership also tried to introduce broad political reforms, but was unable or unwilling to realize that the time when "fine tuning" and "quasi reforms" could appease the population had passed; now systemic changes were necessary.⁶ The leadership attempted to initiate or at least study the possibility of reform in several political areas--particularly electoral, parliamentary, constitutional, and trade union politics. Nonetheless, most of the grandiose intentions quickly degenerated into piecemeal reforms. Furthermore, the measures designed to modernize the country's legislative system "were not really necessary and some were downright regressive."⁷

The leaders' position on the issue of political pluralism had gone through a remarkably rapid transformation. As late as July 1988, Grosz firmly rejected the idea of a multi-party system.⁸ Even Pozsgay, the most liberal member of the leadership, remarked at the time that if a multi-party regime were to be established, it would result in a comedy of "partner parties" for the HSWP, and the situation would be "even more ridiculous than it is today."⁹ Nonetheless, in November 1988 the government permitted the establishment of political parties and pertinent laws were enacted in a few months.

Taking advantage of the fluid political situation and the relative tolerance of party and government leaders, a large number of democratic political organizations quickly emerged and began to establish themselves as parties.¹⁰ Some of these, such as the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the Independent Smallholders' Party (ISP) already existed prior to the elimination of non-Communist political organizations in 1948. Others, such as the HDF, the Association of Free Democrats (AFD), or the Association of Young Democrats (AYD) were newly created.

A further milestone in Hungarian politics was the reburial of Imre Nagy. The opposition had long demanded an appropriate funeral for Nagy and his associates executed in 1958. In October 1988 Janos Berecz, the HSWP CC's secretary in charge of ideology, announced that Nagy would soon receive a "proper tomb," signalling the leadership's weakening resolve.¹¹ The reburial that took place on the 31st anniversary of the execution (June 1989) attracted tens of thousands and offered an opportunity to opposition politicians to gain public recognition.

The June 1989 Polish elections provided additional momentum to the HSWP's reformist wing. In April, an agreement was reached between the Polish United Workers' Party and the Solidarity-led opposition which led to the holding of partially free elections. The accord allowed 35 percent of the seats in the Polish parliament (Sejm) to be open for free competition and all 100 seats in the Senate. The results astonished not only foreign observers, but even the most optimistic members of the Polish opposition: they won 260 of the 261 Sejm seats open for competition and all but one of the Senate seats.¹² Mikhail Gorbachev's explicit rejection of the Brezhnev Doctrine in his July 1989 speech to the Council of Europe offered an additional boost to Hungary's reform-Communists.

Between June and September 1989 so-called round-table negotiations were held between the HSWP and the opposition. The round table, aside from its significance as a new form of dialogue between the rulers and the opposition, served as a forum for the opposition parties to familiarize the HSWP, the other parties, and most important of all, the general public with their views and programs. Agreement about the new electoral law was reached

in early September. A national referendum held in November decided that Hungary's president would be elected following the March-April parliamentary elections.

In the meantime, the HSWP had continued to lose support and faced internal crises. In late June 1989, the top ranks of the party were reorganized. The party leadership elected Nyers as Chairman and as a member of a four-man Presidium also including Pozsgay, Grosz, and Nemeth. The October 1989 HSWP congress resulted in the creation of a new, reform-minded socialist party (Hungarian Socialist Party [HSP]--Magyar Szocialista Part) led by the erstwhile reform-Communists of the HSWP: Nemeth, Nyers, Pozsgay, and Foreign Minister Gyula Horn. The HSWP, reduced to its hard-line elements, continued to operate.

On October 23, 1989, the 33rd anniversary of the aborted 1956 Revolution, Matyas Szuros, the Chairman of the National Assembly proclaimed the Republic of Hungary (in place of the People's Republic). The day before parliament decided to abolish the HSWP's private army, the 60,000-strong Workers' Guard. The winter of 1989-1990 was an eventful political period the likes of which the country had not seen for decades. Newly formed parties were recruiting members and campaigning before the upcoming elections. The HSP, inheriting its governing position from the HSWP, attempted to distance itself from the "mistakes of the past" and followed a liberal course. Nonetheless, the election results demonstrated that Hungarians embraced the opportunity of real choice and turned their backs upon the country's rulers.¹³

The elections were won handily by the right-of-center HDF (42.5 percent), followed by the left-of-center AFD (23.8 percent), and the pre-1948 favorite ISP (11.4 percent). The HSP only secured 8.5 percent of the votes while the HSWP was unable to reach the 4

percent level necessary for parliamentary representation.¹⁴ In early May the new governing coalition, composed of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, Independent Smallholders' Party, and the Christian Democratic People's Party (CDPP) began work under the premiership of Jozsef Antall (HDF). In August the legislature elected Arpad Goncz (AFD) as President of the Republic of Hungary.

Since the Antall-government took office, it has had to face a multitude of political, economic, and social problems. The government and legislature have made a concerted effort to drastically restructure the political and economic system guiding Hungary's return to political pluralism and market-oriented economy. The government's major problem continued to be the country's disastrous overall economic situation--high inflation, low productivity, large foreign debt, to mention just a few problems--for which no easy medicine could be found. The Antall government faced several widespread strikes of which the most memorable was the taxi drivers' walkout in October 1990 that paralyzed ground travel throughout the country for days. In December, opposition criticism, disagreements within the governing coalition, and the incompetence of some ministers forced a limited reorganization of the government. In spite of these problems, and although Hungary shared the socio-economic predicament of underdeveloped countries, transformation to a Hungarian democracy was well on the way by the end of 1990.

B. Foreign Policy

Since the early 1980s foreign policy was one of the few areas that Hungary's Communist leaders could call a success. During the 1988-1990 period this trend continued, even under the short tenures of the Grosz and Nemeth governments. Within the Soviet bloc,

Hungary's affairs were generally well-managed, with a few exceptions. Ceausescu's plan to erase thousands of villages--most of which happened to be populated by Hungarians--incited the anger of Hungarian citizens. The Hungarian leadership made several unsuccessful attempts to iron out differences with Romania. Another contentious issue that also exacerbated the Grosz government's crisis of legitimacy concerned a joint hydroelectric project with Czechoslovakia that the Hungarian opposition fiercely opposed due to potentially harmful economic and environmental effects. Eventually the project was unilaterally broken off by the Hungarian government thereby causing tension with the Prague leadership.

In spite of the dramatic transformation of Hungarian politics from post-Communism to a multiparty democracy, Budapest's relationship with Moscow was relatively undisturbed. First, by 1988 Gorbachev apparently had decided not to interfere with the developments of Eastern Europe. He renounced the Brezhnev Doctrine during his March 1988 visit to Yugoslavia and again, even more explicitly, in July in his address to the Council of Europe. The Soviet leadership recognized diversity in the bloc and appeared committed to consultation rather than issuing directives to the region. Moscow's first priority was taking care of its own economic and political problems. Even political--let alone military--intervention would have undercut Gorbachev's efforts to divert resources away from the military to domestic needs and to gain Western assistance in doing so. The Soviet Union played the role of an interested but not terribly concerned bystander throughout the East European transformation. Political developments in Hungary, for instance, were generally reported objectively and without scathing criticism in the USSR.¹⁵ Second, Hungarian politicians were continuously reassuring Moscow about their sensitivity to Soviet interests

and their actions reflected awareness of the geopolitical realities. Nonetheless, Moscow and Budapest disagreed on several issues. One of these had centered around the utility of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance until it was disbanded in January 1991.¹⁶

Hungary did face short-term conflicts with Czechoslovakia and East Germany following the Nemeth government's decision to dismantle the "iron curtain" on Hungary's border with Austria. Berlin and Prague condemned the Hungarian decision. Later the GDR and Czechoslovakia fiercely protested Budapest's refusal to return East German refugees to their homeland, but the rapid collapse of these regimes prevented the development of serious crises. In fact, the decision yielded Hungary considerable political capital in the West, and particularly in West Germany. Although the Nemeth and Antall governments continued to make gestures toward post-Ceausescu Romania, tensions between the two countries did not ease perceptibly. Hungary offered medical and humanitarian aid to Romania following the December 1989 Revolution, indeed, Foreign Minister Gyula Horn was the first foreign statesman to offer aid and visit the country.

Hungary achieved its greatest foreign policy successes with the industrialized West.¹⁷ In 1988-1990 Hungarian leaders met virtually all of their Western counterparts a number of times. For example, Hungarian leaders met their American colleagues on several occasions. Grosz visited the U.S. in 1988 and met President Reagan; in the following year Nemeth hosted President Bush in Budapest, while in the fall of 1990 both President Goncez and Prime Minister Antall were welcomed in the White House. The Antall government intends to build on the successful foreign policy of the reform-Communist Foreign Minister Gyula Horn,

whose name has become synonymous with the aggressive Hungarian opening towards the West.

