



CENTRE FOR SECURITY STUDIES

DEFENCE WHITE PAPER PROJECT

Hungary's National Security
Strategy - 2012

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About the Author

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Hungary has been enjoying an unprecedented level of security throughout its history as it has maintained good relations with the Euro-Atlantic region and has worked jointly with the Euro-Atlantic to deal against any sort of foreign and global threat. But in the 21st century, the meaning of security goes far beyond conventional war or threats to the state, and Hungary acknowledges that these threats are changing continuously at a fast pace. While globalization has brought about a multitude of opportunities around the world, it also brings new threats to the states. Apart from distant threats and challenges that globalization brings, Hungary's national security strategy focuses on internal threats as well, and both external and internal security is perceived as an inseparable and unified part of the NSS.¹

The purpose of Hungary's National Military Strategy is to establish, based on current conflicts and anticipated future threats, in the short and long term, the utilization of the Hungarian Defense Forces' capabilities and to determine the direction of their growth. In 2012, Hungary was looking forward to modernizing its defense forces and the National Security Strategy provided a cornerstone for this modernization process. And this is further supplemented by Hungary's regional, bilateral, and alliance-based partnerships including European Union and NATO, this partnership also provides a strong foundation for Hungary's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and security. Hungary's membership in these two organizations offers the country a unique chance to effectively manage the security risks and problems of the day and future, in collaboration with its Allies and EU partners.²

The comprehensive interpretation of security necessitates that its political, military, economic, financial, environmental, and human elements be managed holistically, using a whole-of-government strategy. Thus, Hungary's National Security Strategy's implementation was directed by the intention and obligation to ensure freedom and security for current and future generations. The strategy's goal was to identify, Hungary's national objectives, tasks, and complete governmental tools for asserting its national security interests in the international political and security context. The NSS of 2012 was broadly divided into four parts:³

¹Hungary's National Security Strategy of 2012, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary

² Hungary's National Security Strategy of 2012, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary

³ Hungary's National Security Strategy of 2012, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary

- 1) Hungary's Security Environment
- 2) Hungary's Security Policy Interests
- 3) Security Threats and Challenges, and their management
- 4) Implementation of the National Security Strategy

Hungary's Security Environment

Hungary's geographical location and alliances shield it from the threat of conventional attack. However, the possibility of a conventional attack must not be ruled out as certain neighboring regions remain fragile, and the possibility of certain actors (especially non-state actors) using scientific like biological weapons and technological attacks can jeopardize national security as their influence has been growing rapidly. In the 21st century, risk factors range from individual, community, state, and regional to a global level and can have a direct or indirect impact on individuals and governmental and non-governmental organizations. Hungary is also varied of distant security threats and challenges as they can take place at any time without any warning and can affect large geographical distances. The use of weapons of mass destruction and their build-up by terrorist organizations and as well as intensive modern military capabilities also increases the unpredictability of these threats and can pose a potential threat to the security of Hungary and Euro-Atlantic structures. NSS calls for a global perspective to manage conflicts as it requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach including development policy to deal with conflicts, the approach also needs to be applied at a national level too, and the NSS can only be successful if the whole of the government approach is applied, and institutional frameworks should match the challenges. The 2012 NSS calls for a more innovative and effective manner to invest resources in the defense sector to strengthen the security capabilities as around that time global financial crisis was looming over the Euro-Atlantic community.⁴

Hungary's Security Policy Interests

⁴ Hungary's National Security Strategy of 2012, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary

The safeguarding of Hungary's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and constitutional order, as well as the country's stability, socio-economic, and cultural growth, and the upholding of human rights and fundamental freedoms, are among the country's essential security interests. Hungary is interested to settle disputes within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms and standards of International Law, and it does not consider any state as an adversary. The comprehensive approach to security i.e., universal, and strongly interlinked values such as peace, sovereignty, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights (including minority rights) defines the security policy interests of Hungary's NSS. Hungary extends support to the UN and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to tackle the security challenges by contributing actively to their missions. As discussed earlier as well NATO and the EU are of particular importance to Hungary, both the groupings form the basic framework of Hungary's security policy, as their members form a political-military alliance based on solidarity, and their national interests are rooted within the set of common interests. Collective defense provides the cornerstone of Hungary's security as mentioned in Article 5 of NATO and Hungary considers it one of the most important policy obligations. Hungary is also interested in the United States continued engagement in Europe and the strengthening of its strategic cooperation with the European Union. The fundamental purpose of Hungary's EU membership in terms of security policy is to promote and strengthen the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy, as well as the Common Security and Defense Policy, which is a subset of the former as Hungary wants to see Europe stay on a solid, unified, and successful integration path.⁵

