

Vanquishing the Ghost of Trianon:
**Preventing Hungarian Irredentism through
Western Integration**

by Thomas Ambrosio

A rather odd psychosis seems to have recently overcome the countries of Central and East Europe (CEE). From Warsaw to Budapest, every political action and every event of any political significance is being judged by whether it furthers or hinders accession of the country concerned to NATO.

– László Valki

INTRODUCTION

At the close of the First World War, Hungary was partitioned by the victorious Allied powers in accordance with the Treaty of Trianon (4 June 1920). Consequently, the new Hungarian state lost nearly one-third of its historic territory and an equal percentage of its Magyar population.¹ The recovery of Magyar-populated territories outside of the Hungarian borders became an obsession for every interwar government and the desire to overturn the Trianon borders pushed the young state into the camp of the rising fascist powers of Italy and Germany. Once again aligning with the losing side in a world war, Hungary – which had managed during the Second World War to unite nearly all of the Magyars of Central Europe – was once again partitioned.²

After the Soviet takeover of Hungary in 1949, questions about the treatment of the Magyar diaspora were suppressed within Hungary. Although acknowledgment of the Magyars' suppression in the other communist states was allowed to come into the open during the 1956 Hungarian rebellion, it was again stifled by Soviet tanks. Subsequently, the treatment of Hungarians in the Eastern Bloc worsened. But not until the radical geopolitical and domestic changes in Eastern Europe during 1989 did Hungary once again have the opportunity to chart an independent foreign policy path.

Observers in the region feared that with Soviet constraints lifted, Hungary would return to its past irredentist designs and, once again, attempt to reunite its diaspora. As Henry Hauttenbach observed as late as 1996, "The ghost of Trianon continues to

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haunt Central Europe.”³ However, these dire predictions have not come to pass. Four explanations are commonly given for the contrast between Hungary’s interwar and post-cold war foreign policies. First is a process of national learning from the failure of irredentism during the interwar period. As Adrian Hyde-Price puts it, “Hungary’s behavior in the 1930s and during the war; the suffering it caused to other countries and to itself, the lasting damage it did to Hungary’s name – the bad memories of all of this led to a considerable moral revulsion against irredentism.”⁴ Secondly, Hungary’s ability to redeem its population is limited. Because in its region Hungary has the lowest defense expenditures as a proportion of GDP and fewer active duty personnel as a proportion of population, it “has negligible capacities of any kind – particularity in terms of military power, to defend itself or its ethnic kin in the region.”⁵ Thirdly, Hungary’s current borders are relatively long-standing. Absent a period of imperial or state collapse, the willingness and ability to alter borders is not likely to exist.⁶ Lastly, and potentially the most important, Hungarian national identity may be moving away from an ethnoterritorial concept, which promotes the notion that “the political and national unit should be congruent,”⁷ and toward a more civic, liberal, or postnational nationalism.⁸ Thus, the nationalist fervor of the interwar period may not be possible in post-communist Hungary.

While each of these factors may play a role, Hungarian foreign policy is also tightly constrained by a single overarching concern: that statements and policies that appear to call the state’s borders into question will damage Hungary’s relations with the West and consequently hamper its return to Europe. That is, it will lessen Hungary’s chances of joining Western political, military, and economic institutions. Here, I examine three situations in which this constraint is apparent: the fallout from Istvan Csurka’s nationalist essay of 1992; the foreign policy debate during the 1994 parliamentary election campaign; and the “good neighbor” treaties signed with Slovakia and Romania in 1995 and 1996, respectively. I begin this essay with a brief summary of the rebirth of an independent Hungarian foreign policy by focusing on its “holy trinity” – concern for the Magyar diaspora, good relations with its immediate neighbors, and membership in Western institutions – and how they are interrelated. Next, I look at a number of documents and statements by policymakers (both Western and Hungarian) that illustrate the importance of certain prerequisites for membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU), and the Conference of Europe—the most prominent of which is the requirement that applicants resolve all territorial and minority issues with their neighbors. The bulk of this article will examine the three cases cited above in which Hungary’s concern over Western reaction is evident. I conclude this article by exploring the implications of Western integration on stability in Eastern Europe.

THE REBIRTH OF AN INDEPENDENT FOREIGN POLICY

The parliamentary election of March-April 1990 was a rout for the reform Communists (the Hungarian Socialist Party—MSP) and a victory for the center-right

Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), led by Jozsef Antall. This change of government allowed Hungary to chart a truly independent foreign policy.

Prime Minister Antall presented the “four pillars” of his government’s foreign policy program to the Hungarian National Assembly on 22 May 1990.⁹ One of his most important themes was the desire “to return to the European heritage” that Hungary had temporarily lost while under Soviet domination: “The government commits itself to the thought of European integration,” including membership in Western institutions. Connected to this was the second pillar: Antall made clear (with all politeness) that he wanted to extricate Hungary from the Soviet orbit, including withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact.

