HUNGARY'S POST-2001 RATIFICATION CHALLENGES: LESSONS CONCERNING THE V4-NATO RELATIONSHIP

Péter Marton

Abstract: *Hungary and the other Visegrad countries (V4), over the past decade, participated in coalition military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, but not Libya. This article examines how this has impacted Hungary's standing in the North Atlantic Alliance, and to this end deploys the concepts of "two level games" and "ratification" as deployed throughout the political sciences, particularly in Putnam's works. This work adapts these concepts to show how a key challenge of Hungarian foreign and security policy post-2001 was the multi-pronged ratification of the country's path in its foreign affairs to indirectly provide for the country's security, through sufficient "macro-adaptation" to the Alliance's needs. There are lessons that can be gleaned from this experience concerning the other V4 countries and the V4 group as a collective.*

Keywords: Hungary, V4, Libya, North Atlantic Alliance, game theory

Introduction

Hungary, along with the other Visegrad countries, has, in the past decade, participated in coalition military operations involving combat[1] in Afghanistan and Iraq, but has refrained from doing so in Libya. This article examines how this decision affects the country's standing within the North Atlantic Alliance and, to this end, deploys the concept of "two level games" and "ratification" as used in the political sciences largely in Robert Putnam's footsteps. It will adapt these concepts to show how a key challenge of Hungarian foreign and security policy post-2001 was the multi-pronged ratification of the country's path in its foreign affairs to thereby indirectly provide for the country's security, through sufficient "macro-adaptation" to the Alliance's needs. There are lessons that can be taken

from this experience concerning the other Visegrad countries, and even for the V4 group as a collective, given the generally similar predicaments faced over the years, and with the generally, albeit not entirely, similar security needs of those countries. With a view to providing conclusions regarding this, the article in its closing section overviews East-Central European countries' policy towards the intervention in Libya. This offers a chance to take stock of the current state of the V4–NATO relationship, and to assess its prospects.

The Visegrad Four and Hungary within the North Atlantic Alliance

When attempting to shed light on the foreign policy behaviour of the Visegrad Four, including Hungary, within the North Atlantic Alliance, it is useful to recall how, in neorealist theory, it is generally assumed that relatively smaller countries within security alliances exploit their relatively greater partners,[2] or in other words become security consumers, as opposed to security providers. While this assumption is commonplace, there is variance as to the dynamics which produce such an outcome. Some suggest that smaller countries may feel incapable of defending themselves independently, and thus logically look to minimise costs as much as possible upon having entered a security alliance. Without the ability or resources

to cover for the full spectrum of potentially necessary military capabilities themselves, they can then rely on greater powers as well as the collective resources and capability set of an alliance. This may also represent welfare gains for them, having "contracted out" the provision of security in this way.[3] Others argue that since small countries cannot realistically expect to be able to set the agenda of large alliances, and thus pay in terms of their dependent strategic orientation to bigger partners, they may justifiably look to commit less to goals formulated largely independent of them.[4]

This submission of one's strategic will to others is a key aspect of alliance politics, and writing on the subject Danopoulos noted[5] something of great interest in this article: namely how professionalisation, or adaptation, on the part of militaries within alliances, has to take place on two different levels of analysis ("macro" and "micro").[6] Correspondingly, the above explanations of the "alliance-exploitation" phenomenon may also operate on different levels of analysis.

With this in mind it is possible to differentiate between macro- and micro-adaptation in alliance politics. Both macro-adaptation, (conformist policy formulation) and micro-adaptation, (the adaptation of people to alliance goals). For example, Danopoulos studied the processes of micro-adaptation in terms of the socialisation of NATO and Warsaw Pact militaries, in a number of detailed case studies, but the interpretation of micro-adaptation could be broadened to include processes within the larger public as well as specifically among decision-makers. Interpreting the reasons for alliance exploitation may subsequently focus on insufficient macro- and micro-adaptation simultaneously or, in other words, the problem may be framed as less-than-perfect adaptation both in conforming to others' agenda in policy and in terms of decision-makers,' the bureaucracy's, key interest groups' and a public's attitudes.

Ringsmose did important work on empirically testing the proposition of alliance-exploitation regarding a Danish case during the Cold War,[7] finding evidence of how Denmark's defence budget constantly lagged behind the Alliance average for decades, even while moving in near-perfect synchronicity with others' spending in its surges and its long-term decline. An especially interesting addition in the context of this article is how Denmark, despite the above points, is a key participant in the Afghanistan mission, having

provided troops over the years for risky deployments to Southern Afghanistan, and enduring one of the worst casualty-to-population rates within the ISAF coalition.

This reflects the Visegrad countries' general experience as well. Typical complaints about the group's behaviour include that upon having entered the Alliance some of them (Poland being the exception) have shown a clear intention to reduce their defence budgets below expectations, and to invest much less in capability development than what would have been required; for example in the wake of the Washington 1999 Defence Capability Initiative. Furthermore, their overall defence spending, in terms of trends and not in absolute numbers, fails to reflect the shifts of the Russian defence budget[8] which is the ultimate relevant geopolitical concern for these countries. The latter data, as indicators, may show that Visegrad countries long since opted for complete reliance, in this respect, on the US and the collective strength of NATO.

