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FOUNDATIONS OF HUNGARIAN DEFENCE POLICY

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ABSTRACT: This article aims to outline the foundations of contemporary Hungarian defence policy thinking, highlighting the factors which have shaped it during the last years.

Hungary lies in a unique geostrategic position, at the crossroads of 'eastern' and 'southern' challenges. The study therefore begins by presenting an overview of Hungary's place in the global security environment, especially in light of the instability currently characterising certain regions on Europe's periphery. It then goes on to discuss the institutional framework of Hungarian security and defence policy, primarily concentrating on NATO and the EU CSDP. The newly adopted National Security Strategy, together with the National Military Strategy (currently under review) serve as the starting point for the analysis. Our study also pays particular attention to Hungary's large-scale military modernisation programme, the Zrínyi Programme.

Based on this, the authors identify three major challenges shaping the medium-term outlook for Hungarian defence policy. These are

- (i) the pressures of illegal mass migration;*
- (ii) the challenges of transnational terrorism; along with*
- (iii) the activity and potential for conflict among regional and global powers.*

In addition, the article briefly highlights the future challenges that Hungary must reckon with, including the security-related implications of global climate change, energy dependency, cyber defence, together with the proliferation of nuclear and conventional weapons.

KEYWORDS: Hungary, defence policy, defence planning, NATO, EU, terrorism, migration, geopolitics, emerging security challenges, NDPP

INTRODUCTION

It has become commonplace to remark upon global power shifts (such as the emerging multi-polar world order, or the role of great power aspirants), and the multifaceted threats to international security (be that transnational terrorism, cyberattacks, pandemics, weapons of mass destruction, or even climate change). It is also true that the changing nature of the complex security landscape of the 21st century continues to generate 'strategic shocks', in the form of unanticipated, high-impact events, like the illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula or the emergence of a state-like terrorist organisation with strategic offensive capabilities (such as Islamic State/Daesh).

In the face of these challenges, the defence policy of any given country must reflect upon their own geostrategic location, its vested national and allied interests, as well as be able to

prioritise courses of action in order to support a more stable security environment. Due to these reasons, while European nations' own defence policies may vary, they all should seek to pursue cooperation within the context of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the European Union, respectively. In this framework, understanding the signals from the declarations and actions behind national defence policies remains key to facilitating united responsiveness in the face of modern security challenges.

This article aims to outline the foundations of the contemporary defence policy of Hungary. It begins by presenting an overview of Hungary's place in the global security environment, especially in light of the instability currently characterising certain regions on Europe's periphery. Then, it goes on to discuss the institutional framework of Hungarian defence thinking. Most importantly, Hungary is a member state of and highly committed to NATO and the European Union. These structures, beyond the national capabilities, are the most decisive frameworks and the essential multilateral pillars of Hungarian defence policy. In addition, Hungary's participation in the OSCE and the UN are also important factors of its standing in the global environment. The newly adopted National Security Strategy and the National Military Strategy (currently under review) serve as the basis for the analysis of Hungarian defence policy.

Based on the above, the authors identify three current challenges shaping the medium-term outlook for Hungarian security and defence policy. These are (i) the persistent pressures of illegal mass migration, (ii) the challenges of transnational terrorism, along with (iii) the activity of rising and great powers (and the potential for peer conflicts amongst them), which has longer-term geopolitical implications as well. In addition, the authors also briefly highlight the future challenges that Hungary must reckon with, including climate change, energy dependency, cyber defence, the proliferation of weapons and ammunition, and potential future calamities such as natural disasters and pandemics. All this should be interpreted in light of the fact that Hungary is in a unique geostrategic position, at the crossroads of the so-called 'eastern' and 'southern' challenges affecting the European continent.

An analysis of the defence policy's perspective on the major security challenges affecting the country should use the perception of its citizens as a fundamental starting point. As a most recent study published by the Institute for Strategic and Defence Studies (ISDS) based in Budapest points out, the concept of 'security' among the Hungarian public is primarily linked to concerns over personal material security and public safety, with a strong preference for governmental decision-making on national defence and security policy issues.¹ A survey conducted by Pew Research in 2019 found that Hungarians – in line with the general European consensus – considered global climate change to be the top security concern for their country. 66% of respondents cited this as a major challenge, followed by Islamic State militants (59%), North Korea's nuclear programme (51%), and cyberattacks from other countries (35%).²

¹ Tálas, P. and Etl, A. "The transformation of Hungarian security perception between 1999 and 2019". *ISDS Analyses* 4. 2020. [https://svkk.uni-nke.hu/document/svkk-uni-nke-hu-1506332684763/ISDS_Analyses_2020_4_The%20transformation%20of%20Hungarian%20security%20perception%20between%201999%20and%202019_\(Etl%20A.%20-%20T%C3%A1las%20P.\)%20\(1\).pdf](https://svkk.uni-nke.hu/document/svkk-uni-nke-hu-1506332684763/ISDS_Analyses_2020_4_The%20transformation%20of%20Hungarian%20security%20perception%20between%201999%20and%202019_(Etl%20A.%20-%20T%C3%A1las%20P.)%20(1).pdf), Accessed on 8 October 2020.

² "Climate change still seen as the top global threat, but cyberattacks a rising concern". Pew Research Center. 10 February 2019. <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/02/10/climate-change-still-seen-as-the-top-global-threat-but-cyberattacks-a-rising-concern/>, Accessed on 16 July 2020.

It is, however, a natural phenomenon that the ‘defence policy-centric’ security approach and the ‘public-centric’ security approach differ, as the citizens and the defence policy practitioners often see different sets and layers of challenges, risks and threats to national security. Therefore, the drivers they perceive are also diverse, but there are, of course, similarities as well. In the case of Hungary, both experts and the public consider challenges of transnational terrorism (predominantly the emergence and activity of the Islamic State/Daesh) as a current and serious threat. (Notably, both place it in second place in the top list of threats.) To this end, this current publication predominantly summarises the state-centric thinking of the Hungarian security environment. It is important to note that while global climate change and cyberattacks are not on the authors’ list of the three main issues, in “Broader Challenges”, the authors also take stock of those topics.

As for the methodological processes used in writing this article, the sources analysed included:

- Geopolitical forecasts published by leading European and North American think tanks and policy centres (as referenced in the bibliography);
- Globally-focussed surveys on societal security perceptions (published by the Pew Global Research Centre between 2017-2020); as well as
- National-focussed studies on the changing security perceptions of the Hungarian public and the security policy community (published by the Institute for Strategic and Defence Studies based in Budapest in 2020).

The reason for choosing these sources lies in the fact that they simultaneously highlight current thinking on security trends while also providing quantified evidence of how society evaluated the associated risks. On the other hand, the potential drawbacks / limitations are that these sources fundamentally present a Western-oriented worldview, and are often state-centric in their analysis.

While myriad potential security challenges could be named given the rapidly shifting global geopolitical landscape, we aimed to select those upon which defence policy could have the greatest direct effect. As a result, our chosen topics strongly reflect the current thinking of the Defence Policy Department of the Hungarian MoD.

THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK OF HUNGARIAN DEFENCE POLICY

Crisis Zones on the Periphery of Europe

Europe, and by that Hungary as well, is currently surrounded by an ‘arc of instability’ (see *Figure 1*). Owing to its geostrategic position in the centre of the Eastern Flank as well as facing the Western Balkans, Hungary is affected by so-called ‘eastern’ and ‘southern’ challenges simultaneously. From an Alliance perspective, the annexation of Crimea and the destabilisation of parts of Ukraine present the major challenge on the eastern flank of NATO, whereas the civil wars of Libya, Syria (and to some extent Iraq) together with the instability of the Sahel Belt and its consequences are among the most pressing challenges from the southern direction.

Meanwhile, Hungary considers instability in the Western Balkans region as its most pressing security challenge due to its immediate geographic vicinity. At the same time, being aware of the region’s inherent dynamics, it is also clear that the Western Balkans is the only area on the periphery of the European Union where it is reasonable to hope that strong cooperation and a credible perspective for its countries could provide a solution for regional

difficulties. Hungary is interested in a stable region at its southern borders and it is well understood in Budapest that support for the countries in the region is key, as is the credible outlook for the Euro-Atlantic integration.

At the same time, looking at the wider southern neighbourhood of Europe, one can observe a complex landscape of serious instability, which is fundamentally challenging an older concept of security. With regard to the ‘southern’ challenges, the relevance of military interventions and therefore the effects of national force development programmes remain limited. Thus, there is a clear need to find adaptive and scalable answers through developing extended crisis management toolboxes composing all relevant sectors of the DIME(FIL) framework.³ This is an area where the EU should excel even if European Allies, including Hungary, will continue to enhance their ability to respond to all contingencies on the basis of the ‘single set of forces’ principle,⁴ complemented by the ‘360-degree approach’,⁵ regardless of the origin of these challenges.

Over the past decade, relations between Russia and NATO/the EU have become increasingly strained,⁶ thus once again highlighting the ‘eastern’ dimension of security challenges Central Europe is facing. Since 2014, NATO has essentially pursued a ‘dual-track approach’: it has strengthened its deterrence and defence posture, while simultaneously leaving the channels of political dialogue with Moscow open. Hungary supports the “dual-track” while acknowledges the need to develop deterrence and defence capabilities together with its Allies, and realises this through the fulfilment of commitments made within the frameworks of the NATO Defence Planning Process and PESCO.

In sum, the ongoing conflicts on Europe’s periphery are widespread, and oftentimes pose fundamental challenges to European unity. This is pointedly illustrated by the occasionally and invariably differing threat perceptions among member states of the European Union and NATO. To put it simply, it means that the so-called eastern and southern challenges have a different weight among the Allies and Member States. Hence, the respective security and defence communities need to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to understand and reduce potential risks. In parallel with that, Member States and Allies should also take a more innovative look into their inventories, including the exploration of further avenues for scaled-up efficiency gains through multinational capability development that support the abovementioned EU and NATO principles.

