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Hungary in Central Europe

**The Strategic Situation in Central Europe
The Case of Hungary**

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Inhalt

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	5
Creation of the Hungarian State	5
Medieval Times	6
Hungary in Three Parts	6
Under the Habsburg's Sceptre	8
Reform and Revolt	10
The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy	11
Between the Great Wars	13
World War II	14
Communist Times	16
HUNGARY TODAY	19
The Liberation	19
The Political Map	20
Principles of Foreign Policy	21
Hungarian Minorities	22
The Road to Europe 1990-2004	24
NATO Membership	25
Enlargement of the European Union	27
REGIONAL CO-OPERATION	31
Alps Adriatic Working Community	31
The Central-European Initiative (CI)	31
The Carpatho-Euro Region	33
Southeast European Co-operative Initiative (SECI)	33
The Szeged Process	34
Hungarian Interest	34
RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBOURING STATES	37
Austria	37
Slovakia	38
Ukraine	40
Romania	40
Serbia	42
Croatia	44
Slovenia	45
THE HUNGARIAN ARMED FORCES	47
The Heritage	47
Cutting Down and Renewing	47

First Phase 2000–2003	48
Second Phase 2003–2006	49
Third Phase 2006–2010	49
NATO	50
Peacekeeping Missions	51
<u>THE ROLES OF HUNGARY</u>	<u>53</u>
<u>POSSIBLE FUTURE SCENARIOS</u>	<u>57</u>
NATO Enlargement	57
EU Enlargement	58
<u>INTERVIEWS</u>	<u>61</u>

Historical Background

Creation of the Hungarian State

The Carpathian Basin is located in the middle of Europe, thus many peoples have passed through it or settled down there – the Alans, the Goths, Attila and his Huns, the Longobards, the Gepids, and the Avars. In the course of the migration of peoples, the Hungarians came from the area between the rivers Ural and Volga. The seven tribes united under the leadership of chieftain Árpád, leader of the main tribe, the Magyars. Probably around 895, the Hungarians crossed the Carpathian passes and settled in the Carpathian Basin.

From there they made fast raids on horseback, looting all over Europe to the Apennine Peninsula, the Iberian Peninsula, the North Sea and Byzantium. On their fast horses they seemed unbeatable. At the same time the Nordic Vikings were plundering along the coasts and rivers from their fast boats. In the Christian churches there were prayers “from the swords of the Vikings and the arrows of the Hungarians, Lord deliver us”.

It was only after a crucial defeat at Lech near Augsburg 955 against the German emperor Otto, the Great that the Hungarian leaders realised that they had to abandon their pagan and nomadic way of life and accommodate to European norms. Grand Prince Géza called in missionaries from the west and had his chieftains and son Vajk baptised (as István or Stephen). István founded the Christian Hungarian statehood and was crowned in 1000 as the first Hungarian king by a crown (the Holy Crown) sent from Rome by pope Sylvester II and got the title apostolic majesty (Rex et Sacerdos). Later he was canonized as Szent István (Saint Stephen) and the Stephen day on 20 August, which is the main national day of Hungary. In 2000, Hungary celebrated 1,000 years of Christian statehood, Magyar Millennium (MM).

Hungary was enlarged and gained access to the Adriatic Sea when the Croats 1102 gave their oath of loyalty to the Hungarian king Kálmán. During some periods in the medieval times, the Hungarian kings also controlled neighbouring provinces in Serbia and Walachia.

In 1241, the first great catastrophe, or trauma, occurred in Hungarian history as the Tatars (or Mongols) invaded the country during one year, killed half the population and left a devastated land behind them. King Béla IV had to rebuild the country and invited German settlers to come to Hungary. They were joined by Moravian, Ruthenian and Romanian peasants in the border areas.

Medieval Times

The House of Árpád died out in 1301, and after that Hungary was mainly ruled by “foreign” kings. After some fighting about the throne, a distant relative Károly Róbert (Charles Robert) of the Neapolitan Anjou dynasty was elected king 1308. He transferred his residence to the magnificent Gothic palace in Višegrad, where he hosted a meeting with the kings of Bohemia and Poland in 1335. The three kings decided on political, dynastic and economic co-operation. In 1991 – 656 years later – the leaders of Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia met again in Višegrad to agree about co-operation while waiting to be able to participate in the European integration.

In 1370 the son of Károly Róbert, Nagy Lajos (Louis the Great), became also king of Poland. But after his death in 1382, his daughter Mária succeeded him in Hungary and later her husband Sigismund of Luxembourg. A younger daughter of Hedvig succeeded him in Poland and married Władysław Jagiello, prince of Lithuania, and thereby founded the Polish-Lithuanian union.

The Turkish threat to the Christian Europe increased during the 14th century. After the Serbian defeat at Kosovo Polje in 1389, Hungary became the shield of Europe against the Turkish expansion. The great Hungarian military commander János Hunyadi managed to stop the Turks for 70 years, and won his greatest victory at the Hungarian fortress Nándorfehérvár (currently Belgrade) in 1456, but died soon after.

Hunyadi’s son Mátyás (Matthias Corvinus) was elected king in 1458, and was the only real native king of Hungary between 1301 and 1918. He was a real renaissance prince, very interested in culture. He built a famous library, the Bibliotheca Corvina. He also organised a king's army, the so-called black army, not to be dependent on the troops of the magnates. He tried to create a Danube empire by adding Moravia and Silesia to his realm, and in 1485 he conquered Lower Austria and Styria from the Habsburg emperor Frederic III. Mátyás had his residence in Vienna to his death 1490.

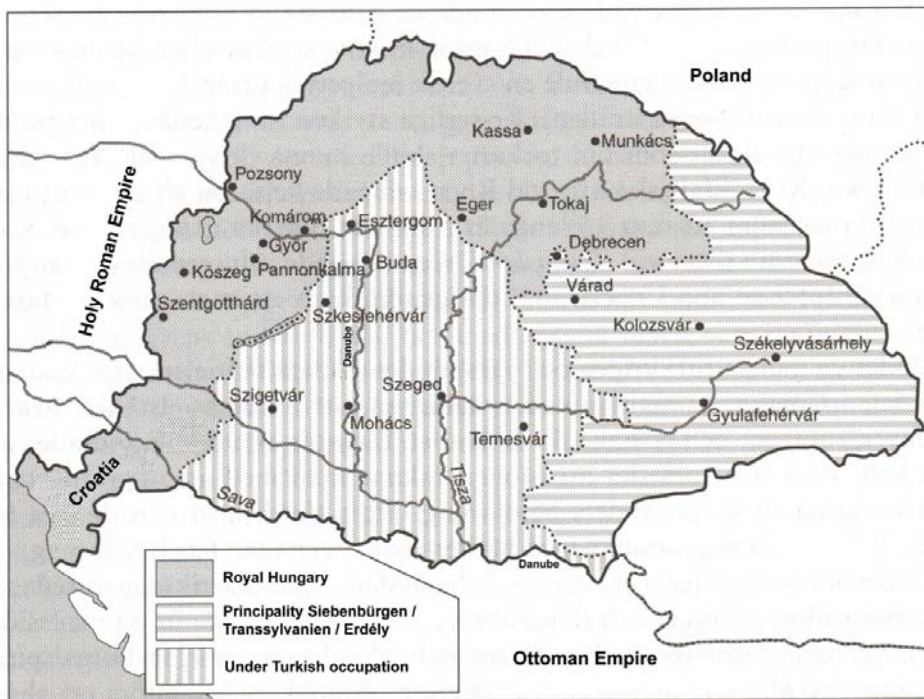
Hungary in Three Parts

Mátyás was succeeded by some weak young kings of the Jagiello dynasty, the black army was dissolved and the magnates regained their strong influence. A serious peasant revolt in 1514 under György Dózsa weakened Hungary even more. In 1526, the Turks attacked again with a very superior army, and the Hungarians were beaten at Mohács. The young king Lajos II died on his way from the battlefield. He was married to Maria, a sister of emperor Charles V and his brother Ferdinand. Ferdinand was married to Lajos' sister Anna, and, according to the heritage agreement, he should succeed his brother in law as king of Hungary and Bohemia. A part of the Hungarian nobility elected Ferdinand to be

king, but another part elected János Szapolya as king. This led to a war about the throne, in addition to the ongoing war with the Turks.

As a result, Hungary was divided in three parts for 150 years, the western and northern parts (so-called Royal Hungary) were united with Austria and Bohemia under the Habsburg emperors; the central parts were under Turkish occupation, and the eastern part, Transylvania (Siebenbürgen/Erdély) was a principality dependent on the Turkish sultan. During the partition, many Hungarian traditions and hopes for independence survived in Transylvania. The battle of Mohács and the following trisection of Hungary is regarded as the second trauma in Hungarian history.

Map: Hungary in Three Parts



The coronation of the Habsburg rulers was moved to Pressburg/Pozsony (nowadays Bratislava) from the traditional Székesfehérvár. Hungarians often felt that the Habsburg rulers mainly saw Royal Hungary as a defence buffer for Vienna and were less interested in liberating and uniting the whole country. The Turks attacked Vienna in 1529, 1532 (when they were delayed by Miklós Jurisics' brave defence of the castle of Kőszeg in western Hungary). In 1566, the Turks were stopped on their way to Vienna by Miklós Zrínyi at his castle of Szigetvár which he defended to the last man with his Hungarian and Croat troops. Em-

peror Maximilian II stood with an army at Győr to protect Vienna, but did not come to Zrinyi's succour. The last Turkish attempt to conquer Vienna was the great siege of 1683.

Under the Habsburg's Sceptre

After the great Christian victory at Vienna in 1683, a long war followed to liberate Hungary from the Turks. It lasted for 15 years, because emperor Leopold I had to employ his forces also against Louis XIV, who always was making wars in western Europe. Buda was taken in 1686, and after prince Eugene's great victory at Zenta in 1697, the Turks had to give up Hungary in the peace treaty of Karlowitz (Karlóca) in 1699.

The many wars with the Turks and the Turkish occupation had devastated large areas of Hungary, especially along the southern border, and left large areas uninhabited. Germans and South Slavic people were invited to settle in these areas. That totally changed the Hungarian demography. Estimates say that ethnic Hungarians made up about 85 % of the population before the Turkish wars. After the wars and foreign immigration, the Hungarians amounted to hardly 50 % of the total population, and there were many minorities in the country.

The Hungarians had contributed much to the liberation and unification of their country. In 1687, the electoral kingdom was abolished, and the Hungarian diet recognised the male Habsburgs as heritable rulers of Hungary.

But the absolute rule of Leopold was not what the Hungarians had expected. Already in 1703, a revolt under the leadership of Ferenc Rákóczi II broke out in northern Hungary. As the war of Spanish succession was going on at the same time, the emperor again had to divide his forces. Rákóczi's plans to co-operate with the French were thwarted by prince Eugene's and Duke of Marlborough's great victory over the French at Höchstädt (Blenheim) in 1704. It was partly also a Hungarian civil war, because even earlier there had been two groups in Hungary: the Habsburg loyal labanc (from Landsknecht) and the anti-Habsburg kuruc (runaway peasants). At some time, Rákóczi controlled large parts of Hungary, but he lost most of the main battles. When he was abroad, desperately looking for help, his followers made a compromise peace at Szatmár in 1711 with emperor Joseph I, that guaranteed Hungary's exclusive position within the Habsburg monarchy and the privileges of the Hungarian nobility.

During the long common history of Austria and Hungary, there have been many ups and downs between both countries. It is an irony of history that 30 years after Rákóczi's great rebellion, it was the Hungarians who saved the heritage for Maria Theresa. Emperor Charles VI had introduced female succession for his daughter Maria Theresa in the Pragmatica sanctio, that also stipulated that the Habsburg lands should be united forever, indivisibiliter et inseparabiliter.

Map: The Habsburg Empire in the 18th Century



After the death of Charles VI, Prussia and many other states started wars to take parts of the Habsburg lands. Maria Theresa managed to make a political and psychological full hit when she appealed for help to the Hungarian nobility at the

coronation diet in Pressburg/Pozsony in 1741. There the Hungarian noblemen enthusiastically promised “*Vitam et sanguinem pro rege nostro Maria Theresia*” (Our life and blood for our monarch Maria Theresa). The appearance of Hungarian regiments marked a turning point in the war, the enemies were driven from Austrian territory, and finally “only” Silesia was lost to Frederic II of Prussia.