They are responding to criticism in light of this and related pressures, by compensating in the Alliance's foreign missions, most notably in Afghanistan where they would otherwise have had no particular interests. They behave similarly to Denmark, and in this respect Hungary, spending around 1% of its GDP on its defence, and between 10 to 20% of its defence budget on capability development, even involved in Afghanistan with a comparatively impressive GDP-dollars-to-soldiers-deployed ratio,[9] is a clear example. The country embraces the Alliance's goals in Afghanistan in its official discourse. Yet, as Marton and Wagner show,[10] "winking" speech acts of politicians across the political spectrum indicate less than genuine micro-adaptation on the part of decision-makers in this specific context, and the need for an emphasis on general "alliance requirements" when in need of a better-resonating explanation for the country's involvement there.

That there needs to be "compensation" as well as "winking" in support of a policy of compensation highlights how it is often a fundamental challenge to please the Alliance and the domestic public at the same time. Political science and specifically the field of Foreign Policy Analysis have been conventionally more interested in understanding how the need to curry favour with the public may affect policy processes. Common concepts in analysing these are those of the "two-level game" and "ratification," based on Putnam's

footsteps. This article now turns to discussing these and to subsequently examine how they may need to be adapted to better understand the problem of having to conform to various expectations simultaneously.

Levels of the Game of Policy Ratification

In his seminal article Putnam conceptualised key challenges of international negotiations, and compared them, from the negotiators' perspective, to simultaneously playing chess on two boards, where every move represents moves at both "tables." [11] One of the two games plays out in the sphere of international politics, and the other in domestic politics. The players have 'win-sets' which is the set of outcomes that will be accepted by their constituents. Thus, their win-sets have to overlap if they are to reach decisions or agreements through negotiations that they will not subsequently be forced to defect on, as a result of resistance at home. This is the challenge of ratification which may manifest in diverse ways. Ratification implies not merely the legislative act of voting on, accepting, and promulgating in domestic law, an international agreement, but the genuine acceptance of any foreign policy decision by a critical mass and mix of people as well as institutional and party political actors. Resistance from all or any of the above may emerge in the form of protests, strikes, civil disobedience or riots as well as a failure of ratification in parliament. Given that a failure of ratification means defection and failure of agreement, players entering international negotiations jointly have to deal with this prospect, and price related risks in their own calculations. Ideally case this means that they should leave enough room to manoeuvre for their partners. Gains arising out of international negotiations, or bargaining, are thus interdependent.

Other authors, in case studies adapting the original concept and the related theory, looked to develop this broad notion of ratification in several ways, fitting the different contexts where it may be relevant. Li, for example, in a study of cross-Straits politics between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China, notes how domestic interest groups may work their way around a government by engaging in negotiations, and forging ties, directly with the opposite side.[12] This article adapts the concept of ratification in a different

way to highlight an equally fundamental aspect of negotiations-like interaction in Alliance politics. It considers the need, especially on the part of small countries, to conform to the expectations of big players, and in this sense have their foreign policy ratified by them as well. There is a "win-set" for these countries both in terms of what their publics tolerate and what they can get away with in their generally observable quest for cost minimisation and security consumption within alliances.

In reference to intra-alliance adaptation, the existing room for manoeuvre, in seeking such upwards ratification, affects how much macro-adaptation will be necessary. If it is too narrow, this may in more difficult circumstances preclude a country from successfully adapting to the alliance. For instance, this may be because of a failure of micro-adaptation on the part of the public which in turn may also be translated as a failure on the part of society to sufficiently socialise into a trans-social and trans-national cost- and risk-sharing community that is the ideal-type of a deeply integrated security alliance. In light of this it may be an interesting question how much decision-makers' attitudes may deviate from the more wide-spread patterns, or how much micro-adaptation fails, or is imperfect among them, and not only in the ranks of the public.

Proceeding further in adapting the concept of ratification, just as Putnam himself was ready in his study of domestic politics to reckon with the triangular interaction of government/negotiator and at least two interest groups, the multi-pronged nature of the effort required for successful ratification of small countries' foreign policy needs to be remembered. Various key partners will sometimes have contradicting expectations that may be difficult to reconcile, as a function of how much these expectations are polarised.

In order to highlight the significance of this, as well as to adequately interpret some key events of the last decade of Hungarian foreign policy, the following section develops a simple visual tool that captures how different directions may consent to 'moderate' or 'severe' disapproval. That is, deficiencies in degree of ratification, and how parallel or simultaneous ratification challenges may interfere with each other.

