Civil-Military Relations and Defence Planning: Challenges for Central and Eastern Europe in the New Era

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Working Paper 09/00
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Working Paper 09/00
First published in 2000
by the ESRC “One Europe or Several?” Programme
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Civil-Military Relations and Defence Planning: Challenges for Central and Eastern Europe in the New Era

Conference Report

Andrew Cottey, Timothy Edmunds and Anthony Forster

‘The Transformation of Civil-Military Relations in a Comparative Context’,

a research project in the

Economic and Social Research Council’s

‘One Europe or Several? Programme

This research project examines the changing nature of civil-military relations in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and analyses the implications of this for European security and stability.

This report summarises the presentations and discussions at a conference on 'Democratic Control of Armed Forces in Central and Eastern Europe: Civil-Military Relations and Defence Planning in the New Era' held in Kyiv, Ukraine, 24-27 March 2000. The conference was funded by the Directorate of Central and Eastern Europe, UK Ministry of Defence, NATO and the ESRC's 'One Europe or Several?' programme and organised in conjunction with the Kyiv Centre of the EastWest Institute.
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Dr Andrew Cottey; Dr Tim Edmunds; Dr Anthony Forster

This report summarises the presentations and discussions at a conference on ‘Democratic Control of Armed Forces in Central and Eastern Europe: Civil-Military Relations and Defence Planning in the New Era’ held in Kyiv, 24-27 March 2000. The conference was organised within the context of an ESRC ‘One Europe or Several’ Programme research project on ‘The Transformation of Civil-Military Relations in a Comparative Context’ and brought together academics and civilian and military policy-makers from Western and Central and Eastern Europe. The purpose of the conference was to explore the challenges of reforming civil-military relations and defence policy-making in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe.

For the purposes of cross-national comparison a common analytical framework was employed to assess the progress made and problems faced by different Central and Eastern European countries in establishing democratic control of their armed forces. The common analytical framework argues that democratic control of armed forces involves three distinct but closely related elements: the non-involvement of the military in domestic politics; democratic control of defence policy (in terms of force size and structure, defence spending and procurement); and democratic control of foreign policy (including decisions on the external use of force). The framework suggests that a range of factors influence the prospects for democratic control of the armed forces in any given country: historical patterns of civil-military relations; the country’s broad domestic political, economic and social context; the international context; domestic institutional factors (particularly, the constitutional, governmental and administrative arrangements relating to control of the armed forces); and issues of ‘military culture’ and military professionalism.

On the basis of this framework, the conference explored three issues: first, the factors affecting the transition process to democratically accountable armed forces in central and eastern Europe. Second, it identified patterns in this transition process the development of civil-military relations in post-Communist Central and Eastern Europe. Third, it assessed the impact of Western policies on the democratisation of civil-military relations in Central and Eastern Europe. Whilst the presentations offer different national experiences and exhibit a wide degree of diversity, six preliminary conclusions emerge:

- The importance of having a clearly defined and widely accepted constitutional and political framework for civil-military relations for effective democratic control and accountability of armed forces. This should specify and delineate the powers and relationships between government, parliament, the defence and internal ministries and the armed forces. However, this is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for democratic
control and accountability. Democratic control of armed forces and defence policy also depends on attitudinal change and non-governmental interest and pressure groups as well as civil society more broadly, who play an important external role in ensuring that the government and the armed forces pay proper attention to public scrutiny and accountability.

- A key component of defence planning in a democracy is that the armed forces should serve national foreign policy goals. Many armed forces in Central and Eastern Europe exist without a fully developed role or specification of tasks which they might be employed to undertake. Without clarity concerning such tasks, serious issues are raised concerning the type of force requirements that need to be developed and how competing demands may be prioritised. Moreover, defence reform needs to be affordable. Money must be allocated sufficient for the tasks set and spent in an effective way. This must also be routinely reviewed by parliamentarians to ensure that the performance of the armed forces is matched against the goals they have been set.

- Elected politicians often show themselves to be inexperienced, unsympathetic towards and sometimes neglectful of defence reform -- more concerned with the image and process than the reality and substance of effective reform. Engaging the military in the process of defence reform is important in encouraging a sense of ownership of the transition process. Without this sense of ownership, creative non-compliance becomes commonplace, with rules un-enforced and democratic norms overlooked. A lack of civilian and military partnership in the reform agenda can lead to inappropriate military interference over elements of defence policy that may have detrimental consequences. Of equal importance, however, is misinformed or inept civilian interference in defence policy issues, leading to inappropriate policy choices and politicisation of the military.

- Western engagement in promoting democratic control of the armed forces is widespread in the region. There are now a range of activities which focus on promoting democratic management of defence, efficiency, openness, professionalism and inter-operability. This process of engagement has a value of its own in developing trust and openness. Some Western countries are offering real long-term partnerships rather than 'quick fix solutions.' In view of this there is a growing need for recipient partners to decide their own reform agendas and priorities. Moreover, not only do they need to accept aid but they also need to ensure effective implementation.

- Whilst NATO membership offers a threshold standard in democratic control of the armed forces, membership itself does not solve the problem of creating democratically accountable armed forces. Democratic control
is a process not an event. Moreover, Membership Action Plans require substantial financial expenditure to reform armed forces to meet NATO standards. Governments will only be able to sustain their commitment if they can carry the support of parliaments and publics. In turn this will rely on electorates understanding the meaning, implications and benefits of defence reform.

