

TRANSFORMATION OF THE HUNGARIAN MILITARY HIGHER EDUCATION

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Anotace:

Informace o transformaci maďarského vojenského vysokoškolského vzdělávání. Vychází ze stručného popisu strukturálních změn ozbrojených sil a tomu odpovídajícího způsobu vzdělávání. Popisuje přístup k redukci fakult a strukturální změně kateder v letech 1996 až 2004, uvádí dlouhodobé plány, které ovlivňují strukturální změny. Autor vyvozuje praktické zobecněné závěry.

Until 1 September 1996, the system of the military higher education in Hungary included four educational institutions: the **Zrínyi Miklós Military Academy** (since 1985 with university rating), the **Kossuth Lajos Military College for Landforces**, the **Air Force College in Szolnok** and the **Bolyai János Military Technical College for Logistics**, the latter three providing basic staff education and training.

In accordance with the Act on Higher Education on 1 September 1996, the Chief of General Staff lost his supervisory authority over the Zrínyi Miklós Military Academy and the aforementioned Colleges were withdrawn from the immediate supervision of the inspector general for education and training of the Hungarian Defence Forces. These educational institutions were placed under the direct supervision of the Minister of Defence. On that day the Zrínyi Miklós National Defence University was established - by integrating the Military Academy, the Kossuth Lajos Military College and the Szolnok Air Force College. The Bolyai János Technical College managed to retain its independent status for the time being.

1. STRUCTURAL CHANGES

On the basis of the former Military Academy two university faculties were established: the Faculty of Military Sciences and the Faculty of Military Management and Organisation. The two former military Colleges were reorganised into college faculties. This meant the horizontal integration of the three former educational institutions. The

newly established Zrínyi Miklós National Defence University started its 1996/97 academic year with two university faculties and two college faculties.

Based on the educational experiences of the first academic year and the supervisory instructions, a **vertical integration** of the university and college faculties was completed by fusing the college faculties into the university faculties. This emulsion/unification was also escorted by a certain **educational streamlining**. Accordingly, the Kossuth Lajos Military College Faculty basically was integrated into the Military Science Faculty, the basic technical staff training, from the Kossuth Lajos Military College Faculty was integrated into the Faculty of Military Management and Organisation with prevailing technological profile for granting technical degrees (for example, civil engineering degrees to combat engineers). Based on the same logic, the avionics engineering training (electrical engineering and mechanical engineering) conducted by the Air Force College Faculty in Szolnok was transferred into the same university faculty. Since the Air Force Staff had the definite requirement of providing considerable staff training for future flight control officers, they were integrated into Faculty of Military Sciences. With these modifications, the Zrínyi Miklós National Defence University launched its 1997/98 academic year with **two university faculties**.

The Act on Higher Education of 1993 spelled out more rigid educational standards for all Hungarian universities. This new law established a compulsory **accreditation process** for each of them, including the Zrínyi Miklós National Defence University. The Hungarian Accreditation Board, supported by Austrian, German and American military experts, accepted the proposal of the On-site Inspection Committee and granted university grading accreditation to those faculties with recognised graduates. Newly established faculties are run with temporary accreditation. Should they comply with the requirements their accreditation is expected by 2004/05.

In accordance with the so-called Integration Act of 1999 the number of Hungarian universities and colleges had to be reduced to about thirty. This was reached through their functional integration. Evidently this Act also did not leave the military higher education system intact. Accordingly, the then independent Bolyai János Military College was integrated as a **college faculty** into the Zrínyi Miklós National Defence University on 1 January 2000. By that time the National Defence University had been composed of **two university faculties**. In keeping with the logic of structural realignment described earlier, the college level officer staff training was transferred to the Bolyai János Military Technical College Faculty. In the meantime, the missile and gunnery air defence training as well as the training of logisticians and financial officers (that do not strictly belong to engineering profile), was placed under the academic and structural supervision of the Management and Organisation Faculty of the University.