³ DIME is an acronym for diplomatic, informational, military, and economic frameworks, while FIL additionally includes finance, intelligence and law enforcement.

⁴ In the EU, the ‘single set of forces’ principle means that an EU Member State can use its capabilities within its national framework, or within a multilateral framework (EU, NATO, UN or other formations). Nonetheless, based on the given nation’s discretion, the capabilities can be used anywhere and anytime, thus these can strengthen other multilateral frameworks as enablers.

⁵ NATO’s so-called ‘360-degree approach’ ensures that the Allies are capable of deterring threats from the ‘east’, while simultaneously countering challenges emerging from the ‘south’. For more information see: Morgan, A. “The Shadow NATO Summit IV: NATO’s 360-degree approach to deterrence and collective defence: Over-stretched and under-powered?”. 9 July 2018. <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-socialsciences/government-society/iccs/news-events/2018/iccs-nato-shadow-summit-report-2018.pdf>, Accessed on 12 December 2020.

⁶ “A Kormány 1163/2020. (IV. 21.) Korm. határozata Magyarország Nemzeti Biztonsági Stratégiájáról”. [Government Decree No. 1163/2020 on Hungary’s National Security Strategy].

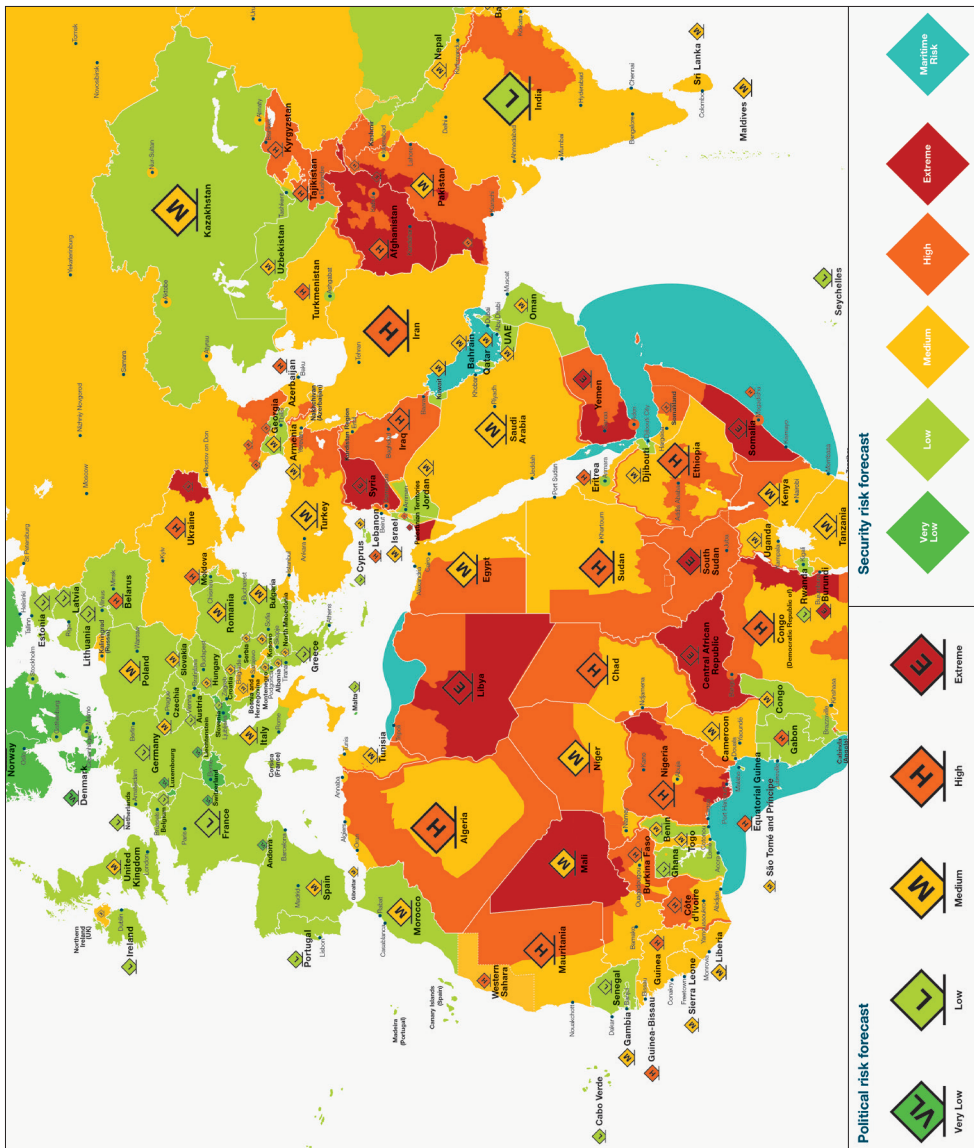


Figure 1 Political and security risk forecast for Europe and its periphery⁷

The Place of Hungary in the Global Security Environment

First and foremost, it is important to lay down certain foundations of Hungary’s national defence policy. As a mid-sized, land-locked Central European nation, Hungary has successfully integrated into the trans-Atlantic and European political and security institutions

⁷ “Riskmap 2020”. Control Risks. 2020. <https://www.controlrisks.com/-/media/corporate/files/riskmap/maps/riskmap-map-2020-a1-eng-web.pdf>, Accessed 16 July 2020.

following the end of the Cold War and the demise of the bipolar world order in 1989. Hungary joined NATO in 1999 and the European Union just five years later, in 2004. To this day, the Hungarian membership in these two organisations serves as the central point of orientation in Hungary's thinking, besides national considerations, on defence-related issues.

However, the aspiration for greater security is fundamentally shaped by the crises on Europe's periphery, for instance, trends in global terrorism, illegal mass migration, the activity of rising and already existing great powers, increasingly assertive use of state power, including military means, as well as peer conflicts – along with the emergence of non-state actors with both the willingness and ability to pursue aggressive actions, the militarisation of cyberspace, the issue of non-proliferation and several other challenges. There are also a myriad of dangers regarding emerging and disruptive technologies or anthropogenic climate change. As it has been mentioned, according to the Pew Research Centre's survey conducted in February 2019, climate change is an emerging top concern for the Hungarian public too,⁸ one which can have wide-ranging potential implications for migration and terrorism as well. One must also consider how the behaviour and the activity of rising and already existing great powers influence the global world order. Besides, Hungary has to maintain and further develop its readiness to counter 'black swan events',⁹ drawing upon, inter alia, the lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, from a defence policy perspective the COVID crisis (as well as the illegal mass migration crisis in 2015 or the increased prevalence of transnational terrorism) have also provided a painful reminder of the fact that in a 'global village' security challenges can easily reach every country from even far away locations in a very short time. This observation has been clearly outlined in the Hungarian National Security Strategy as well.

The COVID crisis is also an acute reminder for the relevance and necessity of armed forces in non-military contingencies. Amidst the contemporary security challenges, the national defence forces are seamlessly proving their central value and pivotal role in the current global pandemic, through their support to the civilian authorities. The military still has a unique set of tools at hand, by default, which can enable and increase efficient countermeasures against unanticipated shocks (i.e. resilience), including those posed by traditionally non-security-related threats. In that regard, the potential emergence of these new security threats validates the use of military in all sectors of national security, predominantly in the area of the civil-military cooperation. Due to that, it may seem that national solutions can be used adequately to tackle crises. However, as one cannot find proper national solutions to mitigate or manage an international challenge, the logical conclusion should be the further reinforcement of those European, Allied, and global efforts which aim to prevent, tackle or remedy instabilities in the global landscape – even after the initial difficulties. In concert with that, Hungary will also continue to contribute to these efforts via a range of actions, which will be further elaborated in this article.

At the same time, understanding the origins and drivers of Hungarian defence policy serves an important introduction to the details of concrete actions. Thus, it is of value to discuss the strategic landscape as well as the national perceptions of the defence policy community on which the concrete courses of actions are born.

⁸ "Climate change still seen as..."

⁹ Generally, the term 'black swan' refers to an event that cannot be predicted, but nonetheless has a major effect. These events are often rationalised with the benefit of hindsight. The founder of the theory was Nassim Nicholas Taleb in his book, *The black swan: The impact of the highly improbable* (2007).

As stated above, Hungary is affected by both ‘eastern’ and ‘southern’ challenges, so there is an inherent necessity for finding the right approach to mitigate those on the most sufficient and sustainable level. This is why Hungary, in accordance with its national interests, has for years held the position that these crises should be handled locally at their source of origin, and that remedying their root causes is indispensable. Approaches aimed at dealing with secondary problems, often ‘imported’ into Europe, are thus oftentimes superficial and inadequate. In this light, Hungary will continue to contribute to managing conflicts in the Western Balkans, the Middle East, Africa (especially the Sahel), Central Asia and other regions that have an influence on its security – either within the framework of international organisations (NATO, EU, OSCE, UN) or as a member of an ad-hoc coalition or regional cooperation framework. Hungary also intends to participate in post-conflict stabilisation and reconstruction efforts in affected parts of the world. Its goal is to facilitate national resilience and enhance state-building processes in these areas, and to bring help directly to those most in need.

Multilateralism in Hungarian Defence Policy

The following section discusses the international portfolio of the Hungarian defence policy. Any defence policy in the 21st century is invariably doomed to failure if it is not dominated by a thorough understanding of the risks, challenges as well as opportunities in its multinational environment. Therefore, the recipe for a more successful Hungarian defence policy is more engagement with its international environment. The elements of this portfolio will be discussed in this chapter, beginning with the NATO, EU, OSCE and UN frameworks respectively, while also emphasising the ‘contributions’ part, namely participation in multinational capability development, formations, and operations. These activities should serve to strengthen strategic convergence through enhancing interoperability between the national defence actors and those of the NATO and EU as well as regional frameworks (primarily the Visegrad 4 initiative).

