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Second Research Report

Hungarian Case

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Research Project „The Image of the Democratic Soldier: Tensions Between the Organisation of Armed Forces and the Principles of Democracy in European Comparison“
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Introduction

Two introductory remarks are to be made to the second Hungarian study of the ‘Democratic Soldier’ research project. The first one concerns the political role of the armed forces, and especially that of the army in the modern history of Hungary. To be more exact, one has to speak about the lack of political role played by the army. Since the end of the First World War, the Hungarian armed forces have always been under strict political control – though most of the time this political control was far from being democratic, its absolute supremacy over the armed forces was not questionable. There is no tradition of military intervention in politics; there was no military *coup d'état* in the history of Hungary. The armed forces of Hungary never acted against the actual political leadership; in case of political crises they always remained mainly passive, both during the failed 1956 revolution, and during the 1989-1990 democratic transition. This firm and lasting tradition of obeying orders received from the civilian political leadership makes it relatively easy both to teach and to internalize the norms of democratic control over the armed forces.

However, the second note to be made is rather negative, and it concerns the constant state of reform in the Hungarian armed forces, in process ever since 1987. The still ongoing reduction of the armed forces, together with the serious budget cuts resulted a continuous sense of insecurity among the soldiers.

1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
3.1 (?)	2.8	2.4	2.4	2.2	2.1	1.6	1.5	1.7
1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1.5	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.5	1,17

The defense budget of Hungary in the percentage of the GDP¹

The number of the armed forces is in constant decrease: from the original, more than 100.000 thousand soldiers and MoD employees Hungary had in 1989, only less than 28.000 remained by 2008, while the share of the administrative personnel is still more than 15%. All in all, since 2003 the decrease in numbers has exceeded 34%!² However, at the same time, many professional and contracted soldier positions remain unfilled, because there are simply not enough applicants, who would be ready to take this serious, but seriously underpaid duty.

Especially as there have been some radical conceptual turns in the reforms since the transition, which made the reform process even less predictable from the perspective of

1 SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, Dr. Fapál, László et al. (eds.): A honvédelem négy éve 2002-2006 p. 224.

2 A Honvédelem négy éve 2002-2006, p. 115.

ordinary soldiers. For a long time no units, institutions and even individual soldiers could be sure about their future, partially due to the numerous professional mistakes committed by the various political leaderships in the last 18 years.

As a result of this uncertainty, certain groups of the military elite are in a constant struggle not only with the political leadership, but with each other as well, trying to preserve their own positions, and pursuing their own interests. The higher the rank a person has, the better his chances are for defending his own place within the military hierarchy – the still unhealthy ranking structure of the HDF³ is partially a result of these rivalries.

It is a well-known fact that people sitting within the administrative structures have much better chances for defending their positions during the reforms than the ‘average’ officers serving in the field units. The HDF troops have been affected to a much higher extent by the cuts in the number of personnel than the administration itself.

As a result of the numerous, sometimes contradictory reforms and the radical budget cuts made by the mostly ‘outsider’ politicians sitting in the various governments, the average soldier hardly gives any signs of satisfaction, when is asked about the political control over the army. Though obviously there is no will and no possibility to question the supremacy of the civilian power, the constitutional and legal background is firm, clear and stable. The last chances of any serious obstruction were lost with the integration of the General Staff to the MoD, analyzed in the previous study. Decisions made by the civilian leadership are obeyed and carried out by the military. However, accepting the norms of the democratic, civilian control over the armed forces is not equal to paying an honest respect to them.

1. The Training of Soldiers

In this chapter the training of the HDF soldiers is going to be analyzed, using a structural-institutional focus. First, a short introduction is going to be given on the military education institutions of Hungary. Second, the only military higher education institution, the Zrínyi Miklós National Defense University will be studied, its history, structural re-organizations, and last, but not at least, the education of the democratic control of the armed forces.

1.1. Structural-Institutional Background:

The above mentioned numerous radical re-organizations and reforms affected the structure of the military education as well. As the overall size of the army has been radically decreasing, obviously the related educational institutions have to reflect these

³ e.g. the too high number of Majors, Lt. Colonels and Colonels compared to the number of officers and NCOs.

changes as well. Many of the military education institutions were either closed down – a smaller army needs a smaller number of officers and NCOs – or were reformed, merged and integrated.

Currently the only military higher education institution in Hungary is the Zrínyi Miklós National Defense University (ZMNDU), a detailed analysis of which is provided below. The training of the NCOs has been conducted also in one central institution, the HDF Central Non-Commissioned Officer Specialized Training School⁴ since 1st August 2001. This institution came into existence with the merge of the former three NCO training special schools, located in Budapest, Szentendre and Szolnok respectively. In addition to these, there were another three training schools, which were all closed down in 1998-1999.

The training of the NCOs provides an education fully compatible with the civilian education; therefore the graduates can find their ways to the civilian life as well. Besides educating future NCOs, the HDF Central Non-Commissioned Officer Specialized Training School also provides further training programs for NCOs already serving in the HDF, following the principle of ‘lifelong learning.’