In its economic predicament Hungary is in dire need of Western good will and economic aid. One of the main themes of the present government is the "return to Europe," that is to say, Western Europe. Some successes were already achieved in 1988-1990. In November 1990 Hungary became the first East European state to be admitted into the Council of Europe. A year later the European Community extended associate membership to Hungary, as well as to Czecho-Slovakia and Poland. Although full membership in the European Community remains a faraway prospect, Budapest seems determined to achieve that objective in the 1990s. In spite of its crisis-ridden economy, the country has been able to secure loans and sympathetic treatment from Western creditors.

Part II. The Transformation of Civil-Military Relations

The political transformation of 1988-1990 resulted in equally significant changes in civil-military relations. By the end of 1990 the political structure of the Hungarian armed forces was completely reorganized and the military brought under the de jure control of the democratically elected parliament and its President. In June 1989 the National Assembly approved the text of the new military oath that obliged soldiers (along with civil servants and policemen) to serve the Republic of Hungary and its Constitution. The new pledge expresses the independence of the HPA from party politics and ideology, the end of party control, and the allegiance of its signers to Hungary's post-Communist constitutional order and national sovereignty.¹⁸ In November the new oath was signed by over 99 percent of the HPA's professional corps.¹⁹

Not surprisingly, none of the existing models of Communist party-army dynamics considered the possibility of such a drastic transformation of civil-military relations. Models pertaining to the Soviet Union have examined the subject matter as an essentially static phenomenon and ignored the possibility of change in the relationship.²⁰ Theoretical constructs concerning Eastern Europe do contemplate the dynamics of evolution but none discuss the possibility of transformation of civil-military relations from a Communist to a democratic political system.²¹

A. Depoliticization: The End of Party Control

The changes in the political life of the armed forces were very rapid. One of the main avenues of the Communist party's control over the military was the extensive system of party organizations in the armed forces; their gradual elimination and the subsequent prohibition of any party activity in the army was the most important aspect of depoliticization.

If one is to believe General Szombathelyi, Grosz's military adviser, the party had relinquished its control over the HPA and "did not demand any privileges in the armed forces" following the May 1988 HSWP Conference.²² In late 1988, the HSWP CC's Administrative Department, the CC organization responsible for the armed forces, was abolished within the framework of an organizational reshuffling. This did not yet mean, however, that the HPA ceased to be the HSWP's army. For all practical purposes, the army's Supreme Commander remained HSWP chief Grosz and the political allegiances of the HPA continued to be unambiguous. Neither the HPA's internal regulations nor the Constitution prescribed who possessed the ultimate authority over the military. Hungary's

Prime Minister, Miklos Nemeth, inadvertently provided a good illustration of this problem. When asked in July 1989 who was the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, the Prime Minister answered that "it is not possible at present to give an unequivocal reply to this."²³ The National Assembly simply did not have the authority to deny the HSWP an outright takeover of the armed forces since the HPA was under party, not state or government control.²⁴ The law permitting HPA personnel to join political parties other than the HSWP was approved by parliament, against the opposition of the army leadership, only in late June 1989. In reality, the HSWP maintained direct control over the HPA until late summer 1989.²⁵

Throughout the first half of 1989 the military press published a large number of articles examining politico-ideological decay within the armed forces. Most of these studies, however, did not see--or did not want to overtly acknowledge--the hopeless disintegration of the HSWP and its youth organization (CYL) within the HPA. Instead, they sought to remedy the ills of the army's HSWP organizations by prescribing "enhanced party discipline" and, especially, "renewal."²⁶ The criticisms targeted the "work style" and "authoritative atmosphere" of seemingly endless party meetings as well as the disenchantment of the party members who frequently failed to attend.²⁷ This is, of course, not to say that the majority of the army's professional cadres shared these views; rather it signifies that as late as the spring of 1989 only these opinions could be published in the military press. It is clear, however, that as a general rule, the older generation in the HPA was reluctant to embrace the political transformation taking place in Hungary.

The generals, connected by myriad ties to the HSWP, would have preferred even the admission of new parties in the military to the abolition of the HPA's HSWP organizations, according to Defense Minister Karpati.²⁸ The army leadership repeatedly stressed the professional corps' "commitment to socialism" and that the HSWP's "influence" in the armed forces was justified as long as its program was acceptable for the population.²⁹ They conveniently ignored the fact that Hungarians were never asked whether or not they "accepted" the Communist party's program. In May, General Szombathelyi still insisted that there was nothing objectionable in a politicized army as most militaries did play a political role. He added that direct HSWP control over the HPA ceased in early 1989 although the party did not wish to give up its influence (i.e., organizations) in the armed forces.³⁰ In September, the Code of Service was modified in to allow HPA personnel to join other political parties and to participate in religious services in uniform.³¹

A few months and a hot political summer later, speakers at the HPA's Party Conference conceded that the "membership had been turning away from the HSWP and was declining"; and that although approximately 82 percent of professional soldiers retained their party cards the "signs of social crisis did not leave the HPA unaffected."³² Even though at the September 1989 meeting of the HPA's HSWP Committee the existence of "reform committees" within the organization was denied, the same committee held an important meeting in mid-September at which several reform proposals concerning the military's depoliticization were heard. The participants agreed that the army could not be used to promote political interests and voiced their intention to bar all parties (including the HSWP) from the armed forces.³³

At this point, however, there was no consensus within the military--or more precisely, between most of the army leaders and the officer corps--regarding the future political position of the HPA. At the September HPA Party conference General Bela Gyorgyi, First Secretary of the HSWP in the armed forces, acknowledged that the demand for the military's depoliticization aroused "uncertainty" in the army. Nonetheless, the delegates agreed that HSWP organizations should leave the armed forces (the Ministry of Defense [MOD] by the end of 1989, other HPA bodies by late 1990).³⁴ Some participants called for an acceleration of this schedule; they got their wish since by early 1990 there were no active party organizations in the military.

It is important to note that while senior army leaders were reluctant to embrace the political transformation, throughout the process they continued to reassure the population that the HPA would remain calm and had no intention in getting involved in politics.³⁵ Although few Hungarians believed in such an eventuality, taking such an unambiguous stance certainly earned points for the armed forces. The fact that some generals were less than happy seeing the unfolding political events is entirely understandable in view of the privileges and high party contacts they stood to lose.

By February 1990, the Nemeth government's Deputy Defense Minister Szombathelyi announced that the depoliticization of the army was completed.³⁶ For four decades, the Communist propaganda machine had made an immense effort to socialize the armed forces but in the end it turned out to be ineffectual. What were the reasons for this failure? First of all, as the models of Herspring and Volgyes on the one hand, and of Alexiev on the other pointed out, the "socialist value system" with its heavy emphasis on "international" values

had never replaced national allegiances in the armed forces. Second, many members of the professional officer corps, let alone the draftees, resented the Soviet domination over Hungary in general, and over the HPA in particular. Third, professional personnel had been annoyed by the large amount of time spent with political-ideological training at the expense of the improvement of professional skills. Fourth, the deterioration of the living standards of professional cadres adversely affected their morale. Fifth, as a result of these factors, the social prestige of the military profession had decreased drastically, therefore, fewer qualified candidates were interested in this career, consequently the HPA had faced profound recruitment problems.

The majority of professional cadres, then, welcomed "the end of ideology" and the opportunity to concentrate on more specifically military missions.³⁷ In September 1989 the participants of the HSWP and opposition round-table negotiations agreed to set up a Defense Council following the general elections. The President of the Republic, the Chairman of Parliament, the Prime Minister, the members of the government, one representative of each party in parliament, and the Chief-of-Staff of the armed forces would constitute this Council which would exercise the powers of the President and the government in cases of emergency.³⁸

In early 1990 the Defense Law was modified, according to the recommendations of the round-table, so as to revoke the licence of the armed forces to interfere in domestic political processes.³⁹ This drastically changed the character of the Hungarian army, for it freed the military from one of its most important functions under Communism: the defense of the regime from its internal foes. In March 1990 parliament agreed to change the name of

the armed forces from Hungarian People's Army (Magyar Nephadsereg) to Hungarian Army (Magyar Honvedseg--HA).

The new Hungarian parliament included only two deputies with extensive military affiliations, both long retired and imprisoned by the Communists. Kalman Keri (born in 1901) had been a high-ranking officer in Horthy's army and subsequently the "tenant of several Soviet and Hungarian penal camps and prisons."⁴⁰ The other was General Bela Kiraly (born in 1912) who returned after a 33-year stay in the United States. Both former officers--along with other martyrs of the Hungarian armed forces persecuted by the Communist regime--were rehabilitated.