The object of inquiry is the three-pronged challenge that has become an acute issue for Hungarian foreign policy in the period following 9/11. An indirect acceptance of Hungarian foreign policy was required simultaneously from three strategically important sources: the Hungarian public, the US, and groups, of varying composition, of some of Hungary's Western European allies.

To illustrate this, consider a traffic lights analogy which in the dramatic case of a strong refusal of approval for Hungarian foreign policy may turn to red. At times like this especially strong resistance may be experienced from a strategically important source related to a particular aspect of the country's foreign affairs. Such prohibitive or disapproving signals may come from the Hungarian public or the international stage, from the direction of the US or a divergent group of Western European allies when one emerges.

On 11 September 2001, at the beginning of the period examined, the lights turned yellow in case the US gave the immediate demand for committed cooperation from partners in the wake of the terror attacks. 'You are either with us or against us in this war on terror,' stated President Bush on 6 November 2001, at a press conference held together with (then) French President Jacques Chirac.[13]

For Hungary, this was to have immediate implications on domestic politics. István Csurka, head of the MIÉP political party, referred in his first reaction to the attack of 9/11 as 'a retaliation against globalism by the oppressed,'[14] and this affected other political parties' willingness – or rather strengthened the lack thereof – to forge a coalition with MIÉP at the Hungarian parliamentary elections of 2002. Beyond this, the most important element of conforming to allied expectations was a commitment of troops/personnel, mostly staff officers and medical personnel, for the fledgling Afghanistan mission.

What follows in is the peculiar twist in the storyline of when a group of Western European allies temporarily diverged from the path of committed support to the US. This development came in the context of the lead-up to the Iraq war, even as NATO had earlier invoked Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty related to the threat posed by al-Qaida and its bases in Afghanistan. France and Germany took a stance against the Iraq war and, parallel to this,

a substantial segment of European public opposed a new round of the Gulf conflict.

The US nevertheless continued to expect support from its allies. In the case of Iraq this meant mostly symbolic support to counteract a notion that the US was going into the Iraq war alone. To a journalist's question, (then) Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld famously responded

> you are thinking of Europe as Germany and France. I don´t. I think that´s old Europe…If you look at the entire NATO Europe today, the centre of gravity is shifting to the east. And there are a lot of new members.[15]

The new members of NATO he was referring to, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland, along with other countries signed the document on 30 January 2003 that came to be known as the Letter of Eight which called for solidarity in disarming Hussein, citing concerns related to the threat of terrorism. Other East-Central European countries then joined this bandwagon, and on 6 February signed a similar document known as the Vilnius Letter. This latecomer group included Romania and Bulgaria for whom joining the EU was still only a prospect. Meanwhile, the signing of the EU Accession Treaties for the Visegrad Four would take place on 16 April in Athens, following the necessary ratification by all EU member states, and Chirac did not fail to highlight the possibility of related complications. He commented that '(e)ntering the European Union presupposes a minimal consideration for others, a minimum of concert [between countries]… I think these countries missed a good chance to remain silent.'[16]

Chirac's signal of disapproval was primarily intended to distract, nevertheless it may have affected Hungarian public opinion by further reinforcing a wide-spread sense of illegitimacy regarding the Iraq war.

A full completion of a mission of the Hungarian logistics battalion deployed to Iraq as part of the Polish-led Multinational Forces-Iraq coalition, was to prove impossible as an indirect result of this sense of illegitimacy. The public reacted with a mix of concern and scepticism over the appropriateness of the mission in the wake of such developments as the logistics battalion suffering its only lethal combat casualty with the death of platoon leader Richárd Nagy, on 04 June 2004, and the 18 February 2004 attack on the al-Hillah

base where Hungarian troops were stationed. Such concerns and doubts were present from the beginnings of the mission and eventually this was to collapse its earlier all-party support in Parliament. Openly, the political party MDF took the first stance against the mission, but at the same time other political parties harboured similar doubts and critical arguments, and in reality this led to the relatively abrupt conclusion of the controversial operation in Iraq. The lack of synchronicity is worth noting here: the lights for the Hungarian public, and through it the lights for Hungarian domestic politics, turn red at a point when in fact most of Europe was supportive of the Iraq mission on the governmental level, even if only tacitly so. An important, partial exception in this regard was Spain to which significance is lent by the Madrid terror attacks of 11 March, 2004, since these may have affected the Hungarian public's sentiment. Ultimately, Hungary's exit from Iraq did not endanger US interests, as the US expected symbolic rather than effective contributions from most of its partners in Iraq, and even this symbolic support mattered less by 2004–2005.

By this time however, there appeared US expectations of enhanced contributions from European partners in the joint efforts in Afghanistan. A symptom of this, parallel to the intensification of the guerrilla campaign waged by the Taliban and other insurgent factions, by 2005 the saying that ISAF stands for 'I Saw Americans Fighting' came to be popular among US troops.[17] Hungary began to assess its options, and the decision to move from a company-size, Kabul-deployed contribution to taking over a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Pul-i-Khumri, Baghlan province, thus increasing the country's share of the burden within the coalition. By September 2006 this was accomplished and Hungary´s public didn´t strongly oppose this. In Parliament there was all-party support. A NATO-led mission under a UN mandate, with Western European allies by this stage in search of ways to mend fences or reinforce the Trans-Atlantic security relationship with the US, seemed an easy sell.