NATO

NATO is the cornerstone of Euro-Atlantic security. Article 5 of the Washington Treaty and the concept of indivisible security are vital elements of the trans-Atlantic alliance. Hungary is a committed NATO member and stands ready to support its Allies in countering any threats and challenges they face. For instance, on the eastern flank Hungary contributes to the Baltic Air Policing mission. Furthermore, Hungary is increasingly able to contribute to the Alliance’s deterrence and defence posture through capability development via the NDPP and in the spirit of Article 3 of the Washington Treaty. At the same time, Hungary continues to pursue a dual-track approach *vis-à-vis* Russia as a potential channel for de-escalation within the framework of the Alliance.

In support of these objectives, Hungary remains strongly determined to implement the commitments of the Wales Summit through the realisation of the Zrínyi National Defence and Force Development Programme (hereinafter referred to as the Zrínyi Programme and elaborated upon later in this section). As a result of a series of high-value, high-end acquisitions, Hungarian military capabilities are being developed on a scale and in a quality unseen since the end of the Cold War. But this is not a stand-alone task, nor is it a solely national project. The main driver behind national capability development is the NATO Defence Planning Process, which determines the general ‘direction of travel’ for the transformation of national

armed forces. The development of these forces converges into the establishment of usable and responsive formations (national and multinational alike) in order to safeguard the security of the Alliance through deterrence and, if needed, credible collective defence. In line with the pledge made at the Wales Summit¹⁰ Hungary has been taking serious measures to increase its defence expenditures in order to be able to deliver against the NATO Defence Planning Procedure (NDPP) requirements. Compared to the defence spending in 2014 (USD 1,032 m, or equivalent to 0.86% of the GDP), the 2020 budget has seen a remarkable 73.75% increase in real terms, reaching USD 1,793 m and 1.33% of the GDP.¹¹ According to official sources, defence spending will reach 2% of the GDP by 2024.¹²

The Hungarian Defence Forces is also substantially contributing to NATO operations and developing Hungarian military capabilities with a view to reach a higher level of interoperability with its European and trans-Atlantic partners. The major acquisitions accomplished since 2018 (main battle tanks, armoured infantry fighting vehicles, self-propelled howitzers, medium and light helicopters, surface-to-air missile systems and radars) have all helped to fulfil the Warsaw Resilience Pledge through gradually decommissioning obsolete Soviet-era weapon-systems and introducing state-of-the-art NATO interoperable assets. Thus, the Zrínyi programme is creating a modern interoperability with Allies in the Euro-Atlantic area on a scale which is clearly historical.

Apart from the strong commitment to support the ‘NATO 3C rules’,¹³ Hungary is also ready to affiliate the Multinational Division Command for Central Europe (HQ-MND-C)¹⁴ and the Regional Special Operations Component Command (R-SOCC)¹⁵ into the wider NATO force structure. This will further enhance the stability of the Central European region, as a result of a multinational effort and will ultimately contribute to the security of Europe as a whole. Simply put, it is clearly in Hungary’s interest to strengthen regional and Alliance force structures, as a stronger NATO leads to a stronger Europe – and vice versa.

It is important to note here that, to date, the resources devoted to the NDPP-driven modernisation of the Hungarian Defence Forces overwhelmingly outnumber those allocated to tackle the so-called southern threats. While this is due to the fact that building a modern

¹⁰ “Wales Summit Declaration”. *North Atlantic Treaty Organisation*. 5 September 2014. https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm, Accessed on 18 November 2020.; Mesterházy, A. “Burden sharing: New commitments in a new era”. NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Defence and Security Committee, Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Defence and Security Cooperation. 17 November 2018. <https://www.nato-pa.int/download-file?filename=sites/default/files/2018-12/2018%20-%20BURDEN%20SHARING%20NEW%20COMMITMENTS%20IN%20A%20NEW%20ERA%20-%20MESTERHAZY%20REPORT%20-%20170%20DSCTC%2018%20E%20rev1%20fin.pdf>, Accessed on 19 November 2020.

¹¹ “Defence expenditure of NATO countries 2013-2020”. *North Atlantic Treaty Organisation*. 21 October 2020. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_178975.htm, Accessed 30 December 2020.

¹² Baranyai, G. “Developments in the Hungarian military reaching global standards”. *Magyar Nemzet*, 26 December 2020. <https://magyarnemzet.hu/in-english/developments-in-the-hungarian-military-reaching-global-standards-9147227/>, Accessed on 30 December 2020.

¹³ The so-called ‘3C rules’ are composed of cash, capabilities and contributions. “Press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg after a meeting of NATO defence ministers”. North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. 14 February 2018. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_151504.htm, Accessed on 23 July 2020.

¹⁴ “New military commands to be established in Hungary”. *About Hungary*. 28 October 2019. <http://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/new-military-commands-to-be-established-in-hungary/>, Accessed on 22 July 2020.

¹⁵ “Regional Special Operations Component Command (R-SOCC)”. *North Atlantic Treaty Organisation*. October 2019. https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2019_10/20191022_1910-factsheet-rsocc.pdf, Accessed on 22 July 2020.

armed forces will always represent a most demanding effort, it also speaks about Allied and European solidarity on behalf of nations, such as Hungary. Despite the fact that Hungary considers the southern challenges more crucial to its own national security in the long run, it continues to allocate its greatest efforts into the Allied responses with regard to the eastern challenges.

From the viewpoint of the Hungarian defence policy thinking, there are marked differences in the nature of the eastern and southern threats and therefore, there is no ‘one size fits all’ solution to tackle both threat vectors at the same time. While having a modern, interoperable, and integrated force structure is necessary in itself, military deterrence and defence is far more valid in the eastern context. With regards to the challenges posed by Russia to NATO, robust armed forces development, increased frequency of training activities, and enhanced multinational cooperation through the NATO Force Structure (NFS) and NATO Command Structure (NCS) entities are of key importance. Additionally, enhanced and tailored forms of military presence have also proved to be successful, flexible and commensurate innovations within the wider toolbox of the Alliance.¹⁶

The European Union

The security of Hungary is inextricably linked to that of Europe as a whole. With ongoing conflicts in the EU’s immediate vicinity (the Middle East and North Africa, the Sahel region, Ukraine), Hungary is committed to assisting the EU’s crisis management efforts. In line with the Global Strategy adopted in 2016,¹⁷ Hungary is an active participant in the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The defence sector is deeply involved in a number of initiatives under the aegis of the CSDP, including Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) projects, the European Defence Agency (EDA), the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) process, along with the recent establishment of the European Peace Facility (EPF).

Hungary takes part in a wide variety of PESCO projects, including EUROSIM, which aims to establish a tactical training and simulation cloud-based network, or Military Mobility, which facilitates simplifying and standardising cross-border military transport procedures.¹⁸ As for the Hungarian assessment of EDA and CARD, it is important to maintain coherence between the defence initiatives and the other tools related to capability development. Overall, Hungary’s intention is to both support European defence harmonisation efforts, as well as to streamline developments with its own modernisation programme (the Zrínyi Programme).

¹⁶ “The enhanced Forward Presence: Innovating NATO’s deployment model for collective defence”. NATO Defence College. 30 October 2019. <https://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=1371>, Accessed on 19 November 2020.

¹⁷ “Shared vision, common action: a stronger Europe, a global strategy for the European Union’s foreign and security policy”. June 2016. https://ceas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf, Accessed on 22 July 2020.

¹⁸ “Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)’s projects – Overview”. European Union. 12 November 2019. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/41333/pesco-projects-12-nov-2019.pdf>, Accessed on 29 July 2020.

Budapest supports efforts to enhance the Union's operational effectiveness, and to deepen defence industry partnerships between Member States.¹⁹ The Zrínyi Programme might be considered as a foremost example for European cooperation (besides having also a strong transatlantic link) as it procured mainly products of the European industrial base. As a secondary result of the Zrínyi Programme, strong industrial synergies have also been created with European Member states, including Germany, France, Sweden, Austria and the Czech Republic.

Hungary believes cooperation could be further strengthened in the areas of illegal migration, hybrid and cyber warfare, together with the fight against violent extremism, terrorism, or disinformation campaigns.

Another fundamental priority of Hungarian foreign and defence policy vis-à-vis the EU is the Euro-Atlantic integration of the Western Balkans (as mentioned also in Crisis zones on the periphery of Europe). Hungary firmly believes that closing this final 'gap' of the European security architecture is a vital prerequisite for a peaceful and secure continent. To this end, we support the European integration of the Western Balkan states through diplomacy, military presence in certain stabilisation processes, as well as business engagement with the Western Balkan states.²⁰

OSCE

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is the main platform of pan-European dialogue (in a wider extent, from Vancouver to Vladivostok) on persistent and acute issues. This framework also contributes to Hungarian security through several activities, including arms control, conflict prevention and monitoring, cyber/ICT security, and many other defence policy-related engagements. The OSCE's presence, especially its monitoring missions, covers 20 locations in Eastern and South-eastern Europe, as well as in Central Asia. Hungary currently contributes to the OSCE Missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Moldova, along with Ukraine. It also has a head of mission in the Programme Office in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, and a chief observer at the OSCE Observer Mission in the Russian checkpoints at Gukovo and Donetsk. The main Hungarian contribution focuses on Ukraine, since it is our immediate neighbour, and also home to one of the most pressing military conflicts in Europe of the past years.²¹ In addition, Hungary actively supports the OSCE's wide-ranging non-proliferation efforts.