B. Political Officers, Military Training, and Prestige

In December 1989 Prime Minister Nemeth announced that since HPA "no longer needed" the Main Political Administration (MPA), one of its most important components the MPA was abolished.⁴¹ The MOD had already reclassified political officers as "educational, social, and political" officers in September 1989. Their new job description was to offer patriotic training, as well as cultural and political enlightenment to conscripts although one might suspect that such an abrupt decision resulted in little more than a change of labels.⁴² The Antall-government's Defense Minister, Lajos Fur, then decided that these functions ought to be carried out by unit commanders and their subordinates as in most democratic armies (or, as it were, in the pre-war Hungarian army). Secretary of State for Defense Erno Raffay justified this measure; saying that the new government wanted a depoliticized army and did not need officers who tried to imbue recruits with the "socialist-internationalist" value system.⁴³ Shortly thereafter, in August 1990, the MOD announced that some 900

erstwhile political officers would be transferred to other areas in the Hungarian Army or discharged.⁴⁴

The power struggle and jockeying for positions accompanying Hungary's political transformation affected the other military positions as well. By February 1990 more than 50 generals and 400 colonels were retired; the average age of professional soldiers dropped to 35 years.⁴⁵ Many officers (1,700 in the first half of 1990 alone) left the service as a result of having better career opportunities in civilian life. The question of what to do with those officers who had been active in the HSWP was also addressed by the new political leadership.

At a session of the parliament's Defense Committee, representatives debated the "red or expert" issue and came to the conclusion that since "it was impossible to dismiss the entire army" professional competence should be the decisive factor.⁴⁶ Defense Minister Fur said that while most officers had been HSWP members, it was impossible to say how many of them had been committed Communists. The new MOD, he added, was hopeful that the mentality of Communist officers could be altered, but those who could not change their ways would have to leave the armed forces.⁴⁷

The need for the rapid replacement of officers active in the HSWP necessitated the revamping of military education and training within the framework of the army's transformation. Since the army's internal repressive function became irrelevant, officer training was altered to reflect this change.⁴⁸ In the Communist era as much as 30 percent of the instruction was taken up by Marxism-Leninism and other politico-ideological subjects although the dogmatism that had characterized these courses diminished after 1987.⁴⁹

Starting with the 1989-1990 academic year, ideological training at the colleges was replaced by courses on military and security policy, international military law, and military history. At the Zrinyi Military Academy new subjects were introduced to ensure that education was based on national interest.⁵⁰ Instead of socialist-internationalist values, officer training emphasized Hungarian political and military history, democratic values, and patriotism.

The structure of education at military colleges was also reorganized. The 1987 reform that reduced the training period to three years was unsuccessful as the pool of candidates did not improve--one high-ranking officer remarked that "we could only attract mediocre students, and I am being tactful"--and the quality of training suffered.⁵¹ Therefore, military leaders successfully called for the reintroduction of a four-year program and raising admission standards. Field training mirrored the change in Hungary's military doctrine: only methods and elements of defensive warfare were practiced. In order to guarantee the continued preparedness of the officer corps, the MOD planned to test the knowledge and aptitude of officers in five-year intervals. Promotion would be conditional on performance in these examinations; those who failed risked being discharged.⁵²

In the 1949-1989 period approximately 2,600 Hungarian officers received their military college degrees in the USSR, 120 in Poland, and 65 in Czechoslovakia. In addition, around 4,000 HPA officers participated in post-graduate and other courses (2-10 months in duration) in the USSR.⁵³ While the training of Hungarian cadets in the Soviet Union was under review by the new government, the Soviet government also signalled that it was no longer willing to subsidize the education of foreign officers. A presidential decree permitted Soviet military colleges to charge for the training of foreign nationals, that reportedly costs

US\$ 1,500 a month per student.⁵⁴ Only 20 percent of Hungarian officer candidates who studied in the USSR in 1989-1990--those close to completing their programs--enrolled in the 1990-1991 academic year; the rest were recalled and transferred to other institutions.

According to Defense Minister Fur, Hungary would like to limit the training of its officer candidates in the USSR to a "few specialized areas." Instead, the MOD plans to send cadets to Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy, and the United States. Because of its lack of funds, the hope was that at least initially Hungarian cadets could be supported by the host institutions through special scholarships.⁵⁵

The MOD would like the new army to attract the best and the brightest of young Hungarian men, but it is unclear what these hopes are based on. In the recent past, only 60 percent of enrolled students graduated, largely because of inferior academic performance and disenchantment with the armed forces.⁵⁶ The prestige of the military career is at an all-time low and unlikely to increase, primarily because of the low income of professional soldiers. In the first half of 1990, 1,700 officers requested their discharge, in spite of the MOD's efforts to improve the conditions of career soldiers.⁵⁷ What must be even more troubling to military leaders is that usually officers with the highest qualifications leave the service as they are the most attractive for prospective civilian employers. Professional military personnel had not been permitted to take on a second job but their wage increases had not kept up with the high inflation rate of recent years. As a result, approximately 10 percent of active officers live under the official poverty line, in the case of NCOs this figure is even higher.⁵⁸ The MOD wants to raise the salary of its professional corps but the government's willingness and ability to remedy the situation at a time of profound economic difficulties is

doubtful. The prestige and the relative material rewards of the profession is the lowest in Eastern Europe. At the same time the demands on line officers are immense, their life expectancy (58.9 years) is six years lower than that of other Hungarian males.⁵⁹ Every fourth officer retires for medical reasons.⁶⁰

In addition, the army's arsenal is clearly substandard and because of its decreasing budget it even has trouble maintaining its equipment, a factor that is sure to repel technically inclined youths. For all these reasons, it is difficult to believe that the profession's reputation will be considerably improved in the foreseeable future. Thus, Hungarian service academies expect to face recruitment problems in the future, therefore the system of the well functioning military high schools--an expensive solution that has had a limited impact--will be probably maintained for lack of other solutions in the foreseeable future. In the future, in contrast with earlier practice, graduates of these schools will have to pass the entrance examination administered by military colleges.⁶¹

Another factor contributing to the low prestige of the profession is that the armed forces--more precisely, the military leadership--has for long been perceived by the population as the refuge of the extremely incompetent and corrupt. A few recently published books only confirmed this belief.⁶² Moreover, for decades Hungarians had viewed the military not as the guarantor of the nation's security but as a representative of foreign interests. It is possible that the "nationalization" of the military may change the minds of some youths about a military career. Despite the severe budgetary problems, the MOD plans to demonstrate the importance of the army's national character by introducing new uniforms "expressing the spirit of the Hungarian Army" as early as 1992.⁶³ In addition, other external attributes such

as manners of address ("comrade" was replaced by "brother-in-arms" [bajtars] under Karpati only to be changed to "sir" [ur] by Fur), ceremonial processions were altered to conform to pre-1945 practices.⁶⁴

In short, by the end of 1990 the Hungarian army once again emerged as a national institution. Again, none of the theoretical approaches considered could anticipate these developments, consequently, none is relevant to Hungarian civil-military relations in the 1990s for this is no longer a "Communist party-state" but a constitutionally established democratic polity.

Part III. Democratization and Reorganization of the Armed Forces

The internal democratization and reorganization of the Hungarian armed forces are very important elements of the transformation of civil-military relations for they demonstrate the extent of military depoliticization. The result of this phenomenon was that by the end of 1990 the principles commanding the internal workings of the HPA had become in many ways similar to those of its democratic counterparts elsewhere.

A. Internal Democratization

Although military leaders attempted to improve the lot of professional cadres in the 1988-1990 period, in important respects their conditions had not changed. For instance, young officers and NCOs were often at the mercy of their superiors and the Code of Service obliged them to seek remedy of their problems from the same individuals who caused them. Although a National Federation of Soldier's Associations was created in the first half of 1990, many line officers felt that this body could not solve their problems since it was

controlled by their commanders. As a safeguard, professional soldiers established the Association to Protect Soldiers' Interests in September.⁶⁵ The MOD did not debate the validity of the soldiers' complaints but rather insisted that relations between the ranks had to be governed by the Service Code. Defense Minister Fur suggested that both sides wait until the Constitutional Court rules on the matter.

In contrast, the service conditions of conscripts had further improved in the 1988-1990 period. In early 1989 the HPA introduced monthly "reception days" when conscripts could forego the usual channels (i.e., requesting remedy for their complaints from their direct superiors) and discuss their grievances directly with their unit commanders.

