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THE CHALLENGES AND TESTS FACED BY PATRIOTISM IN THE 21ST CENTURY¹

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ABSTRACT: *Through Government Decision 1257/2018. (VI. 4), the Government appointed a Government Commissioner for Patriotic and National Defence Education and Related Investments. The tasks of the Commissioner include drawing up a Government strategy for national defence education. National defence education is part of a complex system of patriotic education. Based on the systemic environmental analysis of patriotic education, the present essay discusses the main challenges and risks of our time, which are misleading, hiding dangers and tests of character when it comes to conserving Hungarian identity, especially for young generations. In the conclusion, it is confirmed that the key to facing the security challenges and risks of the 21st century – be they caused by globalisation or new methods of warfare – is the strengthening of patriotism and a sense of national belonging.*

KEYWORDS: *national defence, patriotism, globalisation, migration, hybrid warfare, nation states*

Patriotism is a complex moral concept, based on both emotional and intellectual elements. Morality, made up of written and unwritten rules, is one of the most important social norms. In the course of history, moral norms altered, sometimes undergoing changes over a short period, or even coexisting with other norms. The meaning of patriotism itself has also changed over historical periods. The term is of Greek origin (*patris*), but the ancient Greeks were not attached to a nation as it is understood today (an *ethnos*) but rather to a *polis*, a territorial unit and its government and institutional setup. In contrast, Hungarian patriotism is based on a national bond and its emotional basis has always been a love of the country. This is reflected in the following quote, taken from “The Emancipation of Jews” (*A zsidók emancipációja*) by József Eötvös: “The homeland is not the piece of land you were born on. (...) The homeland is more than that. It is the place where we feel free, where we are among our ilk, whose history is our pride, whose flourishing is our happiness, whose future is our hope; this is the homeland, for which only cowards are not willing to give up their lives; and of those who do not have a homeland, it would be cruel to expect sacrifices.”²

This was especially true during the Hungarian Reform Era of the 19th century, the period of national awakening when the most noble feelings of the Hungarian people found expression and coalesced into a unified national programme, when patriotism was a natural feeling

¹ Originally published in Hungarian in *Honvédségi Szemle* 149/1. 2021. 66-74. DOI: [10.35926/HSZ.2021.1.5](https://doi.org/10.35926/HSZ.2021.1.5).

² Eötvös, J. *A zsidók emancipációja*. Budapest: Neumann Kht., 2003. <https://mek.oszk.hu/05900/05920/html/gmeotvosj0002.html>.

that inspired people to unite for a higher purpose. The best traditions of the Hungarian nation were brought together into a shared national idea, which has provided a good foundation for building a future, and the physical and intellectual heritage of this period is a source of pride to this very day.

CHALLENGES AND TESTS FOR PATRIOTISM

One should not get stuck in nostalgic remembrances regarding the achievements of the Hungarian Reform Era and resign oneself to the idea that the current environment is unfavourable to patriots, who might be called out as nationalists or chauvinists. Patriotism is not a fashion trend arriving from the outside that changes one's look every now and again; it is rather an emotional and intellectual state that matured over the course of the trials and tribulations of a thousand-year history: "*the love of our homeland, if it is mindful, is one of the greatest moral virtues*".³ Deliberate patriotism can never become old-fashioned or outdated; true patriotism can never be about nationalism or chauvinism. True patriotism teaches us to respect our own national values, without denigrating other nations. In fact, it helps Hungarians respect the culture, language and customs of other peoples. Without a doubt, the Reform Era provided a more favourable environment for progressive national socialisation processes than the 21st century does, which is filled with hidden challenges. The greatest of these challenges, both on individual and national level, are globalisation, illegal migration and neo-imperialism. According to the categorisation of factors threatening security, illegal migration ranks higher on the scale than a challenge; it is what the security policy terminology calls a risk.⁴ If the above-mentioned challenges and risks go unopposed, the concepts of homeland, patriotism, patriotic and national defence might be no more than empty phrases for the coming generations.

