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NATO AS A FACTOR OF SECURITY COMMUNITY BUILDING: ENLARGEMENT AND DEMOCRATIZATION IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

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KEY TERMS

ANMR	National Association of the Romanian Military
ANP	MAP Annual National Plan
CCMS	Challenges of Modern Society
CEE	Central Eastern Europe
CEEB	Central European Barometer Program
CEFTA	Central European Free Trade Agreement
CJTF	Combined Joint Task Force
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
DCCM	Democratic Civilian Control of the Military
DCI	Defense Capabilities Initiative
DSD	Degree of Satisfaction with Democracy
EACP	Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council
FKGP	Independent Smallholders' Party
FMDP	Foreign & Military Policy Direction
HDF	Hungarian Defense Forces
HLSG	High Level Steering Group
HUDR	Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania
IDP	Intensified Dialogue Process
IFOR	Implementation Force
IO	Interoperability Objectives
IPP	Individual Partnership Program
LRHR	Level of Respect for Human Rights
MAP	Membership Action Plan
MC	Military Committee
MPs	Members of Parliament
MIEP	Hungarian Justice and Life Party
MIR	Interoperability Requirements
MRC	Military Readiness and Compatibility
MTI	Tasks for Interoperability
NACC	North Atlantic Cooperation Council
NC	Normative Change
NSSP	National Security Strategy & Policy
OCC	Operational Capacities Concept for NATO and PfP Operations
PARP	PfP Planning and Review Process
PC	Political Committee
PCC	Partnership Cooperation Cell
PDSR	Party of Social Democracy of Romania
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PG	Partnership Goals
PMSC	Political-Military Steering Committee
PRM	Greater Romania Party
PSE	PfP Staff Elements
PWP	Partnership Work Program
RAF	Romanian Armed Forces
SFOR	Stabilization Force
SNDC	Supreme National Defense Council
STAGNAGs	Standardization Agreements

NATO AS A FACTOR OF SECURITY COMMUNITY BUILDING: ENLARGEMENT AND DEMOCRATIZATION IN CENTRAL AND EATSTERN EUROPE

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Introduction[1]

This analysis is primarily concerned with examining the building blocks and mechanisms through which NATO extends its institutional and normative influence and contributes (or not) to reducing chances for military conflict and political tension in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) by integrating the region into the Western security community. In terms of political stakes, the prospects of forming a CEE security community would be seriously undermined if NATO enlargement and partnership programs were perceived as facilitating the evolution of a regional arms race, driven by aggressive foreign policies and sponsored by widespread nationalism and regional mistrust. The formation of the CEE security community would be more likely if the institutional and normative adjustments induced by NATO's cooperative security arrangements were viewed as promoting the democratic development of the political-military structures driven by non-nationalist and region-wide, cooperative attitudes.

This research project is motivated by a double empirical puzzle underlying the implications of NATO enlargement for the process of security community formation in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). First, the development of institutional relationships between NATO and most of the former communist countries has led to ambiguous results in terms of reducing sources of political tension and military conflict (i.e., positive, in the case of Romania and Hungary or Hungary and Slovakia; inconclusive for Armenia and Azerbaijan; and negative for Belarus). Second, despite their relatively similar, constant and strong support for NATO membership, the countries of the region have demonstrated curious policy discrepancies, especially in contrast with the vast majority of long-term NATO members, when faced with the option of assisting certain NATO operations (i.e., the1999 military intervention in Kosovo).

Accordingly, while the first empirical anomaly calls attention to possible NATO institutional effects, the second one hints to its potential normative influences.

The study will be structured as follows. The first chapter will provide a critical review of the relevant literature related to security community studies and rationalist theories of international relations. The second section will spell out the theoretical framework of the paper and the methodological apparatus. The third chapter will start with an overview of the evolution of the political and military connections between NATO and the CEE countries from 1990 up to the present, and then will move to assessing the degree of empirical support for two theoretical models in two specific cases – Hungary and Romania. In light of these findings, the study will conclude with a set of remarks concerning the future implications of the relations between NATO and the partner countries for the security of the CEE region.

Theoretical background

The solution to my research puzzle rests on several streams of competing theories that can be safely subsumed into two broad groups: security community approaches and rationalist theories (various strands of realism and neo-liberalism). From the first point of view, it has been widely acknowledged that the present conflict-free and economic prosperity zone of Western Europe can be best described by the concept of "security community" – a "group of political units whose relations exhibit dependable expectations of peaceful change, based on the compatibility of the main values relevant to the prevailing political, economic, and legal institutions and practice within the constituent units."[7]

At the systemic level, the main argument refers to the fact that the creation of an enduring security community is based on developing institutional building blocks (i.e., introduction of consultation and negotiation arrangements at different levels, creation of favorable socio-economic configurations, integration of the military-security systems, etc.), as well as on facilitating an integrative normative climate based on multiple loyalties, tolerance, and internalization of human rights.[8] Given certain precipitating conditions (change in technology, demography, economics and the environment, new social interpretations or external threats), the development of security communities has been usually considered to follow a three-stage process (nascent, ascendant, and mature), driven by power and knowledge considerations, as well as by international transactions, organizations, and social learning.[9]

The outcome consists of an international community whose members share dependable expectations of peaceful change based on mutual trust, high level of interdependence, shared identities, values and meanings, common long-term interest,[10] as well as on an egalitarian type of decision-making structure.[11] These factors are considered to make less relevant the existing power discrepancies between the "small" and the "big" members of the community[12] and to excommunicate military intervention as an instrument of conflict resolution among the members of the security community. From this theoretical point of view, NATO is expected to stabilize the region by initiating a process of confidence building, fostering political and military cooperation, as well as by shaping consensus and mutual trust.

Within the same theoretical stream but at the unit level, liberal theories of state interest formation assume that the fundamental actors in international relations are not states but individuals acting in a social context (government, domestic society, international institutions) whose interests and preferences are shaped by both domestic demands and external pressures (material and social structures of the domestic and international system).[13] According to this logic, war proneness is directly related to the type of domestic political system. While democracies produce a variety of political situations, the role of democratic structures, institutions, and norms is to reduce political incentives for inventing scapegoats and to preclude hard-liners and politically-pressured leaders from going to war.[14] Given the practical absence of war among democracies, the Kantian-inspired democratic peace proposition has been considered as one of the most robust empirical laws in international relations[15] and "a near-perfect condition for peace."[16] It has been also argued that the non-aggression pact among democracies does not extend to non-democracies, since the same constraining factors that prevent democracies from going to war against each other (constitutional restraints, shared commercial interests, international respect for human rights) can exacerbate conflicts between liberal and non-liberal societies[17] as proved during the recent Kosovo crisis.

The ongoing process of democratization in Central and Eastern Europe has given these theories a new impetus. Basically, the transition stage encompasses the drafting of rules and institutions (Constitution, political parties, electoral system, Parliament) aimed at creating the structural framework for resolving political conflicts peacefully.[18] On the other hand, democratic consolidation is usually considered completed "when the authority of fairly elected government and legislative officials is properly established and when major political actors as well as the public at large expect the democratic regime to last well into the foreseeable future."[19] Accordingly, state behavior in international relations is contingent to the specific stage of democratization – decay of the authoritarian rule, transition, consolidation and the maturing of the democratic political order.[20] This process is primarily influenced by three features: the legal and procedural uncertainty underlying the fragile consensus on the proper rules for the functioning of democratic institutions and norms,[21] the economic and social hardships entailed by the reorientation to market economy,[22] and the window of dissonance between the inherited political culture and that of the new political system.[23] From this theoretical perspective, NATO's contribution to the formation of a security community or a conflict-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe should be then assessed against its capacity to facilitate, support, and enhance political reforms in the region, since only democratically consolidated regimes are expected to resolve peacefully their domestic or international differences.

The conditions that can sustain or even more expand the "security community" are strongly contested by *rationalists* who argue that no legal, moral-cultural, economic, political, or military connections can prevent the prospective members of security communities from pursuing their traditional power and alliance politics.[24]

While realist theories regard international institutions and regimes merely as instruments of power that determine who is allowed to play the game, what are the rules of the game, and how the payoffs are distributed,[26] interest-based institutionalist theories stress the constructive role played by institutions in facilitating legitimate bargains while raising the costs for illegitimate ones.[27] Hence, realists view NATO's survival and transformation process as a manifestation of the hegemonic power of the U.S., which seeks to maintain dominance over the

foreign and military policies of the European states.[28] On the other hand, for neo-liberals, NATO's evolution after the end of the Cold War gives credit to those hypotheses probing the constraining effects of institutional path-dependence, context, and linkage.[29] While regarding the CEE states as West-in-the-making[30] under the leadership of EU and NATO, institutionalists are nevertheless worried about the risks of reducing NATO's organizational competence, decision-making capacity, and collective security effectiveness by extending membership and sharing critical resources with untested, fragile and unfinished democracies.[31] In short, rationalist premises encompass given egoistic interests, shaped exogenously by materialist structures, which motivate state behavior primarily in terms of utility maximization. Consequently, from a rationalist viewpoint, the concept of security community represents either a dangerously idealistic construct or an overstatement of the interlocking effects of multi-lateral institutions.

The theoretical arguments outlined above suggest two patterns through which NATO enlargement can have an impact on the political stability of the CEE region. The most optimistic scenario underlines NATO's ability to successfully plant the institutional and normative seeds necessary for the incorporation of the CEE region into the Western security community and for assisting the consolidation of democratic regimes in the candidate countries. The pessimistic forecast calls attention to the risks of pursuing "Wilsonian" goals at the expense of unsettling the existing European security regime by antagonizing Russia, diluting NATO, and creating new lines of division among the CEE countries. Each model advances a set of testing hypotheses that will be discussed in the next section.