During her rule for over 40 years, Maria Teresa kept good relations with Hungary, and cautiously but purposefully brought Hungary closer to the House of Habsburg. Inter alia, she set up a Hungarian Royal Guard in colourful Hungarian uniforms in Vienna. Her enlightened son Joseph II refused to be crowned king of Hungary, and took the holy crown from Pressburg/Pozsony to a museum in Vienna (“King in hat”, *kalapos király*). By decrees he wanted to regulate the life of all his subjects, to make a centralised German-speaking state of the very heterogeneous Habsburg Monarchy. When he died in 1790 as a failed politician, both Hungary and the Austrian Netherlands were at the verge of rebellion against Joseph II. His brother Leopold II brought the holy crown back to Hungary, and was crowned King of Hungary in the traditional way.

The 20 years of revolutionary and Napoleonic wars affected Hungary much less than the other Habsburg lands. That strengthened the economy and the trade of Hungary and made the country a more important part of the Habsburg monarchy. When Francis II created the Austrian empire in 1804, becoming Francis I as Austrian emperor, the kingdom of Hungary became an important part of the Austrian empire.

Reform and Revolt

In 1825, the Hungarian diet started the reform age in Hungary, with count István Széchenyi as the inspirator and leading person (the greatest of Hungarians). The aim was to modernise the Hungarian economy, to introduce new techniques, an Academy of Science was founded, a.s.o.

Demands for political reforms were also brought forward. There was a reform group around Széchenyi and the lawyer Ferenc Deák, and a more radical group under Lajos Kossuth. On March 15th in the revolutionary year of 1848, a Hungarian delegation presented a list of twelve demands to emperor Ferdinand in Vienna, and the feeble-minded emperor accepted the Hungarian demands. A Hungarian government was created under count Lajos Batthyany, responsible only to the reformed Hungarian parliament. Soon laws were passed about the abolition of serfdom, equality in civil and religious rights, and equality before the law, equal taxation and freedom of press. Hungary had become a liberal parliamentarism. But there were different opinions about how far and how fast to go ahead with the reforms. And the reactionary court in Vienna (“*camarilla*”) saw the royal concessions only as temporary.

After a great oration, Kossuth gained a unanimous decision in Parliament in July to set up Hungary's own armed forces, the honvéd. At the beginning of September it was obvious that no compromise could be reached between the Hungarians and the Vienna court views. Batthyány, Széchenyi, Deák and other reformers left the government, and Kossuth and his radicals had the power. Next day Croatian troops loyal to the emperor under Josip Jelačić (the ban [provincial governor] of Croatia) invaded Hungary.

The weakness of the Hungarian revolution under Kossuth was that Hungary was absolutely isolated from a security policy point of view. They got much sympathy from the liberals in Europe, but no help whatsoever. Secondly, the Magyars amounted to hardly half the population of Hungary, and the many minorities in the country did not wish a Magyar national state, and often sided with Austria.

During the autumn of 1848 and the winter of 1849, the luck of war changed several times, and neither side could win a decisive victory. For the Russian czar Nicholas I ("the gendarme of Europe") it was unthinkable to have a revolutionary Hungarian state next to his always unstable Poland. In June 1849, a Russian army invaded Hungary to help the Austrians. In August, Artúr Görgey, commander-in-chief of honvéd, had to surrender in Világos to the superior enemy forces – scornfully to the Russians and not the Austrians. The Russian commander could write to the czar "Hungary lies at the feet of Your Majesty".

Kossuth and some other leaders fled to Turkey. Several others were executed and thousands imprisoned. Hungary was ruled as a conquered country. The neo-absolutism had won – for the time being.

The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy

But the defeats Austria suffered in Italy in 1859, and against Prussia in 1866, made it necessary for emperor Francis Joseph to solve the Hungarian problem. In 1867, the so-called Ausgleich was reached, creating the Austro-Hungarian monarchy with two independent and equal parts with their own parliaments, governments, jurisdiction, capitals a.s.o. The ruler was Emperor of Austria and Apostolic King of Hungary. Foreign policy, joint armed forces and finances were common and there was also a customs union between the two states. Beside the joint (imperial and royal) army and navy, Hungary had its Honvéd and Austria a Landwehr [territorial forces].

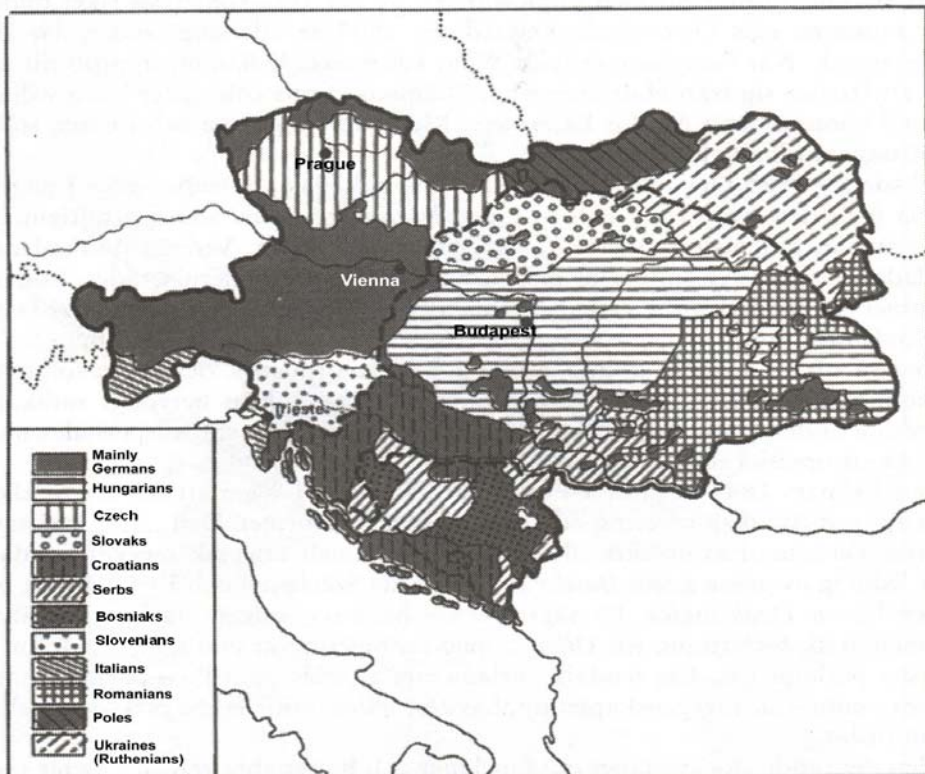
By this the Hungarians under Ferenc Deák and count Gyula (Julius) Andrassy had achieved all their national goals and were the ruling people in their part of the Monarchy. Francis Joseph and his Elisabeth (Sisi) were crowned to be king and queen of Hungary. The irony of history is that the Holy Crown was put on the king's head by count Andrassy – his death sentence (as revolutionary

1848/49) had 16 years earlier been signed by Francis Joseph, who also had him executed in effigy (in his absence).

Hungary, like many European states, experienced strong economic and technical growth around the turn of the century. With strong leaders like Kálmán Tisza and his son István Tisza, politics was much more stable than in the Austrian part of the monarchy. In 1896, there were great 1,000-years celebrations of the Magyar settlement (Landnahme) in the Carpathian Basin. By campaigns for Magyars to have more children and by assimilating some minority peoples, the number of Magyars in Hungary rose to 10 millions in 1910, little over 50 % of the population. There were dreams of a Hungary with 30 million Magyars.

The monarchy was a dynastic creation of the Habsburgs, and there were a dozen larger and many smaller nationalities and languages within the monarchy. The Czechs were not happy with the dualism, and had wished a triple solution with Bohemia as a third part. Later, many South Slavic peoples wanted a third part in the monarchy for them. Since 1868, Croatia had a compromise with Hungary about some autonomy for Croatia.

Map: Austro-Hungarian Nationalities in 1900



After the 1914 murder in Sarajevo, the Hungarian Prime Minister István Tisza first tried to restrict the Austro-Hungarian reaction to diplomatic measures, but after the strong support from Berlin for military action, he agreed to the ultimatum that was sent to Serbia. During the whole war, the Hungarians were very loyal in their participation, but made clear that they did not want any acquisition of territory that would increase the number of Slavic people in the monarchy even more.

After the death of Francis Joseph in November 1916 (after a reign of 68 years), Tisza had the young emperor Charles crowned as Hungarian King Károly IV with all medieval pomp and splendour on December 30th, 1916. Through the coronation oath, the King was bound to the Hungarian constitution, which was very favourable for the Magyars and nobility. That was the last time the Holy Crown was used for a coronation. But still today the Holy Crown (or Saint Stephan's/István Crown) is the symbol of Hungarian statehood.

Between the Great Wars

At the end of the great war there were revolutions in Hungary, as in many other countries, and a civil war broke out between a Bolshevik regime and white national forces. For some time large parts of eastern Hungary, and even Budapest, were occupied by Romanian forces who plundered everything they could steal. At the end of 1919, order was restored by white forces and admiral Miklós Horthy was made head of state as regent, even if the kingdom as such was kept ("kingdom without a king"). King Charles made two attempts in 1921 to regain the crown, but failed.

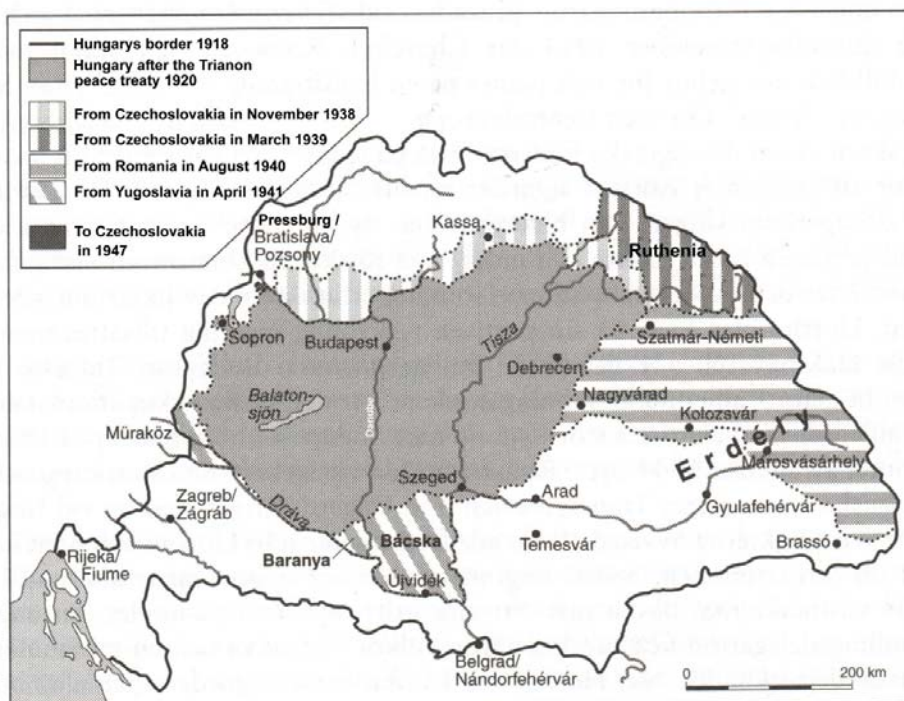
The Treaty of Trianon of 1920, was the third trauma in Hungarian history. It totally mutilated historic Hungary that had existed for 1,000 years. The country lost 71 % of its area, and 62 % of the population (Romania grabbed more Hungarian land than was left to Hungary). One third of the Magyar nation, between 3 and 4 million people, were suddenly minorities in the new surrounding states, often living just across the new borders – had the victorious powers wanted to draw fair borders according to nationality principles, it would not have been difficult. The promised minority rights for the Hungarian minorities in the neighbouring states did not materialise, either. The motto in foreign policy matters for all Hungarian parties between the wars was "Nem, nem soha!" (No, no, never).

Politically, Hungary was totally isolated and surrounded by hostile neighbours, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia formed an alliance, the Little Entente, against Hungary. Hungary tried to get out of the encirclement by signing a treaty of friendship with Italy in 1927, and the Rome protocol 1934 with Austria and Italy about co-operation in the Danube area. At the end of the 1930's

Hungary, like all other states in the region, became more and more politically and economically dependent on Germany.