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In conclusion, the civilian sector must endeavour to better understand and address the needs of the armed forces. In turn the armed forces must further accept that there is a leading role for civilians in the formulation of defence policy. Crucially however, the key task for both partners is to clarify the particular requirements of national security in their own contexts and work to develop, maintain and crucially provide appropriate resources to fund armed forces to fulfil this role.
A Framework For Understanding Democratic Control of Armed Forces in Post-Communist Europe
Dr Andrew Cottey, University College Cork and University of Bradford

Andrew Cottey set out a common analytical framework for understanding the problems of civil-military relations in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe. The legacies of communist rule, the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union mean that the countries of post-communist Europe inevitably face great difficulties in reforming their armed forces, civil-military relations and defence policies. Establishing democratic civil-military relations in Central and Eastern Europe involves three inter-related issues: ensuring the disengagement and non-involvement of the military in domestic politics; securing democratic, civilian control of defence policy; and limiting the military’s role in foreign policy.

The factors that may shape the prospects for democratic control of armed forces in post-communist Europe fall into five broad categories. First, external influences, such as the influence of the West (which has been a major factor in encouraging democratic models of civil-military relations) and regional conflicts (which may, as in former Yugoslavia, increase the influence of armed forces and thereby retard democratisation of civil-military relations). Second, the historical legacies of the communist and pre-communist periods, which may shape current patterns of civil-military relations. Third, the broader domestic political, social and economic context, which may have a significant bearing on civil-military relations (for example, weak states and unstable politics may result in the armed forces being drawn into politics). Fourth, institutional factors have a major impact on civil-military relations, in particular constitutional and governmental arrangements relating to the control of armed forces and defence policy. Fifth, the ‘culture’ of any country’s armed forces (i.e., the military’s entrenched attitudes towards their role in society as a whole and the making of defence policy in particular) are an important factor shaping the prospects for democratic control of armed forces. In conclusion, Dr. Cottey argued that civil-military relations should be understood as comprising a complex set of inter-related issues and the prospects for democratic control of armed forces in any given country are shaped by a similarly complex range of factors.

A Normative Framework for Democratic Control of Armed Forces
Dr Paul Latawski, Royal Military College Sandhurst

Paul Latawski argued that there is a need to define normatively what is meant by ‘democratic control of armed forces’. Whilst there are many different national experiences, a ‘norm’ of democratic control is missing at present. In order to develop this normative definition, it is necessary to ask both ‘what does democratic control mean?’ and ‘how does it work?’ Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan outline a normative framework for democracy in which they suggest that there are five ‘arenas’ of democracy: civil society (freedom of association and
communication); political society (free elections, etc); the rule of law (constitutionalism); useable state apparatus; and economic society (an institutionalised market)\textsuperscript{1}. These ‘arenas’ can be used to normatively assess the concept of democratic control of armed forces.

How, though, do these means of assessing democratic norms apply to the specific case of democratic control of armed forces? Taking ‘civil society’ as an example, one could suggest that the armed forces must reflect the society they spring from. This then generates a range of questions: how do the armed forces relate back to civil-society? What bodies (if any) exist in order to mediate this link? To what extent do the armed forces represent the interests of civil society? Are soldiers citizens or separate? Similar kinds of questions can be developed for the other ‘arenas’ of democracy. For political society: how effectively does the executive implement policy? How far do the armed forces recognise politics as legitimate? For economic society: are military demands on the economy appropriate to a countries security environment?

The rational behind developing such a normative framework for democratic control of armed forces is not to provide a prescriptive model for new democracies, but to present a normative ‘benchmark’, which will facilitate a constructive assessment and comparison of different national experiences in the region.

\textbf{Democratic Accountability of the Security Sector}
\textit{Dr Owen Greene, University of Bradford}

\textbf{Owen Greene} argued that effective democratic control of the military means much more than simple executive control of the armed forces. It also must incorporate scrutiny both by parliament and by wider civil society. There is, however, no single model of how such broader oversight can be accomplished. There is a common misconception in Central and Eastern Europe of what parliamentary control or oversight means. It is, therefore, important to be explicit about what is meant by ‘parliamentary oversight’. Does it mean ‘control’? Consultation? Accountability? In most cases in the West, actual ‘control’ by parliament only occurs in limited areas. In practice ‘parliamentary oversight’ does not mean that every aspect of military policy is directed by parliament, but more that policy is transparent, and that policy-makers can be held to account if necessary.

In the post-communist environment, there is a particular need for further public and parliamentary discussion of the following issues: security threats and

policies; the translation of security policy into military strategy and tactics; budgets; and arms holdings and exports. The role of parliament will vary in these different areas, as will the system and effectiveness of mechanisms of control. However, basic and detailed laws on these issues are central to parliamentary oversight. In their absence, effective parliamentary control is extremely problematic.

Continuing challenges and problems for the implementation of parliamentary oversight remain, however. First, some areas of defence policy are legitimately secret. There are, though, practical measures that can be implemented to allow legislative oversight over secret policy areas, particularly if a relationship of trust exists between parliament, executive and armed forces. Examples include the use of closed rather than open committee hearings. Second, the capacity of parliament to address defence issues in a busy policy environment can be limited and a lack of relevant expertise amongst parliamentarians can inhibit effective legislative oversight. Finally, it is important to be clear about who the military actually are. In many states, other armed formations such as interior ministry troops also exist, and these structures must also be subject to full parliamentary oversight.

