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# The Importance of Statebuilding: Additional Contributions from a Military Perspective

## Abstract

*Since the early beginning, stability, prosperity and security have been core values for the members of the transatlantic community. Efforts have been made for reconciliation over human lives lost in war, to understand and to solve dramatic changes in societies, to rebuild economies after heavy losses in goods, and to repair and maintain destroyed basic infrastructure; these are still ongoing concerns that present periodical challenges for all participating states. Statebuilding approaches can be described in many theoretical ways, but in practice – based on historical experience – they can be either peaceful or very bloody. In order to realise unknown and extreme factors and to give them adequate answers there is an urgent need for a stable, reliable and effective system.*

*The Hungarian Defence Forces has a long history in peace operations, however, the latest missions conducted, especially in the Balkans and in Afghanistan, provided lots of useful experience related to different statebuilding efforts.*

*In this paper the authors explain the basic general relations between state and the military, in normal – or ideal – circumstances, illustrated – as a comparison – with different elements and factors in statebuilding efforts in case of extreme conditions such as war, failing states or even a hypocritical emergence of state-like entities.*

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## 1. Introduction

The Atlantic Charter – as one of the core documents of the transatlantic relations – contains some state(re)building-related measures by focusing on different governmental, economic and territorial expectations to be achieved after the 'final destruction of the Nazi tyranny'.<sup>3</sup>

However, the term 'statebuilding' was used by Charles Tilly first in the 1970s, who explained that warfighting and the creation of states go hand in hand. According to him, centralised control, administration and security related bargains are the key elements of formulating modern European states.<sup>4</sup>

In the Cold War there were different types and waves of statebuilding (or failing) procedures, which were diverse in terms of geographic locations (for example in Asia) or in terms of methods (such as decolonisation, or collapse of artificial federal systems, such as the USSR).

After the end of (the latest) Cold War period we expected a 'never-seen-before peace' and prosperity all around the world, however, we soon had to face the painful fact of local wars spreading in the Balkans and other regions, too. Different peace-building measures were introduced by the United Nations in the early 1990s (see Boutros-Ghali's initiatives) based on the experience of related previous missions and with the goal to involve the international community until the given system becomes self-sufficient and as a result there is no need for any additional peace support.

By the eve of the 9/11 attacks we had realised that global efforts conducted against terrorism did not mean only military campaigns but also included vital needs in order to update earlier methods of statebuilding, especially in the cases of Afghanistan (2011) and Iraq (2003). More than a decade of trying to establish effectively working state systems made the international and especially the transatlantic community realise that the terms 'nationbuilding' and 'peacebuilding' had different contents among local warlords and for tribal and ethnic groups in the above mentioned countries and regions. By the mid-2000s, expressions like 'failed or fragile states' had become well-known and widely used by experts, media and political actors as well, when setting up related lists each year to redescribe malfunctions (or even missing functions) in social, economic, political and other dimensions of state-provided institutions.

Nowadays the events in the Ukrainian crisis and the rise of Islamic State are strengthening the essential need for different, mainly military means, such as organisation, tools, capabilities, planning and effective mission achievements.

The players of transatlantic relations, regardless of being states or international organisations, were (and still are) participating in different state (nation) building missions and realised that achieving victory in a regular war had become progressively less costly, while their success in the post-combat phase had become progressively more problematic.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Atlantic Charter, 14 August 1941.

<sup>4</sup> Verena Fritz and Alina Rocha Menocal, *Understanding State-Building from a Political Economy Perspective. An Analytical and Conceptual Paper on Processes, Embedded Tensions and Lessons for International Engagement*. Overseas Development Institute, 2007.

<sup>5</sup> James Dobbins, 'NATO's role in nation-building', *NATO Review*, 01 January 2005.

## 2. Facing the security domain

In the above section a short overview of statebuilding was given via a quick historical snapshot. However, it needs to be emphasised that statebuilding as a complex process has got many crucial elements, which can be described by different domains and actors.

First of all it is important to set up the premise that a functioning state needs a generally accepted core element, usually a group or elites with a wide legitimacy of leading capability. This (generally political) group is the first target element of the support arriving from international actors wishing not just to have them as decision-makers, but also to approach them as reliable partners, who can provide guarantees and take responsibility. The most important tools and key dimensions through which the first and basic state-running steps can be achieved are: security, public administration and the rule of law. These components are covered by other dimensions, such as social, economic and other factors, whose main characteristic feature is interdependency.