In addition to the ZMNDU and the NCO training institution, one has to mention the military high schools as well. Until 2000 the HDF operated two military high schools for children aged 14-18, in the cities of Eger and Győr. In these schools besides the usual civilian curriculum, special military subjects were taught as well, and children got used to the system and discipline of the armed forces. In line with the general decrease in the number of the HDF, the Eger Military High School was closed down in 2000, and the children were taken over by the other civilian high schools of Eger. Currently only the Győr institution, the Béri Balogh Ádám ‘Honvéd’ High School and Dormitory is still operational. Graduates of this institution become either contracted or professional NCOs and officers of the HDF.⁵

1.1.1. The Zrínyi Miklós National Defense University

1.1.1.1. History

Following the end of the Second World War, the re-organization of the Hungarian military higher education started only in 1947 with the establishment of the Military Academy (Honvéd Hadiakadémia). Following a restructuring in 1949, the Military Academy finally was named after a Hungarian national hero in 1955 to be called Zrínyi Miklós Military Academy.⁶ This was the highest military education institution in Hungary, providing not only ordinary officers’ education, but general staff-level training programs as well. Besides, there were three military colleges, two technical ones, focusing teaching on various fields of military engineering and one for the air forces. This organization structure lasted until 1996.

4 MH Központi Tiszthelyettes Szakképző Iskola

5 Holló, József et al. (eds.): A honvédelem négy éve 1998-2002. Bp, 2002, Zrínyi Kiadó. pp. 125-126.

6 M.Szabó, Miklós: ‘Magyar katonai felsőoktatás 1947-2007.’ In: Hadtudomány 2008/1. pp. 30-36.

Following the democratic transition, military higher education was first regulated by the Law LXXX /1993 and its amendments. These confirmed the four mentioned military higher education institutions inherited from the Socialist era, namely of the Zrínyi Miklós Military Academy, the Lajos Kossuth Military College, the János Bolyai Military Engineering College, and the György Kilián Aero-Mechanical College, but in the coming years the gradual integration of these four institutions took place.

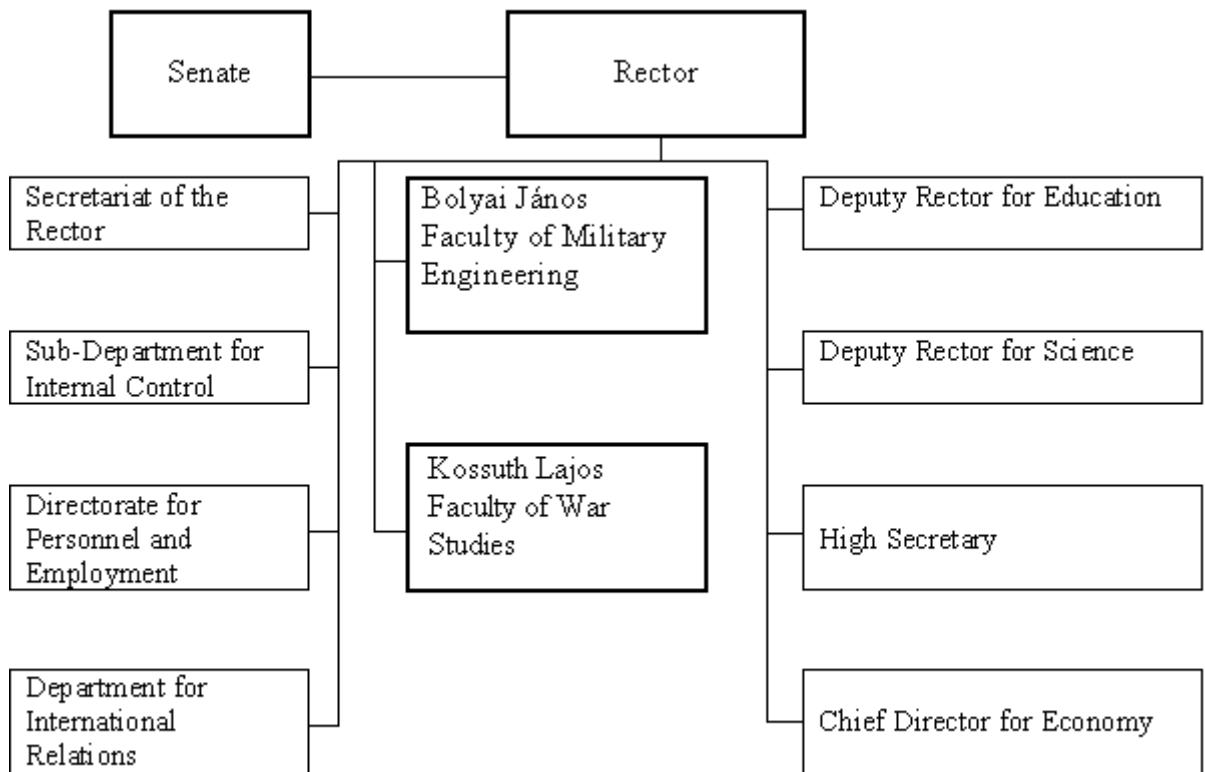
First, in 1996 according to the 75/1996 MoD decree, all military higher education institutions became exempted of the deployment and most of them became integrated in the Zrínyi Miklós Military Academy, thus a new institution, the Zrínyi Miklós National Defense University (ZMNDU) came to existence. The ZMNDU is under the direct control of the Minister of Defense, has its own budget and university autonomy, while at the same time it is an integral part of the Hungarian higher education system. Originally the ZMNDU had one university-level faculty and two autonomous college-level faculties (two of the three former colleges, operating in Szentendre and Szolnok, respectively), while the Bolyai János Military Engineering College remained independent.

The first serious re-organization of the ZMNDU took place in 1997, when the college-level faculties became integrated into the structure of the university. Therefore, a new, two-piece structure was formed: from 1st September 1997 the ZMNDU operated with two faculties, the Faculty of War Studies and the Faculty of Leadership and Organization Science.