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The third pillar was the “particular emphasis” placed on the “Magyar minority living beyond our borders, on the territory of one-time historical Hungary.” According to Antall, “the Hungarian state has an important responsibility to support everywhere the preservation of the Magyar nation as a cultural and ethnic community.” The final pillar was closely connected to the third: cooperation with Hungary’s neighbors and assurances that Hungary is not revanchist. Therefore, Antall’s program of “the creation of links based on bilateral agreements” and “ensuring mutual interests and good neighborly relations” was dependent upon the treatment of the Hungarian diaspora by its neighbors.

It was the second of these pillars—extricating Hungary from the Soviet orbit—that would occupy the first year of Antall’s government. With the institutional legacy of Soviet domination discarded, Hungarian foreign policy settled into a general consensus.¹⁰ However, implementing a foreign policy strategy based on concerns for the Magyar diaspora, good relations with Hungary’s immediate neighbors, and membership in Western institutions would be difficult given the fact that the components are intimately related. Because of Hungary’s past behavior, its neighbors perceive any act of concern over the fate of its diaspora as a sign of nascent irredentism. At the same time, Hungary’s ability to protect its diaspora is largely dependent upon its getting neighboring countries to treat their Magyar minorities well, which in turn is largely dependent upon good bilateral relations. Any deal with Hungary’s neighbors, however, seemed to go against the interests of the Magyar minorities. Thus, post-cold war Hungarian foreign policy was in a bind.

REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP IN WESTERN INSTITUTIONS

Despite an initial reluctance to fully embrace the countries of Eastern Europe, Western states gradually accepted the notion that their political, economic, and military institutions would have to be expanded to the east. Nearly all of the states be-

tween the former Soviet Union and the eastern border of Western Europe desired to return to Europe through integration into the EU, NATO, and the Council of Europe. However, Western countries were quite selective about which states were to be admitted in the first group, which were to be admitted in the second round, and which states simply got left behind. They established a series of conditions or requirements for membership in their institutions; many of these reflected the nature of the institutions themselves (for example, military requirements for NATO and economic ones for the European Union). Others, however, were political in nature, such as the development of a democratic political system. Therefore, one of the main requirements set by Western institutions was that applicants must settle territorial and ethnic disputes with their neighbors prior to entry. Western institutions did not want to “import” security problems. Furthermore, good relations with one’s neighbors are considered to be a key indication of whether a state has accepted “European values.”

The European Stability Pact (also known as the Balladur Plan) was proposed in April 1993 by French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur and adopted by the European Council six months later.¹¹ The proposal was seen as a form of “preventive diplomacy” aimed “to persuade [the East European] countries to make an official commitment to safeguard the rights of minorities and respect each other’s borders.”¹² While this may seem redundant, since the 1975 Helsinki Final Act essentially guaranteed the same thing, the Stability Pact served as a way for states to reiterate their commitment to the inviolability of borders and to formally include the successor states to the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia. Most importantly, however, the Stability Pact and the bilateral ‘good neighbor’ agreements that it required were seen as “the price for closer ties with the [then] 12-member European Community.”¹³ As one analyst put it: the Stability Pact “was, and remains, a necessary pre-condition for EU membership. The Union cannot consider candidates which have the potential to bring destabilizing elements into the fold.”¹⁴ As one of the five Eastern European countries in the first tier¹⁵ of applicants with significant minority and border problems with its neighbors, Hungary was specifically identified as a troubled case: “Hungarian officials have been informed that EU leaders expect Hungary to settle disputes with its neighbors before it can become a full member of the Union.”¹⁶

Leading Hungarian politicians recognized the connection between their country’s adherence to the Stability Pact and bilateral treaties and its future membership in the European Union. Foreign Minister Geza Jeszenszky said, in the context of the problems related to signing bilateral treaties with Hungary’s neighbors, “it would be detrimental for Hungary if Europe thought it was Hungary’s protection of minorities that was a source of danger instead of the denial of justified minority demands.”¹⁷ This policy of reconciliation [with its neighbors] is important to Hungary. In December 1994, Hungarian Foreign Minister Laszlo Kovacs¹⁸ presented a memorandum to the ambassadors of the EU countries in Budapest in which he recognized “the importance of the Pact on Stability in Europe” in promoting “the integration of Eastern and Central Europe into the EU.”¹⁹ That the European Stability Pact was a crucial and

potentially deciding factor for Hungarian accession into the EU is clear. As will be shown below, the MSP government made a conscious choice between signing bilateral treaties with Slovakia and Romania, which were widely criticized by the opposition, and damaging its chances of joining Western institutions.