Security Threats and Challenges, and their Management

The Security Strategy of Hungary has broadly divided threats into – 1. Regional Conflicts, 2. The proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, 3. Terrorism, 4. Financial Security, 5 Cyber Security, 6. Natural and Industrial Disaster 7. Organized Crimes, 8. Migration, 9. Extremist Groups, 10. Environmental and Global Climate Change. Hungary is a stable country; however,

⁵Hungary's National Security Strategy of 2012, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary

it poses several direct and indirect threats and challenges coming from its immediate and indirect neighborhood. Unstable regions, inter- or intrastate conflicts, weak or dysfunctional governments, and the global armaments build-up all constitute a threat to Hungary's and its Allies' security. Also, Hungary is actively pursuing the stabilization of the Western Balkans through its direct foreign policy and economic objectives. The possibility of an increase in the number of countries possessing weapons of mass destruction or their delivery systems and manufacturing capabilities – potentially reaching Hungarian territory – and the acquisition of such weapons by non-state actors, including terrorist groups, pose a strategic threat to Hungary. Terrorism is a low threat in Hungary as a whole. At the same time, Hungary must be vigilant against potential challenges of foreign origin and threats to its foreign interests. Apart from these threats, terrorist attacks committed abroad may have a detrimental effect on Hungary's security and economy. According to NSS 2012, Terrorism can only be defeated via concerted efforts that are adapted to global, regional, and national concerns. The NSS of Hungary also acknowledged the non-traditional threats such as Cyber and Global Environment degradation in its security policy and devised a strategy to deal with them swiftly.⁶

Implementation of National Security Strategy

Hungary's security must be based on a sound economic foundation that provides the resources necessary for an effective security policy and strengthens the country's ability to express its interests through increased stability. As a result, taking Hungary's commitments as a NATO member into mind, the Government regarded the provision of necessary resources for the country's defense as a continuing responsibility and obligation, by its burden-sharing capabilities. Hungary also considers the need for a solid social foundation to successfully implement its security strategy, and a critical component of this is resolving Hungary's social and demographic challenges, particularly severe poverty, and social marginalization, which is a societal concern and one of the most pressing national issues. As part of its foreign policy, Hungary wants to make sure that its security policy goals and interests are being met through an effective foreign policy in both bilateral and multilateral scenarios and relationships. It has a predictable, proactive,

⁶ Hungary's National Security Strategy of 2012, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary

committed, and value-based foreign policy that is based on political and economic stability, unity in domestic policy, and a reasoned policy in the neighborhood. The Hungarian Defense Forces are the key institution responsible for ensuring Hungary's sovereignty and one of the primaries by which Hungary's foreign policy is implemented in the context of international involvement. The fundamental mission of the Hungarian Defense Forces is to ensure the security of the country and to contribute to the collective defense of Hungary's Allies, by the Basic Law. Intelligence and internal and national security are the most important elements of the implementation of Hungary's National Security Strategy.⁷

Analysis of Hungary's National Security Strategy

The 2012 National Security Strategy of Hungary is very comprehensive as it moves beyond traditional threats and acknowledged the use of new emerging threats way back in 2012. While a lot of countries are yet to even consider global climate change, Hungary included Environmental and Global Climate change as a concern in its NSS. The National Security Strategy of Hungary is overly dependent on the EU and NATO for its security and foreign policy objectives. Though the Security Strategy talks about the modernization of its defense sector it doesn't set a deadline or clear objectives as to what needs to be done and by when to modernize its defense sector. Also, the NSS has included multiple threats but there is no mention as to how it is going to deal with ongoing and future threats.

⁷ Hungary's National Security Strategy of 2012, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary

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1. Hungary's National Security Strategy of 2012, Ministry of Foreign Affairs