The second reorganization came into effect from 1st January 2001, when the formerly independent Bolyai János Military-Engineering College became integrated into the ZMNDU as a third faculty. Thus the new university structure had three faculties: the Faculty of War Studies, the Faculty of Leadership and Organization Science and the newly integrated Bolyai János College Faculty of Military Engineering.

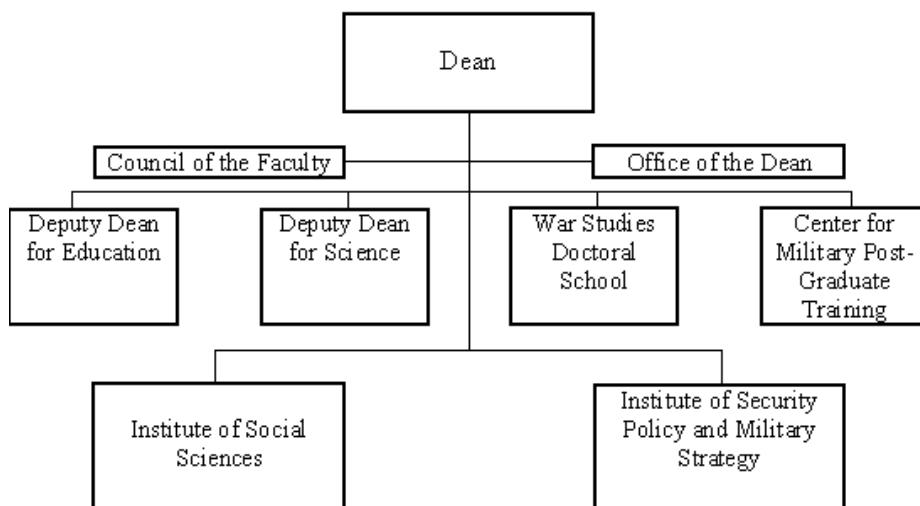
1.1.1.2. The Current Structure of the ZMNDU

In the third main wave of re-organization the structure was again simplified and unified by the merge of the Faculty of Leadership and Organization Science and the Bolyai János Faculty of Military Engineering. The new structure came into effect by 1st September 2004. Since then the organization structure of the university has remained basically unchanged, the ZMNDU still has two faculties, the Kossuth Lajos Faculty of War Studies and the Bolyai János Faculty of Military Engineering, in addition to some background and support organizations, working directly subordinated to the rector. Though the Socialist-Liberal Democrat government in power since 2002 pushed for integrating the Police Academy into the ZMNDU as well, this finally did not take place. Thus the basic structure of the ZMNDU remained the same, despite of the numerous, still on-going re-organizations of the rector-subordinated background institutions.



Current organizational structure of the ZMNDU

From the perspective of the education of democratic control the Kossuth Lajos Faculty of War Studies (KLFWS) is the most important one, as the departments primarily responsible for providing the non-military training of the future officers are here. The KLFWS is also constantly subject to various re-organizations – by the time of the finalizing of this study the KLFWS had the following structure:



Organizational structure of the ZMNDU KLFWS

The current, relatively clean and well-organized structure is a result of a number of modifications, which have taken place since September 2007. At that time one more leadership level was inserted between the dean and the departments, namely the level of institutes. However, the exact position of the institutes in the decision-making structure was not specified exactly, nor were their rights and obligations. It seemed that the only function of the new institute-framework was to provide a few more leadership positions...

There were originally three institutes formed, the Institute of Social Sciences, the Institute of Security Policy and Military Strategy and the Institute of Military Operations. Ten of the eleven departments of the KLFWS became incorporated in these three institutes, while the eleventh, the Department of Border Guards remained independent. However, the three institutes were soon transformed into two, with the more logical separation of military and social sciences. Two departments merged, so now altogether nine departments are incorporated in the two institutes, while the Department of Border Guards is still working separately.

1.1.1.3. Forms of Education Offered

In addition to the normal, gradual training programs, the ZMNDU has always been a provider of correspondence and post-graduate programs as well. Such types of education are designed for all members of the armed forces, from NCOs to the officers of the General Staff.

Besides the military programs, there have been civilian education programs at the ZMNDU since 1998. The first two programs launched for civilian applicants were ‘defense administration’ and ‘security and defense policy’. Since then, the number of civilian programs has largely increased, currently only approximately one-third of the ZMNDU students wear uniforms, the others are civilians, participating either in graduate, post-graduate or Ph.D. training.

The ZMNDE adopted the Bologna process in 2007. Therefore, currently there are numerous military and civilian BSc and MSc programs offered both by the Kossuth Lajos Faculty of War Studies and by the Bolyai János Faculty of Military Engineering, not to mention the activity of the Ph.D. school.

	KLFWS		BJFME	
	military	civilian	military	civilian
BSc	military leader	security and defense policy	military and security engineering	mechanical engineering
		national security	military economics	defense administration
		border guards and border security	economics and finance	economics and finance
	law enforcement officer			traffic engineering
				electric engineering
				technical informatics
				chemical
				construction engineering
MSc				
	military leader (the continuation of the above mentioned BSc-s has not started yet)		military logistics	defense administration
			military technology management	security technology
				disaster management engineering
				defense leadership technology system organization
post-graduate				
	military leader	security and defense policy	military logistics	defense administration
		border guards and border security	quality management	quality management
		law enforcement officer	military technology manager	

Military and civilian training programs offered by the ZMNDU⁷

7 Source: www.zmne.hu

The real system of education is much more complicated than the one charted above, the Bologna-compatible system, simply due to the fact that the transition to the Bologna process is still under way, i. e. there are students, who started their education before the introduction of the Bologna standards and have not yet finished their studies. Therefore, for a few more years the two training schemes will coexist in the university until the pre-Bologna students either finish their studies, or will be integrated to the Bologna programs.