GLOBALISATION

Globalisation started with the great geographical discoveries, and it continued and strengthened over various historical eras. The pace of globalisation accelerated in the 20th century, and it became truly global with the institutional establishment of the global market, which dates from the foundation of the WTO (World Trade Organization) in 1995. In terms of their extent, global processes are all the social, economic and environmental processes the effects of which are felt across the globe instead of being limited to one country or region. In terms of their content and their goals, these are processes that allow Western civilisation to drive a trend of homogenisation around the world in a wide range of areas including economy, finance, trade, architecture, culture and so on, penetrating even into the lifestyles of individual people. This results in a sort of *mono-culture*: in all corners of the world, one might find similar lifestyles based on the consumer society, similar shopping centres, hotels, crowded cities, uniform products, foods (McDonald's), films, music and information technologies. Some see this as a blessing and a path to a world of uniform welfare, while others see it as a curse. In any case, we live in a special time in a world where globali-

³ "Hazaszeretet". *Kislexikon*. <http://www.kislexikon.hu/hazaszeretet.html>.

⁴ Challenges are in general, longer-term processes (e.g. globalisation, environmental and demographic challenges etc.). Risks involve a higher level of threat and they arise as a result of challenges (e.g. massive illegal migration, problems arising out of religious extremism).

sation affects everything by simultaneously creating new values and destroying old ones. Therefore, globalisation cannot be defined as 100% good or 100% bad. Globalisation is a multi-faceted, varied phenomenon. Insulating ourselves from it would be at least as bad a decision as allowing it to enter our country unchecked. The analysis of economic processes shows that the poorest peoples around the world are those that were left out of globalisation. Dictatorships are the least involved in globalisation – North Korea, Cuba and most African countries – and they are clearly the poorest countries of the world. A one-sided or superficial assessment of the *complex effects* of globalisation might lead one to think there is nothing wrong with using state-of-the-art techniques and technologies in order to gain easy access to the circulation of the global economy, especially if the banks of the developed world are more than happy to provide the necessary funding. Introducing modern techniques and technologies is indeed useful in and of itself. However, this is only the start of a process, which has numerous *side effects*. However, economic globalisation does not come with a package leaflet listing those side effects. The main beneficiaries and supporters of economic globalisation are international corporations and financial institutions, which are acquiring greater and greater powers with less and less control. As part of this process, the frameworks provided by nation states are becoming less and less capable of controlling economic and social processes, and the sovereignty of local societies and governments is significantly reduced in the areas that have the greatest impact on the citizens. This negative effect of globalisation on the operation of nation states is what has the greatest impact on the subject of this essay: patriotism.

Europeans have mixed views on globalisation:⁵

- 37% view globalisation as an asset to their country’s identity;
- 53% view globalisation as a threat to their country’s identity;
- 9% do not know;
- 55% consider globalisation is an opportunity overall;
- 45% consider globalisation is a threat overall;
- 35% view their economic prospects with anxiety.

Cosmopolitanism can be considered as an undesired offshoot of globalisation.

According to the Hungarian Dictionary of Words of Foreign Origin, cosmopolitan means:

- a citizen of the world, a citizen committed to *universal human progress*, especially an intellectual;
- a person who is *not closely tied to their people or the culture of their country*, who can easily fit in anywhere in the world;
- in biology: a living creature that is found in most parts of the Earth.⁶

Celebrities are often called cosmopolitan, and viewed as role models in this matter. Based on this definition, one might ask whether somebody who is not closely tied to the people and the culture of their nation can be a good patriot. The author can only hope that the definition is incorrect, and the citizens of the world fulfil their mission for “universal human progress” while conserving their Hungarian identity, their attachment to the Hungarian

⁵ “Reflection paper on harnessing globalization”. *European Commission*. 10 May 2017. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/reflection-paper-globalisation_en.pdf, Accessed on 17 October 2019. DOI: 10.2775/41851

⁶ “Kozmopolita”. *Idegen Szavak Gyűjteménye*. <https://idegen-szavak.hu/kozmpolita>, Accessed on 22 October 2019.

people and culture; as patriots first and cosmopolitans second. As one of the greatest Hungarian poets said: “*the Homeland above all*”.