NATO's requirements went beyond strictly military matters to include good relations with neighbors and the sanctity of borders. The official NATO expansion study released in September 1995 stated, "There is no fixed or rigid list of criteria for inviting new member states to join the Alliance" and "enlargement will be decided on a case-by-case basis."²⁰ But it was clear that NATO was taking a similar position to that of the EU on diaspora and border questions: "States which have ethnic disputes or external territorial disputes, including irredentist claims, or internal jurisdictional disputes must settle those disputes by peaceful means in accordance with OSCE principles. Resolution of such disputes would be a factor in determining whether to invite a state to join the Alliance."²¹

Although Hungary was on nearly every NATO member's shortlist for accession to NATO, the Alliance took seriously the issue of potential Hungarian territorial claims. In a report to the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Joseph Biden (D-Del.) acknowledged a "concern over the years regarding Hungary's prospects for integration with NATO...over unresolved tensions with Hungary's neighboring states that could affect regional security and stability" but found that "this concern has been largely alleviated by the conclusion and ratification of bilateral treaties with Slovakia and Romania."²² Noting the obvious connection: "the prospect of NATO membership is widely credited as a prime motivation for Hungary to resolve outstanding issues with these two neighbors."²³

In a 'fact sheet' on Hungary's progress toward full NATO membership, the U.S. State Department prominently featured the lack of open territorial disputes as an important factor for Hungarian NATO membership.²⁴ Marc Grossman, then Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, submitted a statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in October 1997 that recognized the resolution of Hungarian territorial disputes as a significant reason why Hungary's application to NATO was successful.²⁵ The importance of resolving all outstanding territorial disputes was also put directly to the Hungarians: In a trip to Hungary in September 1995, U.S. defense secretary William Perry laid out five requirements for NATO membership; "good-neighborly relations" was one of them.²⁶

The Hungarians clearly understood the importance of relinquishing territorial claims for their chances of joining Western political, economic, and security institutions. The matter was put quite bluntly by MSP Foreign Minister Kovacs in early 1995: "During my half a year in office, senior politicians from some countries that are important to us, for instance the United States, asked me whether Hungary would at last be prepared to recognize its existing borders. If the view that Hungary is toying with the idea of border modification and territorial claims is allowed to develop, we will become isolated and will not be able to join any [Western] international organization."²⁷

THE CSURKA ESSAY

The controversy surrounding Istvan Csurka's nationalistic and anti-Semitic essay in *Magyar Forum* on 20 August 1992 was possibly the most significant domestic and foreign crisis of the Antall Government.²⁸ This was not simply a fiery tract written by some intellectual; it was penned by one of the deputy chairmen and founders of the MDF, the ruling party in Hungary.²⁹ On the domestic front, the article exposed sharp divisions within the Hungarian body politic and instigated the eventual expulsion of Csurka and his followers from the MDF's parliamentary group and the near collapse of the Antall Government. Just as significant was the potential damage that Csurka's essay posed to Hungary's image in the West.

At a base level, Csurka's essay was a rather paranoid call-to-arms for the threatened Hungarian nation against the Jewish-Communist *nomenklatura* of the previous regime, which according to him was in league with international forces and sheltered by the opposition parties. These conspirators saw the MDF as the primary danger to their economic and political power, while the MDF was seen by people such as Csurka as the true defender of Christian and national values. He urged "firm steps," including violence, to deal with the holdovers from the past regime. In addition, he indirectly called Hungary's borders into question by arguing that the new generation should be able to decide how to reorder their "post-Trianon state" so as to "create a new Hungarian *lebensraum*."

The domestic controversy was quickly transformed into an international issue because a Hungarian-born U.S. Congressman Tom Lantos (D-CA) happened to be visiting Hungary at the time.³⁰ Lantos, who was forced to leave Hungary during the Second World War because of his Jewish heritage, claimed that Hungary's international image would be negatively affected by the Csurka essay: "if Csurka's ideas come to prevail among Hungary's leading politicians, its relationship with the United States may see dramatic changes with adverse effects."³¹ Lantos reportedly described the essay "as radical extreme right-wing, or if you like fascist" and expressed his belief that "it would be worth considering whether it is desirable for Istvan Csurka to continue to hold a leading position in the country's biggest party."³² Hungarian President Arpad Goncz observed sadly, "I am not too happy with Hungary becoming a subject of talk in such a way."³³

The international ramifications of Csurka's essay were well known in Hungarian political circles. Less than two weeks after the article was published, the Inter-Parliamentary Council's Group Against Anti-Semitism issued a statement signed by fourteen Members of Parliament citing "immeasurable foreign political damage."³⁴ Foreign Minister Jeszenszky, in a speech entitled "Hungary's Reputation in the World," made the contrast between the world's "unified...enthusiasm for Hungary at the turn of 1988-9" and the current situation. He warned that Hungary "should not risk [its] results, and should safeguard [its] good reputation."³⁵ The Antall Government focused on damage control. In an address to the National Assembly, Antall publicly distanced himself and his government from the "faulty interpretation[s] found in the

thesis”³⁶ of the essay.