Parliamentary Accountability of Armed Forces: The Case of the UK
Dr Anthony Forster, Defence Studies Department/JSCSC, King’s College London

This presentation explored parliamentary accountability of foreign and security policy as practiced in the UK Houses of Parliament. Anthony Forster set out the key means in which accountability and scrutiny took place in the two chambers, through parliamentary debates, scrutiny committees and the tabling of formal documents such as white papers before Parliament. The presentation analysed the strengths and weaknesses of the UK system and highlighted three key points: first, from a constitutional perspective, the UK has both a unique and quite an effective system of parliamentary accountability, with military chiefs subordinate to ministers and the government in turn accountable to Parliament. However, some parts of the system of scrutiny and accountability work better than others. Second, accountability is a process rather than an event. Parliamentary control therefore requires constant vigilance to ensure that scrutiny and accountability in theory is accountability in fact. Whilst Westminster committees are not executive committees like those of the United State Congress, nonetheless they have central role to play in providing a platform to publicise issues of concern and at least provide an opportunity to persuade the government of the day on key issues. Whether the system works effectively is highly dependent upon the vigilance of individual parliamentarians on the relevant committees and their tenacity in pursuing an issue. Paradoxically perhaps, the effectiveness of the UK system is also depends on non-parliamentary interest and pressure groups, who play an important external role in ensuring that the government pays the proper attention to public scrutiny and
accountability. Third, effectiveness of the UK system depends on the type of issue involved and the urgency of the issue in question. Ultimately, since UK governments regularly command a majority in the House of Commons, the executive can get its own way. However, the existence of an agreed set of procedures for accountability and scrutiny of decisions, does as a minimum provide a yard-stick against which to measure the transparency of executive activity in this area.

**Defence Planning in a Democracy: The UK’s Strategic Defence Review**  
**Mr Philip Jones, Defence Diplomacy Cell, UK MoD**

Philip Jones illustrated the defence planning process in the UK by detailing the process and philosophy behind the UK’s 1998 Strategic Defence Review (SDR). The SDR sought to modernise and reshape the British armed forces in line with the fundamental goals of British foreign policy, and the government’s view of Britain’s role in the world. Key elements of the SDR process were openness and inclusivity, and a process of civil-military cooperation.

The SDR accepts that at the end of the 1990’s, Britain faces an entirely new strategic environment with no direct threats to the UK itself. However, it also recognises that these circumstances cannot be taken for granted indefinitely and that instability exists in other areas of the world which could potentially threaten British interests. The SDR develops a new British defence policy based around the realistic assessment and effective management of these risks. The SDR identifies three regions of the world in which the British armed forces are most likely to be deployed in future (Europe, the Gulf and the Mediterranean) and that future operations in support of the United Nations are likely. Against this backdrop, eight primary missions for the armed forces are identified, ranging from participation in ‘defence diplomacy’ to a defence against a strategic attack on NATO. Within these main missions, 28 more specific military tasks are outlined. A key component of the SDR is that future plans should be affordable. Money spent on defence must be spent in a sensible and effective way. This philosophy is formalised through an annual policy review. Similarly, the development of defence policy is not static, but is a continuing process. It is crucial that this continues in a transparent fashion, with continuing input from both civilian and military sectors.

**Defence Planning in a Democracy: The Case of Germany**  
**Lt Col Jurgen Schwarz, German MoD, Armed Forces Staff Fu S VI 1**

Jurgen Schwarz detailed the German defence planning process, noting that there are three key players in the German defence planning process, the legislature (*Bundestag*), the Government and the Ministry of Defence. These core elements are interrelated with, and influenced by, German society more widely. The *Bundestag* is the sovereign body that determines the fundamental features of policy and passes laws. In practice, it does so through the existence
of a number of parliamentary committees. Most significant of these are the Budgetary Committee, and the Defence Committee. The Cabinet is the second key player. It discusses bills before they are submitted to the Bundestag and coordinates the fundamental features of long-term policy as well as the politics of the day. Finally, the Ministry of Defence is responsible for the implementation of military policy and the defence budget, task undertaken by a civilian defence administration.

Military planning in Germany consists of four successive phases:

- **Establishment of long-term goals**: the Bundeswehr Concept is developed, containing a careful analysis of future missions and environments, and stipulating the capabilities the armed forces will require.
- **Realisation Planning**: an annual cycle assessing how the long-term Bundeswehr Concept is to be realised in practice and resulting in the Bundeswehr Plan.
- **Implementation**: the Armed Forces Service’s staff and the ministerial directorates are responsible for implementation of the planning results.
- **Control**: the chief of staff exercises planning control; the Service chiefs of staff exercise implementation control.

The establishment of long-term goals is a particularly important aspect of the German defence planning process. These are developed on the basis of ‘political’ policy documents, which provide for planning predictability, permit coordinated planning and outlast short-term political events. An annual planning cycle permits short-term corrective action at any time, thus providing flexibility to react to changes in the security situation or resources. The German system is characterised by political control and cooperation. This approach ensures that defence planning corresponds to political premises and does not develop into a self-contained, independent process. Additionally, through their engagement with defence planning, German parliamentarians have a deep insight into current projects, and are thus sufficiently qualified to use the powers or legislative oversight available to them.