When Hitler started the revision of territorial borders, Hungary could reclaim some lost territory. During the two Vienna awards, Hungary got back Hungarian populated areas in southern Slovakia in 1938, and in northern Transylvania (Siebenbürgen/Erdély) in 1940. In 1939, Hungary could take back Ruthenia, and in 1941 the areas and Bačka and Baranya in Vojvodina, and Muraköz and Muravidék in northern Yugoslavia. The population had increased by more than 4 million, and the area from 29 % to 53 % of the original Hungarian territory before 1920. But all these gains were unfortunately made by the grace of Hitler, and therefore were only short-lived.

Map: Hungary in 20th Century



World War II

At the outbreak of World War II, Hungary tried to stay neutral and denied German troops the use of Hungarian territory to attack Poland. and many Polish refugees could pass through Hungary on their way to the West. When Hitler decided to attack Yugoslavia via Hungary in April 1941, the Hungarian prime minister Pál Teleki committed suicide in protest.

Short after the outbreak of the German-Russian war in June 1941, the town of Kassa in Northern Hungary was bombed by what was said to be Soviet planes, and that dragged Hungary into the war on the German side, as “the unwilling satellite” (written by J. F. Montgomery, US ambassador in Budapest). But only in January 1942, Hungary, under enormous German pressure, sent the Second Hungarian Army of 200,000 men to the Don front. There they suffered an annihilating defeat in January 1943, and lost 150,000 men. Despite severe German pressure, Hungary refused to send new troops to the Russian front, but recalled what was left of the Hungarian force.

Leading Hungarian politicians started to realise that Germany was going to lose the war, and they wanted to make sure that Hungary would not again end up at the losing side. During 1943, they started secret negotiations, held in Stockholm, Ankara and other places, to obtain a separate peace with the western powers. As, during the summer of 1943, the Allies had landed first on Sicily and then in mainland Italy, the Hungarians hoped that they soon – like at the end of World War I – would also land on the Balkan, and would soon be in Hungary. But at the Teheran conference at the end of 1943, Churchill did not gain acceptance for his plan to land also on the Balkan. Stalin offered to “liberate” these parts of Europe.

The Germans found out about the Hungarian peace talks, and were also very annoyed that the Hungarians had not done anything to “solve the Jewish question”. On March 19th, 1944, German troops and Gestapo rapidly occupied Hungary and started arresting political opponents and Jews. In April, Allied air-raids started over Hungary. In August, Romania changed sides and joined the Russians to conquer northern Transylvania. With the war at Hungary's boarder, the Hungarian leadership made a last desperate effort to get out of the war. As the western powers refused to negotiate with Hungary, the Hungarians finally had to accept the very hard Russian conditions for an armistice. But when Horthy announced the truce over the radio on October 15th, the Germans made a new coup, arrested Horthy and took him to Germany and made the leader of the Arrow-cross party, Ferenc Szálasi “Leader of the Nation”. After that the really bloody terror started in Hungary with deportations, also of the Jews in Budapest.

As there was no alternative, the Hungarian troops went on fighting the hated and feared Russians, together with the German forces in Hungary. After hard fighting, the Russians encircled Budapest at Christmas of 1944 and took the Pest side in mid-January of 1945. But on the hilly Buda side, the German and Hungarian troops fought from house to house till mid-February. The Russians totally destroyed the Royal palace and the historic houses in the old castle town of Buda with artillery fire. In early April, the Russians had conquered all of Hungary after 194 days of fighting that had laid the country in ruins.

Communist Times

The elections in November did not turn out to be what the Soviet occupants and their Hungarian flunkys had expected. The smallholder party got 57 % of the votes, the social-democrats 17.4 % and the communists not even 17 %. But, according to the Yalta agreement (still an abusive word in Central Europe), the Red Army was in power in the country from 1944 onwards, and the communists under Rákosi and Rajk took over power step by step. About 100,000 political opponents were arrested, some of them executed and many got severe punishments. Altogether 600,000 Hungarians were sent to Stalin's prison camps and many (over 200,000) never returned. About 25 % of the population was punished in one way or another. Against the Catholic church, there was a severe campaign, and its primate, cardinal Mindszenty was imprisoned.

After the war, Hungary was forced back to the hard borders of Trianon and, in the Paris peace treaty of 1947, lost some more villages near Bratislava (Pressburg/Pozsony). The Czechoslovak president Beneš did not only banish 3.5 million German-speaking citizens by his notorious decrees to leave the country where their forefathers had lived for many centuries, he also wanted to expel all the Hungarians from Slovakia (Upper Hungary for 1,000 years). About 100,000 were forced to leave their homes, but when both countries became communist, ethnic cleansing between "socialist brothers" was less tasteful.

After Stalin's death, the four-power occupation of Austria ceased in 1955, and the Austrians got back their independence. This created hopes about liberation in Hungary, too. When the Red Army left Austria, there was no reason for the Soviet troops to stay in Hungary, "to keep contact with the forces in Austria". But in the same year, Hungary and the other occupied states were forced into the Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO), so that the Red Army could stay as "brothers-in arms".

What had started on October 23rd, 1956 as a act of sympathy with protesting Poles soon turned out to be a revolution against the communist system as such, and a fight for Hungarian liberty and independence. A government of national unity was formed under the reform communist Imre Nagy (branded as revisionist by Rákosi). They declared that Hungary would be a democracy, have free elections, and be a neutral country (and leave the WTO to end the Russian excuse to keep troops in the country). The Russians tried to double-cross the Hungarians by pretending to be ready to negotiate the withdrawal of their troops, but in reality they were assembling new troops around Hungary to start a great attack on November 4th. The Hungarians received all the sympathy of the world, but not one finger was raised to help them in their heroic, but hopeless, fight (like in 1848-49). Radio Free Europe played a very dubious role by telling that help was on its way from the West, and by encouraging the Hungarians to fight on.

Again, hundreds were executed, among them Imre Nagy and the military commander Pál Maléter; tens of thousands were imprisoned, and a new wave of

refugees left Hungary (like at the end of the WW II and when the communists finally seized power). It can be seen as an irony of history that it was János Kádár, the Soviet collaborator of 1956, with much Hungarian blood on his hands, who from 1968 onwards let Hungary take small steps of economic liberalisation, the so-called goulash-communism, but within the frame of a one-party-state and the WTO. In these points, Kádár was not going to challenge his masters in Moscow.

The western powers had divided Hungary after WW I, and did nothing to help Hungary to get out of WW II. The 1956 declaration of neutrality proved to be totally worthless. The lesson for the future (once Hungary would again take independent security policy decisions) to be drawn from these events was that only hard security policy guarantees can help and protect a small state in the middle of Europe.

Hungary Today

The Liberation

Gorbachev became the leader of the Soviet Union in 1985. It was neither his intention to abolish the communist one-party state in Russia, nor to give up the Soviet empire in central and eastern Europe. He wanted to reform the communist system and make it more effective and workable, but still communist. What he did not realise, and almost nobody else either, was that the whole system was totally rotten and ready to collapse. The longing for liberty among the oppressed peoples was so great that still very limited relaxing of the oppression would let the genie out of the bottle. Once it was out, nobody could force it back. Gorbachev and the other communist leaders in Europe soon lost control of the development.

During 1987, 1988 and 1989, it became more and more obvious that great changes were underway, particularly in Poland and Hungary. In the communist Hungarian vocabulary, the uprising of 1956 has always been described as “contra-revolution”. It was like an earthquake in Hungarian politics when the reform-communist Imre Pozsgay, both member of the party leadership and of the government, in January 1989 said in public that what had happened in 1956 was a popular rebellion. Everybody realised that the communist era was ending when Prime Minister Miklós Németh in June of the same year took part in the reinterment of Imre Nagy and the other “martyrs of 1956” who had been executed. It was at the same occasion that the leader of the young liberals, FIDESZ, Viktor Orbán demanded that the 60,000 Russian soldiers should leave Hungary. After that, round-table talks started between the government and the opposition about how to hand over power.

In the summer of 1989, many East-German “tourists” were desperately trying to find a way of escaping via the other satellite countries. Occasionally, there were as many as 5,000 refugees in the Federal German Embassy in Prague. The Hungarians had taken over border control between Hungary and Austria from the Russians in summer 1989. The Hungarian government made the brave decision not to shoot people any more who illegally tried to cross the border. They also decided to abolish the Hungarian part of the iron curtain in the long run.

The president of the Pan-European Union, Archduke Dr. Otto von Habsburg (the oldest son of the last emperor/king Charles), together with Pozsgay and the newly established Democratic Forum (MDF) party, planned a Pan-European picnic on both sides of the iron curtain near Sopron for 19 August 1989 (five days before Mazowiecki formed a new free government in Poland). “Interested East

German tourists" in Budapest received invitations with a map to the picnic ground.

Many thousands gathered on both sides of the border between Austria and Hungary. What originally had been intended to be the symbolic cutting of the iron curtain as a protest against the partition of Europe, in reality turned out to be the end of the division of Europe and of communism in Europe. Symbolically enough, it was the secretary general of the Pan-European Union, Walburga von Habsburg (nowadays married Douglas in Sweden), Otto von Habsburg's youngest daughter and grandchild of the last king/emperor of Austria-Hungary, who started to cut the barbed wire between the two former parts of the monarchy. No less than 661 Germans from the German Democratic Republic (GDR) fled to the West at that occasion. The plug had been pulled from the GDR, and the communist satellite system collapsed during the autumn of 1989. Within two years, even the Soviet Union itself disintegrated.

After the first free election in 1990, József Antall (MDF) formed a right-centre government. The new foreign minister Géza Jeszenszky said in June of that year that Hungary was going to negotiate its resignation of membership in the WTO. The Hungarian proposal won support from all the other satellite countries, and the somewhat unexpected decision was to dissolve the whole pact from July 1st, 1991. It was a great day when the last Russian soldier of the occupation force left the country on June 30th, 1991. For the first time since early 1944, Hungarians were again masters of their own country.

Thus, Hungary played an important part in the collapse of the Soviet empire and the communist system in Europe. The leading politicians in the Németh government made the correct judgement that they could open the border to the West without any serious Russian countermeasures. But on the other hand the East-German leaders were very furious, but could do nothing. Anyhow, it was a courageous Hungarian decision; as they could not be quite sure about the Russian reaction.

The Pan-European picnic was the symbolic act that started the changes in Europe and ended the cold war. Within four months, all the communist regimes in the satellite countries had fallen, even in Romania, which experienced some dramatic days at the end of 1989. It was also a Hungarian initiative that led to the dissolution of the WTO, and thereby the withdrawal of the Russian troops from Hungary.

The Political Map

There has been great stability in Hungarian politics since 1990. It is true that after every election there has been a change of government, but between the elections the governments have been stable. The number of parties decreased somewhat, but even the political parties have been rather stable.

The most important political parties are:

- the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), conservative;
- the Federation of Young Democrats – Hungarian Civic Party (Fidesz), started as youth organisation of SZDSZ, today a general bourgeois/conservative party;
- the Christian Democratic Peoples Party (KDNP);
- the Independent Smallholders Party;
- the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ), radical/left liberal party; and
- the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP).

During some parliament periods, other small parties have been represented as well. The most noticed was the populist far-right Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIÉP) under István Csurka's leadership. After the election in April 2002, only MSZP, SZDSZ and Fidesz (with a MDF fraction) are represented in the parliament. Note that the smallholders party, that has played an important role in Hungarian politics for a long time, did not pass the 5 % limit of the complicated Hungarian election system.

Prime Ministers from 1990 onwards:

- József Antall 1990 to his death in 1993, a right-centre government;
- Péter Boros 1993–94, a continuation of the Antall government;
- Gyula Horn 1994–1998, MSZP in coalition with SZDSZ;
- Victor Orbán 1998–2002, Fidesz in coalition with MDF and smallholders;
- Péter Medgyessy since 2002, MSZP in coalition with SZDSZ.

Principles of Foreign Policy

After the 1989 liberation, Hungary was very keen not to end up in any grey zone of security and foreign policy. A neutrality policy has never been regarded as an alternative, inter alia because of the very bad experiences how worthless the declaration of future neutrality policy was in 1956. As one of its first measures, the Antall government stated three principles as guideline for the country's new and independent foreign policy. All later governments have accepted and followed these three principles. Being equally important, they are:

- to participate fully in the Euro-Atlantic integration (NATO and EU), and so bring Hungary back to its traditional western connections;
- to have good relations and co-operation with neighbouring countries; and
- to support Hungarian minorities abroad, particularly the about 3.5 million Hungarians in the neighbouring countries, and to safeguard that their human rights are respected.

From the beginning the Hungarian side stressed that the balance among these three principles must be maintained, and that no one is superior or inferior to any other. The goals of the principles can only be reached if the independence of every principle is respected.