In order to solve the related issues of security, it is very important to define and understand the local in-depth meaning of security. Without this, it is almost impossible to create and maintain effective statebuilding measures, on the contrary, they could be heavily harmed.<sup>6</sup>

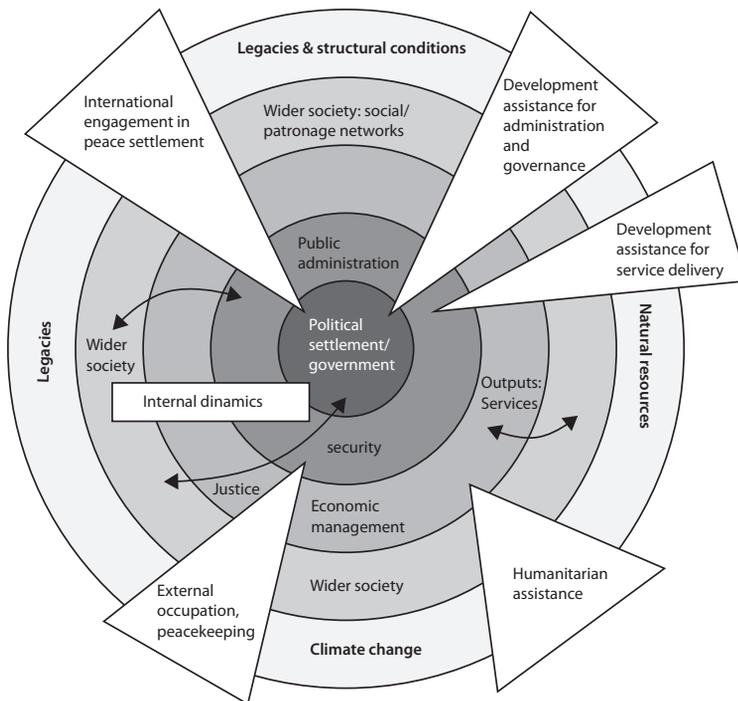


Figure 1: Domains and actors in the statebuilding process

Source: Fritz and Menocal, *Understanding State-Building*.

<sup>6</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Conflict and Fragility. Do No Harm. International Support for Statebuilding*, 2010.

As it can be seen, in statebuilding efforts and activities security plays a central role, which is not surprising, if the basic approach is accepted: missing or eroded state service branches are unable to provide an adequate level of security. In the above figure, it is clearly indicated that security could be provided by external players through occupation or peacekeeping missions. At this point, it needs to be added that starting, continuing and closing efforts are dependent on the initiated position when the exact statebuilding procedure has started. Governmental and statebuilding processes are similar; however, their content and practice are different especially in a holistic manner. (In cases of nationbuilding, belief in a common faith plays the most important role.)

The terms used above, such as 'occupation and peacekeeping' are generally military ones, covering a wide range of usage of military means. As experienced through many centuries, armed forces were used to destroy, demolish or harm enemy forces and obstacles, but in the past few decades the military – as a tool of bringing peace and stability – plays a reverse role. It is a bit controversial, but in statebuilding efforts the military system is the only one which has got almost all of the key elements needed for effective governance: leadership, control, power, operational ability, different services, and so on. At this stage, external players have monopoly over the internal means of violence using their related – usually – military capabilities. In these cases, military (or police or law enforcement agencies) fill up the security gaps, which cannot be provided and effectively guaranteed at strategic level by the state.

Stability, capability of self-defence, cooperation and reliability are the most important expectations as basic needs for an existing (or evolving) state; however, the achievement of these needs is a very complex, hard and long-term procedure even in a very peaceful environment. At this point, a basic fact should be added, namely that the military system is built for missions and tasks to be executed in extreme conditions. In such conditions, the military has to operate continuously and it is crucial to provide direct or indirect involvement in achieving different objectives by military means, which at strategic level are set up by the state (government). The military is created, trained and prepared for unexpected events and procedures. Nowadays, battlefield (or theatre of operations) success cannot be measured only by numbers, by taken objects or just by military mind: there are many other elements, factors and players which also need to be taken into consideration when the depth of success (or failure) is evaluated.