Those who support globalisation and cosmopolitanism without reservations often argue for the necessity – and indeed, priority – of universal human progress over serving one’s own country. In Hungary, the concepts of homeland and progress go hand in hand. The phrase was coined as a motto by poet Ferenc Kölcsey: “*Our mottoes were: Homeland and progress.*” („*Jelszavaink valának: haza és haladás.*”) Dezső Csejtei, a historian of philosophy provides a very convincing guidance regarding this issue in a recently published essay. The essay discusses the ways those in power manipulated the phrase of Kölcsey, updating it to comment on the machinations of globalisation and cosmopolitanism.⁷ Back in the early 19th century, Kölcsey wanted to call the attention of his compatriots to the fact that Hungary would not be able to achieve independence without certain fundamental reforms aimed at establishing a strong middle class. In this period, a strong connection between homeland and progress (with the homeland coming first) was only natural. Later, mainly in the 20th century, as left-wing movements gained power, the two came into opposition. Progress was seen as more important, and internationalism became the justification. Under socialism, there was a certain homeland mythology that manifested the attachment of the working classes to the country through the phrase “Socialist homeland”. After the democratic transition, liberal cosmopolitanism took roots in Hungary, significantly eroding moral norms associated with patriotism, including people’s sense of an obligation to national defence. In this period, progress became synonymous with the mantra globalisation. This process was further fuelled by multiculturalism and the pro-migration policies cloaked as humanitarianism.

As Csejtei concluded: “*(...) in this age, instead of following the twisted rallying cry of progress, our homeland itself and the protection of our homeland is what real progress should be about. The homeland, the nation state is perhaps the only possible antidote of cosmopolitan destruction.*”⁸

MIGRATION

Migration and the various associated phenomena are among the greatest risk factors of our age. The great migration that recently started exceeded all expectations. The events of the last few years exposed Europe to an extreme social, cultural and civilisational shock the likes of which had not been seen since the Ottoman conquest.

Numerous Western European examples indicate that even immigrants who have been living in Europe for decades live in their own micro-communities, and have no wish to change that. Among those who arrive in a receiving country, the distribution of people with regard to their approach to adapting to the culture, laws and religion of the receiving nation is rather extreme. At the same time, Europe is going through a demographic crisis due to the falling birth rate. It becomes clear that if migration goes unchecked, it has the potential to quickly change, or perhaps even push into the background the universal European values of law, culture and religion that emerged over millennia, fundamentally disrupting European societies, which are more or less stable for the time being. The risks of this process to the security of nation states are clear.

⁷ Csejtei, D. “A haza minden előtt”. *Magyar Nemzet*, 11 October 2019. <https://magyarnemzet.hu/velemeney/a-haza-minden-elott-7333160/>, Accessed on 2 November 2019.

⁸ Csejtei. “A haza minden előtt”.

NEO-IMPERIALIST AMBITIONS

Among leading European politicians, there are two diametrically opposed views on the future of Europe and the European Union in particular. One camp would like to conserve Europe's respect of nation states and its Judeo-Christian traditions, which both emerged over several thousand years, and wishes to give nation states a strong role within the European Union. The followers of this view are convinced that Europe can only be strong if its member states are strong and work in close cooperation with each other, thus making the most of their own abilities and maintaining their sovereignty, instead of being relegated to the role of executors of centrally issued orders, which may in some cases be opposed to the interests, traditions, culture and temperament of the given nation. The United Kingdom has traditionally been in favour of strong nation states within Europe. According to the followers of the other line of thinking, Europe can only keep pace with the world's leading powers by becoming a superpower like them. In other words, by becoming an empire in which decisions are made centrally. This is essentially the idea of setting up the United States of Europe, in which nation states would play a much smaller role. The representation of national interests would almost certainly be weakened, and nation states would have to give up the independence they had spent centuries fighting and working for, in the service of goals that can hardly be identified at this stage, and which may not be achieved. From the leading nations of the European Union, Germany and France are most committed to centralisation. British philosopher Roger Scruton said: "(...) *the nation state is not the problem but the solution – it contains within itself the only motives to which politicians can now appeal, when the effects of the European project are finally being felt across the continent.*"⁹

NEW TYPES OF WARFARE

After Hungary joined NATO, voices questioning the necessity of developing the Hungarian military and home defence capabilities started emerging. Some said NATO was going to protect Hungary if it were to become necessary, and Europe has been peaceful for more than half a century, anyway. These comments may be seen as a layman's harmless ideas, but the author feels that the representatives of neo-imperialism are certainly not harmless laymen; they pose a real danger, because the ideas of strengthening the central power inevitably lead to denying the need for an independent military and independent home defence. How peaceful is the world? How realistic is the sense of security of the population? Is there a need for nation states to have their own militaries? To answer these questions, it is necessary to review some characteristics of new types of warfare.