Hungarians strongly support the idea that the present transatlantic link between Europe and the USA must remain strong. Hungarian leaders are not interested in any European *Alleingang* in the field of security policy, and adamantly oppose any such ideas.

There is common agreement about the fact that there is no military threat to Hungary from any neighbouring country today. Possible new wars on the Balkans could however create strains and intermezzos. Today Hungary faces so-called soft security policy treats, such as organised crime from eastern Europe and the Balkans, illegal arms trade, drugs, the smuggling of refugees, prostitution, AIDS, etc., as well as environmental catastrophes and pollution from outside.

Hungarian Minorities

It is easy to see that principles 2 and 3 may well come into conflict with each other. The four countries with the largest Hungarian minorities, Romania (about 2 million), the Slovak Republic (600,000), Serbia (less than 400,000) and the Ukraine (200,000 in Ruthenia/Transcarpathia) have had a slow political and economic transition (even if Slovakia has increased its speed during the last years), and have often been ruled by communist or other authoritative regimes who frequently have blamed the Hungarians for various difficulties of their governments.

The bad Hungarian experiences of revisionist policy during WW II influences Hungarian policy towards the Hungarians in the neighbour countries today. During communist times there were hardly any officially recognised minorities at all, and therefore absolutely no problems with them in any communist country. After the liberation one could see that all earlier problems still were present, and had often turned worse. From the Antall government onwards, Hungarian governments have in word and deed been supporting the Hungarians in neighbouring countries – the Horn government perhaps less enthusiastically than those of Antall and Orbán – in accordance with the principles mentioned.

There was some fuss when Antall in the beginning of his term said that in his heart he was the prime minister for 15 million Hungarians (including those abroad). On the other hand, there was opposition when Horn said that he represented only the 10 million Hungarians in Hungary. Orbán put it in a diplomatic way, when he said that he was aware that the borders of the Hungarian nation and the present state borders do not overlap. When he started his

office, Medgyessy said that he would be the prime minister of 10 million citizens, but felt responsible for all 15 million Hungarians in the world.

But all the established parties and politicians (with a question-mark for Csurka) in Hungary today are against a revisionist policy and the changing of borders, and accept the fate of Hungary after two lost world wars. The Hungarians in neighbouring countries of course look to Hungary for support, but the majority of ordinary people in Hungary do not care so much for their countrymen abroad, and see many more urgent problems of every day life today.

Hungary thus today respects the borders that were drawn for the country at Trianon in 1920, and confirmed in the Paris peace treaty of 1947 - even if the Hungarians still find them very unfair. But at the same time Hungary expects that the neighbouring countries will follow a policy toward their citizens of Hungarian nationality that will make it possible for the Hungarian minorities to maintain their own national and cultural identity. On some occasions there have been some vague ideas about the possibility of double citizenship for these groups, but the neighbouring countries have been absolutely opposed against these ideas. It is obvious that when Hungary will join the Schengen countries before some of its neighbours, contacts with the Hungarians in these countries will be more difficult.

In the beginning of 2001, the Hungarian government presented a proposal that would make it easier for Hungarians in the neighbouring countries to work temporarily (up to three months per year) in Hungary and make them eligible for health and social benefits in Hungary during that time.

Many Hungarians from abroad are already coming to Hungary to work, because pay is higher than in neighbouring countries, but today they often work illegally and have no benefits. They would be able to apply for a specific ID card to claim these rights. There would also be Hungarian economic support for language training of Hungarian children in neighbouring countries. The law was passed in June 2001 by a 93 % majority in parliament, and came into effect on January 1st, 2002.

But Hungary ran into difficulties with foreign countries because of this so-called status law. Hungarians in Austria were excluded from the beginning, because of EU requirements of equal treatment of all EU citizens, and in Austria wages are of course much higher than in Hungary. Romania and Slovakia were very negative about the Hungarian law, and at one stage Hungary promised to give the three months work permit to all Romanian citizens.

Medgyessy's government has now changed the law, so that the work permit is not included. The law deals with support in the fields of culture and education, and the ID-card symbolises only links in these fields - and will only be issued for non-Hungarian relatives with the consent of the other country. Support for the training of the Hungarian language abroad will be given after an application from the respective school. The law does not apply to citizens of EU countries.

The Road to Europe 1990–2004

The continuation of the principles of foreign policy has been successful. Hungary has been admitted as the first formerly communist country to many European and international organisations:

- 1990 Hungary joined the Council of Europe. First official Hungarian contacts with NATO by Prime Minister Antall's visit to Brussels and NATO secretary general Wörner's visit to Hungary. Hungary and some other liberated countries were invited to participate with associate delegations in the North Atlantic Assembly (NAA) in London in November.
- 1991 Hungary signed an association agreement with the EU. Founding meeting of the North Atlantic Co-operation Council (NACC), including 16 NATO members and 9 formerly communist countries.
- 1993 Hungary permitted NATO AWACS planes to use Hungarian airspace to check the no-fly zone in Bosnia-Herzegovina.
- 1994 Hungary joined NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) and signed a co-operation agreement with NATO. The association agreement with the EU entered into force. Hungary applied for EU membership.
- 1995 NATO held a plenary meeting of the NAA in Budapest – for the first time outside a NATO country. A PfP exercise was held in Hungary. Parliament approved Hungarian participation in IFOR, and US use of the Taszár airbase in southern Hungary. Americans arrive at Taszár.
- 1996 Hungary joined the OECD and became an associated partner of WEU. Hungary participates with 416 men in IFOR under NATO command. Parliament approved Hungarian SFOR participation with a engineer battalion.
- 1997 NACC was replaced by the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. Together with Poland and the Czech Republic, Hungary was invited at the NATO summit in Madrid in July to start negotiations about membership, which were finished in December the same year. Hungary and four other countries were invited to start negotiations to join the EU-membership. Referendum in Hungary about NATO-membership, 85 % in favour.
- 1998 Negotiations with EU started in March. NATO countries ratified the treaty about the three new members. Hungarian preparations for membership.
- 1999 Hungarian Parliament approved NATO-membership with 96 % in favour. An air operation centre was opened at Veszprém to connect Hungary to NATO's air information system; Hungary became a member of NATO on March 12th.
- 2002 Negotiations with EU completed at Copenhagen summit.
- 2003 Referendum (on April 12th , 85 % Yes votes) and ratification of EU treaty.
- 2004 Expected EU-membership in May and participation in European Parliament elections.

NATO Membership

The main reason for Hungary to join NATO is said to be that the country seeks a stable, peaceful and secure position and favourable foreign relations for its development. If Hungary is looked upon from abroad as a stable country, this will also encourage economic co-operation and foreign investments.

In the November 1997 referendum, more than 85 % voted for NATO membership. But like in other referendums, participation was low - hardly 50 %. Parliament ratified the treaty with 330 votes for, 13 against and 1 abstention.

NATO requires new members to have stable democratic systems, a functioning market economy, good relations with its neighbour states, democratic and civilian control of the armed forces, and the ability to co-operate with the other member states. Hungary fulfils the political requirements, as do the other new member states. The ability for military co-operation is improved step by step, but all the new members still have much to do in this respect.

Of course, the Hungarians know that their limited armed forces do not really increase the power of NATO. But the country's strategic position in the centre of Europe provides NATO with many advantages. That was shown already before Hungary became a member. Without access to Hungarian territory and airspace, IFOR/SFOR operations would hardly have been possible in the way and to the extent they were conducted. During these operations, 170,000 troops went in transit over Hungary, 1,200 trains and 70,000 vehicles, as well as 4,000 air missions, passed Hungary. Therefore the Hungarians say that NATO came to Hungary before Hungary could come to NATO.

The war in Kosovo and above all the air war against Serbia would have hardly been possible at all if NATO had not had access to Hungarian airspace and the Taszár airbase near Pécs in southern Hungary. Together with an Italian airbase it was the starting point for NATO missions over Serbia. Twelve days after it had joined the alliance, Hungary had to prove that it was a loyal and reliable member. Some say it was an early test. Other say that it was luck for Hungary that they had become a member before the war broke out. Now Hungary was protected against any desperate actions from Milosevic's side. Hungarians in Vojvodina in northern Serbia are the only minority in Serbia against whom there has been no systematic ethnic cleansing from Milosevic's side.

Also the other neighbouring states have become more moderate and polite to Hungary and Hungarian minorities. They all want to become members of NATO, and when they will negotiate, Hungary will be sitting on the other side of the table together with the other members.

Map: NATO Members and Invited States in November 2002



▨ Invited by NATO in 2002 (to become members in 2004)

Map: EU Members and Candidate States in December 2002



Enlargement of the European Union

The Hungarian outlook on future European integration, both of NATO and EU, is that it is an advantage for Hungary if its neighbour states also will join these organisations as soon as they are ready for membership.

The situation for the Hungarian minorities would be less problematic in the neighbouring countries if they were members of these organisations. For one thing these organisations do not permit that minorities are treated badly and are persecuted, for another thing it would be less important in an integrated Europe

if Hungarians live on one or on the other side of a “previous” state border. The EU actively supports the rights of minorities and their right to use and maintain their own language and culture.

Hungary applied for membership in EC/EU already in 1994, and was invited in 1997 to start negotiations together with four other previously communist countries (Estonia, Poland, Slovenia and the Czech Republic), as well as Cyprus, in the first round of enlargement negotiations. Two years later, the EU started negotiations with other candidate countries as well. In December 2002, the negotiations were finished with the countries in central Europe and the Baltic states, as well as with Cyprus and Malta. The ratification process including referenda in most new member states will take place in 2003. In May 2004 the new members should be admitted to the Union in time to participate in the elections to the European Parliament in June that year.

The Hungarians think that the negotiations started late and lasted for a long time. They think that they themselves had been ready for membership earlier. To speed up the negotiations, Hungary as the first candidate country accepted the long transition periods for the free movement of labour that Germany and Austria had demanded in June 2001.

Hungary was the country where the population in opinion polls for long time was most positive to EU-membership. The polls constantly showed around 70 % for yes and only about 10 % for no. That is why Hungary was one of the very first states to hold a referendum about EU-membership, on April 12th 2003. But the politicians said that there must be a “good” agreement for Hungary with the Union in order to win the referendum. Nobody thinks that Hungary got a “good” treaty, but the question will be if it is fair and acceptable enough. The result was an impressive 85 % for yes, but actually the outcome for yes was even higher in Slovenia and Slovakia.

The EU Commission's proposal of early 2002 to give the new members only 25 % of the CAP and regional subsidies, compared to what the older member states get, and to increase them to 100 % during a ten years period was looked upon as very shameful in the candidate countries. Had this been the case, Hungary and several other of the newcomers would have turned out to be net contributors to the Union, despite western and southern Europe being much richer. With such a bid, one could not win any referendum.

Many people in the candidate countries asked themselves how their farmers would be able to compete with the highly subsidised farmers in the old member states. There would be a great risk that the markets in the new member states would be flooded with well-subsidised food products from the west and south of Europe.

At the Copenhagen summit, a compromise was reached to correct the most unfair acts. In a 50-50 deal with national contributions, the Union will contribute to the new member states from the rural development funds, so that from the

beginning the farmers can get up to 55 % of the subsidies their colleagues get in the old member states.

The result is that Hungary will after all gain a net balance of 271 million € from the Union in 2004, and that will be increased to 507 million € in 2005, and to 622 million € in 2006.

The agriculture negotiations were not as great a problem for Hungary as they were for Poland and some of the other candidate countries. In Hungary, only 7.5 % of the people get their income from farming (compared to about 25 % in Poland), and they produce just 6 % of the GNP. Hungary is the only newcomer who today is a net exporter of food products to the Union.

Regional Co-Operation

Already before the liberation, there was some regional co-operation in parts of central Europe, but after 1989 the number of such organisations has increased considerably. The main motive for this was certainly the wish of the liberated states to join as much “Western” or Western supported co-operation as possible to make sure the clock could not be turned back to bad old times. As time went on, these regional collaborations turned out to be more and more of a “waiting room” for the real thing – integration into EU and NATO. Several of these central European organisations do not mainly deal with security policy. The Most important Organisations Should be:

Alps Adriatic Working Community

The Alps Adriatic Working Community co-operation already started in 1977/78, before the end of the cold war and has been broadened with participants from Hungary and the former Yugoslavia. The unique part of the Alps Adriatic Working Community co-operation is that it is not a collaboration among states, but its members are provinces and similar regional units from southern Germany (Bavaria), Austria, northern Italy, Hungary (five provinces in western Hungary, and Slovenia and Croatia). Seven standing commissions deal with questions of environment, transports culture, economy, agriculture and forestry, health care and hygiene, as well as tourism.