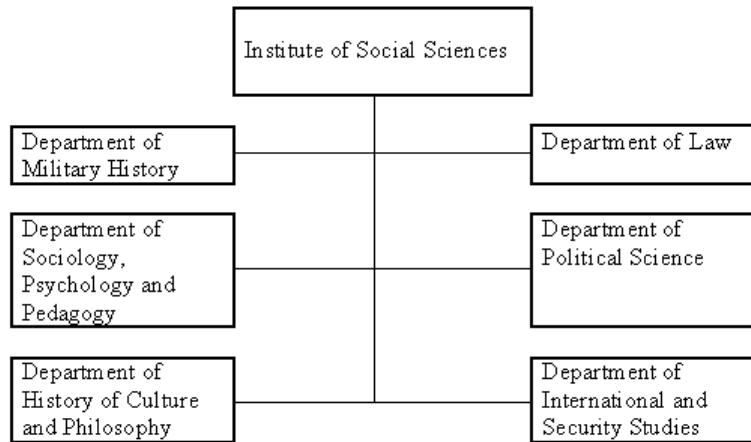
Due to the wide spectrum of the topics and types of trainings offered, the ZMNDU has gradually become one of the most prestigious universities of Hungary. The civilian programs are immensely popular, both the social science ones (especially the ‘security and defense policy’) and the technical ones (especially the engineering programs). The overall level of knowledge of the freshmen is improving every year, and usually 8-10 times more high school graduates apply than the number of places available.

1.1.1.4. Spectrum of Training

All ZMNDU trainings programs are mixed ones; they include both civilian and military subjects. There is no general rule on the share of them, and due to the large variety of the programs offered, enumerating every subject ratio would far exceed the limits of this study. All in all, one can state that the rate of civilian and military subjects vary according to the needs of the given program. On the BSc programs there are more introductory subjects, while the MSc and especially the post-graduate programs build more on the existing background of the students, and provide more specialized skills and knowledge. Generally speaking, all ZMNDU programs put a special emphasis on the language proficiency and computer skills.

1.1.1.5. The Education of the Democratic Control of Armed Forces at the ZMNDU

The Institute of Social Sciences is responsible for all the non-military, social science elements of the education for the ZMNDU students, except physical education and language training. There are a number of civilian departments at the BJFME as well, but they teach mostly technical and natural sciences-related subjects. Therefore, from the perspective of the education of the civilian control of the armed forces the activities of the KLFWS Institute of Social Sciences need to be examined more thoroughly.



Organizational structure of the Institute of Social Sciences⁸

The education of democratic control at the ZMNDU is conducted in the framework of several subjects parallelly. Many subjects taught at the Institute have elements related to the principles and practice of civil control. The exact type and amount of democratic control related subjects received depends primarily on the title education program: obviously a person enrolled in a law enforcement officer training program needs less civil control classes, than a student of security policy. A second parameter is the form of education, e.g. whether the given program is a graduate or post-graduate one, is it a full-time study program, or is it conducted in the form of correspondence and weekend classes, etc. Currently several systems and programs are running parallelly, a few ones still from the pre-Bologna era, together with numerous non-graduate training programs, etc, which mean an immense workload for the teaching staff.

Already during the introductory classes given by the Department of Security and Defense Policy the students face the fact that the HDF is completely under civilian leadership, both the ministers and the state secretaries are civilians, and the General Staff is clearly subordinated to them. Moreover, the main decision-making body of the NATO, the Parliamentary Assembly is composed of civilians, not to mention the Secretary General, who is also a politician, etc.

Among the courses given by the Department of Law, there is no such specific subject called “democratic control”, because it would not fit the general branches of law. Therefore, students learn various aspects of civilian control in the framework of the constitutional law, international law, public administration courses. All in all, pieces of the relevant knowledge on the legal aspects of civil control are scattered among the other subjects.

⁸ Source: www.zmne.hu

The Department of Sociology, Psychology and Pedagogy teaches democratic control from another perspective. There has been a 2-semester course called “*The theory and practice of civil control*”, which has been taught to the pre-Bologna students. In this course the theory and the main foreign models of civil control were addressed, so was the establishment of the Hungarian security sector and the history and problems of civil control in Hungary. In the new Bologna-system there is another, 3-semester-long course for BSc students, titled “*The Sociological Aspects of Civil-Military Relations*”. The focus of this subject is significantly widened compared to its predecessor, as this also discusses the practical implementation of the norms of civil-military relations, e.g. how these norms work on the field, during missions. A huge number of case studies are used as examples.

Generally speaking, one could say that even though there is no such concrete course, ZMNDU students learn the norms, principles, institutions and problems of the democratic control of the armed forces from many aspects, for many semesters. Moreover, they are parts of a structure which is entirely under civilian control. As a result of all these, these norms are internalized by them quite deeply and firmly, despite the numerous technical, financial and management problems the HDF has to face.

2. Military Ethics and Values in the HDF

After the transition the HDF had to face the challenge of modifying the ‘traditional’ Socialist values of the soldier to be in line with the new, democratic political system. This transformation was based on two elements. First, the rich traditions of the Hungarian military history provided enough examples of how the armed forces are supposed to serve the homeland in an honest, glorious, not biased way. The revolution and War or Independence in 1848-1849 was a principal source – especially as the first Minister of Defense, Lajos Für was a historian by profession, who specialized particularly on that era. Second, numerous pieces of Western literature were translated and reviewed in order to adopt the modern methodology and samples of the education of military ethics and values. Last, but not least a whole new system of insignias was elaborated, new uniforms and ranking insignia were gradually introduced, units received new names, and numerous military traditions were renewed and resurrected, all in order to express the dual, national and modern character of the Hungarian Defense Forces.