**Defence Planning in a Democracy: The Case of Romania**, Professor Ioan Mircea Pascu, Chair, Romanian Parliamentary Defence Select Committee

Ioan Mircea Pascu argued that ensuring democratic control of defence policy is a challenging task and Romania’s experience to date has inevitably been mixed. At this stage of the reform process, the emerging democracies of Central and Eastern Europe do not possess the necessary civilian expertise to replace the dominance of the armed forces in the defence planning process. However, a lack of sufficient internal civilian control over the actual process can be supplemented, at least for the time being, by ‘the end product’, namely defence policy itself.
In the case of Romania, this is being implemented on four levels. First, internally, by subjecting defence policy to the approval of the collective civilian leadership of the MoD. Second, externally, by incorporating entirely civilian Foreign Ministry expertise. Third, by subjecting defence policy to the approval of the Supreme Defence Council. Ultimate control is exercised by the Parliament, which has to approve core defence legislation (such as the National Security Strategy, Defence White Book, Military Strategy), as well as intermediary policy (the programs for force creation, modernisation and training), and, ‘the end product’ itself, through the control over budgeting and implementation.

Significantly, in Romania, the main driving force behind the reform and restructuring process of the armed forces has been the military itself. Additionally, democratic control over the military has to be evaluated holistically, against the background of the reform process in society more widely. In this context, we can conclude that, while Romania is still in a process of reform, enough checks and balances have been established to prevent any future slip towards militarism and authoritarianism. Of course, this does not mean that one can be completely satisfied with what has been achieved so far. There still are many aspects of the process that need to be improved. Indeed, the continuation of the reform programme will be in doubt without further economic stabilisation and improvement. Similarly, national consensus on defence policy cannot be achieved in the absence of a substantive dialogue between Government and Opposition, which, in Romania, is almost absent at present. Additionally, further de-politicisation of the military is desirable, as well as a greater strengthening of the powers of the parliamentary defence committees, particularly in the areas of their independent investigatory powers and expertise.

The Role of the WEU and the EU
Mr Steffen Elgersma, Security Policy Division, WEU

Although the development of a European dimension in the field of defence and security is often viewed with apprehension in Central and Eastern Europe, Steffen Elgersma argued that the development of closer European defence cooperation will actually serve to facilitate improved defence cooperation with the region. The further development of an EU defence and security capability involves three main challenges: the creation, by 2003, of a corps sized pan-European rapid reaction force, capable of deploying independently from NATO; the development of EU-NATO synergy; and security and defence co-operation with its non-member European partners. The latter will involve substantial participation of these countries at a political level, but also possibly in operations and exercises. The WEU already co-operates with Ukraine over long-haul air transport, for example.

These new developments are likely to have an impact on civil-military relations. First, there is a question of how to implement national parliamentary oversight over crisis management operations, given that CESDP is likely to be driven by
inter-governmental discussions. Second, a new European approach to crisis management may focus on supporting the work of NGO’s through military means. Finally, the EU will increase its support programmes in the security field, and this will have a direct impact on Central and Eastern Europe. Through its PHARE programme, the Commission has already run programmes promoting democratic control of armed forces. It has also encouraged the demilitarisation of Interior Ministries. These initiatives will feed into the development of an increasingly broad spectrum of support programmes to security sectors in post-communist countries. The development of an EU defence dimension will change the nature of the EU as an actor in Central and Eastern Europe. This change will have positive, rather than negative, consequences, by broadening and deepening levels of contact with countries east of the EU border, and offering new avenues for defence cooperation.

The Role of Western Assistance and Cooperation: The Case of the UK
Mr Malcolm Haworth, Director, Central and Eastern Europe, UK MoD

Malcolm Haworth outlined the UK Ministry of Defence’s role in promoting democratic control of armed forces in Central and Eastern Europe through its ‘Outreach’ programme. Outreach consists of activities in three core areas.

- **Promotion of democratic management of defence**, carried out through meetings of senior officials and the provision of advice from the UK MoD Consultancy Advice Service. Similarly, the MoD is active in establishing international advisory boards, such as the International Defence Advisory Board for the Baltic States (IDAB). Civilian and military advisors are also seconded to Central and Eastern European MoD’s and General Staffs.

- **Promotion of efficiency, openness and professionalism**, implemented through the participation of Central and Eastern European officers in UK-based training courses, such as defence diplomacy scholarships to the UK and multi-national seminars. Outreach also helps to facilitate exchanges of experience on how UK forces operate. Similarly, short-term military training teams are sent to partner countries to advise on these issue-areas.

- **Promotion of inter-operability** through programmes to encourage English-language training, both in-country, and in the UK. Outreach also encourages joint military exercises, both through NATO and bilaterally - the UK has been particularly active in this field with the Baltic States. Seminars are organised on issues such inter-operability, peacekeeping and command and control.