The Italian port city of Trieste (Trieste/Trst) has been pointed out as a good example for this regional co-operation in order to transfer more cargo from roads to the sea. During the Habsburg time, Trieste was the most important harbour of the monarchy and the fourth largest in Europe. Today, Trieste is a sleepy little border town, almost enclosed by Slovenian territory. The idea is to make Trieste once again the primary port of the whole region. But there is strong competition from the nearby and much more modern Slovenian harbour of Koper, that would like to gain that position as well.

The Central-European Initiative (CI)

During an Alps Adriatic Working Community meeting in Budapest in 1989, Hungary took the initiative to initiate co-operation among the states in the Danube area, including Austria, Hungary, Italy, and the then still existing Yugoslavia. In 1990, Czechoslovakia joined, and the co-operation was called Pentagonale, from 1991 Hexagonale when Poland also joined. After that, almost all central and eastern European states to the border of Russia joined, forming

what has become known as the Central-European Initiative. But in this way, the collaboration has been much diluted. The enthusiastic hopes from the early '90s about a “new Habsburg”, and for some even a possible alternative to the EU, are all gone now. The initiative has become a sort of discussion club for the head of states and prime ministers.

Map: The Visegrád Group



The most well-known co-operation in central Europe is the Visegrád group. It is also a typical example of the importance of history in central Europe. In 1335, the kings of Hungary, Poland and Bohemia had an important meeting in the Visegrád palace of the Hungarian king north of the river Danube. They settled their disputes and agreed to co-operate politically and dynastically, and to establish new ways of trade to bypass Vienna as a trading place.

In February 1991, prime minister Antall invited president Havel from Czechoslovakia and the Polish president Walesa to a summit. The place was carefully chosen - Visegrád. Leaders of these three states met again at the same place - 656 years later. They agreed to political co-operation against the then still existing Soviet-union, and collaboration inter alia in a free trade agreement while waiting for EU membership (which they then thought would come in year 2000) and NATO (which they thought would come after EU).

The Visegrád triangle was split up into four states when the Czech Republic and Slovakia were formed in 1993/94. Under the rule of Meciar, Slovakia distanced itself from the successful transition work in the other three states. After the change of government in 1998, when the democrats came to power in Slovakia, the country reapproached the other Visegrád states.

The Carpatho-Euro Region

An attempt to start something similar to the Alps Adriatic Working Community collaboration was made in Debrecen in 1993, when Hungary, Poland and Ukraine agreed to start some regional co-operation in the border regions of these three states.

From the beginning the authoritarian regimes in Romania and Slovakia prohibited their border provinces from joining this co-operation, but when the democrats took power in these states, too, also the eastern provinces of Slovakia and northern Transylvania could join the Carpatho-Euro-region. The co-operation has been rather modest, and has mainly made it possible to establish regional cross-border contacts.

Southeast European Co-operative Initiative (SECI)

SECI was created in 1996 for regional co-operation and to make contacts possible and to support southeast Europe, that is the disturbed and unsettled Balkans area and its neighbouring states. The aim is to help the Balkan states to integrate into various European organisations, to serve as a pact for stability in the region, and to promote democracy and market economy. The activities mainly concentrate on three domains: security, economy and politics. SECI is running eight different projects where different countries have the main responsibility for one programme each. Hungary is responsible for the creation of an effective energy

network in the region, something that is of great importance, both for the economy and also from a security policy point of view.

Original SECI members are: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Macedonia (FYROM), Moldova, Romania, Slovenia and Turkey. Montenegro had observatory status. At the Zagreb SECI meeting in December 2000, the rest of Yugoslavia (Serbia nad Montenegro) was accepted as 12th member of the organisation. Austria, the Czech Republic, Italy, Switzerland and USA are “supporting states” of the organisation.

The Szeged Process

The Szeged Centre for Security Policy (SCSP) was established in 1999 by the University of Szeged, the City of Szeged and the Hungarian Academy of Science, certainly with the approval of the Hungarian government. The aim is to establish a practical collaboration in that region with bordering areas of Romania and Serbia, and to prevent regional and local conflicts. The activities are sponsored by local businessmen in the region. The Centre has established co-operation with the nearby universities of Temesvár (Timisoara) and Újvidék (Novi Sad), and with many communities in the Bánát and the Vojvodina. Among the activities are invitations for students at the three universities to attend joint seminars and courses about various security policy topics.

The SCSP came to play a political role in the so-called Szeged process, by inviting mayors and journalists who were opposed to Milosevic to come to Szeged to be able to discuss problems and strategies in peace for the Serbian secret police and to study the successful Hungarian transition to democracy and market economy before the presidential election in Serbia and Montenegro at several occasions in 2000. After the election, the new leaders in Belgrade said that the Szeged process contributed to the outcome of the election and the fall of Milosevic.

Hungarian Interest

There are (or were) mainly three reason for Hungary to participate in these various organisations:

From the beginning to liberate the country free from the soviet grip, and to establish as many links as possible to western Europe, both for security policy and for economic reasons. The main aim was of course membership in EU and in NATO, so some of these other organisations will be of less importance in the future or may even cease to exist.

Secondly, Hungary wants to have good relations with its neighbour states. Memories of the political isolation of Hungary between WW I and WW II are frightening. Co-operation with neighbour states is of course easier if they also are democratic states with respectable governments.

Thirdly, some of these collaborative organisations enable Hungary to support the Hungarian minorities in neighbouring states. At some occasions, when the relations among the capitals were not so good, regional co-operation could still go on.

Relations with Neighbouring States

Hungary nowadays borders onto seven states, at least four of which can be described as “new states”, dating back to the early 1990s. The neighbour states have very varied historical, cultural and political backgrounds. Some of the states have quite a long experience of statehood with law and democracy, with human rights, market economy and so on. Other neighbour states have no such practical experiences.

The neighbouring peoples are Slavonians, German-speaking and Romanians. By religion and also culturally and politically, they, just like the Hungarians, belong to the western/catholic sphere, or to the eastern, Byzantine and orthodox sphere. In all neighbouring states there are larger or smaller Hungarian minorities who sometimes are treated more or less well, but in many cases have been, or still are, treated badly and are discriminated against. Hungarian historical and political relations to neighbouring countries show a wide spectrum of better and worse relations.

Therefore, also today the span is rather wide from good to sometimes quite bad relations between Hungary and the neighbouring states. This is unlike the situation of Sweden, where there are only small variations of good relations to all neighbouring states. The relations between Hungary and the different neighbouring states have in some cases varied considerably during the last 12 years, depending on the different governments in the neighbouring states.

The strategic position of Hungary has probably never been as favourable as now. Earlier, there were often great powers or hostile states around Hungary. Today, there are small states around the country (Ukraine is in fact large, but weaker than many of the small states). None of the neighbours is really hostile or presents a military threat – even before Hungary entered NATO. Sweden still has two European great powers, Germany and Russia, quite close to its borders.

The coming overview discusses both historical and contemporary contacts, starting with the Trianon peace treaty, between Hungary and the various neighbour states, as they often still play an important role in the political relations among the countries.

Austria

After WW I, there was a conflict between Austria and Hungary about the [Austrian province of] Burgenland, which the victors transferred from Hungary to Austria. The main city of Sopron/Ödenburg was particularly disputed. After a referendum, Sopron stayed in Hungary, and the relations between Hungary and

Austria calmed down. So even if the relations were not the best between Hungary and Austria between the World Wars, they were much better than with any other of Hungary's neighbouring states.

After 1956, when many Hungarians were able to flee to or through Austria, the relations between Hungary and Austria improved considerably. During the 1980s, Hungarians increased their shopping trips to Austria (sometimes the shopping street Mariahilfer Strasse in Vienna was recalled Magyarohilfer Strasse by popular humour). Conversely, today it is the Austrians who have their teeth done, cars repaired, and do their shopping in much cheaper Hungary.

Austria's role as a "bridge" between West and East in Europe has almost ceased. Many international companies see Hungary as a hub in the region, and establish their central European headquarters in Budapest instead of Vienna. The Hungarians try of course to encourage this view as much as they can. One reason why many Austrians are sceptical to a fast EU enlargement probably is their desire to remain in their "bridge-building" function for some time to come. Haider's furious attacks on the free movement of labour in an enlarged Union were not primarily aimed at the Hungarians, but they were of course also hit by them.

It is a historical irony that the former communist and WTO state Hungary now acts as the NATO liaison office to Austria (perhaps difficult to digest for some friends of NATO in Austria). The political relations between Austria and Hungary today are good and without problems.

Slovakia

Relations between Hungary and Slovakia have often been problematic. Slovakia really lacks a statehood tradition of its own, and, just like Upper Hungary, was as an integral part of the Hungarian kingdom for over 1,000 years.

After WW I, the victors created the rather artificial state of Czechoslovakia, with seven different nationalities and languages. The border was not drawn according to nationality principles, and about one million Hungarians ended up in the new state in homogeneous Hungarian areas north of the new border. Had the victors wanted, it would not have been difficult to draw a fair border based on nationality principles.

The Munich agreement at the end of September 1938, and the Czech surrender to the great powers did not only give Germany the so-called Sudetenland areas in Bohemia and Moravia, but also Hungary and Poland (the latter was to be the next victim for Hitler's aggression), and claimed parts of Czechoslovak territory (for Hungary the so-called first Vienna award). When, in March 1939, Hitler occupied the remaining parts of Bohemia and Moravia, the Slovaks proclaimed their own state "under German protection" under the leadership of a priest by the name of Tiso, and Hungary re-conquered Ruthenia.

After WW II, the Hungarians in the re-established Czechoslovakia were stripped of their citizen-rights. President Beneš would really have liked to banish all Hungarians from Czechoslovakia, like he did with all the 3.5 million German-speaking people, but in the end it stopped by that about 100,000 Hungarians had to leave their homes and flee to Hungary.

In 1977, the communist governments in Hungary and Czechoslovakia decided about a huge dam to be built on the Danube, the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros project, which would have diverted the river in an artificial canal to produce much energy, but it would also have flooded large areas owned by Hungarian peasants in Slovakia, and would have caused many environmental problems. With the ongoing liberalisation, the environmental protests against the project grew louder. After the liberation, the new Hungarian and Czechoslovak governments decided in 1992 to stop all the work on the project. But after the separation of the Czechs from the Slovaks, the nationalist Slovak government under Mečiar restarted work on their side, and even demanded that Hungary should go on on the Hungarian side. Hungary refused of course, and launched a protest against the Slovak construction work. After that the dispute has been referred to the International Court in The Hague for several times, which on the whole has asked the two states to try to agree, which has not been possible.

During most of '90s, the populist and strongly nationalistic former boxer Vladimir Mečiar and his party HZDS were in power for three terms of government in Slovakia. Before the separation from the Czech part, he blamed the Czechs for all Slovak problems. After that, the 600,000 Hungarians (11 % of the population) in the Southern part of Slovakia were made scapegoats for all the difficulties in the country. Even more, he changed the administrative borders in Slovakia, and by this gerrymandering the Hungarians could not any longer gain the majority in any single province of the country.

These and many other disputes made the relations between Hungary and Slovakia rather bad during the Mečiar time. But all of Europe regarded Slovakia under Mečiar as the enfant terrible of central Europe. This certainly is the reason why the country was not invited to the NATO enlargement in 1997, or to start negotiations about EU membership in the first round.

Mečiar lost the general election in 1998, and a heterogeneous anti- Mečiar coalition under Mikulas Dzurindas was formed. The Hungarian parties in Slovakia also participated in the new democratic government. Mečiar did not win the presidential elections in 1999, and lost to the democrat Rudolf Schuster. After the democratisation of Slovakia, the relations between Hungary and Slovakia improved considerably.

There were fears in Hungary and in other states that Mečiar would manage to come back in the 2002 elections. He is a great survivor, but luckily for Slovakia and the other countries of the region, he did not, and the democrats managed to

do unexpectedly well. Had Mečiar gained power, he would have turned the clock back for Slovakia and made its integration into EU and NATO impossible.

Ukraine

Ruthenia was the north-eastern part of historical Hungary. In the Trianon peace treaty, this area together with all other parts of northern (Upper) Hungary were separated from the motherland and included into the newly created Czechoslovakia. After the breakup of Czechoslovakia in 1939, Ruthenia was reunited with Hungary during WW II. After the war, Stalin included Ruthenia (Carpatho-Ukraine or Transcarpathia) into the Soviet Union.