According to then Defense Minister Karpati, it was hoped that this measure would disperse the soldiers' feeling of defenselessness.⁶⁶ With the abolition of political-ideological education, conscripts were allowed to spend their free time as they saw fit. These were important measures not only because they made conscript life easier, but also because they signalled changes in the military establishment's attitude toward the civilian population.

Relations between the army and the Churches had shown a marked improvement in the 1988-1990 period. This process started in the mid-1980s with a few minor gestures extended to theological students serving in the HPA. Starting in 1990 they were required only to complete a one-month basic training preceding their studies. For the balance of their service time they would work as military chaplains following their ordination.⁶⁷ In September 1990 a delegation of Italian military chaplains visited the MOD to share their experiences. The post-Communist army's leaders had already familiarized themselves with the system of military chaplaincy in the Austrian and West German armed forces; an MOD

spokesman said that the Ministry wanted to study the Italian and Swiss systems before committing itself to a proposal.⁶⁸

The question of alternative (i.e., unarmed) military service was seriously discussed in the MOD for the first time in June 1988.⁶⁹ The Defense Law was modified to allow conscientious objectors to serve in the HPA without weapons starting in 1989. In March 1989 the Minister of Justice suspended the prison sentences of the 70 young men who refused military service on grounds of religious beliefs and conscientious objection. In June, those opposed to armed service were offered two options: alternative service in the armed forces or work in the health and social welfare fields.⁷⁰

The length of mandatory military service of conscripted soldiers was eased on several occasions starting with the early 1980s. The terms of service of the Hungarian armed forces changed in conjunction with the democratization processes and the shrinking military's size. The length of service was reduced from 18 to 12 months in 1990, a measure already proposed by the Nemeth government in 1989. As a result of this measure 15,000 soldiers expecting to serve 18 months at the time of their entrance to the armed forces were discharged after only a year's service in August 1990. The total service time thus became 22 months (12 months full time and 10 months in the reserves).⁷¹ The terms of alternative and civilian service were reduced from 28 to 22 months as well.

B. Structural Reorganization

Already by 1987 the Hungarian forces were restructured along the lines of the brigade system. The most important decisions concerning the reorganization of the HPA's administrative setup were taken in late 1989. In December 1989, two days after a regular

meeting of Warsaw Pact defense ministers in Budapest, Prime Minister Nemeth announced several changes in Hungarian defense policy. The government justified the measures by its new defensive security doctrine that required the reorganization of the military establishment.⁷² This task entailed "drastic and expedient" reductions in manpower and equipment within the Warsaw Pact in general and in the Hungarian Army in particular. Clearly, some of these decisions were occasioned by Hungary's extremely difficult economic situation. Furthermore, the new measures were expected to meet with popular endorsement as well as the approval of the international community.

One of the most important facets of the reform package was the radical reorganization of the military command structure. In fact, nearly all employees of the Ministry proper had assumed new positions during the reorganization. The most significant change in the structure of the military command was that the MOD was divided into two separate entities: a Defense Ministry (MOD) with a relatively small staff of 135 in place of the earlier 1,500, and a so called "Command of the Hungarian Army" (CHA). In the new system the MOD is responsible for military policy and planning, doctrinal matters, the military's foreign contacts, and other administrative and theoretical matters. The CHA, the practical arm of the defense establishment, is charged with the tasks of supervising actual military training and development, exercises, and the like. The MOD is accountable to the Prime Minister and the government, while the Commander of the Hungarian Army--in accordance with the new Constitution--is responsible to the President of the Republic, who is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.⁷³

Changes in military personnel were also implemented to accommodate the new organizational scheme and to retire and promote cadres in late 1989. Defense Minister Karpati retained his post until the national elections of March-April 1990. General Kalman Lorincz was appointed Commander of the HPA, a position that gave him the rank of State Secretary. General Laszlo Borsits was appointed as Lorincz's first deputy and Chief of Staff.⁷⁴ Several former deputy ministers were retired, among them General Lajos Krasznai, the erstwhile head of the HPA's MPA, who was transferred to the diplomatic corps.⁷⁵

Shortly after the new appointments were publicized, observers pointed out that some of the military's new leaders had openly discussed their orthodox political views in the past and thus did not seem to fit the concept of radical military reform. The Nemeth government's answer to these charges was that personnel changes could be best characterized as "generational," adding that many more cadres were soon to be retired.⁷⁶ The government also suggested that although all defense ministers in the WTO were military officers, because of the Hungarian reorganization it was now possible to appoint a civilian. In fact, quickly after the announcement of the reforms Karpati "became" a civilian, having donned a suit in lieu of his uniform, and entered the reserves. In mid-May 1990, Jozsef Antall named Lajos Fur as his Minister of Defense. Fur, a prominent HDF politician and former university history professor, had no experience in military affairs at the time of this appointment. Admittedly, not all military personnel were in favor of the reforms announced in December 1989. According to the MOD, some commanders unable to identify with the changes were dismissed or transferred. At the same time, as MOD spokesman Colonel

Keleti conceded, some WTO leaders were perturbed by the swiftness and scope of the Hungarian military reforms.⁷⁷

The main purpose of the command structure's reform was to render the armed forces accountable to the Hungarian government and the President of the Republic. This aspect of the reorganization--and it should be emphasized that it was introduced by the (reform)-Communist government--demonstrated a momentuous change in civil-military relations. Whereas the military was previously subordinated to the party, the December 1989 measures ensured that the armed forces would be controlled not by any party organization but by the government and, ultimately, the President. The implementation of this reform broke with the 40-year practice of the Communist Party's direct control of the armed forces.

C. Cuts in Manpower, Equipment, and Defense Allocations

The more favorable international environment--particularly the improvement of superpower relations and the absence of Moscow's disapproval--enabled Nemeth's government to implement considerable reductions in Hungary's armed forces.⁷⁸ In January 1989 the government announced that Hungary would cut its troop strength and equipment by 9 percent (9,300 men) in 1989-1990.⁷⁹ In late November the Council of Ministers decided on another 20-25 percent of manpower by the end of 1991.⁸⁰ The result of these cuts will be a much smaller, lightly armed military. The army's arsenal may improve in relative terms as the most obsolete weaponry will be discarded. In January 1990, the armed forces was composed of 106,800 men and 15,000 civilian employees. By the end of 1991, the number was to be reduced to 75,000 men, one-third of them career soldiers, plus 15,000

civilians, for a grand total of 90,000--a reduction of over 30,000. According to Fur, the military's manpower would stabilize at 0.6-0.8 percent of the population.⁸¹

By all accounts, the arsenal of the HPA has been decidedly mediocre but observers presumed that it was sufficient for Hungary's defense needs. The shocking inadequacy of the armed forces' equipment was revealed by some of the generals summoned before the ad hoc parliamentary committee examining the allegations in Colonel Bokor's book, Petty Tyrants in Uniform. This thin volume gave a grim portrayal of corruption and incompetence in the HPA that astounded the population. The parliamentary inquiry came to the conclusion that Hungary's defense capabilities were hopelessly insufficient.

General Mihaly Torok, for instance, explained that Hungary possessed neither good quality anti-tank guns to hold off an offensive nor equipment that could secure her borders.⁸² In addition, the army had not a single bomber, no sufficient air defense capabilities to protect either the population or the ground forces, and whatever equipment it owned was on average 30 years old. The vast majority of armored carriers were often unable to leave their bases because of poor repair and obsolescence. Torok added that the reason for this situation was the distribution of tasks in the WTO and that the Pact's antiquated offensive doctrine had rendered Hungary effectively impotent to defend itself. The defense of the country's air space, for example, was of "tolerable" quality only when the army's capabilities were complemented by those of the Southern Group of Soviet Forces (SGSF) stationed in Hungary.⁸³

Hungary had never received the most modern equipment from the Soviet Union. According to General Janza, the Head of the MOD's Department of Economics, the weapons

the HPA could buy from the USSR always lagged behind the Soviet military technology by 10-12 years.⁸⁴ Even though the Soviets sold relatively sophisticated equipment, such as MiG-29 airplanes, to countries like Egypt and India, Hungary never received any such equipment. The lack of Moscow's willingness to entrust advanced weapons to its Hungarian ally caused a great deal of resentment among HPA officers.⁸⁵ Due to the drastically reduced defense budgets, it is unlikely that the MOD will be able to substantially improve the army's arsenal in the foreseeable future. These problems were exacerbated by the fact that beginning in 1991, Hungary had to pay in hard currency for the weapons and spare parts procured from the USSR--and after the disintegration of the Soviet Union from Russia--because of a bilateral agreement to conduct all trade in convertible currency. Hungary has, nonetheless, expressed interest in acquiring new weapons, for instance T-72 tanks, from the arsenal of the former East German armed forces.⁸⁶ (Reportedly, Czechoslovakia and Poland are also eyeing the same tanks.) Hungary would like to obtain more modern surplus equipment from the United States as well.⁸⁷