Specific cooperation with the Ukraine has taken the form of 60-70 activities per year, including joint military exercises and high level visits. This makes the UK Ukraine’s most active European partner in this area.
Several key issues emerge from the UK MoD’s Outreach activity. First, practical assistance is important, but effective cooperation also involves many more intangible factors. Second, it is important for partners to decide their own reform agendas and priorities, and the implementation of these is central. Finally, effective mechanisms need to be developed to assess the utility and effectiveness of Outreach activity and thereby assess which elements of the Outreach programme are having the most impact and allow the UK to build on these in future.

**Democratic Control of the Armed Forces in Post Communist Poland: The Interplay of History, Political Society and Institutional Reform**  
Dr Paul Latawski, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst

Paul Latawski argued that, in Poland, even if its consolidation is not uniform, democratic control of the armed forces exists in principle, and increasingly in practice. The interplay of three major factors has been central to shaping this development: Poland’s historical legacy, the weakness of political society, and the scale and pace of institutional reform. In terms of historical influences, the legacy of Polish military involvement in politics boded ill for the establishment of civilian, democratic control of the armed forces in the post-communist environment. Today’s civil-military relations have been preceded by a variety of historical patterns, many of which serve to undermine the establishment and maintenance of civilian, democratic control. These include traditions of *Naczelny Wodz* (the entrusting political and military leadership to a supreme leader in times of crisis), praetorianism and armies serving foreign masters.

The weakness of Polish political society in the post-communist era has also produced periodic temptations to meddle in rather than manage control of the armed forces. The problem has not so much been generals plotting political coups, but politicians drawing the armed forces into political games. Despite these difficulties, in practice, political society has become more consistent in its management of control of the armed forces.

Institutional reform in this area is a long and still incomplete process, however. To date, it has been dependent on a series of changes to the constitution, statute law and ministerial regulations that have had to compete for a time with a very large legislative reform agenda driven by the exigencies of transition. Further institutional change is vital to the development of a more effective approach by political society to democratic control of armed forces.

Despite these problems, a decade after the collapse of communism Poland has undoubtedly made significant progress in establishing democratic control of armed forces. While there is a degree of variable geometry in the consolidation of the practices and norms of democratic control of compared with more ‘mature’ democracies, Poland now has an effective, if slightly untidy, system of democratic control of the armed forces.
Democratic Control of the Armed Forces in the Czech Republic: The Way out of Isolation
Dr Marie Vlachova, Ministry of Defence, Prague

Marie Vlachova argued that the wider process of political transition in the Czech Republic has shaped the relationship between armed forces and domestic politics. In practice, the armed forces have adapted to this process rather more passively than actively. Where civil-military tensions have emerged, they have, in general, resulted from politicians' low competence in military and defence issues, poor management, and a general lack of interest in defence issues.

The civilian sector, and particularly parliament, dominates the formulation of defence policy in the Czech Republic. However, the civilian sector's low levels of competence in military and defence issues make them dependent upon the recommendations, definitions and standpoints of military experts. Czech foreign policy remains firmly in the hands of civilian institutions, mainly the parliament and the government.

Two main factors have influenced democratic control of armed forces in the Czech Republic since independence. First, participation in Partnership for Peace ( PfP) programmes, involvement in peacekeeping operations and accession to NATO in 1999 generated targets for the reform process to aim towards and a strong motivation to address defence reform issues. Second, economic processes have been important. In the early-1990's economic reform dominated the political agenda, to the detriment of reform in the defence sector. In the last five years, however, problems with non-transparent defence and procurement decision-making brought defence reform issues to the attention of the Czech public more widely.

A final important factor in the development of Czech civil-military relations is the negative public perception of the Czech military immediately after the collapse of communism. This resulted from the Czech people’s traditionally ambiguous relationship with their armed forces, as well as the military’s association with the unpopular communist regime. As a result of the armed forces participation in PfP activities, peacekeeping missions, and disaster relief after the floods of 1998, however, this image is slowly changing. The armed forces are becoming increasingly accepted as an impartial national institution whose primary purpose is national defence and participation in the NATO alliance.

Civil-Military Relations in Hungary: No Big Deal
Dr Pal Dunay, Geneva Centre for Security Policy

According to Pál Dunay, the principle that civilian control is necessary to prevent the military from gaining untoward influence in non-military matters is largely irrelevant in case of Hungary. Since independence in 1918, civilian rule has been the norm in Hungary, except for the last six months of World War 2. This trend
has continued, with the armed forces having had little say in any matter, including their own future, throughout the first decade of multi-party democracy.

As the military budget declined steadily between 1987 and 1997, the efforts of the military focused on legitimising at least some defence related investment. The situation has started to change since 1997. Hungary’s integration with NATO has ensured an increase in the defence budget, and made certain reforms timely and necessary. The position of the armed forces has strengthened and will continue to strengthen through the Hungary’s NATO commitment. The formal guarantees that politics, politicians and civilians will have the upper hand in the defence policy process exist. Indeed, the question now is not how the relationship between different sectors (civilian/political and military) will evolve in this process. It is whether there will be sufficient professional expertise anywhere in the system to effectively decide on the defence needs of the country.

International factors, and particularly Hungary’s membership of NATO, play a major, if not decisive, role in Hungarian defence policy. The country has formally met the requirements set by the Alliance in cooperation with the Hungarian authorities. If one looks beyond this, however, and analyses the substance of changes, there is a disappointing persistence of negative features that may have a lasting bearing upon Hungary’s performance as a new NATO member.