This lucky constellation was not sufficient, however, to adequately man and resource the Afghanistan mission, especially in the context of the worsening security situation. Generating the required level of forces took conflict-burdened rounds of high-level negotiations within the Alliance. Eventually most countries,

including Hungary, had to increase and diversify their contributions by taking on new tasks. In Hungary's case the general expectation to do more was compounded by local developments in Baghlan province which somewhat deflated the value of the Hungarian contribution there after 2006. Baghlan province is of strategic importance, hosting key road connections between Kabul and Northern Afghanistan (the towns of Qunduz and Mazar-i-Sharif), but while the area was relatively safe in 2006, the worsening security situation subsequently constrained the Hungarian PRT's work to an extent. In this backdrop, by 2009, the country undertook to deploy a Special Operations Task Unit in Wardak Province,[18] and a joint US-Hungarian Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team to Baghlan Province, thus responding to the "yellow" signals perceived from the US direction.

In 2009, major Eastern European public figures and intellectuals wrote an open letter to President Obama, giving a yellow signal of their own, demanding that the 'United States should reaffirm its vocation as a European power and make clear that it plans to stay fully engaged on the continent.'[19]

At the same time they declared that

> For our part we must work at home in our own countries and in Europe more generally to convince our leaders and societies to adopt a more global perspective and be prepared to shoulder more responsibility in partnership with the United States.[20]

Very clearly this implied a *quid pro quo* and the related warning came in reaction to the „reset" announced in US-Russian relations in 2009. This development was widely perceived to have concerning geopolitical implications for East-Central European countries, potentially invalidating some of the trust invested in the security guarantee of the Alliance.

Delivering on the East-Central European side of the bargain was certainly not free of challenges, as casualties inevitably occurred. In 2008, after two Hungarian combat engineers (Explosive Ordinance Disposal specialists) died in Afghanistan, a parliamentary commission was set up to examine the circumstances of their deaths, reflecting the public's questions about the circumstances. In 2010, less than a month after the deaths of two more Hungarian soldiers, the online edition of the daily *Népszabadság* published

a non-representative, internet-based poll which showed that 52% of respondents opposed the Hungarian role 'in NATO's Afghanistan mission.' Registering a "yellow" signal, albeit conditionally, for this poll cannot be regarded as entirely reliable given its non-representative character. Otherwise, few similar poll results hinted at the level of support for Hungary's participation in ISAF. Former Minister of Defence Imre Szekeres in May 2008 referred to 'very high' support once, but one may as well suspect a latently uninterested and unsupportive public.

Since the end 2009 the Afghanistan mission, and the expectation towards allies to contribute to it, is no longer open-ended, or at least the mission's conclusion has been better conceptualised. After the summer of 2011, a drawdown of contributions did in fact begin as a prospectively long-drawn-out process. This has implications for the analysis here, although it was always the understanding of Hungarian diplomats that expectations would still remain, and no complete exit could yet be contemplated. The lights for the US still turn to green hereby, since the earlier persistent debates about the necessary level of contributions have become void of practical significance in certain respects. Unfortunately, the reason for this is not across-the-board US satisfaction with allies' behaviour and compliance with expectations. On the contrary, as outgoing Secretary of Defence Robert Gates himself voiced in a statement in Brussels, reflecting on the dangers of a "two-tiered" alliance:

> I've worried openly about NATO turning into a two-tiered alliance. (…) Between those willing and able to pay the price and bear the burdens of alliance commitments, and those who enjoy the benefits of NATO membership – be they security guarantees or headquarters billets – but don't want to share the risks and the costs. This is no longer a hypothetical worry. We are there today. And it is unacceptable.

With this, a discussion of Hungary's adaptation within the North Atlantic Alliance now turns to the country's, as well as other regional governments', policy towards the intervention in Libya, where 'yellow' signals appeared once again from a group of Western European countries, largely the UK and France, indicating their respective expectation of contributions.

East-Central European Countries and the Libya Intervention

Of the East-Central European region, notably Bulgaria and Romania played a role in the Libya intervention, and the absence of other post-socialist NATO members is indeed striking, with their compensatory posture towards foreign missions of the Alliance noted before. Before examining the role of the Visegrad countries, it is useful to look at the exceptional cases of Bulgaria and Romania, to see why alliance dependence did not have a strong effect across the region, and why it did have such an effect in their case.