United Nations

The United Nations is both a symbol of the current world order and one of the greatest facilitators of stabilisation efforts at a global level, which supports the fundamental principles of international peace and security across all horizontal and vertical spectrums. There are

¹⁹ This approach is supported by the Zrínyi National Defence and Force Development Programme, underlined by our helicopter acquisitions from Airbus Company (France) or the Leopard 2A47+ main battle tanks and the PzH 2000 self-propelled howitzers from the German KMW. "Hungary takes delivery of its first two H145Ms". Airbus. 25 November 2019. <https://www.airbus.com/newsroom/press-releases/en/2019/11/hungary-takes-delivery-of-its-first-two-h145ms.html>, Accessed on 23 July 2020. Palowski, J. "Hungarian Leopard MBTs unveiled: What was the cost? Analysis". Defence24. 7 July 2020. <https://www.defence24.com/hungarian-leopard-mbts-unveiled-what-was-the-cost-analysis>, Accessed on 23 July 2020.

²⁰ "FM: Hungary is committed to working in support of EU enlargement". *About Hungary*. 25 October 2019. <http://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/fm-hungary-is-committed-to-working-in-support-of-eu-enlargement/>, Accessed on 19 November 2020.

²¹ *Annual report 2019*. Vienna: Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, 2020.

13 UN peacekeeping operations currently deployed worldwide, of which Hungary contributes to those in Western Sahara (MINURSO), Cyprus (UNFICYP), Lebanon (UNIFIL), and Kosovo (UNMIK).²² Furthermore, we host many UN institutions in Hungary,²³ notably UNHCR, FAO, ILO, IOM, WHO, IMF, UNICEF, IFRC and UNOCT.²⁴

Participation in Regional Defence Formats

As for multinational frameworks – which is, in a comprehensive manner, connected to defence industry, defence planning and defence policy as well – Hungary takes part in many regional formations to increase regional cooperation with and support to its partners in crisis management (besides the abovementioned R-SOCC and MND-C).

In that regard, Visegrad 4 (or V4) is not just a longstanding multinational cooperation of the Visegrad states (Poland, Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary) formed in 1991, but a political alliance among the respective countries including military and defence, economic, cultural and energy matters. From a Hungarian point of view, the V4 ‘brand’ is an outstanding example of regional defence cooperation. V4 armies have already created battlegroups within the EU’s structure and a Joint Logistic Headquarters within the Allied framework. Thanks to the enhanced cooperation, the V4 has a number of expert subgroups, while meetings between defence ministers, Chiefs of Defence and policy directors take place on a regular basis, thereby fostering day-to-day communication as well as strategic dialogue.

In parallel with that, Hungary and Slovenia are part of the Multinational Land Force (MLF) led by Italy, which is another form of cooperation in the EU Battlegroup framework. On NATO’s side, participating in the German and Italian Framework Nation Concepts (FNCs) are also important pillars of Hungarian multinational cooperation. FNCs facilitate interoperability among participating states and support regional stability. Besides these, the Hungarian Defence Forces take part in other NATO initiatives, such as the NATO Readiness Initiative, the NATO Response Force, or Baltic Air Policing.

Last but not least, apart from collaboration within the NATO and EU structures, the Central European Defence Cooperation (CEDC) is a form of regional cooperation strictly based on geography. Since its establishment in 2010, CEDC’s joint objective is to enhance defence cooperation in all relevant fields, such as defence capabilities. However, since the strategic shock generated by illegal mass migration in 2015, CEDC is also focusing on handling this security challenge, too.

Hungary’s Presence in International Conflict Resolution

As mentioned above, the Hungarian military actively contributes to missions and operations within the framework of both the European Union and NATO. Furthermore, Hungary firmly supports the Global Coalition against IS (often called Defeat ISIS or abbreviated as the D-ISIS

²² “Summary of contribution to UN peacekeeping by country, mission and post: Police, UN military experts on mission, staff officers and troops 30/06/2020”. United Nations. 2020. https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/03_country_and_mission_26.pdf, Accessed on 23 July 2020.

²³ “Hungary in the UN”. Permanent Mission of Hungary to United Nations New York. 2019. <https://ensz-newyork.mfa.gov.hu/page/hungary-in-the-un>, Accessed on 23 July 2020.

²⁴ UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; FAO: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations; ILO: International Labour Organisation; IOM: International Organisation for Migration; WHO: World Health Organisation; IMF: International Monetary Fund; UNICEF: United Nations Children’s Fund; IFRC: International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent; UNOCT: United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism.

Coalition) and its Operation Inherent Resolve in the fight against the so-called ‘Islamic State’ terrorist group in Iraq. In our view, the comprehensive use of military and non-military instruments of power is crucial in the stabilisation of conflict or post-conflict areas. To this end, as of November 2020, approximately 800 Hungarian troops²⁵ are present abroad, in Europe, Central Asia/the former Soviet Union, Africa and the Middle East. The level of ambition of the Hungarian expeditionary forces was increased to 1,200 troops in 2019, which consists of all troops participating in missions and operations.²⁶ However, it is important to emphasise that the Hungarian Defence Forces take part in the abovementioned NATO and EU initiatives as well.

All this underscores that although Hungary is a mid-sized country with proportionately limited resources, it contributes to international stabilisation and conflict resolution efforts well beyond its means and constraints. Furthermore, the coming period will mark a major milestone in the Hungarian military commitments abroad, as Budapest has the ambition to assume the commander role in NATO’s KFOR operation in Kosovo for one year from November 2021 onwards. Notably, this would be the first occasion in the history of major NATO missions and operations – including the ISAF since 2001 (and later RSM since 2015) in Afghanistan; the KFOR in Kosovo since 1999; and the NTM-I and NMI in Iraq since 2004 and 2018, respectively – that a state which joined NATO after the dissolution of the Soviet Union will take a commanding role.²⁷ This opportunity underlines Hungary’s high commitment to NATO, but – perhaps even more importantly – it underscores its engagement with the stabilisation of the Western Balkans.

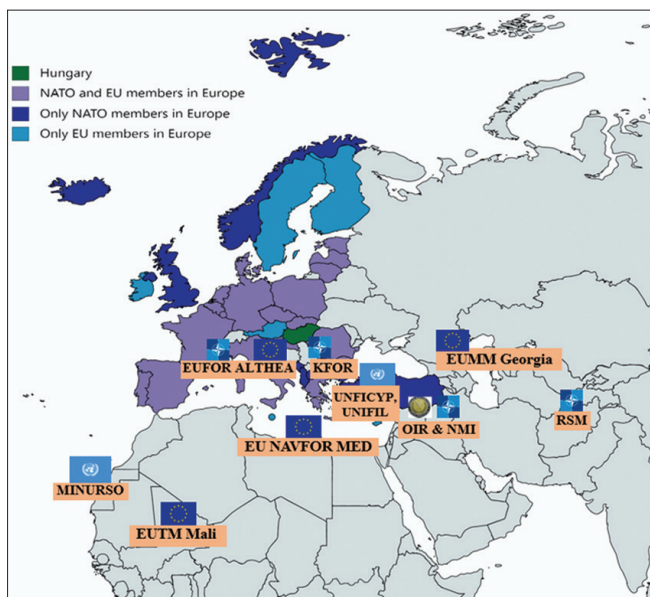


Figure 2 The international presence of the Hungarian military in missions and operations abroad²⁸

²⁵ “Chapter four: Europe”. *The Military Balance* 120/1. 2020. 64-165. DOI: 10.1080/04597222.2020.1707964.

²⁶ “Hungary to increase number of peacekeeping troops”. *About Hungary*. 1 April 2019. <http://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/hungary-to-increase-number-of-peacekeeping-troops/>, Accessed on 23 July 2020.

²⁷ “KFOR commanders”. NATO AJFC Naples. <https://jfcnaples.nato.int/kfor/about-us/history/kfor-commanders>, Accessed on 12 October 2020.

²⁸ Made by the authors based on data from the Hungarian Ministry of Defence (as of November 2020).

STRATEGIC SHOCKS HUNGARIAN DEFENCE POLICY IS FACING

Based on the global security situation outlined above, and in line with Hungary's membership of NATO, the European Union, the OSCE and the United Nations, the priorities of Hungarian security and defence policy can be narrowed down. In the authors' view, the three most pressing medium-term defence-policy related challenges Hungary is facing are the persistent pressures of illegal mass migration, the challenges of transnational terrorism, along with the activity of rising and great powers and the subsequent potential for peer conflicts. These challenges share several characteristics which make them especially demanding in the form of unanticipated strategic shocks. Firstly, due to their emerging and complex nature, they tend to form seamless variations, resulting in strategic shocks. Secondly, since distance in a globalised world ceases to be the most relevant factor, such challenges can easily reach the countries even from extremely far places and they tend to create impacts on the affected countries' security in a very short time, usually without sufficient advance warning. A further common factor in all these phenomena is that they have defence-related consequences, while at the same time these require a comprehensive solution. In each case below, the authors present (i) the general nature and trajectory of the threat, (ii) how it (may) affect(s) Hungary's security, and (iii) Hungary's position on the matter.

Persistent Pressures of Illegal Mass Migration

Migration to (Western) Europe has generally been on an upward trajectory since the mid-20th century, and was generally considered a primarily economic phenomenon for many years. On the one hand, migration can be seen as a global trend as old as humanity itself. On the other hand, illegal or mass migration essentially challenges national security and supply systems, whereas illegal mass migration itself can be interpreted as a risk. This is why the year 2015 marked a strategic shock and turning point in Hungarian national defence policy thinking, as millions of illegal migrants from Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia entered Europe. As a result, the security-related aspects of illegal mass migration took on a much more pronounced role. This was a wake-up call for Hungary as well, which, for instance, received the highest per capita number of asylum applications in 2015 (see *Figure 3*). This underlines the burden that a single country had to face during the crisis, albeit the number of illegal border crossings were definitely higher.