Research Design

A) Testing Hypotheses

A complete empirical validation of the two models is prevented by two critical factors. Time is the first one, since the formation of a mature security community and the consolidation of democratic regimes both require several decades to conclude. NATO itself is the second factor, since the process of adaptation of this organization to the post-Cold War conditions is only beginning. The strengthening of the U.S.-EU and U.S.-Russia relationships and the show of solidarity demonstrated by the CEE countries towards the U.S. in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, reached its peak with NATO's invocation, for the first time in history, of the famous Article 5 of the institution's founding Washington Treaty. On the other hand, the possible expansion of the anti-terrorist military campaign beyond Afghanistan, the resumption of the unilateralist foreign policy agenda of the George W. Bush administration, and the ongoing debate about developing the European Security and Defense Initiative (ESDI) leaves the future direction of NATO somewhat uncertain for the medium-term time frame. NATO may distance itself from the region in favor of a European-based alternative, it may continue its present role of politically and militarily stabilizing the Balkans and Eastern Europe, or it can assume a more assertive role against global terrorism.

Given the two constraints mentioned above, the research goals are more reserved and concentrate not on absolute outcomes but on the NATO enlargement process itself. The key questions in this case, concern the nature and medium-term impact of the institutional and normative building blocks, as well as of the mechanisms by which NATO has been exerting its

influence on the CEE regional stability. One way to substantiate the theoretical assumptions discussed to this point, is to test empirically the following two sets of competing hypotheses:

1. *The security community model:*
   a) H_1: Institutional: The institutional adjustments entailed by NATO membership and partnership programs impose serious constraints on the capacity of the candidate countries to go to war against each other.

   b) H_2: Normative: There is a positive correlation between NATO-induced institutional adjustments and norm and value changes (mutual trust, pluralistic collective identities) at the level of political elites and public opinion.

2. *The rationalist model:*
   a) H_3: Effectiveness: NATO enlargement and partnership programs undermine the Alliance's institutional capacity to deal promptly and efficiently in time of crisis.

   b) H_4: Regional instability: NATO enlargement represents a major source of regional instability since it creates new lines of division between the new members and those left out and facilitates only a reorientation of the perceived threats.[32]

The confirmation of H_1, H_2 and the rebuff of H_3, H_4 will give strong credit to the idea that CEE has started to experience, under NATO leadership, a forceful process of security community formation. An opposite result will fully vindicate the bleakest rationalist expectations. Most probably, NATO's assessed impact will be located somewhere along this continuum.

B) Construction of Variables, Methodology, Case Studies

The empirical examination of the two theoretical models will be methodologically operated on the basis of the following five variables:

a) The *Foreign and Military Policy Direction* (FMDP) variable underlies the degree of convergence of national foreign and military directions with NATO's most recent political and military aims, including humanitarian relief, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, crisis management or collective defense, as they are exemplified by the Combined Joint Task Force concept[33] and the new Strategic Concept of the Alliance (the non-Article 5 crisis response situations);[34]

b) The reformulation of the *National Security Strategy and Policy* (NSSP) concerns the benign definition of threats, security risks and long-term, strategic planning; it is also indicative of the level of political and military commitment to regional cooperation;

c) The underlying assumption of the *military readiness and compatibility* (MRC) variable is that NATO's capacity to efficiently manage the coalition will be seriously undermined if the candidate countries expose a low degree of military interoperability, soft capacity of reaction, no real prospects of economic self-sustainability and negative political support for the objectives of the Alliance;

d) The *democratic civilian control of the military* (DCCM) variable points to the introduction of basic democratic principles into security and defense policy-making and examines the extent to which fundamental political-security options are distorted or corrupted by narrow military preferences;

e) Focusing on the attitudinal change at the level of political elites and public opinion, the *normative change* (NC) variable examines the ways in which the relationship between NATO and candidate countries proved successful in eliminating sources of mistrust and political tension between neighboring candidate countries.

High degree of convergence of the foreign political and military directions, cooperative national security strategies and policies, strong political control over the military-security structures, and positive normative change at the level of political elites and public opinion are likely to enhance the prospects for extending the Western security community to the region. On the other hand, divergent FPMDs, competitive NSSPs, low levels of military compatibility and interoperability with NATO forces, weak DCCM and negative NC undermine these prospects, reduce NATO military and political effectiveness, and amplify chances for regional instability.

Given their different status with regard to the enlargement process, the analytical units proposed for examining NATO's impact on the prospects of formation of the CEE security community are Hungary (NATO member) and Romania (NATO candidate). The selection of the case studies also takes into account the pattern of historical enmity between these two countries, a fact that increases the significance of external factors in stabilizing the region. The analysis traces the dynamics of the relationships between NATO and the two countries within a time frame that begins in 1996 – the year when both countries stepped up their collaboration with NATO as part of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program – and ends in December 2001, the moment when discussions began on the various political options for the next round of enlargement.

While focusing on the peacetime conditions which shaped the relationships between NATO, Hungary, and Romania, this analysis will also address NATO's 1999 military intervention in Kosovo as the principal test for assessing the status of the two countries as contributors or consumers of security.

Building Trust Between Former Enemies

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and of its CEE communist satellites, NATO defied all realist assumptions about alliances dissolving in the absence of a threat. Instead, it took a series of steps which allowed it to once again emerge as the main defense institution of Europe and the core of the European security system. However, NATO's revitalization, transformation and eventually enlargement have not been steady and free of troubles. After taking a vacillating start at the beginning of the 1990s, NATO has been gradually accelerating the tempo by launching the Partnership for Peace program (Pf) in 1994, opening the door to the first three CEE members in 1997, initiating its first out-of-area missions in Bosnia and Kosovo, and preparing itself for a next round of enlargement in 2002.

Exporting Stability to the East

In response to the changing international environment, NATO launched Partnership for Peace (PfP) at the January 1994 Brussels Summit. In strategic terms, PfP served three main goals for the Alliance: it established a process with membership as the target for some partners; it allowed for self-differentiation among partner states without extending the full benefits of NATO membership to the partners; and it supported the Alliance's mission of exporting stability as envisioned in the 1991 Strategic Concept.[45] At the same time, the partner countries interested in membership were given more access to NATO's political and military bodies and were offered a flexible and practical set of mechanisms that went far beyond the soft dialogue and cooperation framework institutionalized by the NACC. As for the aspirant countries' main concern, the PfP invitation made clear that "active participation [in the program] will play an important role in the evolutionary process of the expansion of NATO."[46] The degree of involvement in PfP, however, was purely voluntary, at a pace and scope decided by each Partner. Moreover, PfP also enjoyed the full support of Russia albeit for different reasons. Convinced that PfP would not lead to eventual NATO expansion, President Yeltsin called the program a "stroke of genius."[47]

In practical terms, PfP set out an important agenda animated by the goal "to intensify political and military cooperation throughout Europe, increase stability, diminish threats to peace, and build strengthened relationships by promoting the spirit of practical cooperation and commitment to democratic principles that underpin the Alliance."[48] First, it made participation to the program contingent upon adherence of the partner countries to "the preservation of democratic societies, their freedom from coercion and intimidation, and the maintenance of the principles of international law."[49] In addition, the partner countries were asked to commit themselves "to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, to respect existing borders and to settle disputes by peaceful means [and] to fulfill in good faith the obligations of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights [as well as] the Helsinki Final Act and all subsequent CSCE documents."[50] In order to reach these goals, the PfP required all interested partners to adjust their defense and foreign policies in conformity with the following provisions:

a) Facilitation of transparency in national defense planning and budgeting processes;

b) Ensuring democratic control of defense forces;

c) Maintenance of the capability and readiness to contribute, subject to constitutional considerations, to operations under the authority of the UN and/or the responsibility of the CSCE;

d) The development of cooperative military relations with NATO for the purpose of joint planning, training, and exercises in order to strengthen their ability to undertake missions in the fields of peacekeeping, search and rescue, humanitarian operations, and others as may be agreed subsequently; and

e) The development, over the longer term, of forces that are better able to operate with those of the members of the North Atlantic Alliance.[51]

Second, the PfP established a concrete and structured program of political and military collaboration consisting of:

a) The preparation and implementation of 16+1 Individual Partnership Programs (IPP) listing the necessary steps for promoting transparency in defense planning and budgeting, for ensuring the democratic control of armed forces, for identifying the financial, personnel, military and other assets that might be used for Partnership activities, as well as for carrying out the PfP agreed exercises in the fields of peacekeeping, search and rescue, and humanitarian operations;[52]

b) Establishing permanent liaison officers to a separate Partnership Coordination Cell at Mons, Belgium (PCC) that would have access to certain NATO technical data and STANAGS (standardization agreements)[53] relevant to interoperability and who, under the authority of the North Atlantic Council, would be in charge of carrying out the military planning necessary to implement the Partnership programs.[54] To accomplish this overall task, the PCC was assigned three main functions: to advise NATO military authorities and countries in implementation of PfP programs; to provide liaison and coordination between NATO and individual Partner countries, and to recommend education, training and exercise activities to achieve the objectives of the program;[55]

c) Developing a Planning and Review Process (PARP) – intended to simulate the NATO defense planning process and aimed at providing a basis for identifying and evaluating forces and capabilities that might be made available by partner countries for multinational training, exercises, and operations in conjunction with Alliance forces[56]. The activities were initially derived from 45 generic Interoperability Objectives (IO) which covered areas for the full spectrum of peace support operations and humanitarian aid, acting as PfP 'Force Goals';[57]

Preparing for Enlargement

- Partnership for Peace (1994)
- Intensified Individual Dialogue
- IFOR/SFOR mission (1995)
- The Study on Enlargement (1995)
- PfP Enhancement (1996)

d) The joint preparation by NATO and the partner countries of the Partnership Work Program (PWP) served as the basic menu for the preparation of the yearly IPP and lists 21 activities – from air defense and crisis management, to military geography and language training, offered by NATO bodies (HQ, staffs, agencies or schools), NATO nations, and Partner nations in the framework of PfP.[58] The PWP consisted of two main sections: the generic section laid down the general areas in which Partners should strive to achieve interoperability, while the specific section laid down the next year's program of activities. This latter program was further split into three phased-areas of activity: courses, training, seminars, expert visits; high level visits; and, NATO/PfP exercises and connected building blocks.[59] In view of the experience gained in the first stage of multilateral collaboration, several changes and enhancements would be initiated after the 1997 Madrid and 1999 Washington Summits.