The hybrid warfare model is the most current product of the theory of 21st century warfare, and it reflects a new way of thinking about armed conflict between states. Today's warfare – be it called *strategic deterrent*, *new generation warfare* or *hybrid warfare* – is based on the shared realisation that countries – especially with regard to great powers – are unable to achieve their geopolitical objectives through military force alone, and there are complex methods that can replace or reduce the use of military force in pursuing their interests. "Hybrid warfare, as a complex strategic system model, is a set of tools that countries and alliances

⁹ Scruton, R. "Nélkülözhetetlen nemzetek". *Magyar Szemle, Új folyam* XXII/7-8. 2013. 52-76.

can use to pursue their geopolitical interests. This model aims to achieve geopolitical objectives through a limited use of military operations, largely through non-military resources.¹⁰

Clausewitz described war as a mere continuation of policy by other means. The relationship between politics and war is different in hybrid warfare. In fact, one might say that “in the case of hybrid warfare, the policy is war itself”¹¹, in which the human dimension is the primary battleground, and geopolitical objectives are pursued primarily through new indirect methods, by influencing the thoughts of the target population, by turning them against their own government. In hybrid warfare, by its very nature, the lines between peace, qualified period and war are blurred; there is a constant state of mutual threat. The attacking side essentially engages in a fight with peculiar weapons in the territory of the opposing country without a declaration of war, without escalating the conflict to the level of war, usually through the veiled (undercover) use of existing groups that are willing to use violence against those in power in the target country. As there is no declaration of war and no armed conflict, there is no war in the traditional sense of the word, but it is possible to sow chaos in the target country from outside.

Regarding this issue, one of the most important questions is: what risks will Hungary have to face in the future? Considering the geopolitical position of Hungary, the main reason it may become the target of a complex hybrid threat is its role in the system of alliances. However, there is a possibility of some operations using elements of hybrid warfare.

In 2015, NATO drew up an alliance-level strategy for fending off hybrid warfare attacks. The implementation plan dictates that the member state under threat or attack has to be the first to respond, and the international community has to be ready to assist if requested. Identifying the hybrid threat is essentially *the responsibility of the affected country*. Due to the main directions and areas of the threat and its complex nature, defence requires the *active co-operation of the entire society* as well as governmental, non-governmental, national security, law enforcement and national defence agencies. The statement of General Valery Gerasimov makes the same point: a peculiar feature of today’s conflicts is the need to protect the population, objects and communication from the increasing activity of special operations forces. This can be achieved by organising and operating a system of territorial protection.¹² This is one of the tasks to keep in mind while setting up the Volunteer Territorial Protection Reserve Service. The need to fight this new type of security risk is exactly the reason why territorial protection, which used to rely on military force, needs to be reconsidered in practice. Territorial protection is not about a uniform system or chain of territory control supported by fortified structures; territorial protection requires the use of complex protection resources with territorial variations and differentiation based on what risk factors threaten security.

The most important elements of this type of protection is to appropriately prepare society and to maintain the sense of security of the citizens at an optimal level. One is optimistic about the future of humanity but cannot be complacent about war even if it is only hybrid war in which hard and soft power are used in combination, because according to the pre-

¹⁰ Simicskó, I. “A hibrid hadviselés előzményei és aktualitásai”. [The Antecedents and Current Features of Hybrid Warfare] *Hadtudomány* XXVII/3-4. 2017. 3–16. DOI: 10.17047/HADTUD.2017.27.3–4.3.

¹¹ Simicskó, I. “A hibrid hadviselés előzményei és aktualitásai”.

¹² Gerasimov, V. “Ценность науки в предвидении: Новые вызовы требуют переосмыслить формы и способы ведения боевых действий”. *ВПК*, 26 February 2013. <http://www.vpk-newws.ru/articles/14632>, Accessed on 20 September 2016.

dictions of the model, the social, economic and political destruction is comparable to the consequences of a real war.

The paragraphs above provide an answer to the question of whether or not nation states need their own national defence capabilities.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ever since the beginning of recorded history, humans – as social beings, as members of a community – have always fought against threats, looking for ways to protect themselves, using all the accumulated knowledge of their time to ward off danger. It is not an exaggeration to say that humans are genetically programmed to seek security.