Hungary's response to the migrant crisis was firm and swift. A border fence system was constructed and 4,500 troops were deployed to halt the influx of migrants. The government remained steadfast in its commitment to upholding the inviolability of the Schengen area, and rejected any European quota for the redistribution of refugees/migrants – as the envisioned system would not facilitate proper crisis management and could easily lead to societal (including cultural and ethnic) tensions.

The pressure of illegal mass migration has somewhat eased since 2015-2016, but it remains a major security challenge for European countries. Over 140,000 illegal border crossings were detected in Europe in 2019 alone, with Afghans, Syrians and Moroccans accounting for the top nationalities. Although the number of migrants targeting Europe has somewhat decreased over the past few years compared to their peak in 2015-2016, none of the structural factors inducing migration from developing countries (such as poverty, ethnic/societal tensions, demographic pressures, environmental degradation) have fundamentally changed. As a result, we cannot rule out the possibility of another migratory shock to

Europe in the coming years. In fact, the ongoing COVID pandemic may further exacerbate migratory pressures or accelerate such inflows, since societal trends (i.e. economic hardship, unemployment, lack of healthcare) may serve as further ‘push factors’.

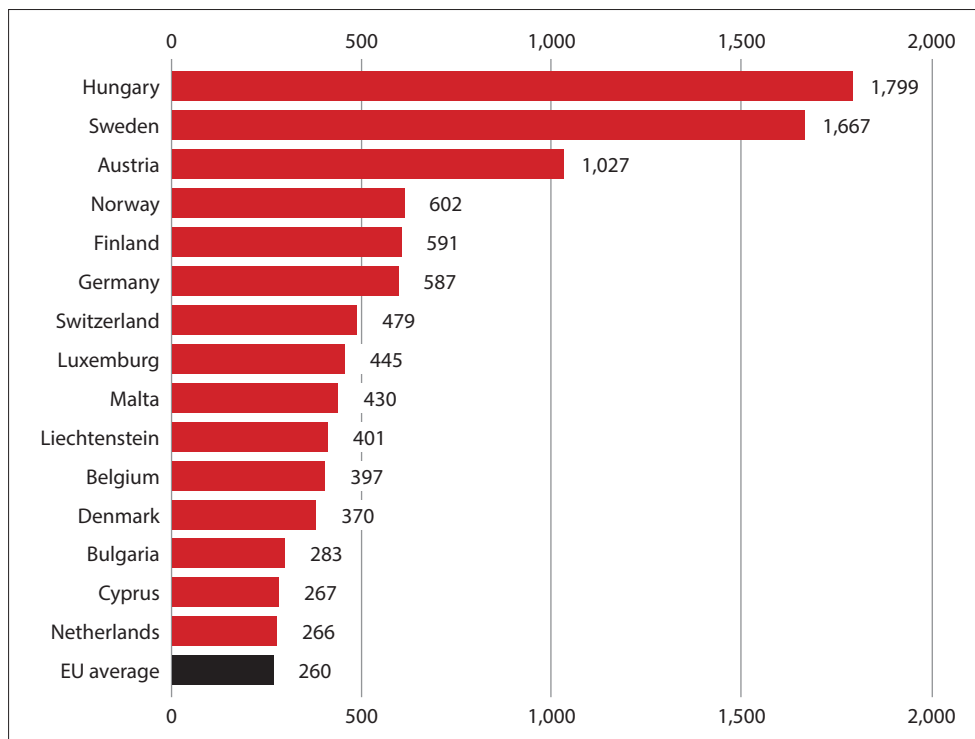


Figure 3 *Asylum applications per 100,000 local population in 2015*²⁹

Migration is an incredibly multi-faceted question, and is closely intertwined with domestic and international politics alike, with economic performance, demographic trends, social cohesion – and security too. The security-related dangers posed by an erosion of state sovereignty through mass migration, or the potential threat of religious extremism, must also be taken into account. It is no wonder that the complexity of migration renders it one of the most sensitive and significant issues of the 21st century.

Migration is likely to remain high on the European agenda in the years to come, as a result of international demographic pressures – and the Hungarian agenda is no exception to this rule. Global population is expected to rise markedly over the next few decades, and Africa in particular will become the major motor of demographic expansion. To put migration into the perspective of global population, around 3-3.5% of the global population is currently classified as migrants. This proportion has proved fairly steady, but implies a gradual nominal growth in light of the medium-term population explosion.

²⁹ “Migrant crisis: Migration to Europe explained in seven charts”. *BBC News*. 4 March 2016. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911>, Accessed 16 July 2020.

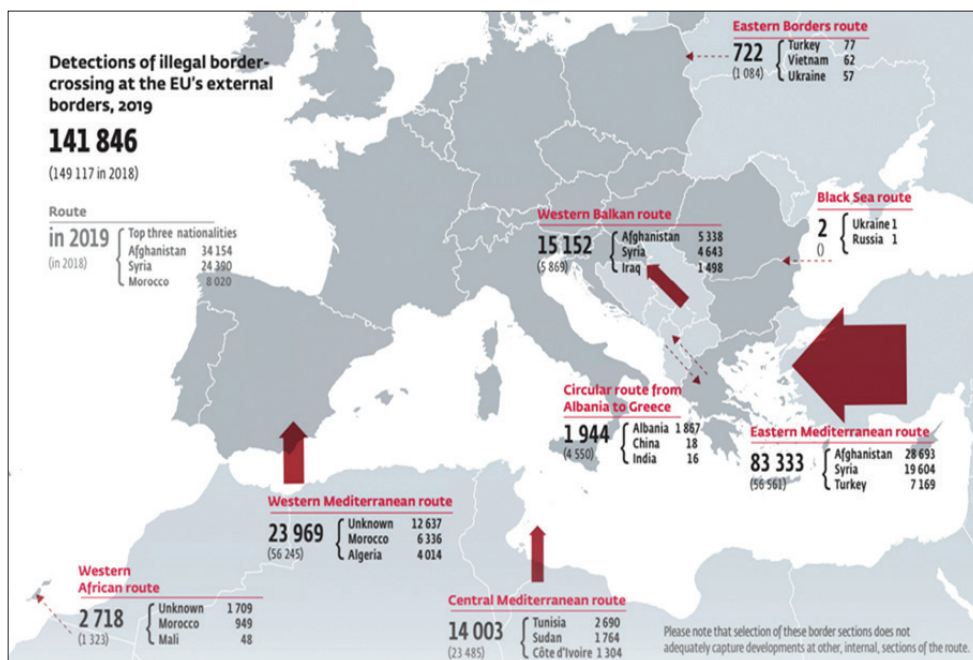


Figure 4 Detection of illegal border crossings at the EU's external borders in 2019³⁰

Forced displacement remains a fundamental burden for the international community. Official figures from UNHCR clearly underscore this. There were some 79.5 m forcibly displaced people in 2019, among them 26 m refugees (including 5.6 m Palestinians), 45.7 m internally displaced persons (IDPs), 4.2 m asylum seekers, and 3.6 m Venezuelans displaced abroad.³¹

This tumult of both migrants and displaced persons all comes at a time when a large portion of (Western) European public opinion is increasingly sceptical of immigration. Another sudden influx of illegal migrants into Hungary (or any other European country for that matter) may entail serious security risks, place a strain on welfare systems, and potentially undermine social cohesion.

This means that at a time of mass global displacement and growing European disenchantment with migration, Hungary must find a policy that is forward-looking, humane and fair. All this comes at a time when any major instability from the 'south' (such as another public health crisis or an ethnic civil war) can trigger a massive influx of migrants over a relatively short period of time.

For this reason, Hungary pursues a policy of delivering local help to crisis-hit areas, as a means to both alleviate suffering and curb illegal migration. The Hungarian government is particularly dedicated to protecting endangered Christian minorities abroad, supporting them through the 'Hungary Helps' programme and the State Secretariat for the Aid of Persecuted Christians. Hungary is committed to the stabilisation of crisis zones on Europe's periphery, in coordination with its NATO Allies and EU Member States. Last, but not least,

³⁰ *Risk analysis for 2020*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2020. DOI: 10.2819/450005

³¹ "Global trends: Forced displacement in 2019". United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. 2019. <https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2019/>, Accessed on 16 July 2020.

as outlined in the National Security Strategy, Hungary firmly believes in upholding its culture, its values, state sovereignty and the sanctity of international borders, with special regard to the Schengen Area.

Challenges of Transnational Terrorism

The second medium-term challenge of Hungarian security and defence policy is that of extremist violence and terrorism. The 9/11 terrorist attacks against the United States brought the issue to the fore, but it was the rise of Islamic State (IS) during the 2010s that presented an even graver threat to Europe. The emergence of IS in 2014-2015 was a strategic shock to the international system: its state-like qualities and robust military capabilities fundamentally overwrote previous thinking on terrorist tactics. Although Hungary has fortunately been spared a terrorist attack to date, such an event cannot be ruled out as Hungary was already a transit country for some of the extremist fighters who attacked Europe in the mid-2010s.

To highlight the gravity of the issue, IS and its approximately 25 affiliated groups have conducted at least 6,500 attacks (including around 5,000 successful actions), which have claimed around 37,000 lives globally and have generated immense flows of migration since 2015 (see *Figure 5*). Currently there are almost 1.3 m³² and approximately 6.2 m³³ internally displaced persons in Iraq and Syria, respectively. Thanks to international counter-terrorism efforts, including bilateral and multilateral formations, there has been a visible decrease in the numbers of successful attacks, suicide bombings, and loss of lives. However, the most recent terrorist attacks in Europe (i.e. those in Austria or France) show that international counter-terrorism and stabilisation efforts must continue, as IS and other terrorist organisations, as well as lone wolf perpetrators, can adapt to many different circumstances.