The primary difference is capability. Absent a motivation informed by national security or other direct interests in Libya, alliance dependence pulled these countries into the mission through the existing option of using their naval assets. On 30 March Bulgaria´s cabinet decided to send one of its Naval ships, the *Druzki*, a Belgian-built, Wielingen class frigate to patrol the Mediterranean for up to three months as part of the fleet enforcing the arms embargo against Libya.[21] This came despite of much hesitation and a public debate concerning the worthiness of supporting the rebel leadership which included former prominent members of Gaddafi's regime. [22] In Bulgaria, memories of the case of five Bulgarian nurses who were sentenced to death in Libya upon a fabricated accusation that they had deliberately spread HIV among Libyan patients at a hospital, is still vivid. Given this, the line-up of the Transitional National Council (TNC) at the time of the March decision to take part in an embargo which was clearly biased in support of the rebels is remarkable. The TNC line-up included Idriss Laga, who used to head the association of the relatives of the infected HIV patients, as a military commander, Abdul Fattah Younes who used to be Minister of the Interior under Gaddafi's regime and would later be assassinated and Mustafa Abdul Jalil, a former justice minister turned chairman of the transitional council.

In the wake of France's recognition of the TNC leadership, Prime Minister Boiko Borisov expressed his dismay about support to the rebels, saying 'there are people on this council [the TNC] who tortured our nurses.' The Bulgarian press referred to Younes as 'torturer-in-chief' in the meantime. Grudgingly, though, the Bulgarian leadership elected to join the allies involved in the operation,

showing the required "micro-adaptation." As a particularly striking example of the latter, Member of the European Parliament Nadezhda Mikhailova-Neinski stated that 'more than any other country, Bulgaria should support the military intervention in Libya. And remember that this is a nice example of European solidarity.' As a sign of heeding this advice, Bulgaria eventually recognised the TNC government before Tripoli fell to the rebels, at the end of June 2011.

The Romanian Navy was also offered to participate in maritime operations, even as Romanian President Traian Basescu had earlier opposed military intervention and taken a position against recognising the TNC too quickly, at the Extraordinary European Council in March. The Romanian Navy sent its flagship vessel, the *Regele Ferdinand* to the Mediterranean. It is the former *HMS Coventry*, a British Royal Navy vessel which was sold to Romania for £116 million in 2003, with the full cost, including necessary modernisation, expected to rise to £250 million. The deal was paid for by a loan from the London office of Deutsche Bank.[23] These aspects of the case show how Western European involvement played an important role as to how Romania had the relevant capabilities in the first place.

A more peculiar aspect of the deal is the relatively high price paid since by some estimates, Romania could have acquired anequally capable assets for less, for example from the Dutch Navy at an estimated £40 million. Nevertheless, since HMS Coventry is serving in the Romanian Navy, it has seen action in *Operation Active Endeavour* as well, and thus proved useful for Romania on occasions in the past, making Romania a more valuable member of the Alliance.[24] The contribution came at the price of having to make accessible reserve funding beyond the existing defence budget.

Turning to the Visegrad Four countries, there was a crucial debate about whether the Hungarian and Czech air forces' Gripen aircraft may take part in either enforcing the No Fly Zone or even striking ground targets in Libya. JAS-39 Gripens are fourth-generation fighter aircraft, ably providing for the Quick Reaction Alert capability generally required across NATO for the countries that have them. They may also theoretically serve as part of a force in an overseas mission. Gripens have air-to-air refuelling capability and are able to attack ground targets. Moreover, Sweden used its Gripen aircraft in the Libya campaign, and the only minor hold-up

in employing them came upon their arrival in Sicily, when the jet fuel required for the Gripens was not in stock.[25] Some nevertheless raised the question of whether Hungarian pilots had received enough training, and if they had enough flight hours on a regular basis to take part in a combat mission. As Kiss notes, the issue is primarily whether capabilities are "theoretical" or "operational," and in his view, at the start of the air campaign, only Poland was realistically expected to contribute its air force to the mission.[26] In some countries the lack of capability was clear; notably Bulgaria which certainly could not consider deploying its MiG-21 or MiG-29 fighter aircraft.

Hungary was helped in alleviating pressure arising from the ambiguity of the situation within the Alliance by its peculiar role as President of the EU Council. It maintained the only EU embassy in Tripoli, thus serving in a key liaison role even for the US. The Hungarian Ambassador, Béla Marton, and his staff, became involved in negotiating the release of several Western citizens held by Gaddafi's forces, including a US journalist. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton personally thanked the Ambassador for his role in a letter.[27] The only problematic aspect of this was that Hungary could not at the same time recognise the TNC leadership, and its perceived lack of support to the rebels' cause may not help its relationship with the new government in Tripoli. Additionally, in the wake of the taking of Tripoli, at the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in September 2011, the US made an effort to include Hungary and the the Czech Republic in the Friends of Libya forum to help the two countries reinforce the missing rapport with the TNC. For Poland, in the meantime, it was a similarly delicate balancing act. The government of Donald Tusk, with Radosław Sikorski at the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also referred to the taking over of the EU Presidency from 01 July 2011, to argue the need for a more neutral position in Libyan matters – even while Sikorski himself had paid visit to the rebel leadership in Benghazi in May.