Hungary has very little military heritage to be proud of. Furthermore, the defence sector was for a decade the constant loser in the competition for resources. As a result, the governmental defence portfolio was generally offered to politicians with no particular interest and limited expertise in defence issues. The Hungarian defence sector has lost a decade in the implementation of military reform. Aside from the establishment of legal foundations for civilian-military relations, the work to establish a modern, performing defence force will only properly begin in the new millennium.

Democratic Control of the Armed Forces in the Slovak Republic
Dr Ivo Samson, Research Centre for Slovak Foreign Policy

Ivo Samson argued that the tradition of military influence in Slovakia has been shaped by the previous pre-independence stages of Slovak history, as part of (Austro)Hungary and Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak tradition resulted in the neutral position of the army in domestic political struggles, whereas the Hungarian tradition brought a positive record of the army as a trustworthy state institution. Slovak civil-military relations in the 1990’s have reflected the democratic ‘specificities’ of the post-independence Slovak Republic, in particular the passive reaction of society to the authoritarian challenge.

Slovakia, while in no way a full ‘liberal’ democracy, has a military elite that has been reluctant to take a clear standpoint in domestic political struggles.
Significantly, though, there has not yet been a genuine test of civil-military relations. Should a strong and authoritarian government emerge, a ‘Turkish’ model is plausible for Slovakia, with the armed forces encroaching on politics. In practice, however, the military itself has proven to be a stable, non-political institution, particularly when it is compared to other state institutions.

The perception of the military by civilians is also important. In general, since independence, the attitude of the public towards the military has proved to be stable and positive, with the military perceived as one of the most trusted institutions in society. There has also been strong public support for NATO membership in Slovakia, and, while this declined significantly after the 1999 Kosovo intervention, it has led to a general pressure for democratic reform of civil-military relations. Publicly, the government has responded in an extremely pro-Western fashion. In practice, however it has shown itself to be more hesitant.

In general the problem in discussing civil-military relations in Slovakia is that an underlying democratic political culture is not established in wider society. This, in turn, cannot help but have a negative influence on issues of democratic control of the Slovak armed forces.

Democratic Control of the Armed Forces in Slovenia
Professor Anton Bebler, University of Ljubljana

When Slovenia gained its independence in 1991, a new civil-military relationship had to be established almost from scratch. Anton Bebler suggests that Slovenia’s very modest military traditions played a minimal role in this undertaking, while the Yugoslav experience was reacted to overly emotionally and mostly negatively. Some of the most prominent factors that contribute to the current Slovenian civil-military relationship include the country’s geopolitical position and size, its level of development, its historic and cultural background, its relative ethnic and cultural homogeneity, its short experience of independent statehood and the circumstances of its creation, and its constitutional and political composition.

Perhaps the most striking feature of civil-military relations in Slovenia today is their lack of salience as a political issue, accompanied by widespread public indifference. In practice, civil-military relations in Slovenia have become relations between a civilian sector, and a new military sector, whose personnel were themselves civilians until only recently.

This radical shift was due to circumstances that both preceded and accompanied Slovenian independence. These included the widespread rejection of the previous Yugoslav model of civil-military relations, which contained both militarist and praetorian proclivities. Additionally, the small size of the armed forces, the paucity of Slovenian military traditions, the underdeveloped corporate identity of the Slovenian military officers, together with the army leadership’s extremely low
political profile, were all factors that contributed to a very high degree of civilian dominance. The parliamentarian system of civilian rule and of control over the military gave this arrangement a secure constitutional and legal foundation.

During the last years of the former Yugoslavia, matters related to the military played an extremely prominent role in political debates and struggles. However the advent of Slovenian independence, and the containment and cessation of the Yugoslav wars through NATO intervention, ensured that the Slovenian political elite and general public lost much of their interest in military matters. Slovenia has thus become a country whose civil-military relationship is characterised by very strong civilian dominance over the military sector; deep civilianisation of the defence establishment; diminished levels of military professionalism; and a very low profile for the Slovenian military. For all practical purposes, there is a complete absence of a pro-military lobby, and a very low level of civilian militarism and limited praetorian tendencies.

The Changing Nature of Civil-Military Relations in Post-Totalitarian Bulgaria

Dr Plamen Pantev and Professor Tilcho Ivanov, ISIS Sofia

Plamen Pantev and Tilcho Ivanov argued that the development of civil-military relations in Bulgaria over the past ten years have marked a definite step away from any residual temptation to involve the armed forces in domestic politics. It has become both a legal and a political norm that the military is the apolitical servant of the democratically elected institutions of the state, while at the same time remaining the symbol of national pride. While civilian authorities are the legal masters the country’s defence policy, however they still lack the professionalism and expertise that would consolidate their dominant position.

The desire for integration with NATO has been a powerful factor influencing Bulgarian civil-military relations. Bulgaria’s stable and democratic civil-military relations has contributed to regional stability in South-East Europe. Though modest, Bulgaria’s participation in SFOR and KFOR enhanced this role. The military-to-military contacts of the Bulgarian armed forces in the Balkans has also had a positive influence on the regional security situation.