Is it possible to rely on people's need for security? If so, to what extent?

Yes, it is possible and it is necessary, but one has to keep in mind that security is like air: we only feel how much we need it when we do not have it. Today's security risks and threats tend to weaken the sense of danger; to realise that one only needs to think about how stealthy the previously mentioned security challenges are.

The best security guarantee of a nation and its population is a *well-functioning national defence system*, and the Government is legally required to ensure its proper operation.

National defence is the largest defence system of a society; it is a national cause based on shared responsibility for the fate of the country and on common action. It is the right, constitutional and moral obligation of each citizen to serve this cause.¹³

National defence is an integrated defence system laid down in the National Security Strategy of Hungary and in the laws. It includes establishing and maintaining the country's defence capabilities, and if needed, mobilising and applying them to manage crisis situations.¹⁴

The basic idea of the operation of a volunteer force presupposes the active participation of society in the system of national defence. National defence is one of the most powerful embodiments of the Hungarian System of National Cooperation, which is open to every Hungarian, an opportunity for everyone and an expectation for everyone. With regard to personal participation in national defence, the following basic principle should be followed: We must give all capable citizens, irrespective of age and sex, the opportunity to participate in the complex task of national defence to the extent of their abilities and possibilities. By way of explanation: In Hungary, the participation of women in national defence is not a question, but a fact of life. Regarding the age groups not covered by compulsory military service: it is the moral obligation of youths who are still too young for military service to prepare for national defence.

NATIONAL DEFENCE EDUCATION

The key to facing the security challenges and risks of the 21st century – be they caused by globalisation or new methods of warfare – is the strengthening of patriotism and a sense of

¹³ Simicskó, I. "Az országvédelem és országmozgósítás szervezeti, hatásköri, irányítási rendszere minősített időszakokban – Történelmi korokon át napjaink hatályos szabályozásáig". [The Organisational System, Division of Responsibilities and Control System of National Defense and National Mobilisation in Qualified Periods – From Historical Periods to Today's Legislation]. PhD Thesis. Budapest: ZMNE, 2008.

¹⁴ Simicskó. "Az országvédelem és országmozgósítás szervezeti, hatásköri, irányítási rendszere..."

national belonging. Patriotic education and national defence education serve this purpose. These are one of the most important tools of strengthening society and improving its defence capabilities and willingness in order to allow Hungarian society to adequately respond to the challenges of the present and the future.

As national defence education is a common interest declared by the Fundamental Law, the state has to provide opportunities for citizens to learn about national education and meet their obligations in this regard. To that end, it is important to continuously work on developing the patriotic education of young generations, strengthening their consciousness of national defence and their positive attitude to national defence.

National defence education is part of a complex system of patriotic education. *Patriotism is a type of personal conduct rooted in morality*. It has many components, primarily the love for one's homeland, which has both emotional and intellectual elements.

The main scene of national defence education is the family and school, which mutually complement and reinforce each other. These two environments are vital because they are the main scenes of pedagogical activities. Also, family and school are jointly responsible for fulfilling obligations listed in the Fundamental Law of Hungary. The Fundamental Law names three such obligations:

1. participating in the defence of the country is the obligation of every Hungarian citizen;
2. parents are required to make sure that their minor children receive education;
3. the obligation to pay taxes and contributions.

Schools today have great responsibility in educating the coming generations in this regard, and nurturing their ethical national consciousness and their sense of responsibility for national defence. Promoting patriotic ideas is traditionally part of community education; as part of national community development, it is part of the educational system of all European nation states in one form or another. István Bábosik put it in the following way: patriotic education is essentially about the presentation, adoption and strengthening of constructive habits, role models, ideals and convictions that meet the interests of the nation. If this work is successful, the behaviour and activities of those who underwent patriotic education will be beneficial to the community due to their internal motivation, without external incentives or control, as a result of their democratic nationalism and the valuable demands that make up democratic nationalism.¹⁵ This is why it is especially important for the content rules and common requirements laid down in the National Core Curriculum to provide practical knowledge, experiences and positive examples to youths who are willing and able to live, work and act for the nation.

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¹⁵ Bábosik, I. "Nemzettudat – nemzeti szocializáció – hazafiság". [National Consciousness – National Socialisation – Patriotism] *Iskolakultúra* 8/4. 1998. 40-48.

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