Nevertheless, diminishing government allocations make even these modest plans unlikely to succeed; indeed, it is doubtful whether the Hungarian Army will be able to maintain its arsenal at the current level. On average, military spending accounted for 4.1 percent of the GDP in the 1986-1989 period.⁸⁸ The government's defense budget for 1989, adjusted for inflation, dropped by 17 percent.⁸⁹ The 1990 budget of the army was slashed by 30 percent in real terms, compared to 1989. Only 35.8 billion forint (US\$ 560 million) was set aside from the budget for defense purposes.⁹⁰ Initially, Fur contended that the armed forces would need a minimum of 75 billion forint (approximately US\$ 880 million) in

1991 to maintain operations and to acquire some much-needed equipment. While annual per capita military expenditures were \$80 in Hungary, they were three times higher in Czechoslovakia and one-and-a-half times higher in Romania.⁹¹ Notwithstanding Fur's claims, defense only received 54.46 billion forint from Hungary's 1991 budget (of which the MOD had to generate 7.05 billion), some 30 percent less in real terms than in the previous year.⁹²

Hungary's small defense industry has been very adversely affected by the economic crisis in general, and the drastic reductions in military spending in particular. Because of the elimination of state subsidies and the dramatic diminution of domestic and foreign orders, the divisions of most enterprises producing military equipment have been unprofitable since the mid-1980s.⁹³ The cuts in the army's manpower and equipment dealt an additional blow to the defense industry resulting in layoffs and enormous losses in revenue. The industry is in a profound crisis and its recovery is difficult to foresee.⁹⁴

Part IV. Hungary, the Warsaw Pact, and Soviet Troop Withdrawals

The collapse of East European Communism was concomitant with the disintegration of the regional economic and military organizations. The CMEA was unceremoniously abolished in January 1991, the Warsaw Pact met the same fate on July 1. By the end of 1990, the WTO was reduced to a pro forma military organization as a result of the East European revolutions and the reunification of the two Germanies.

A. Hungary and the Pact

Until 1988 the questioning of Hungary's membership in the Warsaw Pact was one of the few remaining taboos in the country. As a result of the democratization process, which entailed the rapid liberalization of the media, the issue of Hungary's Warsaw Pact membership soon became one of the most frequently debated topics in the Hungarian media. The publication of the views of Soviet Academician Oleg Bogomolov that a neutral Hungary would not pose a threat to the security of the Soviet Union gave further impetus to this discussion.⁹⁵ In his Council of Europe address in the summer of 1989, Gorbachev renounced the Brezhnev doctrine and said that "any attempts to restrict the sovereignty of states--friends, allies, or any others--are inadmissible."⁹⁶ Hungarian politicians also received signals from senior Soviet officials--Politburo member Yegeny Primakov, CPSU Spokesman Nikolai Shishlin and others--that the USSR would tolerate WTO dropouts and "Hungary could leave the alliance if it chose to."⁹⁷

The process that culminated in Budapest's announcement of its intention to withdraw from the WTO in June 1990 approximately corresponded to the democratization of Hungarian politics. In April 1989 Foreign Minister Horn had said that political changes in Hungary were valuable within the WTO framework and withdrawal from the Pact was but an illusion.⁹⁸ By mid-year, however, the official media began to publish articles and interviews questioning Hungary's WTO membership. In June, for instance, Professor Istvan Dioszegi, a respected diplomatic historian, was quoted as saying that "from a Hungarian perspective the alliance is devoid of any reciprocity and is nothing else but the unilateral limitation of Hungarian sovereignty."⁹⁹ Still, the government while allowing itself to

criticize certain aspects of the Pact--Foreign Minister Horn, for instance, said that the WTO should concentrate on military cooperation rather than on ideological or bilateral questions--was not officially considering abandoning the alliance.

One of the first issues the new legislature discussed in May 1990 was the withdrawal from the WTO. The AFD suggested that the government decide the issue as quickly as possible.¹⁰⁰ International reaction to the AFD's motion was decidedly cool.¹⁰¹ Not unexpectedly, WTO leaders rejected Western (and Hungarian) views that the Pact was in decline and in a deep crisis. General Piotr Lushev, Commander-in-Chief of the WTO's United Armed Forces stated in May that "in today's Eastern Europe there is no--and there can be no--other alternative mechanism that could influence Europe's stability more efficiently than the WTO."¹⁰² In the spring of 1990, the Budapest government began to seriously study the possibility of a unilateral withdrawal from the Pact. According to the Hungarian position, the Warsaw Pact contradicted the country's national interests, had become "obsolete and superfluous," and "its existence was not justified by the given circumstances of European development."¹⁰³ At the June 1990 Moscow meeting of the WTO's Political Consultative Committee, Prime Minister Antall proposed the elimination of the Pact's military component by the end of 1991. More importantly, he announced Hungary's intention to leave the WTO's military arm in 1991 but made it clear that the ultimate objective of his government was full withdrawal from the Pact.¹⁰⁴ Following his talks with Soviet Defense Minister Dimitrii Yazov, Fur announced that he had informed his Soviet counterpart that Hungary would no longer take part in joint WTO exercises, would

remove its armed forces from the Warsaw Pact Joint Command, and place them entirely under national authority.¹⁰⁵

Hungary's Parliament voted overwhelmingly (232 for, none against, and 4 abstentions) for a full withdrawal from the Pact on June 26, 1990.¹⁰⁶ Soviet media reaction to the vote was negative but commentators did concede that "the Hungarian people were brought to their knees under the flag of the WTO."¹⁰⁷ In October, shortly before his visit to the United States, Antall urged Washington to fill the void in Eastern Europe left by Soviet retrenchment, expressing his preference for sustained American military presence in Europe despite the end of the Cold War. At the same time he confirmed that "even if the military part of the Pact is not dissolved in 1991, we will withdraw from it."¹⁰⁸ As it turned out, this was not necessary as the WTO quietly expired on July 1, 1991.

B. The End of Soviet Occupation

As political repression of the opposition weakened in the late 1980s, the sensitive issue of Soviet troops in Hungary began to surface ever more frequently.¹⁰⁹ After 1988, the once sacred subject had become a hotly debated issue and questions concerning the political, military, and strategic rationale for the approximately 65,000 Soviet soldiers stationed "temporarily" in the country since 1945 had been openly discussed in the media. In 1989 the USSR pulled out some 12,000 troops within the framework of Gorbachev's unilateral cuts of Soviet troops in Eastern Europe. The fate of the remaining Soviet soldiers and their equipment was the main topic of three rounds of talks between Soviet and Hungarian foreign and defense ministry officials in February and March 1990.¹¹⁰ The agreement was signed on March 9 by the two foreign ministers, Eduard Shevardnadze and

Gyula Horn in Moscow.¹¹¹ Thereby the Soviet Union agreed to withdraw all of its soldiers and equipment by the end of June 1991.

The lack of clear regulations was at least partly to blame for the serious difficulties concerning the departure of Soviet troops from the Hungary. The first Hungarian-Soviet property agreement pertaining to Soviet bases was signed in 1948. Under its terms, Budapest had agreed to lease to the Soviet troops all buildings they occupied at the end of World War II but it retained ownership. In lieu of payments, the Soviets would renovate the buildings. In 1956 the invading Soviet forces occupied more buildings and bases than in 1948; an agreement was made regarding their financial status in 1958. This agreement invalidated the preceding documents. The ignorance of the high military leadership concerning important aspects of the Soviet forces stationed in Hungary quickly became apparent. General (Ret.) Janos Sebok conceded that he and his former colleagues in the MOD had not known that Hungary served as a supply depot for Czechoslovakia and the Ukraine. "We were also not clear," he said, "about how many Soviet soldiers were stationed in our homeland."¹¹²

In a short time the financial settlement of the Soviet troop pull-out became the most pugnaciously disputed issue between the two sides eliciting a great deal of previously unimaginable ill-feeling, charges and counter-charges between the two sides. Budapest's MOD, after researching the issue, had reached several troubling conclusions. It became known, for instance, that in spite of the 1948 agreement stating that Moscow was to bear all costs for maintaining military bases and constructing new buildings, Hungary financed a large share of these expenditures between 1949 and 1953. The Soviet side, however, only

compensated Hungary for 10 percent of the costs. The Hungarian MOD's financial support of the Soviet presence during this period was not regulated, and the Budapest chose not to safeguard its own rights.