Still Antall faced criticisms that he had not done enough to repudiate Csurka’s populist wing of the MDF.³⁷ Although Antall claimed that he was successful in resisting any attempts to pull his party to the right,³⁸ the continued presence of Csurka on the party’s national presidium and the supposed reconciliation between Antall and Csurka did not help.³⁹ The final straw came when Csurka condemned the Hungary-Ukraine basic treaty – seen as the first step in achieving treaties with Hungary’s neighbors with significant Magyar minorities. In May 1993, Csurka attacked the government for signing the treaty, which declared that the two sides had no territorial claims and would not make any in the future.⁴⁰ Although he stated that “the preservation of [Hungarian] souls” was his main issue and not any desire for the revision of borders, the implication that Hungary still possessed territorial claims was completely unacceptable to the MDF.⁴¹ Csurka and his followers were expelled from the MDF parliamentary group in early June, despite real fears that the Antall Government would topple.⁴² Ultimately, Csurka was expelled from the MDF on 22 June 1993.⁴³

The importance of this expulsion for the MDF’s international image should not be understated. Csurka was an embarrassment at home and abroad, and his continued membership in the governing party damaged not only the government’s reputation, but Hungary’s as well. The international dimension became clearer toward the end of 1993 and in early 1994 when political parties were considering their strategies for the 1994 elections. Hungarian Prime Minister Peter Boross, who took over the position after Antall died on 12 December 1993, said that any cooperation with Csurka’s faction was automatically ruled out because “their rhetoric and mentality does not [sic] correspond to the center-right direction we find acceptable in the interest of our integration into Europe.”⁴⁴ Nearly all other Hungarian parties shared this feeling.⁴⁵ Thus, Csurka’s status as a pariah on the Hungarian political stage was in large part due to how he and his views were interpreted in the West.

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THE 1994 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The foreign policy consensus established early in the Antall Government began to fray as the May 1994 parliamentary election neared. In fact, as early as August 1993, critics of the MSP’s foreign policy surfaced. While the overall components of the consensus – integration into Europe, concern for the Magyar diaspora, and good-neighborly relations – remained intact, differences existed over the government’s priorities.

If one wanted to rank the three foreign policy goals of the Antall Government in order of importance, it would be unclear whether integration into Europe or concern

for the Magyar diaspora would take first place (though likely the latter). However, it is very certain that relations with Hungary's neighbors, and by extension the attainment of bilateral basic treaties, were subordinated to the minorities issue. In the debate over Hungary's national security policy in the spring of 1993, a serious difference between the MDF and the opposition parties was the former's insistence of leaving open the possibility of "peaceful changes resulting from the will of the people in a given region."⁴⁶ While the government was willing to do this in the case of Ukraine, it was unwilling to do the same for Slovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia. At the same time, MDF leaders were also unwilling to drop their demands for Magyar autonomy or their emphasis on Hungary's sense of historical grievance. As a result, bilateral treaties with Romania and Slovakia were nearly impossible to attain—which meant that integration into Western institutions was at risk.

The opposition parties' criticisms of the government were rooted, to a large extent, in its fears that the MDF's emphasis on the diaspora was hurting Hungary's other foreign policy aims.⁴⁷ In response to concerns that Hungary would be on the wrong side of Western integration if it did not have good relations with its neighbors, Laszlo Kovacs replied: "Regrettably such a danger cannot be ruled out. It is precisely the task of Hungarian foreign policy to dissipate such anxieties. ... Without a normal relationship...this region has no chance of integrating itself into the advanced part of Europe. For Europe will not receive countries that are bickering with each other."⁴⁸ The opposition was nearly united in its pledge to make relations with Hungary's neighbors its top priority. The MSP argued that it is "extraordinarily important that Hungary's relations with neighbouring countries should not deteriorate any further" and pledged that it would attempt to reach basic treaties with Romania and Slovakia "as soon as possible," even at the price of relinquishing all future territorial claims.⁴⁹ Elsewhere, the MSP committed itself to "a historic compromise" and "historic reconciliation," based on the model of French-German relations following the Second World War.⁵⁰ MSP chief and later Prime Minister Gyula Horn stated that the most important thing for Hungary was good relations with its neighbors because "the West will be no partner of ours if we clash with each other and increase tension among ourselves."⁵¹ The reasoning was as follows: both good treatment of the Magyar diaspora by its host states and Western integration are dependent upon bilateral treaties. Thus, the Hungarian state must be willing to do practically anything to sign them, including shutting the Magyar diaspora out of the negotiation process.

The victory of the MSP in the 1994 parliamentary elections set Hungary on a different foreign policy path than the MDF traveled from 1990-4. Although the broad tripartite consensus on foreign policy was intact, the priorities of the Government were quite different.⁵² Imre Szekeres, Deputy Chairman of the MSP, pointedly outlined the differences between the Antall and Horn governments:

Hungary must be able to digest at last the trauma of the Treaty of Trianon, to find at last a *modus vivendi* in which the Hungarian nation, inside and outside the Hungarian borders, can live its Hungarianness to the full and be able to find a balance which must necessarily come about between the majority nations and the Hungarian minorities of the other countries.⁵³

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In addition, according to Szekeres, Horn would only be “the prime minister of 10.5 million Hungarians. However, at the same time, he will be a representative, in some form, of the other 3.5 million Hungarians living outside the borders.”⁵⁴ The latter statement was clearly a reference to and repudiation of Antall’s controversial statement about being the Prime Minister, “in spirit,” of 15 million Hungarians.⁵⁵ In the presentation of his government’s program, Horn expressed continuity with the foreign policy goals of his predecessors, but that “our country’s international prestige can be considerably increased” by reordering its priorities.⁵⁶