Historically the military have always been a respected strata of Bulgarian society. The domestic economic context has, however, made defence reforms difficult. Despite this, institutional mechanisms for effective democratic control of the military have been put in place. More work is needed, however in order to develop democratic civil-military relations in the areas of defence policy, defence budget planning, and in professionalising civilian knowledge of the military. In relative terms Bulgaria has passed the most difficult part of its development of democratic civilian control of the armed forces, reaching a level close to the requirements for NATO membership. It now faces the task of consolidating this position, and strengthening the foundations of its civil-military relationship.
Challenges of Civil-Military Relations and Democratic Control of Armed Forces: Theory and Practice in the Lithuanian Case

Mr Vaidotas Urbelis and Mr Tomas Urbonas, Lithuanian Ministry of National Defence

As with the other Baltic States, Lithuania faced the task of building national armed forces from scratch. Vaidotas Urbelis and Tomas Urbonas argue that despite early problems, significant progress has been made in the development of civilian and democratic control of the armed forces in Lithuania since independence. In 1990-91, as part of its struggle for independence, Lithuania began establishing armed forces. In 1992-93, Lithuanian faced problems in this area because of the absence of a clear legal framework for civil-military relations and the economic problems facing the armed forces. Since 1994, Lithuania has put in place a clear legal framework for democratic control of its armed forces, while at the same time beginning other defence reforms designed to promote integration with NATO.

The concepts of civil-military relations and democratic control of the military that emerged as a consequence of political transformations in Lithuania in the 1990’s are comprised of three principles. First, subordination of the military to civilian authority by legal and institutional mechanisms. Second, the political neutrality of the military imposed by external limits and internalised through professional ethic. Third, non-interference of civilian authorities in the pre-defined military domain. In Lithuania today, these principles are outlined in a clear legal framework, and embodied in an institutional division of powers and responsibilities between the Ministry of National Defence, the government, the seimas, and the Chief of Staff.

Democratic Control of Armed Forces in Latvia
Dr Ilmars Viksne, Latvian National Defence Academy

Ilmars Viksne suggests that Latvia does not face serious problems in dealing with civilian and democratic control over its armed forces, though it has had to go about the process creating entirely new National Armed Forces from scratch. Soviet and pre-Soviet legacies influenced this process, both of which led to a certain scepticism over the role of the armed forces in the post-independence political environment. When coupled with an active and critical media, this has led to a general lack of public interest in defence and security issues.

Institutionally, a legal framework for democratic control of armed forces has been established which lays out a clear institutional division of responsibilities between Parliament, the President, the Ministry of Defence and the Chief of Staff; and the core principles of civilian and democratic control over the National Armed Forces. The Latvian military is forbidden from becoming involved in domestic politics directly, and, according to the Law on the Defence Forces, the military are
prevented from engaging in political activities, joining trade unions, or organising and taking part in strikes.

The National Armed Forces do not have particular ties with any political party and all parties except the communists favour cooperation and closer integration with Western security structures such as NATO and the EU. Indeed, this process has heavily influenced civil-military relations in Latvia. This influence has manifested itself in two main ways. First, through the requirement of Latvia to create the appropriate political, economic and psychological conditions for integration with NATO. Second, through the participation of elements of the armed forces in the former Yugoslavia, where a Latvian platoon has served alongside NATO peacekeepers. Latvian armed forces are also active in multinational BALTBAT battalion that includes Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Danish contingents. Participation in these kinds of multi-lateral military operations help to reinforce western norms and models of civil-military relations, and form an important element in the prestige of the Latvian armed forces.

Democratic Control of Armed Forces: The Case of Estonia
Major General Ants Laaneots, Baltic Defence College

Ants Laaneots argued that several particular factors have shaped civil-military relations in post-communist Estonia. First, like the other Baltic states, Estonia’s armed forces were created almost wholly from scratch in 1991. Indeed, in 1992 only 432 Estonians had prior officer experience identified, of these the majority were ex-Soviet officers, and only 60 were involved in the creation of the new armed forces. Most of these officers have undergone training programmes in Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Germany. As a result, Estonia is not faced with the problem of changing the mentality of it officer corps to the same degree as some other post-communist countries. Second, Estonia does have an important pre-Soviet military legacy. Between 1918 and 1920, the Estonian armed forces were 100,000 strong, and were crucial in maintaining Estonian independence during the inter-war period. Similarly, Estonia engaged in guerrilla war against the Soviet Union between 1940-53. Third, since 1992 there has been a policy shift in Estonia from a position of non-alignment to one seeking NATO membership and close integration with the West.

Estonia has developed new legislation in the military sphere since 1992. The new Estonian defence concept is strongly shaped by the Scandinavian experience and is very close to the Finnish model, combing both total defence and territorial defence. Civilian control of the armed forces is strong, and is formalised in both the constitution as well as through other laws, such as on the deployment of Estonian troops outside Estonia. The 1992 Defence Policy Concept defined Estonia’s defence policy-making structure, establishing a defence council and a parliamentary defence committee. The Defence Council is the primary defence policy-making body, though parliamentary control is quite extensive, sometimes to the point of going too far. Ultimately, operational control of the armed forces
rests with the Presidency. Administrative and economic control rests with the Defence Minister. Some tensions exist over the exact division of responsibilities between the two.