Third, besides its regularly scheduled peacekeeping exercises[60] and seminars, the PfP also allowed partner countries to gain operational experience in the NATO command structure by taking part in NATO's Implementation Force (IFOR) and Stabilization Force (SFOR) missions in Bosnia. By June 1996, 12 PfP countries, including Hungary and Romania, joined NATO forces in Bosnia,[61] adding nearly 10,000 personnel to IFOR.[62] Both IFOR and SFOR operations made positive contributions to the PfP process by highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of coordinating a multinational operation in this new context, and by underscoring several, critical interoperability problems for the partner countries in military planning, resource allocation, language training, and communication equipment.[63]

Fourth, the PfP served as an important conceptual and operational blueprint for most of the ensuing discussions concerning NATO enlargement. Thus, NATO's 1995 Study on Enlargement reiterated the political objectives of the Alliance as stated in the PfP Framework Document and called upon prospective members not only to "conform to basic principles embodied in the Washington Treaty: democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law [and] accept NATO as a community of like-minded nations joined together for collective defense and the preservation of peace" but also to "be firmly committed to principles, objectives, and undertakings included in the Partnership for Peace Framework Document."[64] Moreover, the study insisted that in the process of preparation for membership "premature development of measures outside PfP for possible new members should be avoided."[65] Consequently, the PfP was confirmed as the key instrument to be used by the candidate countries to streamline their political and military preparation for NATO membership.

Finally, the PfP created the premises for a timely exposure of several shortcomings hindering NATO's multinational coordination efforts. It has been argued that PfP unintentionally encouraged CEE countries to compete against each other at the expense of their bilateral relations, that it favored military-to-military cooperation with the potential to undermine the civil-military reforms from the region, that it led Partner countries to stress quantity over quality in their programs, that it promoted only limited transparency, and that it deflected the military preparation of the partner countries from more traditional sources of threat.[66] In order to better address these issues, the June 1997 meeting in Sintra, Portugal agreed on a new set of proposals to further enhance PfP and NACC.

Taking on New Responsibilities

Given the predominant military dimension of the PfP, the perceived inefficiency of NACC, and the determination to keep those partner countries that were not interested in NATO membership[67] and those interested but not yet selectable politically-connected to the Alliance, the Sintra ministerial meeting and the Madrid summit decided to raise the political and military cooperation between NATO and the partner countries to a qualitatively new level by establishing *the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC)* as the successor to NACC, and, thereby, enhancing the PfP.[68] The EAPC was designed to increase the participation of the partner countries in the decision-making and consultation process and to expand the scope of political and security-related issues discussed within its framework. The key elements of its structure consisted of: a) regular meetings at the ambassadorial and ministerial level; b) closer cooperation with the Political-Military Steering Committee (PMSC), the Political Committee (PC), and the Military Committee (MC); and, c) a four-tiered Action Plan that included PWP and previous NACC issue

areas, civil emergency planning and disaster preparedness,[69] PfP areas of cooperation, and short-term planning for EAPC consultations and practical cooperation.[70] One of the political goals has been to transform EAPC into a NATO body capable of preventing the next "out of area" regional crisis by enhancing the PfP's emphasis on crisis management, terrorism, and disaster response.[71]

At the operational level, following the more formal 1996 PfP Enhancement program, *the enhanced PfP* stipulated several changes: a) to foster greater regional cooperation and participation, including in the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF), through regional peace enforcement and crisis management exercises; b) to increase partner access to NATO procedures and documents beyond PCC by creating PfP Staff Elements (PSEs) at the first and second level of NATO integrated military structure; and, c) to expand PARP to encourage partner states to adopt a new system of defense planning, create local defense policy experts, increase interoperability standards, and define a genuine mechanism of feedback between NATO and its partners.[72] Prior to the admission of Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic and reinforced at the Madrid Summit in July 1997, the intensified dialogue process (IDP) was offered to all aspirant countries as a supplementary element to assist their preparation and keep them engaged in the PfP. Primarily focused on political factors, IDP was scheduled to take place biannually at the level of the North Atlantic Council (NAC+1), plus an additional dialogue conducted by a NATO team.

After Enlargement

- The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (1997)
- PfP Enhanced (1997)
- Enlargement (1997)
- Expanded PARP (1998)
- The new Strategic Concept (1999)
- The Defense Capabilities Initiative (1999)
- The Operational Capabilities Concept (1999)
- Membership Action Plan (1999)

Growing concern for enhancing interoperability between NATO members and the partner countries and for preserving the military effectiveness of the Alliance resulted in new sets of recommendations. Thus, the Bi-MNC Concept for Implementation of PfP was published in May 1996 and identified what was meant by interoperability and how to build a program to support the achievement of interoperability. The Concept worked within and supplemented PARP as well as embedding two levels of interoperability: functional and service oriented – 26 Interoperability Requirements (MIR) - and those Tasks for Interoperability (MTI) necessary to achieve MIR.[73] In June 1998, the EAPC Defense Ministerial meeting agreed to develop new procedures that would expand and adapt the PARP in order to more closely resemble the NATO Defense Planning Process.[74] The new procedures included the addition of PARP Ministerial Guidance, Partnership Goals and the extension of the planning horizon to six years. The new Partnership Goals (PO), were intended to replace by 2000 the previous Interoperability Objectives (IOs), to enhance the Alliance's capacity to operate in non-Article 5 crisis management situations, to assist the partners in developing interoperable capabilities, and to better help the aspiring countries for membership.[75]

In line with the evolution of the Euro-Atlantic security environment of the first post-Cold War decade, the 1999 NATO's new Strategic Concept acknowledged that the risks to the security of the Alliance "are multi-directional and often difficult to predict." Besides nuclear proliferation and, less likely, large-scale conventional aggression or nuclear attack, the risks include "uncertainty and instability in and around the Euro-Atlantic area and [may stem from]

ethnic and religious rivalries, territorial disputes, inadequate or failed efforts at reform, the abuse of human rights, and the dissolution of states."[76] In order to address these sources of insecurity, the Alliance committed itself to a multi-dimensional approach that included political, economic, social and environmental factors in addition to the indispensable defense dimension. Hence, the fundamental security tasks included are: a) security, based on the growth of democratic institutions; b) consultation as provided by Article 4 of the Washington Treaty; c) traditional deterrence and defense; d) crisis management; and e) partnership.[77]

Given the interoperability problems revealed during its intervention in Kosovo, NATO supplemented its 1999 Strategic Concept with two new initiatives. The first one, the Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI), was primarily targeted at the Alliance members and set as the objective the improvement of defense capabilities[78] to ensure the effectiveness of future NATO-led multinational operations, especially those outside the territory of the Alliance. A temporary High Level Steering Group (HLSG) was put in charge of overseeing the implementation of the DCI.[79]

The second initiative, the Operational Capabilities Concept for NATO-led PfP Operations (OCC), was designed to improve the interoperability between Allied and Partner forces and increase their ability to operate together in future NATO-led PfP operations. To reach this goal, OCC made provisions for five sets of mechanisms: a) Pool(s) of Forces and Capabilities; b) Established Multinational Formations; c) Peacetime Working Relationships; d) Assessment and Feedback Mechanisms; and, e) Enabling Mechanisms.[80] In addition, OCC also took into account needed improvements to PfP training and education, as well as to multi-nationality in the command and operational structure.

Finally, the most recent and probably the most comprehensive and important NATO document governing the relationships with the CEE aspiring countries is the Membership Action Plan (MAP), approved at NATO's Washington Summit in April 1999. Building on intensified individual dialogue on membership questions, MAP was designed to reinforce the "open door" policy of the Alliance and its firm commitment to further enlargement by putting into place a program of activities to assist the aspiring countries in preparations for possible future membership.[81] While stressing that the list of issues included did not constitute criteria, or a guarantee and timeframe for membership, MAP required each aspiring country to draw up an annual national program containing specific information and implementation measures with regard to five chapters: a) political and economic issues including commitment to democracy, rule of law, human rights, peaceful settlement of international disputes, etc.; b) defense and military issues, i.e., enhance interoperability and PARP, adopt the new Strategic concept, and provide forces and capabilities for collective defense and other Alliance missions; c) resource allocation able to meet defense priorities and participation in Alliance structures; d) security issues concerning the safeguards and procedures to ensure the protection of the most sensitive information; and, e) legal issues, i.e., incorporation of NATO's *acquis* (legal arrangements and agreements which govern cooperation within the Alliance).[82] MAP makes also reference to screening mechanisms in 19+1 format, which are intended to provide constant feedback and advice to the aspirant countries. In a similar way to the EU progress reports, the Alliance set formal provisions for preparing an annual report that would help aspirant countries identify areas

for further action, but leaving at their discretion the level of commitment for taking further action.[83]

Expanding the Western Security Community

Drawing on the overview of the post Cold War evolution of NATO's relationship with the CEE countries outlined in the previous section, this chapter will make an assessment of the institutional and normative effects of this relationship on the prospects of security community formation and regional cooperation. After a brief presentation of the recent evolution of the bilateral relationship between Romania and Hungary, the analysis will proceed with examining separately the five variables on the basis of the foreign and domestic political strategies of the two countries toward NATO and their positions during the NATO intervention in Kosovo.

