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## Memorandum on Hungary's security policy situation

7 March 1989

The Current Situation Regarding the Security Policy of the People's Republic of Hungary

### The Related Military Tasks

The announcement of the new international security concept, along with the Soviet - American INF agreement, the announced reduction of conventional weapons and the declaration of the defense doctrine within the Warsaw Treaty, together have opened up new opportunities for our country, too.

The negotiations about the reduction of conventional arms and armed forces in Europe have led to a considerable thaw in international relations; the negotiations can eliminate the existing asymmetries, they can greatly reduce the volume of weapons and the level of troops, thus increasing mutual trust. Despite all these favorable tendencies, it is important to note from the viewpoint of the balance of power that the USA goes ahead with its Star Wars program and, in league with the other NATO countries, carries on with the political preparations for the modernization of its armed forces.

From the military-geographical point of view, the crucial point is that we do not share borders with any of the NATO countries. Neither Austria nor Yugoslavia threatens Hungary militarily, and there are no potentially dangerous elements in our relations with them. Beyond the political confrontation, the signs of the deteriorating relations with Romania are not yet fully interpreted (nuclear capacity, the position on chemical weapons, border zone activities, the activities of the special services).

In case of a military conflict between the Warsaw Treaty and NATO, the maximum number of ground and air divisions mobilized against us from the territory of Northern Italy and the FRG through neutral Austria is as follows: 6-7 divisions, roughly 200,000 troops; 1200-1300 armored vehicles; 1100-1200 artillery guns and mortars; and 500 fighter planes in the first wave of massive air attack.

Hungary's present circumstances and situation pertaining to national security policy, along with the favorable developments in international relations and the new concept of security policy, have made it both possible and necessary to further emphasize the defensive character of our country's military doctrine, as well as to fully implement it in the development of our army. In last year, the armies of the Warsaw Treaty made the initial steps in this direction as part of a concerted plan. In the forthcoming years we must carry out the transformation of our armed forces, their further modernization and preparation, so as to bring the political and the military aspects of the new defense doctrine into complete harmony.

If we take the results of the present military détente as our starting point, and if we anticipate its continuation, then the strengthening of the new concept of security policy can provide the political foundations for the emerging new image of the army, while its military side can follow from the establishment of the military/technical conditions associated with strategic defense. The structure and weapons system of the Hungarian People's Army must be developed and modernized according to the requirements of having a reasonably sufficient defense; also, the Hungarian People's Army must be trained, in close cooperation with the allied armies, and most notably with the Soviet Army, for defensive tasks.

Deploying its ground forces along the country's western borders, the Hungarian People's Army must be capable of putting up a solid defense and in case of an aggression it must join forces with the arriving allied (Soviet) troops to throw back the enemy forces. The Hungarian air defense must be capable of engaging the attack units (80-100 planes) in the first wave of the enemy's air strikes; following this, it must combine forces with the allied air defense units to repel the main thrust of the aggressor's air strike.

The modernization of the Hungarian People's Army, and its functioning, still seems possible only within the framework of the Warsaw Treaty, regardless of the point that in the immediate future the expansion of the bilateral military cooperation between the Soviet Union and Hungary, its upgrading with fundamentally new elements, will acquire a growing importance. In this process, in harmony with our allies, we must consider the possible and the necessary steps in the course of the negotiations with our neighbors and the NATO members, closely examining the possibility of further unilateral arms reductions.

From the viewpoint of the army's development, it is especially important that the volume of resources spent on defense should be determined on the basis of a realistic estimate of the country's economic strength and probably future economic growth.

In this respect, it is a foregone conclusion that the country's future economic development will not make it possible to maintain the Hungarian People's Army in its current size and present structure at the level required by modern warfare.

The circumstances and possibilities of international military politics, the changes in social and economic conditions at home and the new concept of security policy together constitute an epochal change from the viewpoint of the People's Republic of Hungary.

Based on the ascendance of the new concept of security policy, the probable results of the ongoing negotiations on the reduction of conventional arms and troops in Europe and the country's present economic potential, the personnel and the equipment of the People's Army will have to be reduced by 30-35 per cent by 1995, accompanied by the introduction of a conceptually new structure. A study about the complex reform of the armed forces would be advisable: a defense and border guard system based on citizens organized into militias, with a small professional army at the center, plus the integration of the workers' militias into the home defense. The implementation of the new structure should take place at the beginning of the 8th phase of the planning period, parallel with the realization of the measures already decided upon, in such a way that the morale and the readiness of the army must be upheld at all times. In the process of modernization, the emphasis must be on quality, while the harmonization of foreign and military politics must be guaranteed so that the number of initiatives in military diplomacy can be increased.