2.1. Education of Military Ethics

In 1992-1993 a new subject was introduced in the military higher education in Hungary, titled ‘Military profession - officers’ values.’ A textbook of the same title was published, and became the core of the education of military ethics for the rest of the decade. However, the NATO accession of Hungary in 1999 resulted in a decisive change not only in the overall security environment of the country, but posed numerous new demands to the professional soldier, with new tasks, training requirements and new

perception and values. Therefore the need of a new textbook for teaching military ethics and principles became urgent.

The book titled '*Military ethics*', edited by János Gligor is composed of nine chapters, all of which contain five-six studies, texts, etc. It addresses respectively the basic terminology of ethics, the main courses and representatives of ethical thinking, the correlation between ethics, law and politics, the traditional Hungarian military values from the perspective of the military oath, provides an introduction to the history of peace utopias, the problems of the systemic change concerning the armed forces, the questions of Hungarian military ethics in the 2000s, gives an overview of military ethics in the Western armed forces, and finally analyses the ethical problems of international crisis management operations.

The structure of the book reflects the principle already addressed in the chapter on the education of democratic control – namely, in addition to the theoretical, legal norms, emphasis is put also on the practical aspects of these problems. More concretely, besides academically learning the institutional and political structures of democratic control, the soldiers also have to be prepared to behave according to these norms in 'live' as well, e.g. during international peacekeeping missions, in case of combat or other crisis situations.

2.2. Codex of Military Ethics

The Codex of Military Ethics adopted in 2004 sets the principles and expectations towards the professional soldiers of the armed forces. It is valid for all military personnel of the MoD and of the armed forces, including professional and contracted soldiers, students holding a MoD scholarship. Retired soldiers still wearing the uniform are also supposed to obey these norms. The main expectations to the ordinary soldier are the following:

'The outstanding moral virtues and basic values of military service'

Patriotism: *loyalty and commitment to the homeland.*

Loyalty: *service in the spirit of the commitments undertaken by the military oath, pledge, the unwavering practice of the vocation, reliability, persistence even among difficult circumstances.*

Courage: *readiness to undertake rationally acceptable risks and face danger deliberately in the course of completing tasks demanded by the service, while holding back both from unnecessary daring and from cowardice.*

Comradeship: *standing up for and taking on responsibility, unselfish and helpful solidarity and sympathetic readiness to undertake sacrifices for fellow-soldiers.*

Respect: *beside the respect for the values of Hungarian and international culture, the historical past, military traditions and symbols, respect for the service and human*

dignity, the acceptance of human differences and personalities to the extent which cannot hinder military vocation, and the appreciation of rank and professional authority.

Honesty: reliable, honest, conscientious behavior and way of life based on trustworthiness, sense of duty and compliance with regulations.

Discipline: readiness for expectable and predictable action, the self-disciplined observance – and the ensuring of observance by others - of rules ensuring the complete and full execution of military tasks.⁹

2.2.1. The Leadership Concept Set by the Codex

The Codex separately addresses the question of the ideal leadership, and the expectations towards the good military leader. According to the Codex, the ideal military commander exercises his powers always with responsibility and with consistence. He shall keep his personal ambitions moderate, but shall support the career of his subordinates. He is able to analyze objectively both success and failure, and live it together with his colleagues. The military commander shall be resistant to all types of coaxing, and shall avoid even the shade of being suggestible. His works and decisions shall be free of personal dislikes, and he shall support the equality of genders.

Besides his commands and measures, he shall build an efficiently working community of his subordinates through his personal example as well. He shall negotiate in a determined, but cultured tone, which helps him to maintain the respect towards him as a leader, but does not offend either the dignity, or the self-esteem of his subordinates. He shall conduct controls and checks objectively, thoroughly and in a correct manner. He respects the personal skills and abilities of his subordinates, and uses the personal information about them only in the interest of the service. Obviously the same expectations apply to female leaders and commanders as well.

Besides the expectations given in the Codex of Military Ethics, military leaders are also expected to perform abroad as well, both in individual positions and in the framework of units. Service in international crisis management operations raises always the highest demands, and has the highest risks; therefore, commanders have to be able to cope with these challenges, and support their subordinates as well. Therefore, the channeling-in of mission experiences is an integral, especially important part of the leadership training programs, from the beginning to the highest levels.

2.3. The Military Oath

The military oath is a highly important part, a general symbol of the system of values and principles, according to which the soldier shall live, work and behave. The oath symbolizes the devotion towards the military norms, and towards the defense of the homeland. The text of the military oath of the HDF is the following:

9 Available at: http://www.hm.gov.hu/hirek/kozlemenek/katonai_etikai_kodex

'I swear that I will be a faithful soldier/NCO/officer of the Republic of Hungary.

I shall defend the independence of the Republic of Hungary and the rights of its citizens with courage, by obeying and making others obey the Constitution and other laws, with the power of the weapons and soldiers given to me, even by the sacrifice of my life. I shall learn the military knowledge, and prepare my subordinates to fulfill the tasks of national defense.

I obey the commands of my superiors; I lead my subordinates by respecting their rights, and take care of them in a human and responsible way.