The Evolution of the Romanian-Hungarian Relations

Following the collapse of communism, the relationship between Romania and Hungary in the period 1990 to 1994 was characterized by a moderate nationalist stance. The continuing deterioration of the Hungarian-Romanian relationship was stopped and reversed by the launch of the Partnership for Peace program and the subsequent NATO engagement programs. PfP offered an excellent window of opportunity for non-nationalist political forces from both countries to take control over the bilateral normalization process and put it on an ascendant course. Despite ongoing political frictions, it is probably safe to assume that in the absence of NATO's partnership programs, the political tensions between Romania and Hungary would have been deeper and would have requested more time as well as more domestic and international efforts to heal.

In the case of Hungary, the process of internalization of a cooperative and democratic set of norms of international conduct has been taking place faster and apparently more firmly than in Romania, but not without problems. The post-1989 priorities of Hungarian foreign policy have consisted of pursuing a dual track strategy: to become a full member of the Western community (membership in NATO and the European Union) and to protect the rights of the Hungarian minorities living in the neighboring countries. Tensions started to accumulate when the second foreign policy objective became framed into a "public rhetoric that invoked historical memories of Greater Hungary."[84] Thus, the first post-communist Prime Minister Joszef Antall declared in August 1990 that "he considered himself in spirit to be the Prime Minister of all 15 millions Hungarians,"[85] including approximately five million ethnic Hungarians living outside Hungary – a declaration that triggered angry reactions among the neighboring countries and attracted immediate, harsh international criticism.[86]

Another hotly debated action met with pressure by Western European governments, especially Germany, was the decision of the Antall government to block Romania's admittance to the Council of Europe until 1993, in order to force the Romanian government to improve the situation of its Hungarian minority.[87] In addition, insistent appeals to grant collective rights, regional autonomy and self-government to the Hungarian ethnic communities,[88] coupled with an ambiguous security policy on the question of borders,[89] resulted in the international community's conclusion in 1994 that Hungary was not contributing to stability in Central Europe. Rather, the

West viewed Hungary as undermining stability in the region and consequently questioned the country's legitimacy as a potential member in Euro-Atlantic institutions.[90]

At the same time, between 1990 and 1994, the political transition of Romania to democracy proved difficult, unstable, and occasionally tragic. The initial diplomatic breakthrough attained immediately after the violent overthrow of the communist regime in December 1989 failed to materialize in strong international support for the new government. The suspicion that the revolution led only to the deposition of the communist dictator, Nicolae Ceausescu, and not to the complete overthrow of the communist regime and its practices was soon confirmed by the successive brutal assaults on the political opposition and intellectuals executed by miner squads summoned up and organized by the first post-communist president Ion Iliescu and his ruling party. The bloody ethnic clash between Romanians and ethnic Hungarians in Tirgu-Mures, Romania, in March 1990 revealed deep-rooted ethnic tensions and resulted in a cooling of relations between both countries as well as the Western European community. The country's international standing was further weakened by the political coalition the Iliescu government formed between 1992 and 1996 with two extremist, ultra-nationalist parties,[91] well known for their aggressive rhetoric targeted at the Hungarian and Roma minorities.

Incapable of change and adaptation to democratic values, the ruling political elite increasingly took refuge in nationalistic and anti-Western rhetoric. In the words of an influential Iliescu official and current Minister of Defense,[92] the sole explanation for the critical problems facing the country could be found in international conspiracies, implicitly orchestrated by Hungary: "Soon, the old web of international isolation was reactivated, as if someone somewhere became frightened by the advantage Romania might obtain given its relatively large potential compared to the other East European countries."[93] These statements would have probably continued to preserve their entertaining value had they not been echoed by the first post-communist National Security Doctrine, submitted to the Parliament for approval in September 1994, and which, besides "revisionist tendencies," included references to the dangers posed by "distorted perceptions" of Romania's internal evolution in other countries.[94] The ambiguous commitment toward full political and economic reform, the "suspect ideological baggage and questionable political behavior of the Iliescu regime,"[95] as well as the strained political relations with neighboring countries (Hungary and to a lesser extent Bulgaria), all contributed to, before the 1996 elections, placing Romania in an international quasi-quarantine.

As will be argued in more detail in the next sub-section, the Partnership for Peace program was launched at the moment when the political and military bilateral relations between Romania and Hungary were practically frozen. However, changing political conditions at the domestic level provided a window of opportunity for non-nationalist political forces to turn PfP into an efficient instrument for reducing the political

NATO Political Objectives:

- To settle international disputes by peaceful means;
- To demonstrate commitment to the rule of law and human rights;
- To settle ethnic disputes or external territorial disputes including irredentist claims or internal jurisdictional disputes by peaceful means in accordance with OSCE principles and to pursue good neighborly relations;
- To establish appropriate democratic and civilian control of the armed forces;
- To refrain from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the UN;
- To contribute to the development of peaceful and friendly international relations by strengthening free institutions and by promoting stability and well-being;
- To continue fully to support and be engaged in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the Partnership for Peace;
- To show a commitment to promoting stability and well-being by economic liberty, social justice and environmental responsibility.

Source: The Membership Action Plan, April 1999

tensions between the two countries and for improving the general stability of the region. Thus, the Hungarian social-liberal government elected in 1994 set as new political priorities: "...the process of accession to the EU and accession to NATO, or the creation of the opportunities for this. The government will subordinate everything else to this."[96] Similarly, the government coalition of the new Romanian president Emil Constantinescu, which took power in November 1996 and which included the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (HUDR) as one of its members, acknowledged that NATO "had a highly positive, perhaps even decisive, influence in stabilizing the Romanian-Hungarian relations" and promised to transform the bilateral relationship into a "hard core of stability in Central Europe."[97] However, the issue of national minorities has continued to animate the political atmosphere in the region, especially when a new Hungarian conservative coalition came to power in May 1998 and after Iliescu's return to power in Romania in November 2000.

Engaging NATO

The strategic political objectives of NATO vis-à-vis the aspirant countries have been consistently reiterated in all major statements and documents starting with the Rome Declaration in 1991, the Partnership for Peace Framework Document in 1994, the EAPC Basic Document in 1997, and finally the Membership Action Plan in April 1999. These objectives have been translated into practice through various partnership programs and presumably imposed serious constraints on the capacity of the candidate countries to go to war against each other. This proposition does not imply that Hungary and Romania have lost their military capacity to pursue war against each other as a consequence of their collaboration with NATO. It only contends that NATO's institutional engagement with Hungary and Romania has substantively changed the terms of the bilateral framework between the two countries, by increasing institutional incentives for political and military cooperation. The validity of this claim can be examined in two steps. The first one explores the level of institutional engagement between NATO and the two countries, at the political and military levels. The second step assesses the impact of this variable on the Hungarian-Romanian bilateral relationship at the level of foreign and military-defense policies. With regard to the first aspect, Table 1 and 2 (please see Appendix) provide an evaluation of the degree of political and military institutional commitment between NATO and the two countries.

Following its admission into the Alliance in April 1999, Hungary entered a new phase of institutional engagement, a fact that explains the missing data from the corresponding MAP and Enhanced PfP columns. The two tables suggest that at the political and military levels, the degree of institutional engagement between NATO and the two countries has been constantly high. The political rapprochement initiated by NATO toward the former Warsaw Treaty members in the early days of the 1990s has been steadily developing into a complex relationship of cooperation resting on solid political and military pillars. Moreover, both countries joined almost immediately all political initiatives and operational programs set forth by NATO and followed relatively closely the requirements for partnership and membership. Actually, NATO has had no problems in convincing the two countries to join its programs, but rather in accommodating their unrelenting demands for further political and military cooperation.

While illustrative from a quantitative point of view, the two tables are unfortunately silent on the quality of the institutional engagement between NATO and the two countries. The expectation is that gradual convergence of the political and military directions of the two

countries to NATO's strategic objectives produces a positive boomerang effect on the relationship between Hungary and Romania.

A. Foreign and Military Policy Directions

Romania and Hungary emerged from the communist period with no clearly articulated foreign and military policies, except for two enthusiastic, but nevertheless, vague and contradictory ambitions: to integrate themselves as soon as possible into the Euro-Atlantic political-military structures (NATO, EU, WEU, Council of Europe) and to uphold the nationalist basis of state power.