General Matvei Burlakov, Commander of the SGSF and the USSR's representative in charge of the withdrawals, estimated the value of the buildings the Soviet troops erected in Hungary at 10 billion forint (\$ 135 million).¹¹³ Moscow asked for compensation for their investments in and around the Hungarian bases. While the Hungarians did not directly refute the Soviet figures, they wanted to consider several important qualifications. For instance; Hungarian experts contended that many of the Soviet-built apartments conformed to Soviet (having, for example, communal baths and kitchens) rather than Hungarian building standards and thus were of little use to Hungary. Furthermore, the majority of not only the apartment buildings but also the barracks were in such poor condition that they were of almost no value to their new owners. Ideally, the MOD would have liked these buildings to be in the same condition as those maintained by the Hungarian forces.

As Soviet troops began to withdraw, many articles described the Soviet servicemen's life in Hungary. Despite Burlakov's frequent references to the "friendship" existing between Soviet soldiers and the Hungarian people, this relationship could perhaps be best described as calculating and self-seeking, with a heavy dose of Russophobia on the Hungarian side.¹¹⁴ Soviet military leaders vigorously denied that Hungarians and Soviet soldiers conducted "business deals,"¹¹⁵ although scores of newspaper and magazine articles contradicted their disavowal. One such article graphically depicted the relationships between Hungarians and their Soviet "friends" in the village of Hajmasker, site of the first base vacated by the

Soviets.¹¹⁶ Village residents expressed not only their annoyance about the noise of the Soviet military vehicles and the soldiers' occasional offenses but also mentioned the mutually advantageous commercial relationship that had existed between the village and the troops.¹¹⁷ Soviet soldiers sold everything from overalls and boots to gasoline and television sets in exchange for Hungarian wine, brandy, soap, fruit and various food items, and of course, cash.

The Soviets also sold machine guns and signal flares which they occasionally used to threaten their Hungarian "friends" at a heavily frequented Veszprem county garbage dump.¹¹⁸ Many denounced Soviet soldiers for selling ammunition, weapons, and explosives in the cities of Budapest, Gyor, Esztergom, and Szentendre.¹¹⁹ Soviet servicemen in Hungary lived in relatively primitive conditions. The food rations for ordinary soldiers appear to have been very deficient. In an interview the former Commander of the Soviet base in Budapest, Colonel (Ret.) Georgii Lakhno conceded that the cultural level of Soviet officers "remains very low."¹²⁰ He acknowledged that disciplinary problems existed within the Soviet units in Hungary. In fact, because of the widespread thievery and anti-social behavior, Soviet officers at some locations restricted their troops to base. Many Soviet soldiers never had the opportunity to see "the world outside their barracks" during their 2-year tour in Hungary.

Notwithstanding all of these problems, the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Hungary progressed on schedule. By the end of 1990 only 10-15 percent of the Soviet troops remained in Hungary and the withdrawal was completed in June 1991. A number of contentious issues still need to be resolved, however. As long as full documentation of the

costs of the 45-year Soviet occupation remains unavailable, it is difficult to predict, through the barrage of claims and counterclaims, which side will have to compensate the other. One cannot help but feel that, in the end, the "zero payment" alternative might be preferred, so that no money will be involved.¹²¹

C. Proliferation of Western Contacts

The HPA developed many important contacts with its Western counterparts during the 1980s. The successes of the Hungarian military diplomacy were likely the result of a well-planned "Western policy program" starting in the mid-1980s and originated in the Foreign Affairs Department of the MOD. In 1988-1990 these relations became more variegated and substantial, signalling the Hungarian military's growing distance from its WTO partners.

In 1989 alone, Hungary received three NATO defense ministers and a number of top-level military delegations. In May Dutch Minister of Defense Fritz Bolkenstein was the first NATO defense minister to visit Hungary.¹²² In August HPA Chief of Staff General Pacsek paid visits to the U.S., the United Kingdom, Canada, and Switzerland.¹²³ He said that the HPA wanted to improve relations not only with European members of NATO but also with others "out of gunshot range." Pacsek announced plans for a two-year cooperation agreement between the HPA and the Canadian Armed Forces which would allow regular top-level meetings between Hungarian and Canadian military personnel. Budapest also hosted British Defence Secretary Thomas King. Although King said that alliance structures had not yet shown any "sign of genuine change," he stressed that confidence was increasing and that his visit had set an example, particularly in light of the Vienna CSCE talks.¹²⁴

The HPA also was represented at various international meetings, such as the European Conference of Conscript Organizations held in Helsinki in August 1989. The Hungarian and Soviet delegations were the first from the WTO to attend this annual convention.¹²⁵ In December, Hungary and France submitted a joint "confidence-building proposal" at the CSCE talks in Vienna. This was the first time that a NATO and a WTO state jointly initiated a resolution. Moreover, a small Hungarian contingent (15 officers) participated in the United Nations peace-keeping forces observing the cease-fire agreement between Iraq and Iran.¹²⁶ In February 1990 the MOD and the Rand Corporation jointly organized a conference at which top U.S. and Hungarian experts examined civil-military relations in democratic political systems.¹²⁷

Hungary, together with Canada, also was instrumental in the organization of the "Open Skies" conferences that attempted to revive President Eisenhower's proposal to General Secretary Khrushchev at the 1955 Geneva summit meeting. The idea, characteristically dismissed by the Soviet leader as "legalized espionage," was to allow military airplanes to fly over each other's territory. Although agreements over technical matters could not be achieved between the 23 participants at the April 1990 Budapest meeting, the Hungarian and Canadian co-sponsors of the conference agreed that the long-term prospects of "Open Skies" were good.¹²⁸

In sum, since the mid-1980s the Hungarian military leadership has pursued an ambitious foreign relations agenda oriented toward Western states. Like Hungary's foreign policy toward the West, the country's military diplomacy, obviously supported by the government and the (Communist) party leadership, was very fruitful. The successes

achieved by Hungarian military diplomacy must, however, be put in their proper perspective. The tangible results of the policy were some minor agreements holding the promise of "regularized contacts" and the creation of a few (academic) exchange programs. These accomplishments indicated a decade-long Hungarian commitment to disarmament and demonstrated an attempt to ease the tension between the two alliances.

Concluding Thoughts

One could scarcely give a more succinct summary of the transformation of civil-military relations in Hungary than did Colonel Keleti, the capable spokesman of the MOD, offering the following in an interview in late 1990:¹²⁹

The political systemic change has now been completed in the Hungarian armed forces. One of the most important aspects of this is that the army is now a body free of party struggles, characterized by the primacy of national interests and the defense of national sovereignty. The Hungarian armed forces are getting out of the Warsaw Pact, an alliance that worked against its members' national interests. They are also realistically taking into account the events of the past forty to fifty years, rehabilitating (in some cases posthumously) the officers removed in 1956, restoring national traditions and former unit names in the military, and strengthening their ties with social organizations and the Churches. The armed forces are a part of Hungary's democratization process and have become the army of the people and the nation.

It is important to note that in contrast with some other East European states, the political transformation of Hungary was entirely peaceful and the military played no role in it. One of the first acts of the new legislation was the passing of a constitutional amendment which clearly stated that the highest authority over the armed forces was the freely elected President of the Republic. The military had become an institution subordinated to the Constitution and elected state officials. As a result of the transformation of the civil-military

relations, the armed forces no longer had the opportunity to play any role in politics. The political (i.e., Communist Party) structure in the armed forces was dismantled and military personnel were prohibited from engaging in any manner of party politics within the barracks. The military educational system was reformed to reflect the army's shifting loyalties, from the Party and the Warsaw Pact to the nation-state and the Constitution. In short, the primary consequence of the transformation of civil-military relations was the depoliticization of the armed forces. At the same time, the external relations of the military had also changed to mirror its regained independence from the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact.

Some of the most important by-products of Hungary's--and Eastern Europe's--political transformation were the disclosures of wide-spread corruption and incompetence of the country's leaders, an endemic facet of Communist systems everywhere. The shocking excesses of the HPA leadership received a generous share of this attention. Few observers remarked, however, that the top brass could not have succeeded without a system that tolerated their activities. As the revelations filled the pages of the newly uncensored journals and books, Hungarians were astonished not only by the details of the erstwhile HPA leaders' possessions and persuasions but also where their stewardship had gotten the armed forces.

The confirmation that military policies were determined first of all by the Kremlin and secondly by the HSWP with only nominal participation from the state should not have come as a surprise. What did shock the people was the Party's and the military's documented disregard of the legal system. Citizens learned that control over the armed forces was not regulated by law, because such formalities were irrelevant and superfluous niceties. After all, everyone knew who were in charge. It also was clearly revealed that the

"alliance" that was supposed to defend Hungary from the imperialist West, in essence robbed Hungary of its defensive capabilities and rendered it impotent to fight any external enemy.