Administratively, Ruthenia became part of Ukraine, and thus Hungary and Ukraine got a short common border after the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991. But even if the border is rather short (less than 100 km), it may be an important one in the future. It soon will be a EU-border to Ukraine with possibly great economic opportunities in the future. But at the same time, it will be a Schengen-border where Hungary has to stop all kinds of criminal actions, and the smuggling of immigrants and refugees.

After 1991 there was some public opinion in Ruthenia to break away from Ukraine to create an own state or autonomous region. In Ruthenia, there are about 200,000 Hungarians, who are very poor like most people in Ukraine. But they are not discriminated against or treated worse than other people in Ukraine. So the relations between Hungary and Ukraine are rather good, and Hungary does not see any specific minority problems for Hungarians in Ukraine, besides common miserable and insecure living conditions.

Ukraine is perhaps the most unstable of all Hungarian neighbour states, with enormous political and economical problems. From a strategic point of view, it may be the most important one. An independent Ukraine is of prime interest to Hungary and central European. As long as Ukraine exists as an independent state, it constitutes a large buffer between Russia and Hungary and several other central European states, even if the danger of having a common border with Russia is not that great after having joined NATO. But still, it feels better and more secure to have the Russians far away – a lesson learned many times in history.

Romania

Romania certainly is the country that Hungary has the most difficult and complicated relations with. The Romanians are hyper-sensitive about everything that has to do with Hungary and the Hungarians in Romania. Romania is the neighbour that grabbed most Hungarian territory after WW I (more than was left to the small Hungary itself), and the largest and most persecuted Hungarian

minority lives in Romania (around 2 million). The fact that Romania has been ruled by tyrants like Ceaușescu has not improved the living conditions of the Hungarians there or the relations with Hungary.

Transylvania, known as Siebenbürgen in German and Erdély in Hungarian, was for 1,000 years the eastern part of Hungary in the bend between the Carpathian Mountains and the Transylvanian Alps. Since medieval times, three nationalities have been living there: Hungarians (in the easternmost part called Székely or Szekler), Germans (so called Saxons), and Romanians. Since the Reformation there also have been three different denominations, Catholics, Calvinists and Greek-Orthodox (the first law about religious tolerance in Europe was proclaimed in Transylvania in 1571). The loss of Transylvania was the most painful of all losses for Hungary, as Transylvania is regarded to be the most typical Hungarian part of Hungary (like Dalecarlia in Sweden), where Hungarian culture and traditions could survive when Hungary was divided and occupied.

As both the Habsburg and the Romanov empires collapsed at the end of WW I, Romania - which had lost the war and already had made peace - managed to gain full dividends in all respects. In the Trianon peace treaty, Romania not only got Transylvania, but also large areas west of Transylvania and the eastern part of Bánát. National extremists were even dreaming to push the Romanian border all the way to the river Tisza. From Russia, the Romanians could take Bessarabia. Romania had doubled its area, but almost half of the population was made up of minorities, and the promised minority rights were not put into practice.

During Béla Kun's red terror in Hungary in 1919, the neighbouring states intervened against the communists. Romanian troops first occupied eastern Hungary, and even took Budapest in August, and stayed there for two months. In eastern Hungary they stayed till March 1920. The Romanians thoroughly plundered the occupied areas. It is estimated that the Romanians looted Hungary to the tune of 3 thousand million gold *Kronen* - 12 times more than the big international loan that Hungary got from the League of Nations in 1924 to rebuild the country's economy.

In the Second Vienna Award, Hungary managed to get back from Romania about two thirds of Transylvania, the northern and eastern parts. In WW II, both states first participated on the German side, but in August 1944 Romania changed sides and went to war against Hungary on the Soviet side. In Transylvania, the Romanians started such outrages that even the Russians thought they had gone too far and took over the administration of the disputed area. The Paris peace treaty of 1947 gave Transylvania to Romania.

During the communist dictatorship in central Europe, all national and minority problems in the region were suppressed. Things like these just did not exist among party brothers. Despite that, Ceaușescu, for example, planned to urbanise all of Transylvania by forcing everybody to move to the towns, thus destroying all the Hungarian rural settlements with their culture and language. Fortunately,

the tyrant was executed before he managed to put his plans into practice. By “selling” the German-speaking Saxons to the Federal Republic of Germany, and replacing them in Transylvania with Romanians from other parts of Romania, he destroyed the traditional tri-national balance in Transylvania.

But things did not really change to the better for the Hungarians when Ceausescu was replaced by Iliescu. Discrimination continued, and, amongst others, the Romanian authorities prohibited the Hungarians to have a Hungarian-speaking university, and the old Hungarian town of Kolozsvár (Klausenburg) got an extreme Romanian nationalistic madman as mayor. As one main principle of foreign policy of the Antall government was to support the Hungarian minorities abroad, it is understandable that the political relations with Romania were rather bad.

There was hope for better times for the Hungarians when a democratic government took over in Romania in 1996, and the Hungarian parties were also represented in the government. But even if the rhetoric turned softer, not much happened in practical terms, neither with minority rights for Hungarians, or in Romanian politics as such. The Hungarian parties in office often just felt as hostages in the Romanian government and, on several occasions, considered to leave it, what they finally did after the election in 2000.

The presidential election in Romania in 2000 really turned out to be a choice between plague and cholera for the Hungarians in Transylvania with an extreme nationalist like Tudor against the old communist Iliescu in the second round of the election. Many feared that Romania, again under Iliescu, would take many steps back with respect to human rights and European integration. So far it has mainly been a serious stagnation of both the politics and the economy of the country.

The general opinion in Hungary is that Romania shows much more respect in the relations with Hungary since Hungary first was invited to and then became member of NATO. As will be discussed later, it is obvious that the military contacts between both states worked without problems, even when the political relations were quite bad.

Serbia

Another troublesome and very unstable neighbour is Serbia. It is a long and difficult way for this country to democracy, human rights and market economy. It turned out that the problems did not disappear with Milosevic, and there are still many to solve before the country will reach any European level.

Serb terrorist actions started WW I. In November 1915, the Serbs were defeated by Central Power troops and what was left of the Serb army fled over the Albanian mountains. The Entente took the remains to Corfu for reorganisation, and the Serbian troops did not play any role any more during the war.

The outcome of the war made it possible for the Serbs to carry out their dreams of a Greater Serbia under the name of Yugoslavia. All of southern Hungary, including Croatia and the western parts of Bánát were given to the new state by the victors. During the inter war period, Yugoslavia pursued an anti-Hungarian policy as member of the Small Entente.

Unwillingly, Hungary was pressed to let German troops pass through the country in April 1941 to attack Yugoslavia. After Yugoslavia had collapsed, and Croatia had declared itself an independent state, Hungarian troops marched into the Hungarian inhabited areas of Bácska and Baranya in Vojvodina and Muraköz and Muravidék in Slovenia.

Yugoslav partisans were also active in the Hungarian parts of the country, which led to Hungarian counter-actions. After the war, the Yugoslavian communists took bloody revenge for pretended Hungarian encroachments during the war, using, amongst others, the medieval "Turkish" method of impaling people.

Later in the communist era the living standard was higher in Yugoslavia and there were more goods in the shops than in Hungary, which caused Hungarian shopping trips to Yugoslavia. Later, during the ten years of international sanctions against Milosevic's dictatorship it was the other way round.

After the Hungarian liberation, the Hungarians were supportive of the liberation aspirations of the various nationalities in Yugoslavia, and sold handguns to Croatia during their fight for independence. Many refugees, mainly Hungarians, from northern Croatia got refuge in Hungary during the war. Many young Hungarian men fled from Vojvodina to Hungary to escape service in the war criminal's army.

Hungary had not been a member of NATO for two weeks, when war started in Kosovo, and NATO conducted air-strikes against Serbia. Hungary at once acted as a very loyal alliance member, provided airspace and bases, and also carefully investigated a Russian "humanitarian-aid" convoy to Serbia. A plea from prime minister Orbán not to bomb in Vojvodina where there are close to 400,000 Hungarians remained unanswered by NATO. The Hungarians understood that from a military point of view it was of course quite impossible to leave the Serbs a safe heaven in Vojvodina.

But there would have been different opinions among the political parties had NATO asked to cross Hungary with army units to attack Serbia from the north. The socialists were against letting NATO march through Hungary, mainly not to risk any Serbian reprisals against the Hungarians in Vojvodina in such a case.

Some commentators said that it was bad luck that Hungary, when joining NATO, would start with the first acts of war of the alliance. But the massive popular support for NATO membership was not really affected. Only in the very southern parts of Hungary where you could hear the bombs explode, and where

people often have relatives across the border, some people were worried about indirect Hungarian participation in the action.

The Hungarian economy was hit by the sanctions against Serbia, and by the blocked traffic on the Danube. As a result, it is estimated that the GNP grew ½ % less than it would have otherwise. Therefore, the return of a normal situation in Serbia is of great Hungarian interest. The Szeged process, mentioned earlier, is one step in this direction.

Croatia

Hungary and Croatia share a long common history, just over 800 years. But the Croatians were always very loyal to the Habsburg rulers and chose the side of the emperor when there were conflicts between the ruler and the Hungarians.

The Croats favoured the idea of creating a third, South-Slavonian, part of the Habsburg monarchy with Croats as the leading nation. Still in May 1917, the Croats and Slovenes were uttering their support for such a solution. The governments in Budapest were all the time against a triple-state solution which would have weakened the strong position of Hungary in the double monarchy.

In the new Yugoslav state, Croats and Slovenes were treated like conquered people, and the Serbs oppressed them in various ways. The Croatian peasant party leader Stjepan Radic and four of his fellow MPs were even shot dead during a parliament session in Belgrade in 1928.

The Croats did not hesitate to declare their own state after the collapse of Yugoslavia in 1941 under the leader of the ustaša party Ante Pavelić. The well-known partisan warfare in Yugoslavia during WW II was above all a bloody civil war among different political and ethnic groups in Yugoslavia.

During communist times, the Dalmatian coast of Croatia was a popular place for Hungarians to go to – and there were of course not so many holiday resorts to go to in those days.

There is a Hungarian minority of 30,000 in Croatia, and they have not had any controversies even with strong Croatian nationalists.

As mentioned earlier, Hungary helped Croatia in the war against Serbia by selling arms to the Croats. After the death of president Tudjman and the real democratisation of Croatia, Hungary considers itself the godfather of Croatia, helping the state to join various international organisations and into European integration. Croatia has recently joined PpP and is preparing to participate in peace keeping operations. They have also recently applied for EU membership. They are not yet a candidate country, but hope to join together with Romania and Bulgaria (which they say could be in 2007 or 2008). Croatia certainly is better prepared for the Union than the other two Balkan states.

Slovenia

There are harmonious relations between Hungary and Slovenia, where there is a Hungarian minority of 5,000.

During WW II, Slovenia was divided between Germany and Italy, but Hungary also got back the small area of Muraköz and Muravidék in eastern Slovenia. Like all other gains during the war, also this one was lost after the war.

As Slovenia managed to liberate itself quite quickly and without much fighting from Yugoslavia, Hungary got a new neighbour without many problems – one of the few (even if there is a dispute between Slovenia and Croatia about the border between the states in the territorial waters). In 1996, Slovenia joined the free trade zone that the Visegrád states had created in 1991. When Hungary was invited to join NATO, there were many discussions if Slovenia should also be invited, so that Hungary would border on another NATO state, which is not the case today. Probably it was only France that prevented Slovenian membership at that time by demanding that if Slovenia is invited, then also Romania should be.

Within the Alps Adriatic Working Community, the modern Slovenian port of Koper has become a serious competitor of the much older Trieste to serve as the harbour of the whole region. The idea is that new roads and railways should be built from the port there across Hungary, and all way to Russia and Ukraine. There are also plans for an energy network for the Mediterranean region that would affect this part of central Europe.

The Hungarian Armed Forces

The Heritage

The Hungarian armed forces of have been re-moulded and even fashioned altogether anew several times in history. After the Christian state was established in 1000, the wild horse-back raids of the Hungarians till 955 were replaced by a feudal army. King Mátyás created a formidable force of standing royal troops, the black army. But after his death in 1490, the magnates quickly dissolved the standing forces to make the kings again dependent on the private forces of the magnates and the war service of the nobility. In 1526, the feudal army suffered a crushing defeat at Mohács. After that there was no real Hungarian army for long time. Certainly, many Hungarians served in the imperial armies, and the princes of Transylvania had their own troops, even if they were said to be rather undisciplined.