The strong political and military engagement of both countries with NATO, illustrated in Table 1 and 2, was paralleled by a four-stage evolution of the Romanian-Hungarian military and political relationship. First, the number of cooperation agreements (see Appendix, Graph 1) between the two states increased steadily, especially after the launch of the PfP in January 1994 and the change of government in Hungary and Romania respectively in 1994 and 1996. Second, under NATO/U.S. pressure, political normalization followed suit with the conclusion of the Treaty of Understanding, Cooperation and Good Neighborly Relations (the Basic Treaty) in 1996. While guaranteeing the inviolability of borders and the territorial integrity of each state, the treaty also included provisions for regular consultations on issues concerning security, defense, regional stability and mutual support for integration into NATO, the EU and the WEU.[98]

Third, the previous adversarial stance between the two countries has gradually given way after 1996 to a cooperative relationship resting on relatively strong institutional ties and improved policy coordination. A Joint Intergovernmental Commission for Cooperation and Active Partnership was established in October 1997 as a means to promote transparency, generate feedback and convey mutual assistance on all key bilateral issues, especially those related to Euro-Atlantic integration.[99] In the military realm, a joint peacekeeping battalion composed of 500 soldiers from each country had been agreed upon in March 1998 and became operational one year later, with one of its missions consisting of the transfer of expertise Hungary has gained from its recent NATO membership.[100]

Fourth, following the 1998 election of a conservative coalition in Hungary and the return to power of Iliescu's party in Romania in November 2000, the level of bilateral contacts between the two countries has receded sharply (see Appendix, Graph 2). However, so far, neither the bilateral military relationship or the general institutional setting presents visible signs of disruption, but this situation may reverse swiftly in the near future. In general, the political and military engagement between NATO and each of the two countries has yet to be duplicated into vigorous patterns of bilateral cooperation between Hungary and Romania.

This contrast emerges clearly when comparing Table 1 and 2 with Table 3 (see Appendix), which summarizes the regulative framework governing the political-military relationships between Romania and Hungary. Table 3 provides only moderate grounds of optimism concerning the possibility of developing a security community in the CEE region. NATO's robust political and military engagement with Hungary and Romania has indeed proved conducive to the improvement of the bilateral relationships between the two countries at the level of individual foreign and military policy directions, but this process has been advancing very

slowly at the bilateral level and the results are still indecisive. The conclusion of the Basic Treaty has been followed so far only by two concrete measures – the establishment of a joint committee of partnership and a joint peacekeeping battalion. Unfortunately, neither of these two initiatives seems to be animated by any intense activity.

Moreover, the issue of national minorities has been forcefully brought back to the table in 2001, hoisted to the top of the political agenda in the context of the Hungarian government's proposal of granting certain economic and social benefits to kinship minorities living in neighboring countries (the Status Law). The proposal was met with strong suspicion by Iliescu's government and triggered a spiral of rhetorical exchanges between the two governments. The dispute was brought to the attention of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (also known as the Venice Commission), which issued a compromise resolution,[101] on the basis of which the Prime Ministers of the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding in December 2001.[102] The situation remains nevertheless strained. Further measures of institutional consolidation and policy coordination are hardly foreseen in the near-term, despite the otherwise generous and strikingly similar foreign and military policy orientations (see Appendix, Table 4).

The examination of the evolution of the international positions of Hungary and Romania during the past decade suggests as a preliminary conclusion, that NATO's magnetism has indeed exerted a great deal of positive influence on the foreign and military directions of both countries, but it has failed so far to eliminate the issue of national minorities as the main source of mistrust and political tension between them. The next section will investigate the potential ramifications of this contentious issue for the national security strategy and policy of the two countries.

B. National Security Strategy and Policy

The dual concept of national security strategy and policy (NSSP), addressing a country's security objectives and corresponding instruments of implementation, is rather new in Central and Eastern Europe. Before the implosion of the communist regimes, it had been the Soviet Union that decided what constituted national security and how far the satellites could depart from the spirit of the Brezhnev Doctrine.[104] Romania represented one of the few CEE exceptions from this general rule, but its expertise in this field became an obstacle rather than an advantage when faced, after 1989, with the requirement to formulate a NSSP in line with the political objectives of NATO partnership and eventual membership.[105] Lack of expertise and suspicion against civilian activities contributed to the almost exclusive involvement of the military in the process of drafting the first post-communist security policies[106] in the CEE region in general, and in Hungary and Romania in particular. The results were thus, predictable: both the 1994 draft of the "Integrated Conception Regarding the National Security of Romania" and the 1993 "Basic Principles of Security Policy of Hungary" were cloaked in the same, communist-era terminology, stressing suspicion against neighboring countries. NATO membership was, thus, considered the best security arrangement against a country's perceived threats.

The process of close political and military cooperation between NATO and the CEE countries inaugurated by the launch of the PfP in January 1994 has proved expedient in this area as well. NATO's explicit concern not to import regional tensions into the Alliance put pressure on the candidate countries to settle their differences and improve their relationship before joining the institution. By 2000, both Hungary and Romania amended or adopted revised versions of

their NSSP more attuned to the new regional security environment as well as to NATO's membership requirements.

Key elements of NSSP

- National security concept
- Threat analysis
- Crisis management
- Defense policy and planning
- Civil emergency planning
- Action plan

The key elements of the new NSSP emphasized no threatening postures towards neighboring countries, a commitment to regional cooperation and peacekeeping missions, democratic civilian control of the armed forces, military strategies of denial based on minimum levels of sufficiency coupled with increased military interoperability by NATO standards, increased role of civilians in the military structure, growing attention to non-military as well as to internal sources of threats, guideline procedures for crisis management and containment, medium-term deployment of Rapid Reaction Forces, gradual professionalization of the army, and civil emergency planning for a timely and efficient response to natural or man-made disasters. While the institutional component will be addressed in the next section, Table 5 (see Appendix) outlines the legal NSSP framework of the two countries.

The critical question concerns the implementation effects of NSSPs: do they do what they promise to do, namely to enhance regional stability and remove sources of military conflict? The answer so far is positive but with a caveat. Compared with the previous allergic suspicion of both countries to each other's political and military intentions, the latest versions of NSSP rests on a more benign definition of threats and a stronger commitment to regional cooperation at both the political and military levels, within the framework of the PfP program. The first practical test of this relationship came with the 1999 admission of Hungary as full member of NATO.

Contrary to the ominous forecasts advocated by nationalist skeptics,[107] this changed position of Hungary vis-à-vis Romania has cast no negative spin on the general military-security posture of Hungary towards Romania. Moreover, Hungary has refrained from using the strategic advantage entailed by NATO membership to advance its political and economic goals and repeatedly expressed its support for early admission of its neighbors into NATO and the EU.[108] However, no institutional framework can resist over time in the absence of a corresponding normative change at the level of political elites and public opinion. Unfortunately, the present conditions in both Hungary and Romania offer only limited reasons for optimism in this respect . This issue will be discussed in more detail later in this paper.

C. Military Readiness and Compatibility

General policy orientations such as foreign, military, and national security strategies are indicative for anticipating future courses of action. In this respect, the last two sections advanced the argument that, given the context of NATO partnership programs, further improvement of the political and military relationships between Romania and Hungary is expected, although not at a very fast pace. However, the general problem with strategies and long-term planning, especially in the CEE region, stems from the usual overstatement of intentions regarding availability of resources and capabilities. This section tries to preempt this criticism by examining in some detail the military capacity of the two countries with regard to their level of cooperative engagement within the NATO partnership framework and between themselves.

Although not very loudly trumpeted, the capability gap began to be acknowledged as a serious defense-planning problem in both Romania and Hungary. General Constantin Degeratu, the former Romanian Army Chief of the General Staff, admitted that:

> The units have a certain operational capacity, and are able to cope with average to low risk situations, namely to accidental situations or some provocation. If there were a major conflict in the area, with the involvement of modern armies, it would certainly be untrue to say that the Romanian Army is able to cope with average or high-level conflicts. If we were to make a correct appraisal of the operational levels, compared with NATO standards, we would have to admit that we are very far from this level.[109]

Similar questions were raised in connection with the medium-term capacity of the Hungarian Armed forces to adjust themselves to the requirements of the Alliance, given the inherited structure of the armed forces, decaying Soviet military technology, and the slow pace of military modernization programs concerning personnel policy, hardware modernization, and defense industry reform.[110]

Both Romania and Hungary have undertaken significant steps in reforming their defense institutions and aligning their military to NATO compatibility standards in terms of the structure of the armed forces, proper equipment, infrastructure and adequate levels of readiness. In the words of a former Romanian Minister of Defense, the ultimate objective is to "transform the military from a mass army designed for mass confrontations to a professional military able to participate efficiently in a large range of missions within both the national and multinational framework."[111] Hence, strongly motivated by prospective NATO membership, both countries launched ambitions programs of military modernization spanning a 5-10 year period, aiming at reducing the military personnel, securing interoperability with the rest of Allied forces, and upgrading the military equipment and infrastructure, as briefly illustrated in Table 6 (see Appendix).