At the same time, the fact that one of the most important functions of their army was protecting the rulers from the ruled was hardly sensational news to the population.¹³⁰

The leaders of the Hungarian Army are in an unenviable situation. First, in order to attract the best and the brightest into the new officer corps, they need to convince the population, particularly the country's young men, that the new army is very different from the thoroughly politicized HPA. This will not be easy for some time to come since the middle and top ranks currently are dominated by officers with extensive ties to the Communist regime. These people, however, cannot be easily replaced due to the fact that despite their undesirable political connections to the past, their expertise is indispensable at the present time. Second, Hungary does not have the resources to address the army's financial problems. In the current socio-political and economic situation national defense occupies a rather low position on the government's list of priorities. Third, partly as a consequence of the preceding point and partly due to the country's former association with the Warsaw Pact, Hungary is in an extremely vulnerable security situation as it would be unable to defend itself from any one of its neighbors. It appears to be clear that without Western help--whether in the form of giving Hungary surplus military equipment and/or extending NATO's protective umbrella over the country--Budapest's security predicament will not be overcome in the foreseeable future. The first signals of cooperation on military issues between the Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland is indicative of the East Central European states' capability of genuine collaboration in this area. Aside from enhancing their

defensive capacities, such cooperation might also be looked upon very favorably by NATO's leaders in Brussels.

NOTES

1. For a brief summary of Budapest's new security concerns, see Alfred A. Reisch, "Foreign Policy Reorientation a Success," Report on Eastern Europe, Vol. 2, No. 51/52 (December 20, 1991), pp. 15-16.
2. See Rudolf L. Tokes, "From Visegrad to Krakow: Cooperation, Competition, and Coexistence in Central Europe," Problems of Communism, Vol. 40 (November-December 1991), pp. 100-115, especially pp. 104-109.
3. Magyar Nemzet, August 29, 1988.
4. Magyar Hirlap, October 28, 1988.
5. Magyarország, March 3, 1989.
6. For detailed analysis of some of the reform proposals, see my "Political Participation and the Notion of Reform: Electoral Practice and the Hungarian National Assembly," East Central Europe, Vol. 16, Nos. 1-2 (Summer 1989), pp. 107-122; and "The Bankruptcy of Hungarian Communism," Sudost-Europa, Vol. 38, No. 4 (1989), especially pp. 197-204.
7. See, for instance, Geza Kilenyi, "A kormányzati tevékenység továbbfejlesztéséről," Társadalmi Szemle, August-September 1987, pp. 54-63.
8. See for instance his article, "Minden társadalmi érdekelte a megújulásban," Partélet, June 1988, p. 39-43; and the interview in Newsweek, July 18, 1988.
9. Pozsgay made this statement on Radio Budapest's popular "Evening Dialogue" program, July 18, 1988, 7:05 pm.
10. For an annotated list of political organizations, see my "Hungary's Independent Political Groups and Parties," Background Report/168, Radio Free Europe Research (hereafter RFER), September 12, 1989.
11. "Berecz: Nagy to Receive Proper Tomb," Foreign Broadcast Information Service-Eastern Europe, October 21, 1988, p. 42.
12. For analysis, see Zoltan D. Barany and Louisa Vinton, "Breakthrough to Democracy: Elections in Poland and Hungary," Studies in Comparative Communism, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Summer 1990), pp. 191-212.
13. For analyses of the elections, see my "On the Road to Democracy: The Hungarian Elections of 1990," Sudost-Europa, Vol. 39, No. 5 (May 1990), pp. 318-329; and Rudolf L. Tokes, Vom Post-Kommunismus zur Demokratie: Politik, Parteien und die Wahlen 1990 in Ungarn (Bonn: Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung, 1990).

14. For detailed electoral results, see Magyar Nemzet, March 30, and April 10, 1990. For the parties' views on the military, see Magyar Honved, March 19, 1990.
15. See, for instance, A. Melnikov's report about Hungary's implementation of the multiparty system in Sovetskaya Rossiya, March 12, 1989, p. 5.
16. The Washington Post, January 6, 1991. For a brief analysis of the CMEA's failures, see Charles Gati, The Bloc that Failed (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 124-135.
17. For the Nemeth government's foreign policy statement, see Gyula Horn, "Magyarország és az európai együttműködés," Kulpolitika, Vol. 16, No. 1 (1989), pp. 3-11.
18. Magyar Nemzet, November 18, 1989.
19. Nepszabadság, December 2, 1989.
20. The best summation of these models by Timothy Colton, Roman Kolkowicz, and William Odom can be found in Dale R. Herspring and Ivan Volgyes, eds., Civil-Military Relations in Communist Systems (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1978).
21. These models are outlined and analyzed in my "Civil-Military Relations in Communist Systems: Western Models Revisited," Journal of Political and Military Sociology, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Summer 1991), pp. 75-99.
22. Cited in Janos Kecskes, "Vezéraldozatok", vagyis mit tesznek a kiskirályok panikban (Budapest: Tornado Dámenija, 1990), p. 207.
23. Radio Budapest, July 1, 1989, 0430 GMT.
24. See the interview with General Sebok in 168 óra, June 23, 1989.
25. Kecskes, p. 211.
26. See for instance, Gyorgy Sandor, "Mit jelenthet az ifjúsági mozgalom megújulása?" Honvedsegi Szemle, Vol. 43, No. 2 (March 1989), pp. 1-13; and Laszlo Rapcsanyi, "Gondolatok a KISZ jelenerol es jovojerol," pp. 17-24 in the same issue.
27. See, for instance, Janos Mate, "Meditációk a parttestületek munkastilusáról, munkarendjéről," Honvedsegi Szemle, March 1989, pp. 94-100; and Sandor Faar, "Az alapszervi munka megújításáról," pp. 100-108 in the same issue.
28. See Magyarország, April 7, 1989, p. 20.
29. See for instance, Nepszabadság, April 1, and August 30, 1989.

30. Heti Világgazdaság, May 27, 1989.
31. Nepszabadság, September 2, 1989. For a military analysis of the new Code, see Kalman Lorincz, "Az új szolgálati szabályzat bevezetéséről," Honvedsegi Szemle, Vol. 43, No. 3 (May 1989), pp. 17-21.
32. Vasárnapi Hírek, September 17, 1989.
33. Magyar Hírlap, September 11, 1989.
34. Magyar Nemzet, September 18, 1989. In 1989-1990, hundreds of articles appeared in the press suggesting ways to assure that the army could not be utilized for the purposes of internal politics. See for instance, Istvan Gyarmati, "A hadsereg a demokratikus társadalomban," Valóság, April 1990, pp. 18-25.
35. See for instance, Magyar Hírlap, May 20, 1989.
36. Nepszava, February 24, 1990.
37. See for instance, Magyar Hírlap, March 11, 1990.
38. Nepszava, September 12, 1989.
39. Vasárnapi Hírek, November 4, 1990.
40. For short biographies of the representatives of the 1990 parliament, see Szabadon választott (Budapest: Idegenforgalmi és Propaganda Kiadó, 1990), p. 154. For more details on Keri's life and career, see Ferenc Kubinyi, "...ketrecbe engem zartak..." (Budapest: Holnap, 1989), pp. 168-269.
41. Nepszava, December 2, 1989.
42. General Lorincz sought to dismiss such suspicion in an interview, two months before (!) Nemeth's announcement. See Fejér megyei Hírlap, September 30, 1989.
43. See Új Dunántúli Napló, July 20, 1990.
44. Radio Budapest, August 6, 1990, noon.
45. Magyar Hírlap, February 24, 1990.
46. Magyar Nemzet, May 10, 1990.
47. Vas Nepe, June 2, 1990.
48. Vasárnapi Hírek, November 4, 1990.