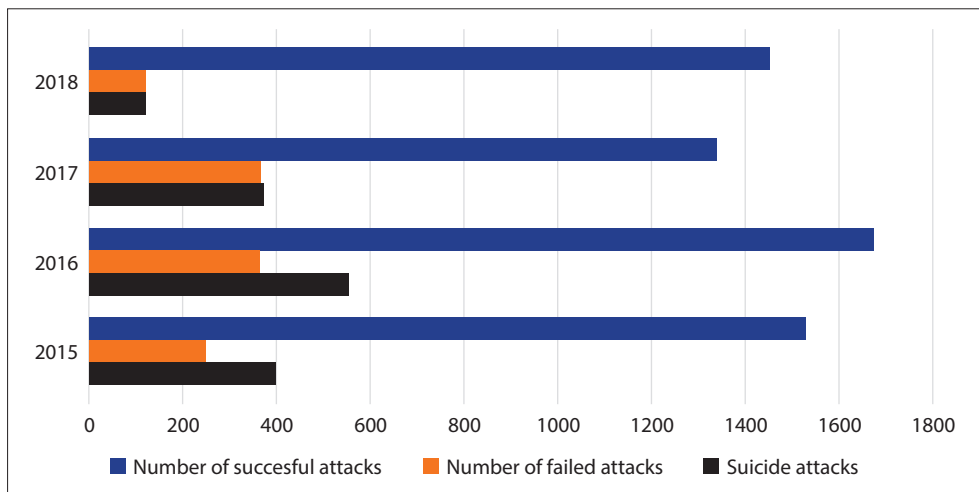


Figure 5 IS attacks worldwide (2015-2018)³⁴

³² “Displacement tracking matrix: Iraq”. *International Organisation for Migration*. 2020. <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/>, Accessed on 16 July 2020.

³³ “Internally displaced people: Syria”. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. <https://www.unhcr.org/sy/internally-displaced-people>, Accessed on 16 July 2020.

³⁴ Based on data from Global Terrorism Database. Chart made by the authors. “Global Terrorism Database”. <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/access/>, Accessed on 16 July 2020.

Although it seems that the operational focus of IS has shifted to the Sahel Belt, its presence has not ceased to exist in other crisis zones, such as Libya, Afghanistan or Yemen, even without its former strongholds and leaders. Apart from the MENA region, South Asia (and particularly Afghanistan) is within the comfort zone of both IS and Al Qaeda, where they can operate with ease (see *Figure 6*). These terrorist organisations are able to appear in any conflict zone to create a new safe haven for themselves, as a sort of ‘tumour’ of international security – thus their radius of operation clearly extends to Europe as well. This is particularly true in light of the growing proportion of home-grown terrorists in the West.

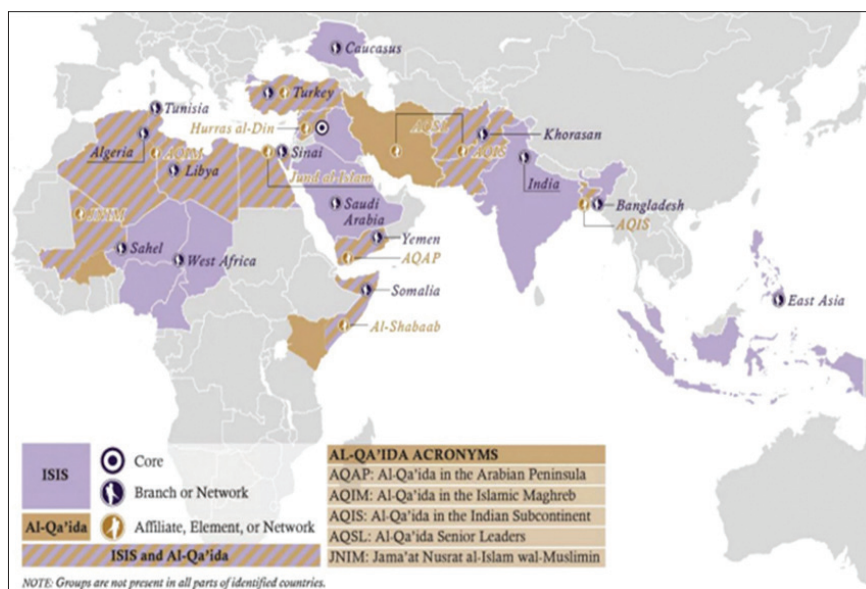


Figure 6 *The sphere of IS influence mapped*³⁵

Europe is currently affected by terrorism on two fronts: first, as the potential victim of terrorist attacks, and second, as the point of origin of many foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs). While in 2014 IS and Al Qaeda were only perceived as potential threats, by 2015 there was clear evidence that IS and its affiliates were hidden in Europe – which led to the increase in terrorist attacks on the continent. The 2015 Terrorism Situation & Trend Report presented a correlation between migration and terrorism. In that year, cyberterrorism also appeared as a new platform for extremist actors to conduct assaults against their targets.

It is important to note that the Western Balkans has become a base of radicalised communities that IS exploits to recruit and mobilise for its different attacks. As long as the Western Balkans lacks the credible perspective of Euro-Atlantic integration, the region will remain a forward cluster of the challenges from the south, and on the mid- to long term, it can potentially become a launching pad for extremist actors to expand their influence in Europe.³⁶

³⁵ “Worldwide threat assessment of the US intelligence community”. US Office of the Director of National Intelligence. 29 January 2019. <https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/os-dcoats-012919.pdf>, Accessed on 16 July 2020.

³⁶ “Worldwide threat assessment of the US intelligence community”.

The total number of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) is about 40,000, including around 5,500 fighters from Europe, who fight in the Middle East and North Africa, or even in the Sahel. Approximately 1,600 fighters returned to their home country, while an additional 1,500 were killed in combat or taken into custody. Up to 2017, many FTFs used Hungary as a transit route to reach Western Europe or the Western Balkans, the latter also has at least 1,000 FTFs on the ground. However, the inflow of FTFs has not yet stopped, and the potential emergence of a new illegal migration flow may facilitate their return in Europe in the future.³⁷

Experience gained in the Middle East and in Afghanistan highlight that the required force ratio for the successful elimination of a terrorist organisation can prove quite high. In the case of IS, over the past years the D-IS Coalition conducted at least 34,000 air strikes against the group both in Iraq and Syria, and defeated a minimum of 80,000 terrorists. In spite of all these efforts, IS is still a threat and an overarching victory against the organisation has not yet been realised. This led the international community to switch to a more integrated and comprehensive approach during its engagements (covering the full spectrum of DIME), instead of relying solely on the military dimension of the issue. As local stabilisation and ownership are highly important in counter-terrorism efforts, international actors supported the affected areas through financial, material, and other immaterial donations, to facilitate the resilience-building of local societies.³⁸

Due to the drivers mentioned previously, Budapest has taken a more determined approach to terrorism since 2015. One of the foundations of Hungary's international engagement is to manage crises at their roots, instead of importing problems to Europe – and by definition, to Hungary as well. This is the engine of Hungary's engagement in international counter-terrorism efforts. Since 2015 Hungary has been playing a greater role in the Council of Europe's counter-terrorism work strands. Budapest takes part in the Council of Europe Counter-Terrorism Committee (CDCT) (formerly: Committee of Experts on Terrorism, CODEXTER).³⁹ Moreover, since 2016 Hungary has been taking part in the Coalition's Operation Inherent Resolve to combat IS and it has also been involved in the NATO Mission in Iraq. Hungary joined the so-called Christchurch Call in September 2019 to enhance counter-terrorism efforts in online media and to help abolish extremist propaganda.⁴⁰ Furthermore, in November 2019 a decision was made that the regional programme support office of the United Nations' Office of Counter-Terrorism will be located in Budapest.

Hungary also supports states in need through project-based non-material assistance, to facilitate the return of people and support them in restarting their lives. The Hungarian authorities ensure basic conditions, for instance through the provision of housing, sanitation,

³⁷ "How many IS foreign fighters are left in Iraq and Syria?". BBC News. 20 February 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-47286935>, Accessed on 16 July 2020.; Bergema, R. and Wijninga, P. "Coming home: Explaining the variance in jihadi foreign fighter returnees across Western Europe". Jihadology. 15 February 2018. <https://jihadology.net/2018/02/15/guest-post-coming-home-explaining-the-variance-in-jihadi-foreign-fighter-returnees-across-western-europe/>, Accessed on 16 July 2020.; "EU terrorism situation & trend report (TE-SAT)". EUROPOL. 2020. <https://www.europol.europa.eu/tesat-report>, Accessed on 16 July 2020.

³⁸ "Strike releases". Operation Inherent Resolve. 2020. <https://www.inherentresolve.mil/Releases/Strike-Releases/>, Accessed on 16 July 2020.

³⁹ "Council of Europe Committee on Counter-Terrorism (CDCT)". Council of Europe. 2020. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/counter-terrorism/cdct>, Accessed 23 July 2020.

⁴⁰ "Supporters". Christchurch Call. 2020. <https://www.christchurchcall.com/supporters.html>, Accessed 23 July 2020.

education, health care, financial support, etc. Besides bi- and multilateral cooperation, through Official Development Assistance Budapest donated more than USD 56 m to the Middle East states, including Iraq and Syria, and through the ‘Hungary Helps’ programme it also supports these states and their neighbourhood.⁴¹ In Hungary’s view, it is only through a local and comprehensive approach that the threat of terrorism, and the spread of radical ideologies, can be curbed.

On a military front, the D-IS Coalition – and by that, the Iraqi Operation Inherent Resolve – is the centre of gravity of Hungary’s counter-terrorism efforts. To underline this, in 2015 the National Assembly of Hungary mandated the Hungarian Defence Forces to support the Coalition’s mission initially with 150 PAX for two years.⁴² In 2017, that maximum number of personnel was expanded to 200 PAX and the national caveat regarding the area of operation was withdrawn. Notably, that expanded number of personnel is almost 17% of the national level of ambition of Hungary’s expeditionary forces. Furthermore, Hungary is contributing to other relevant missions and operations to facilitate local stabilisation and counter-terrorism efforts, including the NATO Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan or the EU Training Mission in Mali. The contribution to missions is a highly important pillar of Hungary’s 3C activities in NATO.