Providing security by military tools in statebuilding missions usually means: creating the basics of a secure and safe environment for the (re)start of daily life, providing training, doctrinal solutions and equipment for the domestic (local) forces. It should be emphasised that beyond military tools, there are economic, diplomatic and other possible solutions, too. The best combination of their use depends on the exact situation which consists of – at minimum level – characteristics of state leadership, will and ability of donor states, geopolitical and geographical location and related expectations.

Over the past 25 years, the security environment of Hungary has significantly changed. Besides the old challenges new ones have appeared near and far in our neighbourhood. For local, regional and global peace and security much more must

be done both at national and Alliance levels. The new challenges have appeared in a complex way. According to the Copenhagen security theory, security requires efforts in the entire security dimension:

- Political (administrative)
- Military (homeland security)
- Economic
- Social (social, humanitarian)
- Environmental
- Other (scientific, technical)

Complex challenges require complex answers. Each challenge must be responded to, they must be treated to provide stable, predictable and self-sustaining peace. The complex answers have many players. For the success, it is essential to coordinate the efforts of those actors.

Among the Copenhagen security dimensions, the top three are essential for establishing stability. Of these, the creation of military (homeland security), also known as physical security, is the foundation of everything. Where there is no physical security, there is no free will, choice or decision for small and large communities, or the state.

### 3. The military and the state

The military is an essential pre-condition and part of community life. The armed forces guarantee physical security, free will and free decision-making for a nation's society. Throughout history, communities formed armed groups to ensure their physical security, on the basis of the division of labour among its members and groups. The armed forces are the result of such a historical development process.

The military force is the basis of statehood, and the state has a monopoly over the armed forces. This monopoly includes the military preparation, development and deployment. Where such monopoly is not realised, that state is weak and prone to fail. Therefore, one of the four criteria in the failed state index is the issue of the state monopoly of violence. The basic functions of a government (regulation, collecting, distribution, defence, sanctioning) should be closely aligned. But the most important and the oldest of all is defence. This idea is not only displayed at state level but also in towns and communities, moreover, at individual level. On the basis of the Maslow hierarchy of needs, it can be stated that the basis of existence is comprised by security created at the first two levels (physiological needs and physical security).

The armed forces, as a state actor creating physical security and guaranteeing sovereignty, are characterised by many special features:

- Continuous maintaining of the existing state and protecting life
- Readiness for the worst-case scenario
- Carrying out unpredictable and unexpected responsibilities and duties
- High-risk missions for the individual and for the armed forces (life and death)

- High risks also for the state – if the military fails, there is no other physical force for the defence of the interests and values, which would be capable to guarantee the independent existence
- The military force is used in dangerous or even lethal environment

The armed forces (may) carry out their missions in extreme environments:

- Extreme terrain
- Extreme climate
- Extreme security environment
- Extreme human terrain

The deployment of military forces involves conducting missions under various conditions:

- Hostile environment
- Foreign cultural environment
- Significantly different from normal circumstances
- Destroyed infrastructure (there is no production, supplies, public services and utilities, public administration)

The deployed military forces have to be prepared for the worst-case scenario. They are to operate in destroyed infrastructure, destroyed environment, where the living and working conditions do not exist.

Therefore, the armed forces must be able to create the conditions for their own operations. Besides their own units, the military forces must often be able to provide support to others (for example, the local population). It is the structure of the armed forces, the establishment of their functional components, maintenance, development and coordination of these activities (command and control) which enable their operation. The forces are self-sustaining, capable of regeneration, planning, organising, command and control, and execute high-risk or even lethal military operations.

Today, the new tasks of the armed forces have also come to the fore. The military, besides guaranteeing security for the state, is involved in building other states. These require new missions, organisation, challenges and procedures, too.

Due to the changes in the security environment, the military operational environment has also changed. The complex tasks, many actors and continuous coordination comprise important features of a complex operational environment, and conflicts have also changed considerably in recent years.

The characteristics of the tasks carried out by, and the expected future mission of the Hungarian Defence Forces can be connected to changes in the conflicts.