THE HORN TREATIES

The Horn Government set to work on reaching basic treaties with Slovakia and Romania immediately after assuming power. Hungary was very willing to make concessions on the issues of collective rights and political autonomy – something which the Magyar diaspora greatly feared – and agree to relinquish all territorial claims because, as Horn observed, “the sooner we settle our ties with our neighbours, the bigger chance we have for joining NATO.”⁵⁷ The impending summit on the European Stability Pact (in spring 1995) added significant urgency to the negotiations: “Pressure is being exerted on us in the sense that ... the member states of the European Union, and obviously the United States as well, would like to see such basic treaties concluded between Hungary and Romania and Hungary and Slovakia, before the Paris conference.”⁵⁸ Although Hungary was unable to conclude a treaty with Romania in that timeframe, one was reached with Slovakia prior to the summit.

The opposition in the Hungarian National Assembly, and ordinary Hungarians in both Slovakia and Hungary blasted the Hungary-Slovakia Basic Treaty. Thousands demonstrated in front of St. Stephen Basilica in Budapest when the treaty was made public.⁵⁹ Three Hungarian opposition parties – the Federation of Young Democrats (Fidesz), the Christian Democratic People’s Party, and the Hungarian Democratic Forum – called upon Horn not to sign the treaty. Fidesz chairman Viktor Orban proclaimed that “the Hungarian government has capitulated. [Slovak Prime Minister] Vladimir Meciar has defeated Gyula Horn.”⁶⁰ The parliamentary debate was tense, with the opposition arguing that the Horn Government in essence sold out the Magyars of Slovakia in order to get a basic treaty as quickly as possible.⁶¹ However, some newspapers praised the treaty and its international implications for Hungary.⁶² Similarly, the Alliance of Free Democrats (coalition partner with the MSP) “argued that the basic treaty helps Hungary’s Euroatlantic integration.”⁶³ Despite criticisms, the Hungarian National Assembly ratified the treaty in June 1995.

The Hungary-Romania Basic Treaty was more difficult to reach because of intransigence from the Romanian side and the Romanian elections, which relied in large part on anti-Hungarian demagoguery. In addition, the fervor in the Hungarian parliament was stronger because of events in Slovakia: the Slovakian government passed a language law which made Slovak the official language, thus raising doubts about the Magyars’ ability to freely use Hungarian, which was supposed to be guaranteed under

the Slovakia-Hungary Basic Treaty.⁶⁴ While the Hungarian government reacted negatively to the Slovak language law, the opposition claimed that it had foreseen this outcome. By being too quick to sign a treaty with Slovakia (i.e., without holding out for sufficient minority rights guarantees), the Horn Government put the Magyar minority at risk. As one MDF deputy put it, “the Hungarian-Slovak basic treaty was a mere trick by which the two sides wanted to delude the international public.”⁶⁵ Adding to the hysteria about the basic treaties, MDF Chairman Sandor Lezsak warned that the MSP-led government was “preparing the ground for a third Trianon with the Hungarian-Romanian basic treaty.”⁶⁶

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Some movement on cosmetic issues from the Romanian side allowed the finalization of a Romania-Hungary Basic Treaty; again, without political/territorial autonomy, or collective rights for the Magyar minority.⁶⁷ The opposition savagely attacked it.⁶⁸ Horn tried to justify the treaty’s provisions by arguing that they were the best Hungary could achieve under the circumstances: “Agreements that satisfy all demands cannot be concluded with the neighbouring countries...documents that aim at reconciliation and lasting cooperation should definitely be signed, as that is the road leading to the European Union.”⁶⁹ Hungarian president Goncz echoed this sentiment: “I believe none of us disputes the fact that our first task is to win membership in the European Union. Within this, we are obliged to engage in absolutely realistic politics, and that is our only opportunity.”⁷⁰ In his defense before the National Assembly in September 1996 of the treaty with Romania, Kovacs was surprisingly blunt about its international implications;

Good relations between Hungary and its neighbouring countries are in our fundamental interest because they serve the security and stability of the region and therefore serve our own security interests, too. They assist economic cooperation and so they suit our economic interests, too. They provide an opportunity for us to act profitably in the interest of the Hungarian communities in neighbouring countries and therefore they suit our minority-policy interests, too. Finally, they are a precondition of our own and our neighbours’ admission to Euro-Atlantic organizations and so they suit our integration interests.⁷¹

The reasons given by the Horn government for signing the treaty quickly became an important source of criticism: “Today, they look to the expectations posed by the decisive international political factors of Euro-Atlantic integration, instead of trying to have their negotiating partners accept Hungarian goals.”⁷²

CONCLUSIONS

Hungarian foreign policy since the collapse of communism has been strongly influenced by the process of gaining membership in Western political, military, and economic institutions. NATO's invitation for Hungary to join the alliance marked both a success for post-cold war Hungarian foreign policy and the acceptance of Hungary as part of the West. Hungary's ties to the West through NATO and likely European Union membership will continue to restrain its diaspora policies. Hopes of Western integration have constrained even the hint of latent Hungarian irredentism and have played a critical role in foreign policy decisions, internal politics, and domestic rhetoric. Western international organizations have made it quite clear that states with lingering territorial claims or interstate ethnic problems would not be seriously considered for membership. Although this was not the only requirement, it was an important one, as these institutions do not want to import security problems. And because Hungary is the only 'first tier' East/Central European state with a substantial diaspora, this issue has been an especially acute obstacle for Hungary's "return" to Europe.