Meanwhile radical changes took place in the Hungarian Defence Forces as well. The 155,000-strong military establishment of 1990 (during the change of regime) was gradually reduced to its current size of 45,000. The Defence Review conducted in 2002/03 calls for further cutbacks in the peacetime authorised military strength reaching

27,000 to 35,000 by 2013. A government decree stipulates that Hungary shall introduce an all-volunteer force by spring 2005. These modernisation steps make enrolment and graduation forecasts temporarily impossible, meaning that the Hungarian Joint Staff is unable to determine the exact number of students to undergo college training and university education for the next 4-6 years. These circumstances and other conditions (such as financial restrictions) have forced the National University to further modernise its structure and training system. (I shall elaborate on the latter issue later.)

The University Council made decisions on additional structural rationalisation in April 2003. Accordingly, the **Faculty of Military Sciences** was further augmented by attaching the Institutes of Social Sciences and Education Management Section to the Faculty.

At the same time department structures became more complex. In the slides you can see from which departments and sections the new departments were established. The **Department of Army Operations** was established consisting of the Department of Operations and Tactics, the Department of Mechanised Infantry and Armour, the Section of Military Strategy of the Department of Security and Strategic Studies and the Section of Military Geography of the Department of Engineering and Military Geography. The **Department of Air Operations** was established by fusing the Air Force and Air Defence Departments. The **Combat Operations Support Department** was established by integrating the former Artillery and Intelligence Departments and also the Mapping Section of the Department of Engineering and Military Geography. The Department of Border Guards carrying out basic border guard staff training and the Department of Border Security and Defence responsible for postgraduate education retained their independent status based on the decision of the Supreme Commander of Border Guard. (Even though the Hungarian Border Guard is subordinated to the Ministry of Interior, its college and university level education, based on financial rationale, is realised at the National Defence University). At the Institute of Social Sciences the **Department of Sociology, Psychology and Pedagogy** was established by fusing the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology and the Department of Sociology. Similarly the Department of Legal and Political Sciences was created by integrating the **Department of Legal Sciences** and the Department of Political Sciences. From the foundations of the Section of Security Studies of the Department of Security and Strategic Studies the Department of International Relations and Security Policy was established. As a result of all these structural changes the Faculty of Military Sciences lost one deputy dean position and six departments. The new structure was finalised by September 2003 and serves as a structural basis for the Faculty of Military Sciences for the academic year of 2003/04.

Based on the decision of the University Council and approval by the Minister of Defence, the **Bolyai János Military Technical Faculty** will start operating on 1 September 2004. This Faculty will be established by fusing the **Faculty of Management and Organisation** and the **Bolyai János Military Technical Faculty**. This new university faculty will provide both college and university level education. The Faculty will be

augmented by an *Educational Office*. Out of the former 28 departments of the two faculties, 12 departments will operate under the integration. These are as follows:

- ***Department of Military Mechanical Engineering:*** by fusing the former Department of Mechanical Engineering, the Department of Armament, and the Department of Armour and Transportation technology.
- ***Department of Military Technology and System Management:*** by fusing the former Department of Communications and Systems Management, the Department of Information, the Department of Information Technology, the Department of Electronic Warfare and the Department of Technical Operation and Quality Control.
- ***Department of Defence Electronics:*** by fusing the former Department of Electronics, the Section of Radar Technology, the Section of Electronic Warfare; the Section of Surveillance Systems Communications Section and the Missile and Artillery Air Defence Section.
- ***Department of Logistics:*** from the Departments of Logistics and Transportation.
- ***Department of NBC, Disaster Relief and Operations Safety:*** by fusing the former Department Chemistry, Environmental Security and Disaster Relief, Department and Operations Safety, and the Department Medical Sciences.
- ***Department of Management Science and Economics:*** from the Department of Economics and Defence Economics, Department of Management and Organisation, and Department of Force Planning and Mobilisation.
- ***Department of Finance and Military Supply:*** from the Department of Finance and Logistics.
- ***Department of Military Technology:*** by fusing the former Department of Civil Engineering and the Section of Military Technology of the Department of Military Technology and Military Geography.
- ***Institute of Flight Technology:*** from the Department of Airframes and Engines, the Department of Avionics, the Department of Air Support, the Training Centre of Flight Technology and the Library.

Obviously, it is still not the optimal solution as far as the numbers and profiles of the departments are concerned. Departments with similar profiles might expect further streamlining in the near future.