In terms of public opinion, there was limited support for the armed forces between 1991-95. While this has gradually improved, largely as a result of Russia’s actions in Chechnya, problems still remain, and the Estonian press has sometimes been very critical of the military. In general, it is important that there should be maximum transparency where defence policy and the armed forces are concerned, and Estonia must strive to implement this principle in its own civil-military relations. Doing so will maximise public understanding of these areas, and help to encourage a more constructive public engagement with defence issues.

Challenges of Democratic Control of the Croatian Armed Forces in the Light of the Parliamentary and Presidential General Elections of 2000
Mr Zlatko Gareljic, Deputy Minister of Defence, Republic of Croatia

In the past decade, democratic control of the Croatian armed forces has been characterised by an unpredictable and rapidly changing security environment. However, Zlatko Gareljic suggested that recent developments have provided an opportunity to openly discuss the key issues surrounding the establishment of effective democratic control. Croatia’s national leadership realises that civil-military reform is a long-term process that requires joint efforts from both civilian and military sectors in order to make progress.

There are some common challenges of post-communism in the sphere of civil-military relations that are shared by Croatia. These include a lack of civilian defence experts; oversized forces that need downsizing, weapons systems that need modernising; decreasing defence expenditures; and non-compatibility of forces with those of Western countries. Croatia also faces its own unique challenges, in particular the legacy of its involvement in the Yugoslav conflicts. It must also carry out reforms in an unstable security environment, with potential instability present in two of its neighbours.

Croatia remains keen to further entrench democratic control over its armed forces. Croatia has developed a legislative and institutional framework for democratic control of its armed forces. In particular, this provides the legal parameters of institutional authorisation and the distribution of power between elected politicians, appointed civil servants and the military. Problems remain, however, in a disproportionate balance of power between the president and parliament.

A primary concern for the future is the need to enhance the role of parliament in military affairs, and serious efforts need to be made in order to circumscribe some of the authority of the presidency in this area. Additionally, the lack of
civilian expertise in the MoD is another key issue that needs to be addressed. Similarly, democratic control of the armed forces is to a great extent dependent on principles of transparency and openness. As a result, defence planning and budgeting must be further opened to public scrutiny.

Belgrade, Borders and the Boundaries of Civil-Military Relations: The European Exception (or The Life and Death and Life After Death of the Yugoslav People’s Army)
Dr James Gow, Kings College London

In the absence of democracy one cannot begin to consider democratic control of the military in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro – the FRY). Civil-military relations have, however, played an important role in the break-up of the preceding Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) and continue to play an important role in FRY and its relations with its neighbours. On one side, there is the government of FRY. On the other, there is an army that still has the shadow of the hammer and sickle on its soul, the Serbian cross with four Ss in its breast and deeply anti-Western values running through most of its arteries. Despite this, it is an irony of civil-military relations in the FRY that the military, or rather elements within it, provide one of the main hopes upon which a transition to democracy in Serbia, and so in the FRY, as a whole could be achieved.

In addition to the relative complexity of a civil-military relationship characterised by differing attitudes to and qualities of democracy in the constituent parts of the federation, there are additional layers that complicate the picture. First, each of the constituent states in the federation has its own internal force – the Ministerstvo Unutrašnjih Poslove service (MUP), each of which embraces police and paramilitary units. Second, the Serbian Security Service has been responsible for the organization and control of quasi-autonomous paramilitary forces and special military units. Third, on the territory of the FRY, there has been an insurgent force, the Kosova Liberation Army (UÇK) in the Serbian province of Kosovo, fighting for independence for the mainly ethnic Albanian land. Fourth, the conflict on the territory of the FRY between the UÇK and Serbian and Yugoslav Forces also led to the deployment of an international force in the province, with NATO organization at its core. Fifth, the VJ and the Security Service paramilitary units have been engaged in war on the territory of two neighbouring former Yugoslav states, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Finally, a decade of war has defined civil-military relations in the FRY.

After a decade of statehood defining war, the basic civil-military question in the FRY, as in the other war-framed states that emerged from the dissolution of communist Yugoslavia, concerns legitimation and the need to arrive at a position where there is a correlation of statehood and regular armed forces.
The Ukrainian armed forces were created out of elements of the Soviet military. As a result, the Soviet legacy in Ukraine remains extremely significant for contemporary civil-military relations. Perhaps the most influential factor in Ukraine’s civil-military relationship, however, has been economics. Hard economic realities have helped to focus the minds of the military, and forced them to think carefully about the future of the defence sector. Similarly, both Russia and the West have an important influence on the development of Ukrainian civil-military relations and the future of the Ukrainian armed forces. Russia is important because it is the most significant determinant of Ukraine’s present security environment. The West plays a role through its engagement with Ukraine over civil-military issues, and also through the influence of security organisations such as NATO and the OSCE.

The armed forces of Ukraine are unlikely to become involved in the country’s domestic politics. However, the military remains a political and economic concern for different political forces, networks and clans in Ukraine. Ukraine is in the process of developing its institutional mechanisms for democratic control of the armed forces, including in areas such as the role of the executive and the role of parliament. Important issues include control of the military budget and the distribution of powers between the Ministry of Defence and the General Headquarters.

A final important point when considering Ukrainian civil-military relations is the role of other militarised formations such as Interior Ministry troops play in the development of civil-military relations. Often these sectors have a greater influence on internal and domestic politics in Ukraine than the armed forces themselves.