(May God be on my side.¹⁰)

As it can be seen, the military oath contains not only the ‘usual’ reference known from the historical military oaths, namely the defense of the homeland even at the highest price, but an equally important reference to obeying the laws and the Constitution of the republic as well. This element is an integral part of the overall image of the soldier in Hungary: the armed forces are integral parts of the society, and they are not exempted from the law in any ways (as it was during the Socialist period in many aspects). The same, or in many cases even stricter laws apply to them, and the service of the homeland can be conducted only in accordance with the legal regulations.

3. Norms of Conflict Settlement, Lawfulness and Argument

3.1. Institutions of Conflict Resolution

In this chapter the official institutions of conflict resolution will be reviewed. There are basically three types of such organizations. First, the MoD operates a forum for the coordination of the various interests of the actors of the defense sphere. Second, there are two large trade unions and a few smaller interest groups representing organizations, operating mostly independently from the MoD. Third, the final option for protecting one’s interests - without turning to the court - is to address the Parliamentary Ombudsman of Civil Rights.

3.1.1. National Defense Interest-Coordinating Forum¹¹

According to the Law on Employment, interest-coordinating councils and forums are to be organized between the government and the organizations representing the employers and the employees. In the defense sphere, this council is the National Defense Interest-Coordinating Forum, which has been operating in its current format already since April 1998. The main objective of the Forum is to regulate interest- coordination with the minister, to elaborate agreements acceptable for all the parties, and to ensure the proper representation of all principal branches of the defense sphere.

10 Saying this last sentence depends on the individual belief of the soldier.

11 Honvédelmi Érdekegyeztető Fórum

According to the Protocol on Cooperation signed 30th April 1998, the NDICF is composed of the minister of defense, the commander of the HDF, and the Chief of the General Staff (or of their representatives) on the one side, and the two main trade unions (discussed below) together with the two other cultural organizations partially engaged in interest-representation on the other. In case of necessity, and if initiated by the interest-protecting organizations, lower level MoD officials can also participate in the NDICF sessions.

The NDICF has been playing a crucial role in the stressful re-organization and restructuring processes taken place in the HDF in the last ten years. The civil organizations did their best trying to represent the interests of their membership, sometimes with more, sometimes with less success. Currently the framework for interest-coordination is provided by the new agreement on cooperation signed on 14th March 2005.¹²

3.1.2. The Role of Trade Unions and Cultural Organizations

There are two main trade unions in the Hungarian defense sphere, representing and protecting the interests of all MoD employees, including both civilians and uniform-wearing people. The first one in timely order is the Trade Union of the Employees of the Hungarian Defense Forces (HODOSZ)¹³, which was formed already in 1989. The organization had more than 30.000 members in its best period, however, the radical decrease in numbers affected the trade unions as well, and currently the HODOSZ has approximately 3000 members only. The second one is the ‘Honvéd’ Trade Union,¹⁴ formed in 1995. This was the first military trade union in Hungary, which had only individual and no organizational members.

Both trade unions participated in the elaboration of the Law XLIII / 1996, regulating the legal status of the employees of the armed forces. This law was followed by the Law XCV / 2000, which is currently known as the ‘Law on HDF Service.’ The main objective of the trade unions during the debates was to ensure the role and rights of the interest-representing organizations, which they successfully accomplished, though the process was far from being free of conflicts.

Besides these two trade unions, there are another two civil organizations, which are also parts of the general interest-coordinating mechanism, and have significant support among the employees of the HDF. The first one is the National Alliance of Comrades Organizations,¹⁵ BEOSZ in its short Hungarian form. This is an umbrella organization of numerous local NGOs composed of active, retired and former soldiers and interested civilians. These NGOs are mostly engaged in preserving military traditions, and organizing cultural events, thus usually have strong connections to the local communities.

12 The agreement is available: Együttműködési megállapodás.

http://old.honvedelem.hu/miniszterium/erdekkedelem/egyuttmukodesi_megallapodas Downloaded: 29th March 2008.

13 Honvédségi Dolgozók Szakszervezete, www.hodosz.hu

14 Honvéd Szakszervezet, www.hsz.hu

15 Bajtársi Egyesületek Országos Szövetsége, BEOSZ, www.beosz.hu

The second is the Interest-Protecting Organization of People Serving in Field Units,¹⁶ or CSÉSZ in its Hungarian abbreviation. This organization represents explicitly the interests of the field units' personnel, both of the military and the civilian staff.

In addition to all these, there is a third trade union, which tends to have an influence on the MoD-related issues and policies, namely the Trade Union of the Armed and Law Enforcement Employees.¹⁷ Though this organization is rather composed of employees of the police, the fire brigade, law enforcement, the formerly independent Border Guards, etc, in most cases they mutually support each other's demands with the 'Honvéd' Trade Union. Moreover, there are many soldiers, who joined this trade union instead of the 'Honvéd.'

3.1.3. The Parliamentary Ombudsman of Civil Rights

The main task of the Parliamentary Ombudsman of Civil Rights is to examine the tensions and contradictions related to fundamental constitutional rights. In order to solve the problems, he has the right to initiate individual or general measures.¹⁸ However, his suggestions are recommendations only, they are not obligatory. His basic tasks and responsibilities are mentioned in the Constitution as well.¹⁹ As a general rule, one can state that the actions taken and the recommendations made by the Ombudsman tend to make the state administration work faster on the given issue. The Ombudsman tends to play a mediating role between the state and the society. This is important especially in examining individual cases, and in supporting the work of different grass-root interest-representing organizations.