2. FACULTY DRAWDOWNS AND LONG-TERM PLANS

Continuous and radical personnel drawdowns taking place in the Hungarian Defence Force also had considerable impact and consequences at Zrínyi Miklós National Defence University. On 1 January 1996 the aggregate number of instructors and support personnel at Zrínyi Miklós National Defence University and three military colleges was as high as 3,334. By 1 September 1996 in the case of Zrínyi Miklós National Defence University and Bolyai János Military Technical College the staff was reduced to 1,605

meaning a 52% reduction. This was followed by a 3% reduction on 1 January 1999, when staff strength reached 1,568. On 1 January 2000 the full reorganisation and integration process at the University required another 9% reduction, thus the aggregate number of instructors and administrative staff positions fell to 1428. These radical cutbacks in personnel were done basically by drastic reduction of the support personnel. It was made possible by eliminating a number of service-support functions (such as catering, vehicle maintenance, security guards etc.). These functions were either taken over by the Hungarian Defence Forces or purchased from civilian enterprises **at a much higher cost**. Even though this contradicted official reasoning that savings would require drawdowns, there has been little or no progress in this area. (Substitution of redundant and discharged instructors by outside lecturers.)

The next 34 % cutback (487 positions) that took place on 30 June 2001 was especially shocking, since this already concerned the faculty staffs. The situation further deteriorated when another 15 % drawdown, starting on 30 April 2003 was completed in three weeks. After this cutback the staff numbers were reduced to 803. The biggest concern is that out of this number the size of the instructor body is only 403. And what is even more disastrous is that we have not yet reached the ultimate number. A current Government Decree stipulates another 15% reduction by 1 September 2004, by establishing a two-faculty university model. What is more, there will be another reduction in 2006 that cuts back the number by 77. I also have a concern based on all three reductions. The decision-makers think of it as “just a 15%” reduction. However, that will result in a 205 faculty staff capacity, which is about 50 % of the current size. And please, do not forget that the support staff, such as secretaries, stock-keepers, computer technicians, switchboard operators etc. are not indispensable either.

In my opinion, there are **three basic lessons** of these continuous and endless drawdowns. *First*, it is indisputable that a reduced force structure would require a decreasing number of officers, which would unavoidably lead to a decreasing staff number in different military educational institutions. However, it seems as if the starting point was wrong. *The second lesson*, while the force size and the extent of the subsequent higher education system **does not depend on the mission, but rather the actual size of the affordable budget, which has very little to do with the mission of the force, it will be really difficult to talk about an efficient and credible military force or true modernisation efforts of the military higher education system**. These **unreasonable drawdowns** will be misleading and might result in serious damages in the higher education system if the sufficient number and composition of university and college instructors is not maintained to accommodate future military personnel requirements, even if they are indefinite at the present. *The third lesson* is that we will need to face serious consequences resulting from planning and decision-making mishaps, if the number of professorial and instructor staffs will be based on the number of enrolled student with basic military training requirements let the growing number of course students alone. This happens in a time when all the high brass is - let's say rightfully - talking about the importance of and shift in education to the favour of postgraduate training. Even though

the Zrínyi Miklós National Defence University enrolled 3,153 university and college students, 230 PhD students and 1,704 postgraduate students in the 2003/2004 academic year, the Joint Staff is forecasting 150 students for regular college level staff training and a significantly increasing number of students undergoing advancement training. Similar intentions can also be observed on behalf of the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Interior.

3. COMPREHENSIVE LESSONS

Based on the 7—8 year educational experiences at Zrínyi Miklós National Defence University, the following lessons can be drawn. Even though these lessons are far from final conclusions, they can be valid and useful for military university training in other countries and military forces:

- carefully planned military educational strategy would help avoid continuous and radical changes in the university structure every 1—3 years;
- the actual size of faculty staffs and support personnel must be based on a long-term (5—10 year) assessment and accommodate mission requirements in all circumstances;
- based on the previous lesson, the university budget should be derived from the same missions and activities. The budget should constitute from 2 to 3 % of the overall defence spending, and there is still little guarantee that this would allow quality staff training which is absolutely indispensable to provide high quality cadres to establish a real professional force;
- both the requirements of the 21st century and the radically changing NATO, as well as the obligations to study military sciences would demand that the current period full of ambiguous reorganisations, drawdowns and subsequent cost-of-living problems should be followed by a more pragmatic and productive period characterised by educational streamlining and modernisation, and the necessary prerequisites to conduct research in different fields of military sciences.