What are the broader implications for Western policy toward Eastern/Central Europe? The Hungarian case is not unique. Many states in East/Central Europe are eager to reap the anticipated benefits associated with Western integration, which provides the West with important leverage over them. Similar pressure to that placed upon Hungary has been applied, with varying degrees of success, upon such countries as Slovakia and Romania.

To be effective, Western pressure must also be consistent. Steady pressure on Hungary appeared to be instrumental in achieving the desired foreign policy outcome. The fact that the Horn Government felt compelled to reach a bilateral treaty with Romania in the face of harsh domestic criticism of its treaty with Slovakia was a testament to the pressure's success. However European pressure could create a backlash against the mandates of Western institutions. While this did not fully happen in Hungary, the defeat of the Horn Government in the 1998 parliamentary elections by the transformed center-right Young Democrats was based in part on the latter's criticisms of the bilateral treaties and promises to revise them.⁷³ On a different issue, European condemnation of the inclusion of the far-right Freedom Party into the Austrian ruling coalition has actually increased the party's popularity, a reaction similar to earlier Western disapproval of Kurt Waldheim's presidency.⁷⁴

Lastly, some states in Eastern/Central Europe might be somewhat immune to Western pressure on the grounds that integration is neither likely nor desirable. For example, Belarus' turn away from the West and toward Russia, due in part, to domestic and geopolitical factors, also indicated its rejection of Western integration. The regime of Aleksandr Lukashenko has heightened its level of oppression despite, and likely because of, Western pressure.⁷⁵

In sum, it is clear that Hungarian foreign policy toward the Magyar diaspora under successive governments was restrained by the goal of Western integration. The

requirements for integration can be a powerful tool to modify the foreign and domestic policy behavior of aspirants to its institutions. While there are certainly limits to its effectiveness, conditions of democratization, respect for minority rights, and the inviolability of borders has the potential for spreading the European zone of peace eastward.

Notes

- ¹ Compiled from Ferenc Glatz, "Data on Trianon Hungary," *Hungarians and Their Neighbors in Modern Times, 1867-1950*, ed. Ferenc Glatz (East European Monographs, 1995), 105-110.
- ² The English language uses the term Hungarians, though the Hungarians call themselves Magyars. I use the two terms interchangeably with a preference for 'Magyar' when referring to the diaspora and 'Hungarian' when referring to the state.
- ³ Henry Hauthenbach, "Divided Nations and the Politics of Borders," *Nationalities Papers* v.24, no.2, September 1996, 369-70 (369).
- ⁴ Adrian Hyde-Price, *The International Politics of East Central Europe* (Manchester University Press, 1996), 32-3.
- ⁵ Daniel N. Nelson, "Hungary and Its Neighbors: Security and Ethnic Minorities," *Nationalities Papers* v.26, no.2, 1998, 313-30 (321).
- ⁶ Paul K. Huth, *Standing Your Ground* (University of Michigan Press, 1996), 90-2.
- ⁷ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Blackwell, 1983), 1.
- ⁸ Gyorgy Csepeli, *National Self-Identity in Contemporary Hungary* (East European Monographs, 1997); Laszlo Deme, "Liberal Nationalism in Hungary, 1988-1990," *East European Quarterly* v.32, no.1, Spring 1998, 57-82.
- ⁹ *Hungarian Home Service* (Budapest), 22 May 1990, 13:13 GMT, reproduced as "Premier Jozsef Antall Presents Government Programme," in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (BBCSWB)*, 25 May 1990, EE/0773/ C1/1.
- ¹⁰ The passage of the Hungarian Security Concept by the Hungarian National Assembly one vote short of unanimity was evidence of this consensus. *MTI*, 2 March 1993, 19:40 GMT, reproduced as "Parliament Approves Security Policy Principles," in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service — Eastern Europe (FBIS-EEU)*, 3 March 1993, 25.
- ¹¹ Council Decision of 14 June 1994 on the continuation of the joint action adopted by the Council on the basis of Article J.3 of the Treaty on European Union on the inaugural conference on the Stability Pact," 94/367/CFSP. [accessed via CELEX database]
- ¹² "EC Summit may Convoke Conference on Pact with E. Europe," *Agence France Presse*, 7 December 1993.
- ¹³ "EC Launches Work on French-proposed Stability Pact," *Agence France Presse*, 11 December 1993.
- ¹⁴ Joe Cook, "Stability Pact Tries Hard to Encourage Good Behaviour between Neighbours," *European Dialogue*, no.1, March-April 1995.
- ¹⁵ Hungary, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland, and Slovenia. "Screening Process Continues," *European Dialogue*, no.2, March-April 1999.
- ¹⁶ Julius Strauss, "Hungary Has Uphill Battle for Rapprochement," *European Dialogue*, no.1, March-April 1995.
- ¹⁷ "Hungary Seeks Friendship with Neighbours But Wants Hungarian Minority Rights," *Magyar Távirati Iroda* (Hungarian Telegraphic Agency, hereinafter *MTI*), 15 October 1993.
- ¹⁸ Kovacs became Foreign Minister after the Hungarian Socialist Party won the 1994 elections (see below).
- ¹⁹ "What Does Hungary Expect from EU?," *MTI*, 13 December 1994.
- ²⁰ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Study on NATO Enlargement," September 1995, accessed July 2001 <<http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/enl-9502.html>>.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*
- ²² Senate Foreign Relations Committee, *Meeting the Challenges of a Post-Cold War World: NATO Enlargement and US-Russia Relations*, report prepared by Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 105th Cong., 1st sess., 1997, Committee Print 97-S-382-9, S. Prt. 105-26.
- ²³ *Ibid.*
- ²⁴ US Department of State, Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs, "Hungary's Record in Meeting NATO's