Tasks Related to the Disarmament Process  
With Special Regard to the Ongoing Negotiations about Conventional Disarmament  
And the Measures to Increase Security and Mutual Trust

The complexity of the issues discussed at the negotiations about the reduction of conventional arms in Europe, along with the volume of measures proposed and the - sometimes seemingly unbridgeable - differences detected in the position of the sides, forecast a difficult and drawn-out process, which will not necessarily lead to arms reductions on the planned scale and at the desired speed.

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Based presumably on a similar assessment and reasoning, the Soviet political leadership have come to the conclusion that part of the proposed measures to eliminate the existing asymmetries could be introduced unilaterally, without waiting for the agreements at the negotiating table. The Soviet leaders have recognized that by effecting the reductions ahead of time they are likely to draw additional political, economic and propaganda benefits. The Soviet move to reduce troops unilaterally, and thus eliminating the Soviet Union's share of the Warsaw Treaty advantage, poses the question whether the other Warsaw Treaty members, Hungary included, should wait for the formal agreements at the negotiation table before she does away with her share of the asymmetry, something she had already agreed to do anyway, or whether she should reap all those benefits of a preemptive unilateral reduction that motivated the Soviet Union to take such a step.

Based on the information NATO and the Warsaw Treaty have provided about their own organizations respectively, the elimination of the Warsaw Treaty advantage will require a reduction of 25-30 per cent in troop levels (not counting the air force), while the same figure regarding military equipment is in the region of 50-60 per cent. The Political Committee resolution about the development of the Hungarian People's Army targets a level, which is very close to the one that is desirable on disarmament considerations; however, regarding certain categories of equipment (most notably armored transport carriers), it seems necessary to approach the requirements that the negotiation on conventional arms reduction is likely to produce, because this is justifiable on the grounds of both national security considerations and budgetary restraints.

It is very important that the recommended measures in the area of arms reduction should be compatible with the negotiations on conventional disarmament in Europe. It would be prudent to announce the reduction of the arms, which we have already "written off" and politically promised in advance, within a very short time, while the more radical version of the proposal discussed by the Political Committee about the reduction of equipment should be carried out in two or three years time. The reductions should be effected in a manner, which is conformable to the negotiations. In addition to the provision of accurate information, this would imply an internationally verifiable (observable) execution in the entire range of the reductions.

The economic, domestic and foreign policy as well as disarmament advantages resulting from the reductions will be optimal only if the measures are carried out as suggested above. Quite clearly, the prompt execution of the reductions will free up resources, which are much needed elsewhere in the nation's economy. There is no need to explain that the profits resulting from the "streamlining" of the army will only be realized in domestic politics, if the public is informed about it fully and as soon as possible. This argues for the swift and complete announcement of the reduction. By bringing forward the elimination of our share of the asymmetry, or the announcement of our intentions in this regard, we could make up for the loss of foreign policy prestige, which resulted from the circumstance that, while we kept emphasizing our readiness for progressive measures (experimental field), we fell behind all the other Warsaw Treaty members as far as the timing and the mode of execution of the concrete steps were concerned. We could recover our leading position in the area of European security only by making such a progressive move.

By declaring the unilateral and complete termination of Hungary's share of the asymmetries and carrying it out in a short time frame, and also assuming that the other Warsaw Treaty members follow suit, we could prevent the situation that the first 3 or 4 years of the negotiations on conventional disarmament are dedicated to the issue of terminating the Warsaw Treaty advantage, thus putting the Warsaw Treaty entirely on the defensive. It would make more sense to go ahead with the reductions already tendered and acquire a position

at the start of the negotiations, which would allow us to discuss with our western partners major (not cosmetic) reductions that go beyond the termination of the asymmetries and also affect them.

Related to the imminent negotiations about conventional disarmament in Europe is our task to make sure that Hungary is involved in the European disarmament program, both formally and in substance. The fact that so far we have been unable to get our socialist partners accept Hungary's regional classification as a Central European country can potentially jeopardize the realization of our efforts in the area of conventional disarmament in Europe. As a result, we cannot be sure that Hungary will be affected by the first batch of measures, which will presumably be confined to Central Europe. On top of all the other factors weighing against it, being grouped together with the South-European countries would make it impossible for Hungary to use reductions as a negotiating chip, because NATO, which has the advantage on the southern flank, seems more likely to have to make reductions.

Parallel with the negotiations about conventional disarmament and measures to build up trust and security, it would be a good idea to explore the possibility of establishing a system for building up trust specifically among Austria, Hungary and Yugoslavia. The possible agreements include such mutual obligations, which would ban the concentration of troops above certain level within a zone of specified breadth along the border and any military activity outside the garrisons.

Budapest, March 7, 1989.

Dr. István Földesi

Special advisor to the First Secretary of the HSWP's Central Committee

*[Translation by Ervin Dunay]*