In the Cold War era basically:

- Armed conflicts took place under the control of governments and in the framework of military command and control systems
- Armed conflicts were carried out by military organisations
- Damage was mainly military
- The fundamental goal was to seize and hold a given area or territory
- Military tasks were carried out by combined arms units, at joint force level and with the use of complex weapons systems

Post-Cold War civil war conflicts are different in every aspect:

- The conflicts take place within the state on the basis of historical, religious, ethnic, or economic diversity
- The warring parties are armed groups and militias – in accordance with international law, these militants often cannot be considered 'warriors' or warring parties
- The victims of clashes are mostly civilians
- The objective of the use of force is to strengthen the identities of a grouping and to deprive of power others with different historical, religious and ethnic backgrounds, often with the use of the scarce resources
- Simple small arms are used which determines the location of warfare

Combat takes place without joint or combined arms units, without sophisticated weapons systems. Fighting is conducted almost exclusively with small arms, in urban space or in the vicinity of settlements. Without aerial vehicles, artillery, combat vehicles and communication systems large areas cannot be controlled. But the population of cities and villages can be controlled. Conflicts based on traditions, religion, ethnic groups and diversity of human behaviour in residential areas can only be defused in the place of their origin, with the tools in use, and with a focus on the real causes. The underlying traditions, religion or ethnicity are based on the diversity of human behaviour; therefore, conflicts can only be unlocked with devices and measures in which these factors are incurred, present as they comprise the real reasons.<sup>7</sup>

Second-generation peace operations have the following characteristics:<sup>8</sup>

- Changes in conflicts
- Complexity (security actors, other organisations)
- Civil war (power)
- Mass murder/genocide/ethnic cleansing
- Individual and group identity consciousness
- Refugees and civilian casualties
- Simple, inexpensive weapons
- Peacekeeping forces targeted
- The use of violence by peacekeeping forces, enforcement
- Simultaneous military actions
- Preparedness, equipment
- Control of scarce resources
- Handover/takeover of tasks among organisations

Additional features include:

- Increased importance of regional security

<sup>7</sup> Gábor Boldizsár, 'Kultúranropológia és a jövő tisztképzése' [Cultural Anthropology and Officer Training in the Future], *Hadtudományi Szemle* 6, no 1 (2013), 101–102.

<sup>8</sup> Gábor Boldizsár, *A békeműveletekben való részvétel hatása a Magyar Honvédségre*, doktori disszertáció [The Effects of Participation in Peace Operations on the Hungarian Defence Forces, PhD thesis] (Budapest: Zrínyi Miklós National Defence University, 2008), 33.

- Prevention (UNPREDEP)
- The application of sanctions
- The reassessment of the concept of neutrality, impartiality
- The reassessment of the concept of self-defence
- Conducting non-traditional military functions (police, humanitarian, election security, and so on)
- Peace operations have become an important task of the armed forces, the necessary regulations have been constructed (concept, doctrine, procedures, and so on), practical experience and training have been processed and integrated into training

#### **4. Operational environment: Impacts and future expectations**

The transformed conflicts and their management have affected the operational environment, which have the following basic characteristics:

- In conflict management, strengthening peace and security, a growing number of international organisations are involved. Each organisation strives to make its activity legitimate, based on a UN Security Council resolution.
- Military operations are executed at a high level of political and media attention. Because of the political effect and publicity, the execution of tasks by small units and individuals is highly valued.
- Due to the complexity of conflicts, a complex and coordinated response is needed in the execution of international operations in all dimensions (political/administrative, military/homeland security, economic, humanitarian, environmental, and so on) of security and with its actors.
- A military force conducts complex task systems in the military/homeland security, political/administrative and economic security dimensions.
- All security dimensions have their peculiarities, so the involved organisations and participants also show diversity. The management of complex conflicts has many players with whom continuous cooperation and coordination of efforts must be designed and maintained.
- The areas of operations are basically large geographical areas, while the strength of available military forces is limited. Thus, in such large areas small units have to carry out their mission.
- An international military intervention is planned, organised and carried out by multinational efforts, so the multinational nature is also crucial.
- It requires the execution of missions at small-unit levels in the framework of cooperation of various services (land forces, air force and navy) that is a combined and joint execution of tasks.
- The capability to execute such tasks must be permanently maintained, far away from homeland bases. The tasks are to be carried out with a high degree of autonomy, in a restrictive legal environment, and with scarce resources, on

the basis of the superior commander's instructions. The supply, supplement and resupply for the operation is to be provided from home territory.