Standards,” 15 August 1997.

²⁵ US Department of State, Marc Grossman, “Statement submitted for the record, as prepared for a hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee,” October 1997.

²⁶ *MTI*, 20 September 1995, 19:31 GMT, reproduced as “US Defence Secretary: Hungary is Leading Candidate to Join NATO,” in *BBCSWB*, 22 September 1995, EE/D2415/C.

²⁷ “Interview with Hungarian Foreign Minister – Uj Szo,” *MTI*, 30 January 1995.

²⁸ For more detail on Csurka’s essay, see its partial reproduction in “Excerpts from Csurka’s Theses,” *Nepszabadsag* (Budapest), 27 August 1992, reproduced in *FBIS-EEU*, 3 September 1992, 9-13. Also Judith Pataki, “Istvan Csurka’s Tract: Summary and Reactions,” *RFE/RL Research Report* v.1, no.40, 9 October 1992, 15-22.

²⁹ Edith Oltay, “A Profile of Istvan Csurka,” *RFE/RL Research Report* v.1, no.40, 9 October 1992, 26-9.

³⁰ Because of his Hungarian heritage, Lantos has been an important interlocutor between the U.S. and Hungary and his views hold substantial weight in both countries.

³¹ “Tom Lantos Meets the Press in Budapest,” *MTI*, 1 September 1992.

³² *Hungarian Radio* (Budapest), 1 September 1992, 10:00 GMT, reproduced as “US Senator [sic] says Csurka Article May Harm US-Hungarian Relations,” in *BBCSWB*, 4 September 1992, EE/147/A1/1. Also see Peter Maass, “US Interests Try to Counter Hungarian Rightist,” *Washington Post*, 20 October 1992, A31.

³³ “Hungary Undergoes Democratic Changes, President Says,” *MTI*, 12 September 1992.

³⁴ “Csurka Pamphlet – Protest,” *MTI*, 1 September 1992.

³⁵ “Hungary Should Not Risk its Results – Foreign Minister’s Lecture,” *MTI*, 12 January 1993.

³⁶ *Hungarian Radio* (Budapest), 31 August 1992, 13:18 GMT, reproduced as “Premier Antall Addresses Parliament on ‘Csurka’ and ‘Media,’” in *BBCSWB*, 3 September 1992, EE/1476/B/1

³⁷ Edith Oltay, “Hungarian Democratic Forum Rent by Dispute over Extremism,” *RFE/RL Research Report* v.1, no.47, 27 November 1992, 22-25.

³⁸ Edith Oltay, “Hungarian Democratic Forum Opts for Centrist Policy,” *RFE/RL Research Report* v.2, no.9, 26 February 1993, 22-6.

³⁹ “HDF National Convention – Opinions,” *MTI*, 23 January 1993; “Antall and Csurka Explain HDF Balance of Power,” *MTI*, 25 January 1993.

⁴⁰ “Parliament on Hungarian-Ukrainian General Agreement – Criticism by Hungarian Way,” *MTI*, 3 May 1993.

⁴¹ Edith Oltay, “Hungarian Democratic Forum Expels Radical Leader,” *RFE/RL Research Report* v.2, no.31, 30 July 1993, 24-29 (25).

⁴² In early September 1993, the Government’s ruling coalition only enjoyed a two-seat majority and there were continual fears that it would have to be reconstituted as a minority government. *MTI*, 3 September 1993, 11:21 GMT, reproduced as “Government Coalition Majority Falls to Two in Parliament,” in *BBCSWB*, 9 September 1993, EE/1789/A.

⁴³ “Csurka and Kiraly Excluded from HDF,” *MTI*, 22 June 1993.