Despite these serious efforts, none of the two countries appears able to reach full compatibility with NATO standards in the near future. In the case of Hungary, increased economic performance has not been associated with larger defense budgets. On the contrary, the budget of the Hungarian Armed Forces (HDF) has consistently shrunk from 3.5 percent of the GDP in 1988 to 1.51 percent of the 2000 GDP, despite the government's promises to increase the defense budget from 1998 onward by an annual rate of 0.1 percent.[112] Furthermore, the Hungarian military performance, measured in terms of current capacities and prospects, was assessed as insufficient for producing a cumulative trend that would allow Hungary to become a security contributor to the Alliance in the near term.[113] The three major areas posing problems to further integration concern: command and control interoperability, integration of the existing air defense systems into the NATO structure, and preparation of facilities to receive NATO reinforcement units.[114] Other capability requirements that need strong improvement are: combat readiness and mobility; sustainability and logistics; effective engagement capability; survivability of troops and infrastructure; and, command, control and information systems.[115]

Strongly influenced by U.S. defense planning methods and following the 1999 NATO call for a Membership Action Plan (MAP), Romania set off an interagency process including the Ministry of Defense (MoD), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, and the

intelligence service, that resulted in a comprehensive MAP Annual National Plan (ANP) covering defense planning as well as other political, economic, national security, and legal issues.[116] In addition, the Defense Ministry created the NATO Integration Council in June 1999, in order to facilitate communication and cooperation between the Defense Ministry and the General Staff in preparing its ANP. However, under conditions of severe economic constraints, the situation of the Romanian Armed Forces (RAF) offers little signs for further optimism. According to the Chief of General Staff, Gen. Mihail Popescu, the execution rate of the planned military exercises is 50 percent for the Naval Forces and only 13 percent for the Air Forces.[117]

Hence, Gen. Popescu estimates that RAF cannot achieve military interoperability by NATO standards before 2014-2019, but in operational terms, it can catch up relatively quickly with the three recent NATO members.[118] Even this last objective might not be so easy to achieve, given the current tendency to reduce the numbers of partnership goals assumed under the PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP). The number of interoperability objectives (IO) and partnership goals (PG) assumed by Romania within the PfP PARP program has evolved as follows: PARP I (1994-1997): 20 IO; PARP II (1997-1999): 44 IO; PARP III (1999-): 84 PG.[119] The draft of the next Romanian ANP reportedly makes reference to 13 primary objectives and stresses provisions for a drastic revision of the number of PGs.[120]

The severity of financial and military problems affecting the reform process of the Romanian armed forces forced a recent RAND study to place Romania second from the last – together with Macedonia but before Albania and after Slovenia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania – in terms of its likelihood of NATO membership.[121] By relying on a set of key indicators encompassing deterrence sufficiency, power projection capacity, defense expenditures, GDP growth, political regime, strategic exposure, etc., the RAND study produced a set of four composite criteria for assessing the capacity of the candidate countries to contribute to the security of the Alliance. In the light of the arguments presented in this section, Table 7 (see Appendix) applies three RAND criteria for comparing the readiness status of the Hungarian and Romanian armed forces with regard to their contribution to NATO security.

The assessment results presented in Table 7 do not take into account the significant differences existing within the military of each of the two countries. In fact, both states have two militaries: one small, better equipped and NATO compatible (the Rapid Reaction Forces), and the rest of the armed forces that can hardly keep up the pace with the more advance units. The critical issue that both countries must face in medium-term is to bridge this gap through a better allocation of resources and through a personnel policy that would rotate officers between the two types of units.[122]

D. Democratic Civilian Control of the Military

Similar to the NSSP concept and largely for the same reasons, democratic civilian control of the military (DCCM) represented another alien notion faced by the CEE post-communist defense establishments. Democratization implies the introduction of basic democratic principles into security and defense policy-making and tries to provide legal answers to problems related to the political control and division of authority on defense issues between the three branches of government. The process of civil-military reform is considered a guarantor of successful

democratization of the security and defense apparatus and tries to ensure that fundamental political-security options are not distorted or corrupted by narrow military preferences.[123]

Hence, the level of civilian involvement and oversight of the military-defense structures constitutes an important indicator of the level of democratic consolidation of the respective countries. In addition, NATO's strong interest in the CEE's civil-military relations has been influenced by the risks attached to the stability and functioning of the Alliance by two factors: the mentality of former communist military elites and the fear of "praetorian coups"(see the case of the Greek military junta between 1967-1974). Therefore, the introduction of DCCM as a mandatory criterion for NATO membership was intended to take all these factors into account and ensure that enlargement would not undermine the political and military effectiveness of the Alliance.

Besides the concern for the stability of the Alliance, DCCM is also critically important for the evolution of bilateral relationships between the CEE countries. Given the usual military proclivity to exaggerate threats in order to benefit from larger defense budgets, it is thus presumed that increased civilian democratic control of the military ensures a better political bilateral relationship. Interestingly enough, the military relations between Romania and Hungary are generally credited to have followed a more positive path then the political ones, primarily because of the more intense cooperation in the military realm between the two states within the framework of NATO partnership programs. This observation draws attention to the fact that the dual process of democratization and civil-military reform of the defense policy-making structures is still in an embryonic phase.

NATO standards for democratic civil-military relations:

- Clear legal and constitutional frameworks;
- Increased transparency in national defense planning and budgeting processes;
- Enduring democratic control of national armed forces;
- Civilian Ministry of Defense;
- Effective oversight and scrutiny of the military by the parliament;
- Clear division of professional responsibility between civilian and military personnel.

Source: 1994 PfP Framework Document, 1995; Study on NATO enlargement, 1999 Membership Action Plan

The main attributes of the civil-military relations in the two countries are presented in Table 6 (see Appendix), which shows that most of the formal DCCM requirements have been put in place in both Hungary and Romania. However, in line with the CEE post-communist tradition, formal introduction of certain measures is not necessary followed by a highly effective implementation in terms of reaching the objectives for which they were designed. DCCM makes no exception from this general rule. On the contrary, it appears now that DCCM in both Hungary and Romania has been highly ineffective and, despite the general legal framework, civilian control of the military has not been yet rendered operational. The reasons for this failure are partially structural and deal with the contradictions existing in the general legal framework.

In the Romanian case for instance, the Supreme National Defense Council (SNDC) was specifically designed to enhance the powers of the first post-communist president Ion Iliescu, despite his limited constitutional prerogatives. Accordingly, the SNDC is legally entitled to take binding decisions, which are secret, obligatory, and enforceable immediately after adoption. No parliamentary deliberation is required prior or after their enforcement. The SCND, however, has

a legal duty to inform the Parliament, through reports presented once a year, or to answer its requests for information. The reports have always been presented later than requested and the debates have been, most of the time, simply postponed. Basically, the Parliament has always received what the Council wanted to provide. In addition, SNDC's decisions are binding only for its members. The consequence is that a minister who is not present at a SNCD meeting may simply choose to ignore a SCND 'binding decision' as has already happened.[124] Unfortunately, this situation continues. In the Hungarian case, the continuing wrangling between the General Staff and the Defense Ministry has made civilian oversight also increasingly difficult.[125]

Even when the legal framework is relatively clear and coherent, DCCM has not produced impressive results. Thus, despite its established structure of committees and procedures, parliamentary oversight of the military remains largely formal and practically ineffective. The defense committees are usually flooded with irrelevant information and lack sufficient expertise and capacity of analysis. Moreover, given the communist political tradition and the post-communist structure of party competition, the CEE parliamentary defense committees have not yet developed a more intrusive attitude with regard to the defense policy-making process, as is the case with the U.S. Congress or the German Bundestag. Even the most powerful instrument of civilian oversight – financial control of the defense budget – has become a simple rubber-stamp practice. In the absence of independent civilian scrutiny, there is no "value for money" qualitative assessment of military requirements. Budgetary figures are proposed by the members of the military and are not seriously challenged by civilian policy-makers or Members of Parliament (MPs). After an initial trade-off between the ministries, the defense budget is then presented to the parliament for adoption, sometimes in the form of a single page in length.[126] Hence, parliamentary fiscal powers are restricted to approving the overall size of the defense budget with large discretion left to the MoD for reallocating budgetary items.

A last important set or problems hindering the DCCM process concerns the level of political commitment to the issue of civilian control of the military. Hungary is probably the most quoted example in this context, given the policy of the 1994-1998 socialist-liberal coalition to reverse the process of civil-military reform of the MoD inaugurated by the previous conservative government. Most of the elderly military cadre were reinstated in senior positions despite Western pressure for reform, by accepting retirement to civilian-status or simply by ceasing to wear military uniforms.[127] This tendency had also been present in Romania before 1993, but eventually was blocked after 1996. However, the issue of political commitment has remained critical for the effective implementation of DCCM. The former Romanian President Emil Constantinescu, for example, had to intervene swiftly in November 2000 and dismiss the Chief of General Staff Mircea Chelaru for his negative comments concerning the role of civilians in the military. Chelaru was also accused of masterminding a semi-political organization – the National Association of the Romanian Military (ANMR) – founded by retired and serving officers in the Army, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Security Services. The association agreement stated that the "military personnel cannot and must not indifferently witness the humiliation or ignorance of national values or the continuous decay of living standards" and consequently, called for developing public attitudes against corruption, crime and activities against the state.[128]

The return of Ion Iliescu to power in November 2000 has made the issue of political commitment more ambivalent. On one hand, the new government supported the appointment of persons with dubious political and professional records in important positions. Thus, a former communist secret service officer suspected for having been involved in the attacks directed between 1980 and 1983 against the Radio Free Europe staff in Munich[129] was selected to serve as chairman of the parliamentary committee in charge of supervising the activity of the intelligence service. The suspected Member of Parliament eventually resigned under heavy press criticism.[130] Certain suspicions were also raised in connection with the person appointed as Director of the Romanian Intelligence Service.[131] On the other hand, the former Chief of General Staff, Gen. Mircea Chelaru, dismissed six months before, was placed on reserve after having been initially threatened with Martial Court for attending a ceremony honoring the pro-Nazi World War II leader Marshal Ion Antonescu.[132]

In short, democratic civilian control of the military remains an ongoing process. While most of NATO DCCM formal requirements have already taken legal form, neither Hungary or Romania has been excelling in implementing these reforms. Unclear legislative framework, lack of parliamentary expertise and capacity of analysis, vacillating political commitment, as well as the absence of independent civilian scrutiny represent the main challenges to the effective implementation of DCCM. However, even in this rudimentary form, DCCM has proved instrumental in preventing dangerous rhetoric escalations between the Hungarian and Romanian military. The ascendant course taken by the bilateral military relationship owes a great deal to the increased density of interactions between the two countries within the PfP framework. Improved and effective DCCM can help make this process irreversible.