Poland received much criticism for its lack of a military role in Libya. Moreover, Tusk did not simply refuse to commit Polish F-16s, but was at the same time sceptical of the goals of the intervention. He was quoted as saying:

> Although there exists a need to defend civilians from a regime's brutality, isn't the Libyan case yet another example

> of European hypocrisy in view of the way Europe has behaved toward Gaddafi in recent years or even months?[28]

This echoed others' sentiment in the region. Even while Bulgarian Foreign Minister Nikolai Mladenov promised full compliance with the sanctions against Libya, Borisov stated earlier than Tusk's quote above, that

> Petrol and who will exploit Libya's oil fields are to a great extent the interests behind this operation. There are many African countries where hundreds of thousands were killed, where unrest is ongoing... But there are no operations conducted there.[29]

In a condemning reaction that was typical in some circles, Tomas Valašek of the Centre for European Reform, a London-based think tank, opined that the 'fact that Poland not only stayed out of the Libya operation but also described it, effectively, as "war for oil," has damaged NATO's reputation.'[30]

The by-now resigned British Defence Secretary Liam Fox was critical as well, regarding the problems of burden-sharing, and at an event at the Royal United Services Institute think tank, he declared,

> The United States is willing to spend on defence, Britain is willing to spend on defence and deploy. Far too many of our European partners inside NATO are still trying to get a free ride, and they should regard Libya as a wake up call. (...) Some of their contributions are pathetic. If they want the insurance policy, they should perhaps think about paying the premiums.[31]

Tusk's refusal of micro-adaptation is noteworthy. By raising moral objections, and showing a readiness to formulate arguments beyond the established patterns of argument concerning the Libyan intervention, Tusk's remarks shed light on a key aspect of coalition operations: that wars-of-choice-by some are inevitably more questionable in legitimacy than wars-of-necessity-for-some. Framing the key difference in the Libya campaign in this way may highlight how micro-adaptation of an "unthinking" kind was missing in Tusk's and others' case.

This article is not interested in claiming that Tusk's position was the appropriate view of the Libyan situation. It is interested in noting the lack of adaptation primarily. But to illustrate that Tusk's concerns had merit, one may highlight the dynamics of the arms

trade to which he was implicitly referring. Between 2005 and 2009 alone, European countries sold$ 834.5 million of weapons to Libya, of which the share of East-Central European countries, including Poland, was a mere $15.08 million, or 1.8% of the trade.[32]

Still, in light of Gates' and Fox's statements noted above, East-Central European countries were registered as unwilling *as well as* incapable Alliance members in the context of Libya.

The peculiar aspect of this is that a segment of their publics were even moderately sympathetic to the cause of the intervention, albeit. One Hungarian commentator noted a parallel with 1956, and interestingly not with the Anglo–French coalition's involvement in North African military operations but with the intervention that did *not* take place to save the Hungarian revolution, arguing that the decision to intervene would be the right one (before it took place).[33] In Poland as well, public opinion polls showed the schism suggested above: a majority believing the intervention to be correct, even though 88% were opposed to deploying the Polish military for the mission. A way to explain the above contradiction may be with reference to the budgetary as well as the general economic situation. It meant there were no resources willingly committed.

Nevertheless, even the capability to act was missing to a degree. To the extent that the latter is the case, even if partaking in the Libya campaign may have required "unthinking" – as opposed to "genuine" – adaptation, the option to adapt may not have been available at all. This then is a failure of 'macro-adaptation,' or more precisely the failure of pro-active, long-term-oriented macro-adaptation within the Alliance. The earlier participation in the missions in Afghanistan and Iraq represents largely "reactive" macro-adaptation whereby Hungary acquired familiarity with Foreign Internal Defence operations, counter-IED tactics, and, for example, developed a Special Forces capability with US assistance. However, along with the Czech Republic and Poland, they were still unprepared to deploy fighter aircraft to join the Libya coalition, thousands of kilometres nearer to home than the Afghanistan theatre.

This highlights a number of strategic challenges. Of immediate significance is that currently a number of authors propose a "lead from behind" approach of the Obama administration,[34] and others an avoidance of major US land deployments overseas. Thus the use of air forces has become a more feasible option in the eyes of some

decision-makers, and this may reproduce the need for similar, related contributions in the future. In the longer run, the concern is that compensating for security consumption in the form of reactive, and thus from time to time insufficient, macro-adaptation can lead to mutually hollow alliance commitments amongst partners. There is therefore a need for more pro-active, strategic macro-adaptation. Given the current budget constraints which may well prove to be critically cost-prohibitive in the maintenance of meaningful national defence capabilities, sharing is clearly a necessity. While the Anglo-French defence sharing pact of 2010 may not, intuitively speaking, seem to be an appealing analogy for the countries of the region, other initiatives, such as the Strategic Airlift Capability, may show[35] that decently functioning regimes can be developed with a view to collectively creating certain capabilities.[36]