During the revolution of 1848, Kossuth reached a unanimous decision in parliament to set up a national Hungarian force, the honvéd. During the ensuing battles in 1848-49, they had considerable success against the imperial troops.

After the Ausgleich (Compromise) of 1867, there was a common army (k.u.k. Heer, közös Hadsereg) and navy in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy for both parts of the monarchy. Then there were separate territorial defence forces in both parts of the monarchy, the k.k Landwehr in Austria, and the Magyar Királyi Honvédség in Hungary.

After the fall of the monarchy, civil war and fights with neighbouring states, the Honvéd was raised again, but for many years it was limited to 35,000 men according to the Trianon peace treaty. WW II showed painfully that the Hungarian army was not equipped and trained well enough for modern warfare. After the communists had taken power, a red armed force was created, but it collapsed during the revolution of 1956. After that, a new army was raised after the Soviet model.

Cutting Down and Renewing

During Soviet times, the Hungarian armed forces consisted of 150,000 men, and three times as many could be mobilised in time of war. After the liberation, numbers have been cut down all the time. When Hungary entered NATO, a 10-year plan (2000 - 2010) was adopted to reform the armed forces the same way as has been done in West after the end of the cold war (The new Medgyessy government is working on a new plan according to their intentions).

The principle is to create a smaller but meaner defence, where it is of great importance to discover the enemy early, to gain information for decisions quickly, to make best use of the weapons, and then to complete the mission, following NATO's new strategy of a flexible and fast profile for the armed forces.

First Phase 2000–2003

Hungary will cut down and adapt its defence to NATO standard, to get a more professional defence force of higher quality, with better language knowledge and better possibilities of advancement for the professionals, as well as better social conditions. The defence expenditures are now 1.75 % of the GNP (about \$ 1.08 thousand million) and, according to plan, shall rise by 0.1 % per year.

The military has been cut down to 61,000 men (180,000 after mobilisation), and will soon be cut down to 45,000 that can be increased to 70,000 after mobilisation. The good state of the Hungarian economy at present makes it easy “to get rid of people”. But because of the it is also difficult to recruit and retain qualified and well educated young people. To make that easier and keep the numbers accordingly to plan, there will be pay rises of about 65 %, and an attractive bonus system will be introduced for the professionals in the army.

The big reductions have resulted in the disbanding or merging of many units. The Danube flotilla has been disbanded all together. Some garrisons and units have been kept without military need because of “political reasons” – something that is well known also in many other states.

The small but mean army of the future should need some home guard for territorial defence, but that may be difficult because the people have a rather negative attitude towards the military, a heritage from communist time. But there are some discussions in the Ministry of Defence about a national guard according to the US model.

According to the plan, the Hungarian army will have about 7,000 officers, 12,000–15,000 NCOs, and the 18,000 soldiers will be 50 % professionals and 50 % conscripts (today 65 %). This would be similar to the Danish system. Quite recently, the government declared that in the future they intend to abolish the conscript system altogether, and only would have professional soldiers in the Hungarian defence forces.

Since communist times, the status of the military men has been very low in Hungary, and it has been very unpopular to serve the compulsory military service. After the fall of communism, many young men have in various ways got a exemption warrant. Another problem is that many qualified NCOs have left for better paid jobs, so there are too few of them today. But there is a surplus of higher officers. Last year, 20 generals (out of 42) and 200 colonels were discharged or had to retire.

Second Phase 2003–2006

Defence will be reorganised, and NATO standard for operations (doctrine) will be introduced. It is essential that the people will “think in NATO way” regarding processes, fighting plans, logistics, and so on.

Some technical renewing of vehicles, lorries and other transport equipment will take place. Regarding battle tanks, the Hungarians think that the Russian T-72s are still good, as well as armoured vehicles and artillery from Soviet times.

There has been a long discussion for several years about modernising the air force, whether to buy new planes or buy or lease used ones. Some politicians have questioned whether Hungary as a NATO member needs an air force of its own at all.

The old MIG-21s are out of service. The two main competitors were the American F-16, rather old today but with a record of excellent battle experience, and the more modern Swedish SAAB GRIPEN, but without any battle record. The F-16 is bigger, can fly longer, and take more weapons than the GRIPEN, and is used in several NATO states. The GRIPEN on the other hand can fly more missions a day. One alternative was also to upgrade the remaining Hungarian MIG-29s.

As the Swedish air force is cutting down the number of planes, there suddenly was a surplus of GRIPEN. This made it possible for Sweden to offer Hungary to lease little used planes. In December 2001, the Orban government took a preliminary decision to lease 14 GRIPEN (12 single-seated and 2 double-seated). The new government added some new demands, mainly that it should be possible to refuel the planes in the air, and that they should be able to carry laser-guided bombs. This makes it necessary to modify the planes quite extensively, and therefore they will of course be more expensive. Early this year (2003), the final contract was signed.

The planes will be leased by the Swedish board of Defence Materiel Administration (FMV), but the Wallenberg companies will make great investments and counter-trade in Hungary. After 10 years, Hungary will buy the leased planes, and there is hope in Sweden that they then will buy some new ones as well.

Third Phase 2006–2010

There will be a renewal of equipment, and modern systems will be introduced. The changes of garrisons and the building of flats for the staff will be finished during this period.

Hungarians hope to get a NATO Training Centre located to Budapest (similar to the one at Garmisch Partenkirchen).

NATO

Adoption of NATO standards is more difficult and takes more time than thought in Hungary, in the Czech Republic, and in Poland as well, particularly in the fields of tactical thinking, communications and language skills. With western help, they now try to introduce new technical equipment for communication and other purposes, and to modernise training and management.

Co-operation with the Americans at the Taszár air base (close to Kaposvár and Pécs) for missions in ex-Yugoslavia worked well and without problems. Quite recently the Americans have used the base to train some Iraqis. Some Hungarians have been wondering why they were taken to Hungary for training – the conditions in Hungary are hardly similar to Iraq.

Before Hungary joined NATO, there were some discussions whether Hungary should belong to the northern or the southern command of NATO. Hungary was finally placed under the southern command in Naples (Napoli). The Hungarian military perhaps would have preferred the northern command, but the main thing for them was to join NATO as such, and the Italians are said to be happy to have the Hungarians in the southern command.

There were also some discussions if it is possible and suitable to have a NATO-member all surrounded by non-allied states, and with no land communication to any other NATO state. But it was said that modern heavy airlift capabilities make land connections less important. During the Kosovo war it was demonstrated that the transport to Hungary could function well even without a common land border. But the condition for that is that the heavy airplanes are available for such an operation at that moment, and that may depend on the global situation as such. Even a super-power's capacity for heavy air lift is not unlimited.

But all that will most probably change soon. If Slovenia, Slovakia and Romania join NATO in 2004 as planned, the strategic situation of Hungary will change very much. Instead of a NATO island as it is today, it will almost be surrounded by NATO allies.

During the Kosovo war, Hungary “discreetly” had a higher level of preparedness along the border to Serbia. Troops were mainly moved during the night. Border control was tightened, and the collecting of intelligence was greatly increased. They tried to keep the journalists away from the border area by setting up an information centre for them in Budapest. Some Serbian troop movements towards the border were noticed, but no incidents took place.

Hungarian membership in the alliance is mainly of strategic and geographic importance for NATO, and is a stabilising factor in central Europe. The Hungarian armed forces can hardly be a great contribution to NATO, but Hungary is important as a base area for operations in the Balkans, and even further away. In that context the Hungarian air space is also of great importance. Consequently,

the role of Hungary is primarily to be an important base area for NATO (and soon also perhaps for the EU) for possible new missions on the Balkans.

Shortly after the Medgyessy government had taken office, the new defence minister Ferenc Juhász received a severe reprimand from NATO secretary general Lord Robertson for not having modernised the Hungarian its defence forces enough, and not having procured new equipment (it is said that practically nothing has been bought during the last four years). Lord Robertson said that the technical backwardness of the armed forces is great, and there was no protection against chemical and biological attacks. The reduction of personnel had left some units unable to accomplish military operations. The after all not negligible Hungarian defence spending has obviously not been used in quite the optimal way.

Peacekeeping Missions

Since 1995, Hungarian units have participated in UN-missions in the Sinai and on Cyprus. Since 1996, Hungary has taken part in NATO-led operations in the former Yugoslavia (IFOR, later SFOR and then KFOR), where they are guarding the headquarters. Hungary has also served as an important transit country, and has provided bases for operations in the Balkans. Usually, there are about 750 men from the Hungarian army serving in various peacekeeping missions abroad.

For future peacekeeping missions, Hungary is preparing to co-operate with neighbouring states (as has been the case around the Baltic sea). An Italian-Hungarian-Slovenian brigade is under way to be organised. The staff is already operational, and there have been some common exercises. After the recent changes in Croatia, and after it has entered PfP, there are plans to include Croatian troops into this brigade.

A Hungarian-Romanian battalion is being organised, but its purpose is only to provide help when there are natural disasters and civil accidents. Over the last years the border areas have been hit by severe floods, after dams have burst in Romania. At several occasions, large amounts of poison were released into the water. A burst dam in Romania in 2000 released so much poisoned water into the Hungarian river Tisza, that all fish in the river was poisoned and died.

In Hungarian-Slovak-Romanian-Ukraine co-operation, a similar civil help battalion is being set up in the border region of the four states.

One must say that the purely military contacts with neighbouring countries like Romania and Slovakia functioned well and were correct even when the political relations among the states were not so good. During the international boycott of Serbia, there were no official military contacts with the Milosevic regime, but obviously there were still some limited private and unofficial contacts.

The Roles of Hungary

The roles of Hungary in European foreign and security politics, and thus the goals of Hungarian foreign policy, have varied considerably throughout history, depending on the political situation in the world at large. On some occasions, the realpolitik has been such that Hungary had really no ground for any political movements of its own, or even no independent foreign and security policy at all.

In brief, the various roles can be listed as:

- 1389–1526 Shielding the West against the Turkish threat.
- 1541–1683 Saving the survival of the nation during the division into three parts and attempts to reunite the country.
- 1683–1699 Participating in the liberation from the Turks and uniting the country.
- 1700–1848 Maintaining the exceptional constitutional position of Hungary within the Habsburg monarchy.
- 1825–1848 The reform era to modernise Hungary.
- 1848 An effort to establish a liberal constitutional monarchy.
- 1848–1849 Efforts to safeguard Hungarian independence in the revolutionary war.
- 1850–1866 Efforts to get rid of the suppression of neo-absolutism and to restore the exceptional position of Hungary.
- 1867 The Ausgleich (Compromise) with the ruler. Hungary became an equal part within the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Hungary's national goals were achieved.
- 1867–1914 Efforts to maintain and strengthen the Hungarian position within the monarchy. Efforts to strengthen the Hungarians and Hungarian language position in Transleithania (Magyarising).
- 1914–1918 After some political hesitation, first very loyal participation in WW I.
- 1918 An effort to improve the Hungarian position by cutting the links with Austria at the end of the war.
- 1918–1920 During the revolutions and the civil war, there were different aims for various groups:
 - To create a liberal republican Hungary;
 - To create a communist republic of councils;
 - To restore the previous order.

- 1920–1938 Attempts to achieve a revision of Trianon peace treaty (Nem, nem soha) and break the foreign policy isolation of Hungary.
- 1927 An attempt to break the isolation by a treaty of friendship with Italy.
- 1934 An attempt to establish co-operation in the Danube area under Italian leadership under the Rome protocols.
- 1938–1941 Some revision of the Trianon borders, but with maintained Hungarian neutrality.
- 1941–1943 Unwilling Hungarian participation in the war against Soviet Union.
- 1943–1944 Hungarian efforts to seek contacts with the Western powers and hopes to be able to pull out of the war with their help.
- 1956 An attempt to liberate Hungary from Soviet occupation, and to establish an independent, non-communist and neutral Hungary.
- 1989 Efforts to achieve Hungarian independence by, amongst others, admitting that the 1956 revolution had been a popular uprising, taking over the guarding of the border and taking the decision not to shoot at people who tried to cross the border illegally.
- 1990– Official goals of Hungarian foreign policy:
- to fully participate in the Euro-Atlantic integration (NATO and EU), and bring Hungary back to its traditional western connections;
 - to have good relations and co-operation with neighbouring states;
 - to support Hungarian minorities abroad, particularly in the neighbouring states.
- 1997– To negotiate NATO and EU membership as soon as possible and to adapt Hungary for membership in both organisations.
- 1999– To participate fully in NATO as a member, and to adapt the Hungarian armed forces to NATO standards, and strategically to be a NATO outpost towards the Balkans and south-east Europe.
- 2002 To conclude the negotiations with EU in order to become a full member in 2004.