Activity of Rising and Great Powers, Potential for Peer Conflicts

The third, and final, challenge Hungarian security and defence policy are facing is much more fluid and therefore harder to pin down. It is a shift in global power dynamics, one that overwrites previous conventional thinking on military might and inter-state relations. This creates new realities that a mid-sized, land-locked Central European country such as Hungary must be able to adapt to. It is important to note that as a member of NATO and the EU, the Alliance’s and the Union’s threat perceptions shape Hungary’s assessment as well.

The US-dominated global world order seems to be in flux, but the outlines of any future power balance remain unclear. This transition period is marked by shifts in global confidence as well, as highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the banner of ‘America First’, the trans-Atlantic relationship has been replaced by a more pragmatic approach that requires tangible achievements in partnerships; it is yet to be seen what changes in tone the incoming Biden administration will bring.

The activity of rising and great powers, as well as the proliferation of peer conflicts could easily lead to heightened tensions in our immediate security environment. Rising powers, such as China, often have significant geopolitical aspirations. It is important to note that China presents both challenges and opportunities, as it was elaborated on in the London Declaration by the Heads of States and Governments of NATO as well as by the EU’s ‘Strategic

⁴¹ “Hungary’s Official Development Assistance in numbers”. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, Department for International Development. 2019. <https://nefe.kormany.hu/hungary-s-official-development-assistance-in-numbers>, Accessed on 16 July 2020.

⁴² „H/4027. számú országgyűlési határozati javaslat a Magyar Honvédségnek az Iszlám Állam elnevezésű terror-szervezet elleni nemzetközi fellépésben való részvételéről”. Government of Hungary. March 2015. <https://www.parlament.hu/irom40/04027/04027.pdf>, Accessed on 19 November 2020.

Outlook’ in 2019⁴³ – and was also reflected in the National Security Strategy of Hungary. At the same time, these actors often have domestic-related issues (i.e. territorial disputes or legal issues) they must tackle. Other actors, such as Russia, take an assertive posture in Hungary’s immediate and farther neighbourhood, i.e. in the post-Soviet area, the Middle East and North Africa or the Mediterranean. Such a stance allows these actors to influence the dynamics of key geographical regions and thereby affect the security of Hungary as well.

By the shifts in global power, the changing characteristics of warfare has led to an overall rise in defence expenditures. The trajectory of increased global military spending is illustrated in *Figure 7*, together with the defence expenditure of the major global military powers. According to the European Commission, global defence budgets have grown by approximately 75% over the past two decades. The top 5 spenders (the United States, China, Saudi Arabia, Russia and India) collectively account for 60% of all expenditure. Studies by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) suggest that military arsenals worldwide will double in terms of size between 2016 and 2030.⁴⁴ The role of innovation, IT and dual-use technologies will likely become even more pronounced in the coming years (see in *Broader Challenges*).

Inter-state war remains relatively rare in the global arena; internal conflicts and acts of terrorism are far more common. A number of smaller wars (particularly in the post-Soviet space) have effectively become frozen conflicts. The nature of war has undergone significant changes since the end of the Cold War. On the one hand, conflicts are now much more diffused through a proliferation of actors (such as states, mercenaries, corporations, civil society groups, etc.). On the other hand, they have become increasingly diverse in their means – be that military confrontation, economic coercion, cyberattacks or information warfare. All this comes at a time when major powers and regional actors alike are behaving in a more assertive manner, thus narrowing the room for manoeuvre of mid-sized states such as Hungary. This trend strengthens the need for developing national resilience within institutional and multinational frameworks, under the aegis of the Zrínyi Programme that comprehensively supports the Hungarian defence policy’s vision of strategic convergence with key defence partners.

⁴³ “London Declaration”. North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. 4 December 2019. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_171584.htm, Accessed on 28 July 2020.; “EU-China: A strategic outlook”. *European Commission*. 12 March 2019. <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/communication-eu-china-a-strategic-outlook.pdf>, Accessed on 28 July 2020.

⁴⁴ Béraud-Surdeau, L. “Global defence spending: The United States widens the gap”. IISS Military Balance blog. 14 February 2020. <https://www.iiss.org/blogs/military-balance/2020/02/global-defence-spending>, Accessed on 16 July 2020.

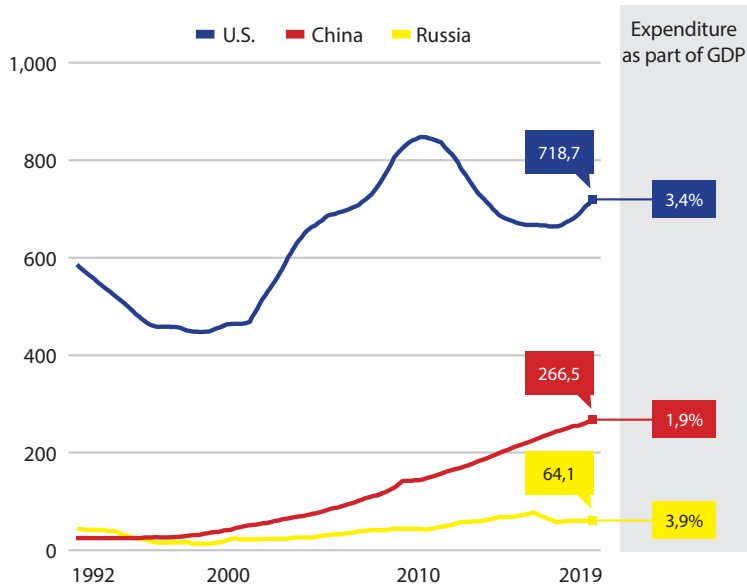
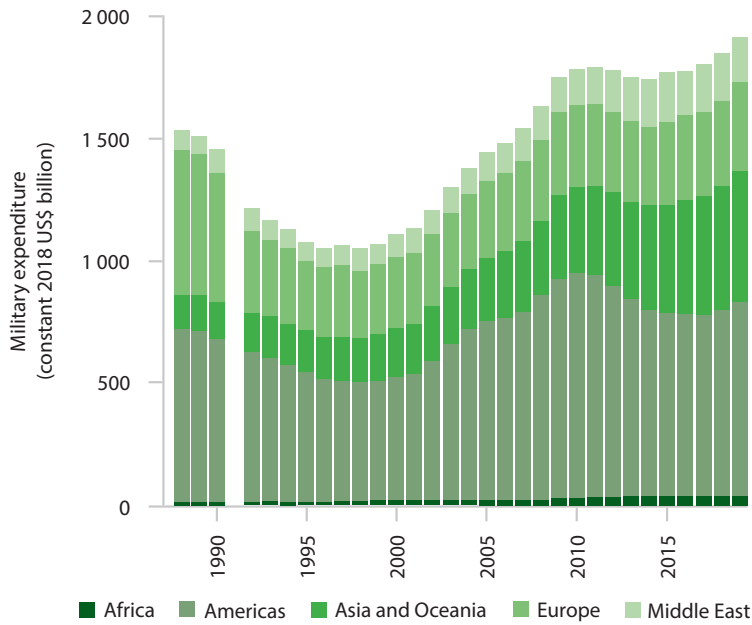


Figure 7 Global military expenditures and specific spending rates of the US, China and Russia, bn USD⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Buchholz, K. "China steps up military spending". Statista. 5 June 2020. <https://www.statista.com/chart/16878/military-expenditure-by-the-us-china-and-russia/>, Accessed on 16 July 2020.; "Military expenditure." SIPRI. 2019. <https://www.sipri.org/research/armament-and-disarmament/arms-and-military-expenditure/military-expenditure>, Accessed on 16 July 2020.

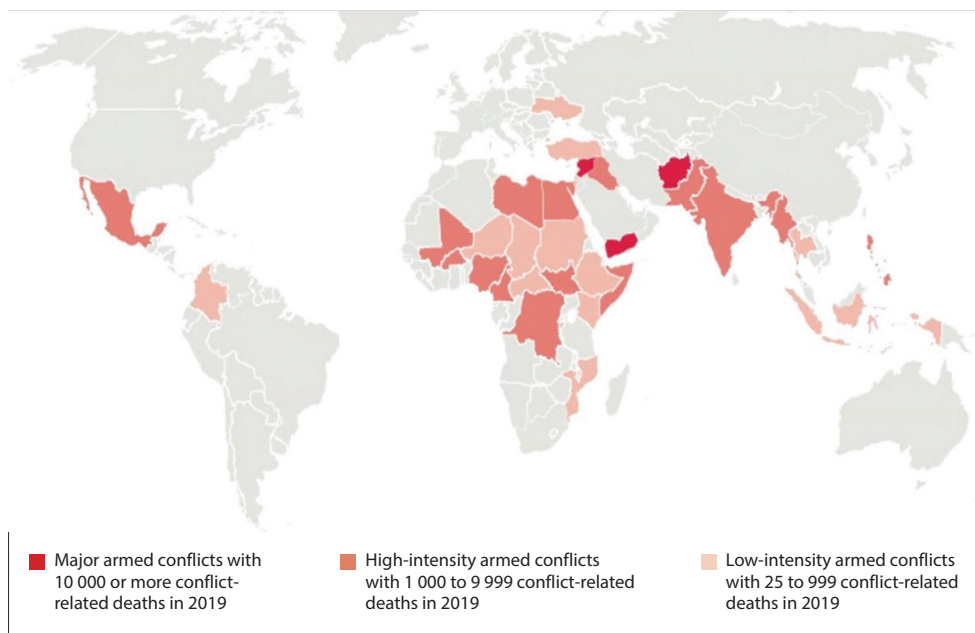


Figure 8 *Major armed conflicts in the world, 2019*⁴⁶

BROADER CHALLENGES

While the previous chapter highlighted the main challenges Hungarian defence policy is already reckoning with, certain wider security policy related issues cannot be overlooked either. These are questions that perhaps do not fundamentally determine the immediate defence landscape, but must be taken into consideration when developing Hungarian defence policy. The dangers posed by unilateral energy dependence, or the need to halt the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, are by no means novel developments – nonetheless, they will continue to shape international security. In addition, anthropogenic climate change, cyber defence and the threat of other health crises are relatively new issues, where the international community as a whole is grappling with formulating an adequate and comprehensive response.