It also seems clear that the Visegrad group is expected, within the Alliance, to work together in maintaining existing capability levels, or to save as much as possible. The Hungarian foreign policy strategy of 2011 notes this, in concluding that

> we shall enhance the Trans-Atlantic dimension of our cooperation with Central European allies. We intend to raise awareness among our allies of the value added that Central European regional cooperation, including and especially the Visegrad cooperation may represent in furthering our common goals as allies.[48]

This indicates that on the part of governmental actors the perception has been reinforced that future macro-adaptation within the Alliance shall include the collective maintenance of some capabilities, utilising this end even the Visegrad forum of cooperation. This, however, cannot work as a mere exercise in the usual reactive macro-adaptation. Standardisation would have to take place in various fields, and interest groups' resistance overcome, or their preferences managed, while at the same time historical sensitivities and related nationalistic tendencies in domestic politics may critically hinder the process. For it to work, the Visegrad countries will now need to genuinely be interested in it themselves. The problem, is that it has come to be necessary to explicitly *expect* of them that they now sense their *own* interests.

Conclusion

Through examining Hungary's experience in the last decade, this article was interested in presenting the Visegrád group's key challenge in terms of alliance politics as one of problematically ratified intra-alliance adaptation. As these countries, with the exception of Poland, sought to compensate for their smaller-than-expected defence budgets with strong participation in foreign missions of the Alliance, they were generally focused on reactive as opposed to proactive macro-adaptation. In mobilising support for related endeavours they were often interested in, and capable of, only unthinking as opposed to genuine micro-adaptation. The post-Libya situation now presents the countries of the region with a peculiar constellation of circumstances. On the one hand, they have to demonstrate meaningful capabilities, and show serious efforts at least towards maintaining existing ones. On the other hand, with the extra-territorial ambitions of the Alliance somewhat decreasing, they are expected to do this in fields of more interest to them and to the territorial-defence function of NATO. Moreover, they are expected to work together to this end, as in certain cases this seems to be the only financially feasible solution. A psychological challenge arising out of this peculiar context is the need to realise that to these expectations one now shall react not with unthinking adaptation, but by owning up to them, genuinely adapting to one's own interests, otherwise it will not work.

Péter Marton is affiliated to the Corvinus University of Budapest and may be reached at: pmarton@gmail.com.

Notes to Pages 187-203

1 Some of the missions undertaken were not combat missions as such, but involved combat, that is, they saw engagements with hostile forces at least occasionally.

2 Mancur Olson (1965), *The Logic of Collective Action,* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p. 35. A remark important to add here is that Poland probably does not fit this category of 'relatively smaller' countries, and that it does in fact spend proportionally more than the other Visegrad countries on defence.

3 Anessa L. Kimball (2010), 'Political survival, policy distribution, and alliance formation,' *Journal of Peace Research* 47, no. 4, pp. 407-419.
4 Walter J. Thies (1989), 'Crises, and the Study of Alliance Politics,' *Armed Forces and Society* 15, no. 3, p. 364.
5 Constantine P. Danopoulos (1985), 'Alliance Participation and Foreign Policy Influence: The Military's Role,' *Armed Forces and Society* 11, no. 2, pp. 271-290.
6 Danopoulos (1985), p. 283.
7 Jens Ringsmose (2009), 'Paying for Protection : Denmark's Military Expenditure during the Cold War,' *Cooperation and Conflict* 44, no. 1, pp. 73-97.
8 John Blocher (2011), *Conditions for Visegrad Defence Cooperation: A Transatlantic View*. Thesis, Corvinus University of Budapest, p. 48.
9 Nikola Hynek and Peter Marton (2011), 'Introduction: What Makes Coalitons S/tick?' In Nik Hynek and Peter Marton (eds), *Statebuilding in Afghanistan: Multinational Contributions to Reconstruction*, London and New York: Routledge, p. 17.
10 Peter Marton and Peter Wagner (2011), 'Hungary's Involvement in Afghanistan: Proudly Going through the Motions?' In Nik Hynek and Peter Marton (eds), *Statebuilding in Afghanistan: Multinational Contributions to Reconstruction*, London and New York: Routledge, p. 197.
11 Robert D. Putnam (Summer 1988), 'Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games,' *International Organization* 42, no. 3, pp. 427-460.
12 Chenghong Li (Fall 2005), 'Two-Level Games, Issue Politicization and the Disarray of Taiwan's Cross-Strait Policy after the 2000 Presidential Election,' *East Asia* 22, no. 3, pp. 41-62.
13 'Bush says it is time for action,' *CNN*, 6 November 2001, available at: <http://edition.cnn.com/2001/US/11/06/ret.bush.coalition/index.html> (accessed 27 December 2011).
14 Quoted by Andras F. Hajdu, 'Fidesz–MIEP: politikai erkolcs vagy politikai celszerűseg,' *Mozgo Vilag* 28, no. 1, January 2002, available at: <http://epa.oszk.hu/01300/01326/00025/janu7.htm> (accessed 27 December 2011). The original wording of Csurka's statement; own translation: '... this had to happen. The oppressed people of the world could no Langer suffer the humiliation and the exploitation brought on them by globalisation, or the pre-meditated genocide taking place in Palestine.'
15 Quoted by Peter Kiss, 'Eastern European Defense Review: Two Defense Secretaries and the "New Europe,"' *CSIS*, 28 June 2011, available at: <http://csis.org/blog/eastern-european-defense-review-two-defense-secretaries-and-new-europe> (accessed 27 December 2011).