Hungary mainly has a geo-strategic role in central Europe. As it borders onto several less stable states, it will, as a loyal NATO member, bring stability to the whole region. It will also remain an important base area in case of new missions in the Balkans. It can also add knowledge about a part of Europe that the alliance has had little experience of (and knowledge about?).

Through co-operation with neighbouring states that are not members yet, Hungary adds to their eagerness to join NATO, and also, according to Hungarian

views, helps to prepare and adapt their armed forces for future NATO co-operation and membership.

Both NATO and EU membership require that their members respect human rights and treat their minorities well. We can be sure that Hungary will closely watch how the Hungarian minorities are treated in neighbouring states. By acting as a “watchdog”, Hungary should speed up the democratic development in some neighbouring states.

In the region, Hungary will support co-operation in the Carpathian Basin also in the future. In Europe Hungary will certainly be a loyal member of both NATO and EU, but Hungarians will also defend the trans-Atlantic link, as they are definitely not interested in any European “Alleingang”. They want the USA to remain in Europe, both politically and militarily.

Possible Future Scenarios

From the Hungarian side it has often been said that Hungary is in favour of all its neighbour states joining the process of European integration as soon as they are ready, and “have done their homework”. For the Hungarian minorities in neighbouring countries it would be a setback if the contacts with Hungary should be made more difficult by a Schengen border between Hungary and its neighbours. To prevent such problems, at least partially, a so-called status law for Hungarian minorities was introduced last year, as mentioned earlier.

The horror scenario for Hungary as well as for the whole region is that nationalistic extremists, like Mečiar in Slovakia or Tudor in Romania, would come to power in any neighbouring state. Every day we learn that extreme nationalists are far from gone in states like Serbia. Ukraine is a very unstable state, and nobody knows in which direction changes will go. The transition and the system changes have not been radical enough in many of these states. Nationalists and communists are strong, and democracy is still fragile. Even in Hungary itself there were some nationalistic tones at the end of the last general election campaign.

An extreme nationalist government in any of these states would of course prevent these countries from participating in the process of European integration, and the subsequent problems and difficulties could be blamed on the Hungarian minorities by the nationalists. The fact that two most likely will become EU members soon, and that three of Hungary's neighbours will be NATO members, reduces of course the risk for such a scenario in these states. But there still are some neighbouring states that will take part in the process of European integration for a long time, if ever. That means that, in the foreseeable future, Hungary will be an European border-state, facing the war-torn and unsettled Balkans and unstable Ukraine.

NATO Enlargement

At the NATO summit in Prague on the 21st and 22nd of November 2002, the three Baltic states, as well as Slovenia, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria were invited to become new members of the alliance in 2004. This will bring about profound changes in the Hungarian strategic position. Instead of being a NATO island, surrounded by non-allied states, Hungary will have three neighbouring states who also are NATO members. This means that only the southern border to Serbia can be regarded as unstable for the time being.

The Big Bang enlargement was a political decision, but the alliance should not underestimate the difficulties of integration of so many new members. There were and still are problems to integrate three new members, Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic, particularly with respect to communication, language skills and NATO thinking regarding operations, planning, and logistics. The greater the number of less developed states that are admitted, the greater the problems of integration and adaptation will be.

Some of the soon members-to-be may wonder how solidarity works in NATO in times of crisis. Anyhow, the US-loyal members in "Old Europe" will soon have several new allies in NATO, because the formerly communist states do not want any European "Alleingang", but want US support and a trans-Atlantic link to remain.

In Austria, there was an intensive debate about NATO membership in 1997. Austria (and also Sweden and Finland) has from the beginning been much better adapted to NATO than the former WTO states. In the "red-black" government at that time it was impossible to agree on this issue, as the conservative ÖVP [the blacks] was pro NATO, membership, but the socialist SPÖ [the reds] was dead against.

Both parties in the next black-blue (ÖVP and FPÖ) government were in principle for NATO membership, but did not bring up that topic during their three years in power. Such a decision requires a two thirds majority in parliament, and thus also the support of the SPÖ. There is a wide gap between the Austrian political elite, who mainly are for NATO membership, and the popular majority that hardly can imagine any alternative to neutrality ("neutrality has been so good for Austria"). After the early election at the end of 2002, the ÖVP gained a dominant position, and has recently renewed the coalition with the much weakened FPÖ. Soon most of Austria's neighbours will be NATO members. It remains to be seen if this will put the NATO topic on the agenda in Austria again, and make the SPÖ rethink.

NATO membership of several neighbouring states makes the Hungary's strategic position much better and more central. But as stated earlier, Hungary will still be a NATO border state to the Balkans. If peace-keeping operations are launched from Hungary, there will always be some risk of terrorist revenge. During the Kosovo war, there were no attacks or threat against the US base at Taszár. Some Iraqi people were trained at Taszár by the Americans, but that did not lead to any terrorist attacks.

EU Enlargement

For political reasons, 10 new members will be admitted to the Union in 2004, but in a kind of diluted membership with long transition periods concerning agriculture subventions (till 2013), and regional funds (till 2006). In the EU it is not

possible to act like in NATO and conduct a Big Bang only for political reasons. The economies, the laws and civil services of the new members must be ready for membership.

It is well known that not all the members of the Union are sure the new members are already prepared for membership. There have also been worries about the costs of enlargement, and the most probably unjustified fear of huge movements of labour from the new members, so there are also long transition periods.

Up to now the Union has never been enlarged by more than three new members at a time. We do not know how it will work out with ten new members. One must expect that it will take quite some time for the EU to "digest" so many newcomers. This means that the other candidate countries will have to wait a long time for the next enlargement. Romania and Bulgaria are candidates, but have still a long way to go before they are ready for membership. Early in 2003, Croatia also applied for membership and may well be able to catch up rather fast with EU requirements. Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia have not even applied for membership yet.

The question is if the Union could find some arrangements for these states to feel that they after all somehow belong to Europe. If these states feel that the European door will be closed for them for a long time - which EU membership definitely is - they may be frustrated and have economic difficulties, with the danger that nationalists, communists or other extreme parties may come to power. On the other hand, regional co-operation has no encouraging record in the Balkans at all. All the nationalities look upon the other nationalities around them as their hereditary foes with whom there have been many cruel wars and who have taken away rich provinces from each other. Yugoslavia fell apart 12 years ago because of this. Wrongdoings among the peoples of 1389,1878, 1912-13,1928, 1941-45 and of 1991 till today seem to have the same value and weight in the minds of the people today - and there should be revenge for every wrongdoing. Certainly, this is no good starting point for any kind of co-operation in the future.

But as mentioned before, there are some regional co-operation organisations where the Balkan states are members, often as a result of pressure from NATO and EU to "bring order into their homes", if they at all will dream about some future membership in these organisations.

For Hungary it is of great importance which of its neighbouring states will become EU members and when. It does not seem very rational to build a long and expensive Schengen border, only to pull it down some years later. Contacts between Hungary and Hungarian minorities in neighbouring states will also be more difficult if some countries are EU members and others not.

The advantage of Hungary entering EU is that the Hungarians have had much longer time to adapt their economy to the market economy than the other former communist countries, in fact by small tiny steps in that direction since 1968. Since

the liberation in 1989, Hungary has been the favourite for investments from the West, and many western companies today have production facilities in Hungary, also of high tech products. The Hungarians have also succeeded to adapt their legislation to the demands of market economy, which still is a problem in some candidate states.

The units of commercial farming in Hungary are large enough for Hungarian food production to be competitive on the European market. The number of people employed in agriculture and in the food producing industry is almost on EU average level. Thus, in this field, Hungary has no problems at all, compared to Poland for example.

The hard security policy guarantees Hungary got by joining NATO. After two lost world wars and the lonely fight in 1956, the Hungarians know that only really hard security policy guarantees can protect a small state in the middle of Europe.

But the threats today are not hard military dangers, but mainly all kinds of soft threats as criminality like illegal arms dealing, drugs, prostitution and AIDS, the smuggling of illegal immigrants and refugees, etc., as well as various environmental and natural disaster problems. In these fields it is primarily the membership in EU that will increase Hungarian security against such soft threats, as the EU step by step is dealing more and more with these problems and how to handle them. Sweden for example has been very active to build such protection against soft threats around the Baltic sea by EU and other regional co-operations.

Thus, NATO gives the hard security policy guarantees. EU membership will give Hungary and other new member states increased security from soft threats trough co-operation in the EU regarding these problems.

Interviews

Attached please find a list of interviews made exclusively for this research in 2000 and in 2001. For the historical and political parts as such there is a complete list of literature and interviews in Nicolaus Rockberger's book entitled *Mitt i Europa* (SNS Förlag, Stockholm 1999).

Undersecretary Iván Bába, Dept. Multilateral Relations, MFA, 31/8 2000.

Colonel Peter Backlund, Swedish defence attaché in Budapest, several times in 2000 – 2003.

Mr László Botka, Szeged County Council, 13/9 2000.

Ambassador Staffan Carlsson, Swedish Embassy in Budapest, 18/5, 22/5 2001.

Secretary general Miklós Dérer, Hungarian Atlantic Council, 4/9 2000,

Ambassador László Desző, MFA, several times during 2000 – 2003.

General Lajos Fodor, Chief of the General Staff, 28/8 2000.

Dr. Ferenc Gazdag, MZNDU, 11/9 2000, MFA, 21/5 2001.

Prof. György Granasztói, Teleki László Institute, 31/8, 7-8/12 2000.

Major General József Holló, MOD, 1/9 2000, 24/5 2001.

Dr. József Kozma, MSLP, Szeged, 7/9 2000.

Deputy state secretary Csaba Körösi, NATO Department, MFA, 28/8 2000, 22/5 2001.

Ambassador István Körmendy, Dept. For Strategy and Planning, MFA, 28/8 2000.

Prof. László Leindler, Hungarian Academy of Science 14/9 2000.

Dr. Györgyi Lengyel, FIDEZ, Szeged, 7/9 2000.

Deputy state secretary Zoltán Martinusz, MOD, 1/9 2000, 18/5 2001.

Dr. János Matus, Miklós Zriny National Defence University, 31/8 2000.

Prof. Rezső Mészáros, rector of József Attila Universitetet, Szeged, 13/9 2000.

Prof. László Nagy, History Inst., Univ. Szeged, 13/9 2000.

Dr. László Nagy, Miklós Zriny National Defence University, 31/8 2000.

Dr. István Nemeskürty, Millennium Commission, 6/3 2000.

Mr Tibor Papp, Szeged County Council, 13/9 2000.

Avd. Chef Sándor Peisch, I. Territorial Dept. MFA, 28/8 2000.

Mr Jenő Póda, adviser to PM, 8/9 2000, 29/6 2001.

Dr. László Póti, Inst. for strategy and defence studies, MZNDU, 31/8 2000.

Prof. Enikő Sajti, History Inst., Univ. Szeged, 13/9 2000.

Dr. Mária Schmidt, adviser to PM, several times in 2000 – 2003.

Dr Péter Sztáray, deputy head of section, MFA, 21/5 2001.
Chief of cabinet Ádám Szabó, FIDEZ, Szeged, 7/9 2000.
Dr. István Szalay, MSZP, former burgomaster in Szeged, 12/9 2000.
Dr. Sándor Szöllősi, fire brigade in Szeged, 7/9 2000.
Docent Zoltán Tefner, University of Economics, Budapest.
Colonel László Toth, SCSP, several times in 2000 -2002.
Mr Tamás Wachslar, former state secretary in MOD, 23/5 2001.
Dr. Éva Ványa, MDF, Szeged, 8/9 2000.
Prof. József Zachar, Military History Museum, Budapest, Eger High School,
several times 2000 – 2003.

I have also participated in:

A seminar about EU enlargement and the Swedish presidency 26-27 JUN 2001,
arranged by the Institution for political science at Budapest Economic Uni-
versity and XXI Century Institute, supported by the Swedish Embassy in
Budapest.

A symposium about the Hungarian revolution in 1956 and Austria 8-10/10 2001
Arranged by Institut für strategische Forschung, Landesverteidigungsakademie,
Wien.

Dr. Nicolaus Rockberger, Ph.D.