49. See, for instance, Magyar Nemzet, August 18, 1990.
50. Uj Dunantuli Naplo, July 20, 1990.
51. Nepszava, April 9, 1990.
52. See the interview with Fur in Nepszabadsag, September 10, 1990.
53. See Peter Harkai, "A Magyar Nephadsereg kadereinek kulfoldi katonai kepzese," Honvedsegi Szemle, January 1989, pp. 24-27.
54. TASS (Leningrad), October 11, 1990.
55. Nepszabadsag, September 10, 1991.
56. Nepszava, April 9, 1990.
57. Magyar Hirlap, June 21, 1990.
58. For discussions of the low living standards of professional soldiers, see Pont, January 15 and January 29, 1990; and Magyar Hirlap, September 6, 1990.
59. Vilag, August 10, 1989.
60. See the interview with MOD spokesman Colonel Keleti in Nepszabadsag, July 30, 1990.
61. Zalai Hirlap, January 25, 1990.
62. See for instance Imra Bokor, Kiskiralyok munderban (Budapest: Uj Ido, 1989); Kecskes, "Vezeraldozatok", *op. cit.*; and Istvan Kozma Toth, Czinege Lajos munder nelkul (Budapest: Zrinyi, 1990).
63. Nepszabadsag, August 18, 1990.
64. See the interview with General Antal Annus, in Komarom-Esztergom megyei Dolgozok Lapja, September 1, 1990.
65. Nepszabadsag, September 17, 1990.
66. Magyar Hirlap, May 20, 1989.
67. Radio Budapest, August 6, 1990, 8 pm.
68. Nepszava, September 22, 1990.

69. Magyar Nemzet, June 27, 1988. For an excellent analysis of conscientious objection, see Tamas Csapody, "A szelidek ereje," Forras, March 1990, pp. 73-82. For the opposition's view, see Demokrata (samizdat), No. 5 (1988), pp. 13-19.
70. Orszag-Vilag, March 29, 1989.
71. Nepszabadsag, August 22, 1990. The Hungarian Army at this time kept approximately 80,000 reserve officers on its registers.
72. For the text of the Prime Minister's speech, see Magyar Nemzet, December 2, 1990.
73. Questions regarding the President's authority in military affairs emerged in early 1991. See my "East European Armies in the Transitions and Beyond," East European Quarterly, Vol. 26, No. 1 (March 1992), pp. 23-24. Furthermore, a new reform of the HA's structure has been widely debated since 1991. See Heti Vilaggazdasag, August 24, 1991; Beszelo, September 7 and 21, 1991; Magyar Forum, September 26, 1991.
74. Borsits retired and was replaced by Major General Janos Deak in September 1991.
75. Krasznai had a party-military career, in many respects typical of the Communist era. A former civilian who had been First Secretary of the Pest County HSWP, he had been appointed as MPA Chief in December 1988--with little military expertise--and given a military rank. See Nepszabadsag, December 2, 1989.
76. MTI (Hungarian Telegraph Service), December 1, 1989.
77. The Independent, December 21, 1989.
78. An article in the Soviet government's daily Izvestia, January 17, 1989 offered no criticism of the Hungarian defense cuts.
79. Nepszabadsag, January 31, 1989.
80. See my "Major Reorganization of Hungary's Military Establishment," Background Report 230, RFER, December 28, 1989; and Der Spiegel, December 7, 1989.
81. Magyar Hirlap, November 29, 1990.
82. See Kecskes, "Vezerelidozatok", pp. 171-176.
83. These deficiencies became apparent during the fall of 1991 when the jets of the Yugoslav federal air force violated Hungarian airspace on several occasions. See Nepszabadsag, August 28, 1991 and Magyar Hirlap, November 9, 1991.
84. Nepszabadsag, May 8, 1990.

85. Personal interviews with Hungarian military officers in the summer of 1990.
86. Nepszava, September 27, 1990.
87. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, September 27, 1990; Nepszabadsag, December 7, 1990.
88. According to the Weekly Bulletin (July 20, 1990) of the MTI, the Hungarian defense budget had been reduced by 80 billion forints in the 1985-1990 period. For an informed analysis of this issue, see Douglas Clarke, "The USSR Cannot Expect Greater Military Efforts from Hungary," Background Report/13, RFER, January 27, 1989.
89. The New York Times, December 15, 1988, p. A12.
90. MTI (in English), December 15, 1989.
91. Magyar Nemzet, November 14, 1990.
92. Alfred Reisch, "Armed Forces Reorganized and 1991 Defense Budget Passed," Report on Eastern Europe, March 15, 1991, p. 19.
93. Magyar Nemzet, July 22, 1989.
94. For an analysis of the financial situation of the Hungarian defense industry, see Jozsef Csabay, "A magyar hadiiparrol, penzugyi szemmel," Penzugyi Szemle, No. 1, 1990, pp. 79-83.
95. See Nepszabadsag, February 9, and February 15, 1989.
96. The New York Times, July 7, 1989.
97. The Baltimore Sun, October 30, 1989.
98. Magyar Hirlap, April 24, 1989.
99. Magyar Nemzet, June 24, 1989.
100. See AFD Chairman Janos Kis' article in Magyar Hirlap, May 15, 1990; and Weekly Bulletin, May 23, 1990.
101. See, for instance, The Independent and The Financial Times, May 10, 1990.
102. TASS interview with Lushev published in Nepszabadsag, May 12, 1990.
103. Nepszava, June 7, 1990.
104. For a description of the meeting, see Alfred Reisch, "Hungary to Leave Military Arm of Warsaw Pact," Report on Eastern Europe, June 29, 1990, pp. 20-25; and Nepszabadsag, July 14, 1990.

105. See Reisch, "Hungary to Leave," *op. cit.*, and The Economist, June 16-22, 1990. The last major joint WTO exercise with Hungarian participation was "Friendship-89" held in Czechoslovakia in February 1989. For a Hungarian analysis of the maneuvers, see Istvan Nyilas, "A Baratsag-89 gyakorlat tapasztalatai," Honvedsegi Szemle, May 1989, pp. 9-16.

106. The Times (London), June 27, 1990.

107. Radio Moscow, June 27, 1990, 6:45 pm.

108. AP dispatch from Budapest, October 8, 1990.

109. This section draws on two of my papers: "A Hungarian Dream Comes True: Soviet Troops to Leave after 45 Years," Report on Eastern Europe, March 30, 1990, pp. 23-28; and "Not a Smooth Ride: Soviet Troop Withdrawals from Hungary," Report on Eastern Europe, June 15, 1990, pp. 20-27.

110. For the state of Hungarian-Soviet negotiation on the troop withdrawals until the end of January 1990, see Zoltan D. Barany and Alfred Reisch, "Withdrawal of All Soviet Troops by End of 1990 Demanded," Report on Eastern Europe, February 9, 1990, pp. 22-26.

111. The text of the agreement was published in Magyar Kozlony, May 29, 1990, pp. 1190-1192.

112. Mai Nap, March 22, 1990. For the announcement that Hungary served as a supply base for Czechoslovakia, see Magyar Hirlap, March 8, 1990, and Radio Budapest, March 12, 1990, noon. It is unclear what Sebok's evidence was for the part of his statement regarding the Ukraine.

113. Magyar Hirlap, April 4, 1990.

114. The Soviet High Command was obviously satisfied with Burlakov's performance as in December 1990 he was appointed to oversee the withdrawal of some 380,000 Soviet troops from Germany. He was replaced in Hungary by General Viktor Silov. See Reuter (Berlin), December 13, 1990; and Radio Budapest, December 12, 1990, 5:00 pm.

115. Magyar Hirlap, April 4, 1990. For a contrary claim, see Kisalfold, October 18, 1990.

116. Rege, March 7, 1990.

117. For a pictorial report of Soviet sale items, see Nepszava, March 28, 1990. The photos depict everything from service medals and Lenin busts to gas-masks and even an officer's cap priced at 2,000 forint.

118. Veszprem megyei Naplo, March 31, 1990. According to the article, Soviet soldiers regularly visited the garbage dump to search for saleable items in the rubbish. They also frightened Hungarian "treasure hunters" by firing their handguns.

119. See for instance, Komarom-Esztergom megyei Dolgozok Lapja, April 17, 1990.
120. Kepes 7, April 7 1990.
121. Apparently this how the Hungarian leadership is calculating. See an interview with Fur in Veszprem megyei Naplo, June 30, 1990.
122. See Nepszabadsag, May 25, 1989, and Mai Nap, June 2, 1989.
123. Magyar Hirlap, August 28, 1989.
124. Daily News (Budapest), September 8, 1989.
125. AP (Amsterdam), August 4, 1989.
126. Nepszabadsag, October 13, 1988 and June 17, 1989.
127. Radio Budapest, February 12, 1990, 7:00 pm.
128. See Nepszava, April 24, 1990 and May 11. For an incisive technical analysis, see Michael Krepon and Jeffrey P. Tracey, "'Open Skies and UN Peace-Keeping," Survival, Vol. 22, No. 3 (May-June 1990), pp. 251-263.
129. Cited in Alfred Reisch, "Armed Forces Reorganized..," op. cit., p. 22
130. Marton Vargha, "Pacifista katonai doktrina," Beszelo, July 14, 1990. p. 25. See also, "A hadsereg a demokratikus tarsadalomban," op. cit., pp. 18-25.