The Ombudsman played an important role related to the defense sector, when in 1995-1996 he made an extensive study on the respect of fundamental constitutional rights inside the army. Given the success of the examinations, e.g. the number of changes made following his actions, he made a significant contribution to the increase of the respect of the army in the society.²⁰

3.2 Conflicts and Punishments

The simplest, though sometimes misleading definition of a conflict is when a certain action is against the law. Besides these 'ordinary' crimes, there are cases, when soldiers act against the principles of the expected ethics, discussed above. However, these cases are mostly very low-level ones, and occur not too frequently, and have received publicity even more rarely – though there were some spectacular exceptions, which are to be discussed below.

16 Csapatoknál Szolgálatot teljesítők Érdekvédelmi Szervezete, CSÉSZ, www.csesz.hu

17 Fegyveres és Rendvédelmi Dolgozók Szakszervezete, www.frdesz.org.hu

18 Fapál (1995) p. 66.

19 Constitution of the Republic of Hungary, Chapter V.

20 Murányi p. 240-41.

3.2.1. Criminal Cases

When speaking about crimes, first one has to make a clear distinction between military crimes, and crimes committed by people belonging to the military. Both types belong to the competency of the Military Prosecution Service. If a crime is committed, the competent commander immediately has to report the case to the Office of the General Staff in a so-called Immediate Factual Report. This information is handled, summarized and analyzed by the Disciplinary Executive Officer of the Office of the General Staff. Not only crimes are to be reported this way, but also suicides, suicide attempts, and, on the other hand, cases of exceptional bravery as well.

According to law, no person having been previously convicted can be a soldier any more, these people have to leave the army immediately. However, according to official information, the ‘typical’ crimes committed by HDF soldiers are relatively simple, ordinary ones, ending with easy sentences, in most cases with fines, therefore, they do not have to leave the army. The most frequent crimes in the HDF are theft, hooliganism and drunken driving, respectively.

In the fourth place stands perhaps the most important problem nowadays, namely the use of drugs. In the early 2000s the problem started to become more and more serious, in 2001 there were 66 such cases, in 2002 already 104, and next year 169 cases of drugs use became known. The rate started to decrease from 2004, partially due to the stricter and more often conducted medical checkups, and partially due to the abolition of conscript service.

Experience shows that since the abolition of the conscript service, the number of known drugs cases has reduced significantly. During the conscription era, medical checkups showed that 20-30 % of the personnel have tried drugs at least once in their lives. In the professional army this rate is around 2-3%. Since 1999 the HDF uses a ‘zero tolerance’ policy during the recruitment: if medical checkup shows any traces of any drugs in the body of the applicant, he or she is immediately excluded from the process, and cannot join the army.²¹

3.2.2. Violating the Norms – A Few Illustrative Cases

Besides the above discussed and relatively simple criminal affairs, there were cases, when the norms of the democratic, civilian control of the armed forces were not respected. The experts’ opinion vary about the exact number of such cases since the transition, the estimations are around 48-60. Some of these cases received wide publicity, especially those ones, which resulted in personal changes in the military leadership.

The year 1996 was particularly bad from this perspective. In March the Minister of Defense, György Keleti decided the procurement of 100 T-72 tanks from Belarus without

²¹ Szűcs, László: Zéró tolerancia: aki drogozik, nem lehet katona! 22nd September 2005. Available: http://www.hm.gov.hu/hirek/kiadvanyok/magyar_honved/zero_tolerancia_aki_drogozik_nem_lehet_katona Downloaded: 2nd April 2008.

properly coordinating with the Committee on National Defense of Parliament.²² Two months later, in May a few MiG-29 fighters took part in a shooting exercise in Poland, without the Parliament being even notified either by the Ministry or by the General Staff – the argument of the MoD was based on an existing bilateral Polish-Hungarian cooperation agreement on training. However, factually this action was a *de iure* violation of the Constitution,²³ but it ended only with the resignation of a relatively low-ranking official, Major General István Bakó, Head of MoD Section of Air Forces and Air Defense.

A more recent example, which also received widespread publicity was an electronic letter posted on the internet forum of the MoD, written by a captain named Roland Farkas, that time serving in Afghanistan in 2005.²⁴ He openly criticized the equipment of the Hungarian forces, blaming MoD officials of providing useless, sometimes explicitly dangerous equipment, and drew attention to the deliberately false communication of the MoD concerning the security of the Hungarian contingent in Afghanistan, and named concrete cases of procurement and development corruption. First, the moderators of the MoD forum immediately removed his letter from the website, but to that time already numerous copies of it were made and spread around, thus the case could not be hidden any more.

The letter induced a huge outcry in the whole defense sphere, many soldiers and civilian experts expressed their solidarity with the writer – though unlike Captain Farkas, others did this anonymously. An official MoD inquiry committee was set up, which – not surprisingly - did not find any of the accusations true. The captain did not wait till a disciplinary procedure was launched against him, and left the army already during the inquiry. As a final consequence, the internet forums of the MoD website were significantly modified; it is no more possible to publish comments prior moderation.

In the first two cases the situation was clear and evident; both times the relevant laws were violated by the actions of the MoD. On the contrary, the case of ‘the captain from Afghanistan’ was perhaps the most well-known example, when a soldier was accused of not criminal acts, but of violating the behavioral norms of the armed forces.

3.2.3. Mistreatment of Subordinates

During the era of conscription, the maltreatment of the conscripts was almost a tradition, especially in the early months of their service. Various forms of abuse were conducted both by senior conscripts and by NCOs, under the general name of ‘szívátás’. Though *de iure* such cases were unimaginable, these actions were more or less encoded in the system, and were tolerated by the commanders as long as they remained moderate.