16 Own translation, from the original French in 'Conference de presse de Monsieur Jacques Chirac, President de la Republique, a l'issue de la reunion informelle extraordinaire du Conseil europeen, Bruxelles,' 17 February 2003, available at: <http://www.mondediplomatique.fr/cahier/europe/conf-chirac> (accessed 27 December 2011).

17 To document that its trajectory reaches back this far, see Cpt. Nighthawk, 'Embedded in Reality' (blogpost), 21 August 2006, available at: <http://cptnighthawk.blogspot.com/2006/08/embedded-in-reality.html> (accessed 27 December 2011).

18 The creation of a special-operations capability within the Hungarian Defence Forces was a task undertaken in the wake of the 11 September attacks as a result of a 2003 defence review which put forward a tenpoint program of action focused largely on global counterterrorism. The United States provided assistance in creating the capability in various forms (providing both training, assets and equipment), and consequently could expect, to a certain extent, to rely on these forces (the 34 Laszlo Bercsenyi Special Operations Battalion) in its Afghanistan campaign. See Peter Wagner (October 2011), 'Az amerikai terrortamadasok hatasa a Magyar Honvedsegre,' *Nemzet és Biztonság*, no. 8, pp. 66-68.

19 Vaclav Havel, Istvan Gyarmati, Alexander Kwaśniewski et al. (2009), 'An Open Letter to the Obama Administration from Central and Eastern Europe,' *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 15 July 2009, available at: <http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,6825987,An_Open_Letter_to_the_Obama_Administration_from_Central.html#ixzz1hjIEYMX3> (accessed 27 December 2011).

20 Ibid.

21 'A magyarok tobbsege kivonulna Afganisztanbol,' *NOL*, 18 September 2010, available at: <http://nol.hu/belfold/20100918-a_magyarok_tobbsege_kivonulna> (accessed 27 December 2011).

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27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
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31 Ibid.
32 Bulgaria's case is similar in this respect. Another Bulgarian Wielingen class frigate, *Gordi*, served in Operation Southern Breeze, in the maritime embargo against Iraq, in the Persian Gulf, see 'Bulgarian Frigate Sets Out for Libya Embargo Operation,' op. cit.
33 'US fuel stops Gripen Libya mission,' *The Local*, 7 April 7 2011, available at: <http://www.thelocal.se/33058/20110407/> (accessed 27 December 2011).
34 Kiss, 'Eastern European Defense Review...,' 28 June 2011.
35 Attila Seres, 'Hillary Clinton levelben koszonte meg Magyarorszagnak,' *NOL*, 08 July 8 2011, available at: <http://www.nol.hu/kulfold/20110708-hillary_clinton_levelben_koszonte_meg> (accessed 27 December 2011).
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41 'Levert forradalom: megint 1956?' *Véleményvezér*, 17 March 2011, available at: <http://velemenyvezer.blog.hu/2011/03/17/levert_forradalom_megint_1956>; Also very supportive of the intervention was Tota W. Arpad, 'Imperial March,' *W.blog.hu*, 08 April 2011, available at: <http://w.blog.hu/2011/04/08/imperial_march_2> (both accessed 27 December 2011).

42 Daria Dylla, 'Poland, Libya, and NATO,' *New Atlanticist Policy and Analysis Blog*, 3 June 2011, available at: <http://www.acus.org/new_atlanticist/poland-libya-and-nato> (accessed 27 December 2011).

43 U.S. military term for tasks included among which is the training of local security forces for counterinsurgency-related operations.

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45 Robert Gates, speech delivered at United States Military Academy (West Point, NY) [as Delivered by Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, West Point, NY, Friday, 25 February 2011], available at: <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1539> (accessed 27 December 2011).

46 Although it has to be noted that out of the Visegrad Four countries, currently only Poland and Hungary are participants in this initiative.

47 On this point, see Blocher's conclusions, with which this author agrees. Blocher, *Conditions for Visegrad Defence Cooperation: A Transatlantic View,* 51. Blocher notes the weaknesses of the SAC as well, and concludes that similar regimes ought to have a manageably small number of participants, should be based on clearly perceived national interests, should be cost-saving in its effects, and should include a working mechanism of cost-sharing.

48 'Magyar kulpolitika az unios elnokseg utan,' A Magyar Koztarsasag Kulugyminiszteriuma ("Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs"), 2011, pp. 35-36.