E. Normative Change

From a security community view, institutional constraints can hardly resist over time without a corresponding normative change at the level of attitudes and values shared by political elites and public opinion at large. Following the launch of its PfP program, NATO has been highly influential in shaping Hungarian and Romanian foreign policy and military decisions as well as these countries' national security strategies and policies. It also provided clear leadership for establishing democratic civilian control of the military in both countries. Although highly effective in terms of developing strong relationships between NATO and each of the two countries, these measures have not been totally successful in eliminating the issue of national minorities as the main source of mistrust and political tension between Romania and Hungary. Despite the significant progress achieved in this sensitive area between 1996 and 2000, the process of bilateral reconciliation and cooperation remains in the early phases and relatively unstable. One way to substantiate this claim is by examining the evolution of the attitudes of the political elite and public opinion with regard to national minorities, regional cooperation, democracy satisfaction, and respect for human rights.

The post-communist bilateral relationship was marred from the very beginning by a bloody ethnic clash that took place in Tirgu-Mures, Romania, in March 1990, between Romanians and ethnic Hungarians. The political relations between the two countries were further strained by the nationalist stance assumed by Ion Iliescu's and Joszef Antall's governments. The first break-through came with the launch of the PfP program in 1994, which instructed both states to pay more attention to their bilateral relationship. Increased NATO pressure and change

of political leadership led to the conclusion of the Basic Treaty in 1996 as well as to an unexpected improvement of the level of political cooperation between the two states. Unfortunately, this positive trend has subsequently slowed down and experienced a reversal with the advent to power of a conservative coalition in Hungary in 1998 and the return of Ion Iliescu as President of Romania in 2000.

The critical issue here concerns the extent to which the political elites from both countries have learned from the experience of the past decade. The answer so far is cautiously encouraging. With the exception of two extremist parties – the Greater Romania Party (PRM) and the Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIEP) – all other political forces have shown moderation in their discourse concerning national minorities. On the Hungarian side, no political party (with the exception of MIEP) entertains the idea of change of international borders as a solution to protecting the kinship minorities living in neighboring countries. The only contentious issues concern the intentions of the incumbent conservative coalition to extend certain economic and social benefits to Hungarian minorities living in the region[133] and to possibly issue them double citizenship.[134] The report of the Venice Commission and the recently concluded governmental memorandum of understanding[135] temporarily put the issue at rest, but further disputes concerning the status of national minorities are definitely inevitable, if only for the reason that they provide cheap and efficient electoral gains.

On the Romanian side, the situation is more ambiguous. While there is a quasi-political consensus concerning the future possibility of a peaceful reunification between Romania and Moldavia, there is also a slowly emerging tendency for a genuine political accommodation of the views of national minorities. The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) was part of the governmental coalition between 1996 and 2000, and it managed to conclude a temporary political agreement with the succeeding government as well. The downturn to this positive evolution is represented by the rise of nationalist-populism as a very serious political contender. With almost 20 percent of the public vote, the extremist PRM emerged after the November 2000 general elections as the second strongest political force by campaigning on a very aggressive anti-Hungarian, anti-minorities, and anti-political establishment platform.

Moreover, given the traditional "special relationship" and unwavering mutual support between the PRM and Iliescu's party,[136] the political rhetoric of the Romanian government vis-à-vis Hungary is expected to amplify. This tendency is unfortunately already underway as proved by the outbursts of Romania's President and Prime Minister against the Hungarian government's plan to introduce a "Status Law" for minorities living in neighboring countries. Reminiscent of the wording used not so long ago by Slovakia's Vladimir Meciar and Yugoslavia's Slobodan Milosevic, Prime Minister Adrian Nastase said that Romania is "no colony from which Hungary can recruit workforce" and threatened "to abrogate some bilateral treaties" regulating the labor movement between the two countries as well as to break the political agreement concluded with the UDMR.[137] President Ion Iliescu went even further and threatened to suspend the Basic Treaty with Hungary concluded in 1996.[138] The report of the Venice Commission and the memorandum of understanding temporarily defused the situation, but it did not settle the issue. The relationship between the two governments remains cold and unstable.

Despite the tortuous evolution of the political relationship, the economic cooperation between the two countries has been rather upbeat, characterized by a slow but steady increase of the level of trade (see Appendix, Graph 3) and mutual investments. The level of Hungarian-Romanian foreign trade had increased significantly after the 1997 entry of Romania into the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), but it decreased slightly as a result of the market protection measures introduced by Romanian in June 1999 on Hungarian pork and poultry imports. Hungarian investment in Romania amounted to a total of $196 million before 2000, a figure that has placed Hungary tenth among countries investing in Romania, seventh in terms of the total volume of commercial exchange, and first in terms of the strongest commercial partner among Romania's neighbors.[139] During the same period, the level of Romanian investment in Hungary was only 38 million USD strong, mirroring the growing gap between the economic outputs of the two countries.[140] Despite the current weakening of the bilateral political relationship, the commercial turnover for the first three months of 2001 increased by 148 percent, comparing with the same period of the preceding year.[141]

The attitudinal change at the level of public opinion on the issue of national minorities and regional cooperation is more difficult to assess, primarily for two reasons: a high degree of volatility and unavailable cross-regional comparative data. The Central European Barometer program (CEEB) coordinated by the European Commission is one of the few reliable cross-regional surveys, but unfortunately it does not address directly this study's issues of concern. As an indirect proxy, one may tentatively use the degree of satisfaction with democracy (DSD) and the perceived level of respect for human rights (LRHR) in the two countries (see Appendix, Graphs 4 and 5). It may thus be presumed that a low level of satisfaction with democracy and respect for human rights would be less conducive to improving conditions for better regional cooperation and political accommodation of national minorities.

These two variables – low respect for human rights and dissatisfaction with the political regime – constitute perfect ingredients for civil unrest, "scapegoat policies," and regional instability. Applied to the case of Hungary and Romania the two proxy indicators provide ambiguous insights. On one hand, Romanians, and especially Hungarians, are quite unhappy with the way in which democracy unfolds in their country. On the other hand, both are moderately satisfied with how human rights are respected in their country. These two observations seem to suggest that it is not the political component of democracy that is at stake here, but rather its social and economic dimensions. Moreover, the low level of respect for human rights in Romania warns about a possible political backlash against democracy, if the promised social and economic benefits fail to be delivered.

A more effective indicator for assessing the public attitudinal shift concerning national minorities and regional cooperation is the support enjoyed by political parties opposed to these values. The Greater Romania Party and the Hungarian Justice and Life Party are the most important political forces to campaign on a revisionist and anti-national minorities platform. As shown in Graph 6 (see Appendix), public support for the two parties has increased steadily in the last years, especially in Romania where it already threatens to disrupt the political process. While having little chance of actually winning the elections in the near future, both parties exert a negative influence on the political process by rendering nationalist-populist agendas more tempting for the rest of political parties. This process is already in full swing in Romania and

holds the potential to make inroads in Hungary as well after the 2002 general elections. If these predictions are correct, then perspectives for regional cooperation are less optimistic then officially presented.

The Kosovo Test

NATO's relationship with the CEE countries and the strength of the emerging CEE security community was first put to test during the 1999 NATO intervention in Kosovo. Although preceded by a low-scale NATO intervention in Bosnia in 1995, the Kosovo crisis caught both NATO and its CEE partners relatively unprepared. Having been primarily engaged in peace-keeping and peace-building training and exercises within the PfP framework and driven by various political interests, the CEE countries and, to a certain extent, NATO itself signaled moderate willingness to engage in peace-enforcement missions. The Kosovo crisis represented a defining moment for evaluating the strength of the institutional and normative building blocks, shaping the triangle relationship between Romania, Hungary, and NATO. To be sure, the military contribution of both countries during the Kosovo operation was very limited, but the key input was political.

All factors discussed in the previous sections came into play: coordination of the foreign and military policies; real-life application of national security strategies; full-scale assessment of the level of military readiness and political control of the military; and, last but not least, the degree of political support among political elites and public opinion. From this perspective, both countries performed relatively well, especially Romania, which, unlike Hungary, was not a full member of the Alliance. However, this assessment must be read with caution. Given its geographic proximity to the conflict zone and its concern for the security of the Hungarian minority living in Vojvodina, Hungary had to be seriously pressed by NATO and U.S. officials to fulfill its member obligations. In Romania's case, the swift intervention in support of NATO's operation in Kosovo was largely due to the personal efforts of President Emil Constantinescu and to the political support of the ruling center-right coalition. Had Yugoslavia's Slobodan Milosevic threatened with reprisals against the Hungarian minority from Vojvodina, or had Ion Iliescu been President of Romania at that time, then both Hungary and Romania would have been much less forthcoming in their support of the NATO intervention.