22 Molnár, p. 41.

23 Ujj, András: ‘A politikai irányítástól a civil kontrollig.’ In: Védelmi Tanulmányok. No. 35. Bp, SVKK, 2000. p. 69.

24 The letter is still available at: A százados levele Afganisztánból – ribillió a vezérkarban és a miniszteriumban 25th February 2005. <http://gondola.hu/cikkek/40787>. Unfortunately no English translation was made.

They were perceived as part of the socialization of the conscripts. Moreover, the process kept on going, as the ‘rookies’ became senior conscripts, in most cases they felt that their time has come, and they started the same mocking of the newcomers.

The limits were not exactly set, but *de facto* serious physical or psychical injuries were considered definitely beyond the tolerable extent. Generally speaking, one has to clearly see that these actions very rarely caused any serious harm, and were nowhere compared to the infamous Russian ‘dedovshchina.’ However, all adult males in Hungary, who fulfilled their conscript service, can tell dozens of such stories. Moreover, the abuses during the conscript service were permanently used as arguments against the conscription in general by various protest organizations.

With the professionalization of the army these symptoms have mostly disappeared. First, the personnel itself is different, both soldiers and NCOs are much better trained, both physically and mentally, and are much more committed to the service, their motivation is much stronger. The image of the ‘useless’, ‘lazy’, ‘dumb’ conscript, who wanted to spend his service as convenient as possible disappeared completely, and was replaced by the responsible, devoted, professional soldier. For them service is not a waste of time any more, but their profession. Moreover, since the NATO and EU accession serving abroad in various crisis management missions has became a reality, altogether for thousands of Hungarian soldiers. Among such circumstances unconditional trust in the fellow soldier is a must, lives can depend on it – therefore, there is no place left for ‘szívatás’ any more.

Summary

As it was already analyzed in the previous study conducted in the framework of the ‘Democratic Soldier’ project, Hungary has a firm, stable and well-functioning system of democratic control of armed forces, established following the democratic transition. As the institutional and legal background of this system was studied in the previous research paper, hereby first the training of the soldiers is in the focus of analysis, then the norms and ethics of the HDF, then an introduction is given to the ethics and values propagated and taught in the HDF. Finally, the institutions and practices of conflict settlement are analyzed.

Concerning the training and education given to the HDF soldiers – and to the civilians studying at the only military higher education institution, the ZMNDU – one has to keep in mind the effects of the constant re-organizations and numerical decrease of the HDF, which has a definite effect on the military education as well. Moreover, the ZMNDU shares the problem of the whole Hungarian education system, namely that the transition to the Bologna-process is not finished yet, currently old pre-Bologna and Bologna programs are running parallelly, which generates further complications.

The education of democratic control is not based on one specific subject, but many social science subjects contain relevant elements of knowledge. Therefore, students learn

the legal system of civil control in the law classes, the moral aspects in the framework of military ethics, etc. All in all, they learn these norms and system for many years, from many perspectives. In addition to this, besides the theoretical aspects, much attention is paid to the practical implementation, e.g. how these norms and systems are supposed to work in real crisis situations, for example in international crisis management missions, etc.

The firm system of democratic control is reflected in the military ethics and moral norms of the HDF as well. Both the Codex of Military Ethics and the military oath itself contain crucial obligations connected to this field. The Codex of Military Ethics provides the general moral and ethical expectations towards the soldiers, while a separate chapter addresses the duties of the officers. The respect of laws and human rights has an important position here. The military oath contains explicit references, that besides the ‘usual’ commitment of defending the homeland at all costs, this has to be conducted with the full respect of laws.

In case a conflict arises, both the military trade unions and some cultural organizations can play a role of mediator, and can represent the interests of the MoD employees. On higher level, there is a National Defense Interest-Coordinating Forum, an institution designed for coordinating between the MoD and the interest-representing organizations of the armed forces employees (e.g. the above mentioned trade unions and cultural organizations.) If problems cannot be settled in these frameworks, MoD employees can turn to the Parliamentary Ombudsman of Civil Rights – and finally to court, of course.

In explicit criminal cases, the Military Prosecution Service is the competent authority, both if a military crime is committed and if soldiers commit civic crimes. All such cases are immediately reported to the MoD as well. Since the abolition of conscript service, the amount of crimes committed in the HDF has decreased significantly, currently the most frequent crimes are theft, hooliganism and drunken driving. However, a few years ago the problem of drugs use became quite serious. The HDF leadership reacted with serious countermeasures, stricter medical checkups and a zero-tolerance policy in the recruitment process, which achieved a significant decrease in the amount of known cases.

The abolition of conscript service had a good effect on the earlier well-known, and quite frequent mistreatment of subordinates (which affected mostly the conscripts) as well. The new, fully professional army has a different mentality, stronger motivation and commitment to service. Moreover, as it was mentioned before, the need to respect the rights of subordinates is part of both the Codex of Military Ethics and of the military oath as well, which provides further protection. In addition to all these, among such circumstances, when participating in international military crisis management operations is already a reality for many HDF soldiers, there is simply no place left for mistreatment, simply because full confidence in each other is needed in the field.

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	English version	Hungarian original
ZMNDU	Zrínyi Miklós National Defense University	Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem
KLFWS	Kossuth Lajos Faculty of War Studies	Kossuth Lajos Hadtudományi Kar
BJFME	Bolyai János Faculty of Military Engineering	Bolyai János Katonai Műszaki Kar
HDF	Hungarian Defense Forces	Magyar Honvédség
MoD	Ministry of Defense	Honvédelmi Minisztérium