⁴⁴ qtd. in Edith Oltay, “Hungary,” *RFE/RL Research Report* v.3, no.16, 22 April 1994, 55-61 (59).

⁴⁵ Alfred A. Reisch, “Hungarian Parties’ Foreign Policy Electoral Platforms,” *RFE/RL Research Report* v.3, no.19, 13 May 1994, 14-21 (17).

⁴⁶ Alfred A. Reisch, “Hungary’s Foreign Policy Toward the East,” *RFE/RL Research Report* v.2, no.15, 9 April 1993, 39-48 (47).

⁴⁷ Alfred A. Reisch, “Consensus on Hungary’s Foreign Policy Frayed by Elections,” *RFE/RL Research Report* v.3, no.20, 20 May 1994, 42-48 (43).

⁴⁸ Kovacs qtd. in *Hungarian Radio*, 7 December 1993, 11:50 GMT, reproduced as “Socialist Party Foreign Affairs Spokesman on ‘Realistic’ Foreign Policy,” in *BBCSWB*, 9 December 1993, EE/1867/A.

⁴⁹ *Hungarian Radio*, 4 December 1993, 17:00 GMT, reproduced as “Socialist Party Formulates New Foreign Policy,” in *BBCSWB*, 7 December 1993, EE/1865/A.

⁵⁰ *Hungarian Radio*, 7 December 1993, 11:50 GMT, reproduced as “Socialist Party Foreign Affairs Spokesman on ‘Realistic’ Foreign Policy,” in *BBCSWB*, 9 December 1993, EE/1867/A; Alfred A. Reisch, “Hungarian Parties’ Foreign Policy Electoral Platforms,” (note 56), 19.

⁵¹ *Hungarian Radio*, 2 February 1994, 20:05 GMT, reproduced as “Foreign Minister and Leading Politicians Discuss Hungarian Security and NATO,” in *BBCSWB*, 5 February 1994, EE/1914/A.

⁵² Alfred A. Reisch, “The New Hungarian Government’s Foreign Policy,” *RFE/RL Research Report* v.3, no.22, 26

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⁵³ qtd. in *Duna TV* (Budapest), 29 May 1994, 20:38 GMT, reproduced as "HSP Deputy Chairman Outlines Policy Towards Cross-Border Hungarians," in *BBCSWB*, 31 May 1994, EE/2010/A.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Hungarian Telegraph Agency*, 13 August 1990, 18:21 GMT, reproduced as "Hungarian Government Spokesman's Office Criticizes Slovak Premier's Speech," in *BBCSWB*, 16 August 1990, EE/0844/A2/1.

⁵⁶ *Hungarian Radio*, 14 July 1994, 07:19 GMT, reproduced as "Horn Presents his Government Programme," in *BBCSWB*, 16 July 1994, EE/2049/A.

⁵⁷ "Horn Interview in Polityka," *MTI*, 22 November 1994.

⁵⁸ Laszlo Kovacs qtd. in "Basic Treaties, Hungary Will Not Make Concessions," *MTI*, 1 March 1995.

⁵⁹ "Demonstration Against Basic Treaties," *MTI*, 18 March 1995.

⁶⁰ "Opposition Asks Horn Not to Sign Treaty," *MTI*, 18 March 1995.

⁶¹ "Parliament – Debate on the Basic Treaty," *MTI*, 20 March 1995; "Hungarian-Slovak Treaty – Pros and Cons," *MTI*, 13 June 1995.

⁶² "Newspapers on Hungarian-Slovak Treaty," *MTI*, 20 March 1995.

⁶³ "Parliament – Hungarian-Slovak Basic Treaty," *MTI*, 23 May 1995.

⁶⁴ "Slovak Language Law Contravenes Treaty," *MTI*, 20 November 1995.

⁶⁵ "Parliament – Opposition Reacts to Horn's Address," *MTI*, 20 November 1995.

⁶⁶ "HDF on Hungarian-Romanian Basic Treaty," *MTI*, 30 May 1996.

⁶⁷ "Hungarian-Romanian Basic Treaty – Full Text," *MTI*, 17 September 1996.

⁶⁸ "Opposition Condemns Hungarian-Romanian Treaty," *MTI*, 16 September 1996.

⁶⁹ "Horn on Basic Treaties," *MTI*, 17 August 1996.

⁷⁰ "Duray, Kovacs, Tokes, Goncz on Hungarian-Romanian Treaty," *MTI*, 19 August 1996.

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⁷³ Bianca Guruita, "Romania's Orban Problem," *Transitions*, July 1998.

⁷⁴ William Drozdiak, "Haider Plays On Fears of Foreigners," *Washington Post*, 6 February 2000, pg.A1.

⁷⁵ Janusz Bugajski, "Eastern Europe's New Leaders: Most Leaders Have Given as Their Primary Aim a Return to Europe and Normality," *World and I* v.14, no.1, November 1999, p32. Also see Michael Wines, "Fear Is Creeping Across this Post-soviet Land," *New York Times*, 17 December 1999, pg.A4.