Climate Change and Natural Disasters

In recent years, man-made climate change has emerged as one of the world's top long-term international security threats. This is a multi-faceted challenge, since it may result in more frequent extreme weather events, droughts, flooding, a loss of agricultural territory and biodiversity, etc. Consequently, global warming is often referred to as a 'threat multiplier': it does not cause security problems in itself, rather it exacerbates and amplifies existing socioeconomic and political vulnerabilities. The potential effects of climate change on

⁴⁶ "Global developments in armed conflicts, peace processes and peace operations". In *SIPRI Yearbook 2020*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

human security are accordingly wide-ranging and difficult to predict. They include heightened competition over resources (especially freshwater), environmentally-induced migration, more frequent natural disasters, food insecurity, and the endangering of coastal areas by rising sea levels. (Not to mention that climate change and its potential consequences have serious effects on military operations and missions, for instance through extreme weather conditions that can cause damage to military equipment or personnel, regardless of the area of operation.) This challenge is of course not unique to Hungary; in fact, its environmental footprint is negligible in global terms. Nonetheless, national adherence to European and global environmental and climate policies remain key for all relevant nations.⁴⁷

Energy Policy

Energy policy strongly relates to both politics and economics. Conventional wisdom holds that a nation's energy policy must meet a 'holy trinity' of goals: affordability, security, along with environmental sustainability. Hungary has long been dependent on foreign hydrocarbon imports to meet its energy needs,⁴⁸ since the size of Budapest's domestic reserves is inadequate, and this is unlikely to change over the medium term.

For historical reasons, the issue of energy imports from Russia is a sensitive question in Central Europe. The gas crises of 2006 and 2009 brought the dangers of one-sided dependence into stark relief, and reinforced the EU's commitment to diversifying import sources and routes. Over the past years, significant steps were taken within the EU's Energy Union to ease this dependence (i.e. the construction of interconnectors linking Central European countries, the building of liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals, or plans for additional imports from the Black Sea/Caspian/Eastern Mediterranean). On a domestic front, the expansion of the Paks nuclear power plant is currently underway, with the hope of providing a cheap and stable source of electricity. The LNG terminal at Krk, Croatia serves also to diversify the energy portfolio and reduce dependency. Meanwhile, the proportion of renewable sources within the Hungarian energy mix is steadily on the rise. Growing attention is also paid to new challenges in the energy sector, such as the cyber security of critical infrastructure.

Cyber Defence and Resilience

In a globalised and information-based world, the challenges originating from the cyber dimension have gradually become paramount. NATO has recognised cyber space as a new operational domain, and later as a military domain.⁴⁹ Because of this, a cyberattack could potentially trigger the invocation of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. In that regard, resilience, especially cyber resilience, is of crucial importance, as a cyberattack could paralyse (critical) national infrastructure. Attacks against Hungarian cyber networks, and a growing awareness of the scale of the potential threat, have led Hungary to make greater efforts at

⁴⁷ "A Kormány 1163/2020. (IV. 21.) Korm. határozata Magyarország Nemzeti Biztonsági Stratégiájáról". [Government Decree No.1163/2020. on Hungary's National Security Strategy]

⁴⁸ "A Kormány 1163/2020. (IV. 21.) Korm. határozata Magyarország Nemzeti Biztonsági Stratégiájáról". [Government Decree No.1163/2020. on Hungary's National Security Strategy]

⁴⁹ "Cyber defence". North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. 25 September 2020. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_78170.htm, Accessed 19 November 2020.

strengthening national resilience, as outlined in the National Security Strategy.⁵⁰ To this end, for instance, Hungary is already part of the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Tallinn, and joined the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats in Helsinki in 2019.⁵¹

Proliferation of Weapons and Ammunition

The challenge of non-proliferation and arms control has long been on the international security agenda but developments in recent years have adversely impacted the global progress made. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the number of currently deployed warheads still exceeds 3,700, while the quantity of stored types reaches almost 10,000.⁵² That amount is divided among nine countries in the world. Arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation (ADN) activity is a pillar of Europe's strategic stability as a part of the Cold War legacy. ADN is also the cornerstone of crisis management processes, which helps protect civilians, strengthens state sovereignty, and reduces the chance of conflicts reigniting. To this end, Hungary actively supports non-proliferation programmes within the framework of the OSCE.⁵³

Pandemics and Health Care Crises

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic of 2019-2020 is often characterised as a 'black swan' event, even though the threat of a global disease has long been discussed. Compared to the death toll of previous historical pandemics, COVID-19 remains fairly contained, but the havoc it has wrought in a globalised world is unprecedented. At this point, it is important to note that the geopolitical impacts of COVID-19 are far from clear, and not yet over. Disruptions to global travel, business, supply chains and human contacts have led many to question the future of globalisation. In addition, some scientists claim that the encroachment of humans upon previously untouched natural habitats may accelerate the future spread of other diseases from animals to humans, thus one cannot rule out the possibility of other contagious diseases emerging over the coming years. That means that the international community must prepare for tackling these challenges in the future, and it has to focus on reducing the potential negative effects of any other short-notice or no-notice threat.

In politics, the pandemic has unveiled both a tendency for mutual cooperation (i.e. through international organisations) as well as for national isolation to combat the spread of

⁵⁰ "A Kormány 1163/2020. (IV. 21.) Korm. határozata Magyarország Nemzeti Biztonsági Stratégiájáról". [Government Decree No.1163/2020. on Hungary's National Security Strategy]

⁵¹ "About us". *NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence*. <https://ccdcoe.org/about-us/>, Accessed on 23 July 2020; "Hungary joins Hybrid CoE". *European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats*. 10 December 2019. <https://www.hybridcoe.fi/news/hungary-joins-hybrid-coe/>, Accessed 23 July 2020.

⁵² "Nuclear weapon modernisation continues but the outlook for arms control is bleak: new SIPRI Yearbook out now". SIPRI. 15 June 2020. <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2020/nuclear-weapon-modernization-continues-outlook-arms-control-bleak-new-sipri-yearbook-out-now>, Accessed on 16 July 2020.; "World nuclear forces". *SIPRI. 2019*. <https://www.sipri.org/research/armament-and-disarmament/nuclear-disarmament-arms-control-and-non-proliferation/world-nuclear-forces>, Accessed on 16 July 2020.

⁵³ "OSCE's work on small arms and conventional ammunition". Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/5/4/359006.pdf>, Accessed on 19 November 2020.

the disease. The economic downturn expected in the wake of the virus may yet fuel further instability in the political and social spheres.

In the spirit of European solidarity, Hungary actively assisted other countries during the coronavirus outbreak. Most of this support was civilian (and not military) in nature, and was therefore coordinated by the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Hungarian aid efforts were primarily conducted on a bilateral basis, but in close and frequent coordination with the European Union and NATO. Budapest also organised several repatriation flights that brought home foreign citizens stranded abroad. Hungary provided medical tools, personal protective equipment (PPE), COVID-19 testing kits along with disinfectant liquids to a dozen European countries (including its strategic focal point, the Western Balkans). In the domain of military operations, Hungary ensured the evacuation and aerial transport of Serbian nationals from the EU Training Mission in Mali.⁵⁴

CONCLUSIONS

The core purpose of this study was to present an overview of Hungary's modern defence policy. Its starting point has been the major strategic shocks that affected Europe's security environment in the past decade, such as the migration crisis, the armed conflict in Ukraine (with the assertive involvement of external actors), or the ever-looming threat of terrorist attacks on the European continent. Within this context, Hungary lies in a truly unique geo-strategic position, since it finds itself at the crossroads of both 'eastern' and 'southern' challenges. The three main direct challenges for Hungary in medium term were thus identified as illegal mass migration, transnational terrorism, along with growing competition between great and regional powers. These priorities have also been confirmed as being among top security priorities for the Hungarian public.

The study also presented the increasing multilateralism of national defence policy. This initiative is primarily rooted in the understanding that strategic convergence between Allies is required to tackle today's modern, complex challenges. The concept would however remain an empty shell without credible force development. In the case of Hungary, the Zrínyi Programme is bearing fruit already, and the multinational commands HQ-MND-C and R-SOCC serve as nests of cooperation to strengthen the capabilities of the Alliance and those of the Union at the same time. Thus, regional formations of defence cooperation are also gaining increasing prevalence in Hungarian defence policy. While the Visegrad 4 is invariably the primary formation, other frameworks are also important both for enhancing security and fostering military cooperation in the wider region of Hungary, which is facing the same set of challenges.

The authors are confident that the herein presented deliberations of the Hungarian defence policy will foster a better understanding on the overall direction of travel of the national defence sector. Nonetheless, as the security environment continues to show its emerging and increasingly complex nature, Hungarian defence policy shall also find its way to become an even more proactive – rather than reactive – member of the European and Euro-Atlantic defence community through, *inter alia*, continued conceptual development.

⁵⁴ "Honvédségi géppel Nyugat-Afrikából". 9 May 2020. <https://honvedelem.hu/media/honvedsegi-geppel-nyugat-afrikabol/>, Accessed on 23 July 2020.

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