In the Hungarian case, all political parties, except for the extremist MIEP and the communists, fully supported the NATO intervention. Hungary opened its airspace and military airports to NATO aircrafts and allowed the Alliance to use its airbase at Taszar for air strikes against Yugoslavia. However, the political support for the air strikes was neither constant nor evenly shared by all political forces. The Hungarian Socialist party, second largest in the parliament, even initiated a motion to withdraw permission of unlimited use of Hungarian airspace for NATO at a time the intervention was escalating.[142] The issue of Vojvodina continued to be a headache to both Hungarian leaders and NATO officials. The leader of the right wing nationalist party MIEP called for a redrawing of Hungary's borders to include part of Vojvodina, while the vice-president of the minor coalition party (FKGP) of the government and chairman of the parliamentary defense committee suggested that Vojvodina could become an independent state.[143] The Hungarian government distanced itself firmly from both proposals. However, NATO officials seemed to have been disturbed by the Prime Minister Viktor Orban's original interpretation of NATO's Article 5. Orban insisted that the issue of Hungarians from Vojvodina

was not only a Hungarian issue, but a NATO one as well, and that "if Hungarians are harmed to the slightest extent, there must be an appropriate response."[144]

Concern for the security of the Hungarian minority in Vojvodina compelled the Hungarian government to oppose NATO plans for a ground war and to refuse to make its territory available for a land invasion, were this to occur. The issue of refugees also proved controversial, since the Hungarian government declined to accept quotas for refugees on the grounds that it hosted as many as arrived. This measure eliminated most of the Kosovars since only 2000-3000 refugees – mainly Serbians and ethnic Hungarians – could make their way through Serbia to Hungary.[145] On the other hand, the Hungarian government acted very firmly to oppose a Russian armor-plated convoy in April 1999, as well as to deny permission of use of airspace to Russian planes in June 1999, during the NATO-Russia standoff concerning the garrison in Prishtina.[146] As for public opinion, the level of support in favor of the air strikes in Budapest was below the 62 percent threshold throughout the entire crisis, while the concern for possible spillover effects into Hungary remained significant (52 percent).[147] In step with the escalation of the intervention, public support for sending NATO ground troops in Kosovo consistently dropped from 37 percent to below 30 percent.[148]

Unlike Hungary, Romania is not a member of the Alliance, but has been actively struggling since 1994 to join the institution. There is no political force in Romania that explicitly opposes NATO membership, but the reasons motivating political attitudes toward NATO differ greatly. Given deep-seated historical memories similar to those present in many CEE countries, most of the political forces favor the "old NATO" – the Cold War military alliance against Russia. In addition, there is also widespread agreement that only NATO membership can keep the Romanian-Hungarian relationship on a positive track and prevent military competition. Another set of considerations underlies the symbolic attachment to the "return to Europe" argument and the belief in the capacity of the "new NATO" to stabilize the region not just militarily but also politically and economically. Last but not least, NATO membership is regarded by all parties as the ultimate public relations (PR) trophy, the winner of which could allegedly stay in power for a long time, regardless the severity of the country's economic and social problems. The first two sets of motivations are primarily shared by nationalist-communists (the extremist Greater Romania Party, PRM) and the nationalist, post-communists (PDSR recently renamed PSD, the party of current President Ion Iliescu and Prime-Minister Adrian Năstase), while the third reason is favored by liberals, Christian-Democrats, social-democrats and the party of ethnic Hungarians. With the "new NATO" taking precedence over the Cold-War alliance, PRM has gradually moved to a less sympathetic position towards NATO but it stopped short of opposing it explicitly. PDSR (PSD) has also toned down its anti-NATO rhetoric used during the Kosovo crisis and provided support, albeit largely symbolic, to the U.S. and NATO anti-terrorist campaign after the September 11 attacks.

In effect, the Romanian reaction to the NATO intervention in Kosovo mirrored the motivational split described above. On one hand, President Emil Constantinescu and the ruling coalition acted basically as a *de facto* NATO-member, by politically supporting all actions of the Alliance, including the air strikes that were considered by the President to be "necessary and legitimate" endeavors to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe. In military terms, Romania provided NATO aircrafts with unlimited access to its air space, anticipating a joint Romanian-NATO air space management.[149] Additionally, a NATO radar unit was installed near Craiova to

monitor the air traffic over Yugoslavia while the government issued a decision to implement the oil embargo declared by the European Union against Yugoslavia.[150] The Romanian-NATO cooperation in managing the Kosovo crisis seemed rather smooth, given the unprecedented challenge that Kosovo posed to the PfP crisis management institutions and procedures. The most vulnerable area proved to be the coordination of information concerning operational plans for air space, air traffic management, and conflict development, as well as information related to acceptance of refugees, the organization of camps, the transport of humanitarian aid, or the repatriation of refugees.[151] The Romanian government offered to accommodate up to 6000 refugees, but the number of those arriving in the country was significantly lower.

On the other hand, the political opposition of that time, composed of the party of Ion Iliescu (PDSR) and the Great Romania party (PRM) – now back in power following the general elections of November 2000 – harshly condemned NATO's intervention in Kosovo and tried to block the government's support for the Alliance. First, it vehemently opposed the proposal made by the government in October 1998 to grant access rights to NATO airplanes entering Romanian airspace under "urgent and unexpected circumstances." Ion Iliescu, PDSR, and PRM then again pressed the government in April 1999 to reject NATO's request for unlimited access to Romania's air space.[152] The representatives of PDSR and PRM had initially refused to even discuss the proposals made by Romania's Supreme Council for Defense allowing NATO forces in the Romanian airspace[153] during a joint session of the parliamentary defense committees and later declined to vote a similar resolution in the Romanian parliament.

The position of Ion Iliescu and his PDSR party during the Kosovo crisis raises serious questions about Romania's capacity under his leadership to be a real provider of security to the Alliance. Currently, the answer is negative, leaning toward the "consumer of security" side. Had Ion Iliescu and his party been in power during the Kosovo operation, Romania would have probably supported the Alliance only rhetorically, and even then reluctantly. A few other political statements support this conclusion. After accepting an invitation one year before the Kosovo crisis to a private meeting with Slobodan Milosevic, in "gratitude for his efforts during his presidential mandates to restore a fair peace in the region," Ion Iliescu expressed his strong support for the position of the Serbian authorities towards the conflict in the Kosovo province.[154] Deplorably enough, he also likened Milosevic's treatment of Kosovo to a man beating his wife and accused NATO of intervening needlessly in the conflict.

Finally, in a controversial statement, Ion Iliescu also ruled out the possibility of ever having NATO troops on Romanian territory.[155] Strong suspicions have been repeatedly voiced as to the role played by several top-level officials of Iliescu's administration – including the ex prime-minister, Nicolae Vacaroiu – in breaching the UN oil and arms embargo against Yugoslavia between 1993 and 1995.[156] Unfortunately, all prosecutors investigating this case were dismissed and all legal inquiries were stopped suddenly after December 2000, following the return to power of Ion Iliescu and his party.[157] Moreover, in 2001, a *New York Times* article contended that experts had proof that Romania broke United Nations sanctions by selling arms to Iraq after the 1990 conflict, during the previous presidential mandates of Ion Iliescu (1990-1996).[158]

The reaction of the Romanian public toward the Kosovo operation was highly critical. During the conflict, only 15 percent of Romanians expressed support for the air strikes – most notably the ethnic Hungarians who favored them by 50 percent – while the overwhelming majority of 75-78 percent opposed the strikes.[159] Interestingly enough, support for NATO membership increased by 6 percent during the same period, from 56 to 62 percent,[160] and jumped to 78 percent a year later.[161] This puzzling evolution correlates with worsening economic conditions and confirms the widespread public belief (51 percent) that NATO membership may help improve the country's tattered image to foreign investors.[162] On the other hand, only 46 percent agree to send Romanian troops abroad while only 31 percent accept NATO troops on Romanian territory.[163]

Conclusions

The main goal of this paper was to explore the implications of NATO enlargement on the process of security community formation in Central and Eastern Europe. In this respect, the paper examined the building blocks and mechanisms through which NATO is assumed to extend its institutional and normative influence in the region and, thereby, reduces chances for military conflict and political tension. While acknowledging certain methodological limitations, the paper assumed a clear rationalist position and performed the empirical part of the research by testing competing sets of hypotheses derived from two theoretical models, based on five key variables (foreign and military policy direction, national security strategy and policy, military readiness and compatibility, democratic civilian control of the military, and normative change), and applied to two case studies (Romania and Hungary).

Given the relatively short time-frame featuring the interaction process between NATO and the aspirant CEE countries, as well as the fast-track process of NATO adjustment to post-Cold War conditions, the paper was interested in concentrating not on absolute outcomes but on the enlargement process itself. Hence, it formulated four hypotheses (institutional, normative, effectiveness, and regional instability) in order to provide an empirical basis for the confirmation or rejection of two theoretical models. The first one assumed the formation of the CEE security community to be primarily the result of NATO-driven institutional and normative adjustments, in terms of democratic political-military structures, as well as non-nationalist and regionally cooperative attitudes. The second model contended that NATO enlargement undermined the institutional capacity of the Alliance to deal promptly and efficiently in times of crisis and negatively impacted regional stability by creating new lines of division between the new members and those left out.

The empirical examination of the four hypotheses (see Appendix, Graph 7) gives partial credit to both theoretical models. NATO's magnetism has indeed exerted a great deal of positive influence on both countries but at different levels, higher for Hungary and more moderately for Romania. On one hand, the security community model is supported by the steadfast convergence of foreign and military directions (FMPD) and national security strategy and policies (NSSD). Although on an ascendant course, the issue of democratic civilian control of the military (DCCM) has some way to go to meet NATO standards.

On the other hand, there is little likelihood that the effectiveness of the Alliance can improve in the near future given the modest level of military readiness and compatibility to NATO standards of the armed forces of Romania and Hungary. Finally, despite significant progress in institutional terms achieved under NATO leadership, the political stability of the region is not fully supported by an irreversible change at the normative level, since the issue of national minorities remains the main source of mistrust and political tension between the two countries. As a general conclusion, regardless the general positive trend, the sound political and military engagement between NATO and the two individual countries has not yet been rendered into similar vigorous patterns of bilateral cooperation between Hungary and Romania. The process of formation of the CEE security community is slowly advancing but results are as of yet indecisive.

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