- The use of military force is characterised by asymmetric warfare.
- In many cases it is not only traditional military tasks that are to be executed in a fundamentally different culture amidst demolished, dilapidated infrastructure, under extreme physical (geographic, man-made) and climatic conditions.
- For the forces operating in the area of operations as a 'third party', the acceptance willingness of the local authorities and the general public, formal and informal opinion-makers' behaviour, are essential in relation to the military force, the international efforts and in relation to the goals and ultimate objectives. This behaviour may be supportive, neutral or negative.
- It is the attitude of the locals, that is the human terrain conditions and events, which primarily affects the execution of tasks (acceptance) and poses a threat to military forces (different values and responses). The actions and reactions of individuals and of the large and small traditional communities vary due to different historical, cultural, religious and empirical reasons. Unawareness of different standards is a serious threat to a military force and international players in action.<sup>9</sup>

The basic pre-condition for complex operations with changing intensity is that objectives designated by the policy (government) are to be achieved by the armed forces. The policy-makers (government) should define and provide three essential elements:

- Clear, achievable end state
- An appropriate legal background for the implementation
- Guaranteeing the proper quantity and quality of resources (human and material) required for the execution

In case of the existence and harmony of these three conditions, a mission can be accomplished. The lack, overestimation or under-providing of any of the three factors generate dysfunction or failure in the execution of military missions.

Today we can see that the conflicts from previous decades have not been resolved and new ones have already appeared. The Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan or Cyprus are all unresolved issues. New challenges, such as the Islamic State, the crisis in Ukraine or mass migration have developed. The states and alliances must be able to manage both the old and the new challenges.

It is an important task in the present and future statebuilding. This should be carried out in locations far from Hungary but often increasingly closer. For security reasons, it is essential to have predictable, stable, self-sustaining and capable states that are willing to cooperate in our immediate and wider environment.

Therefore, a state must be built. In statebuilding, the armed forces have both responsibility and experience. The Security Sector Reform, the military, the law

<sup>9</sup> Gábor Boldizsár, 'A magyar PRT, mint a legkomplexebb külföldi válságkezelés műveleti környezete' [The Hungarian PRT as the Most Complex Crisis Management Operation Abroad, and Its Operational Environment], *Társadalom és Honvédelem* 1–2 (2013), 27–48.

enforcement, the secret services' transformation and several other statebuilding tasks have been performed by the military, and will have to be carried out in the future:

- All types of peace operations are complex and multi-player missions. Basically, they are aimed at the creation of physical security.
- Providing security:
  - The establishment and monitoring of a ceasefire, ending the conflicts
  - The separation of opposing parties
  - Ensuring the monitoring presence
- Security shaping:
  - Disarmament of former combatants
  - Developing a security system
  - Training, mentoring and monitoring security actors
  - Execution of security operations
- Transfer of responsibilities:
  - Preparation and execution of national and local elections – the prerequisites for this are an established government and the Security Sector Reform
  - Transfer of authority – after free elections, the local bodies take over governing and the control of the security agencies from the interim international management
- Cooperation:
  - Complex management of complex crises has many actors. A close-coordinated and concerted cooperation is needed between all dimensions of the active security agents. The cooperation of military, policy-makers, business and public administration, professionals, judges, doctors, teachers and engineers is necessary.
  - The military has the necessary elements for cooperation and harmonisation, experience, expertise, organisations and experts (CIMIC, PSYOPS, Information Operations, Human Terrain Analysis Team).
- Construction:
  - There is a need for ongoing networking and information sharing with the cooperating actors and for coordination and a unity of efforts.
  - In the last 25 years, the statebuilding tasks in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan were performed by soldiers. Within the framework of ISAF's PRT (Provincial Reconstruction Team) in Afghanistan, the HDF contributed to the existence of the state and was active in three important areas:
    - Support for public administration
    - Economic development
    - Physical security

## 5. Summary

The transatlantic community gained deep and wide experience in the past decades in which statebuilding efforts became central components.

The basic function of a country's armed forces is to protect the nation's interests and values, and to guarantee national independence. Today, however, the military is involved in statebuilding in other countries, not only in establishing physical security but also in other, non-traditional efforts.

The forces both at home and abroad are willing to accomplish missions in extreme and life-threatening environment, facing unknown and high risks to perform tasks for maintaining the given country's existence and freedom of actions.

As a result of the operational changes and changes in conflict environment the forces, including the Hungarian Defence Forces (HDF), also changed considerably. Besides country defence and disaster relief missions, the HDF is capable of carrying out international missions, too. These tasks are conducted far away from Hungary, in a different environment and multinational units, in varying intensity conflicts. Doctrine, training, education, equipment and the conversion of cooperation accomplished over the past 25 years allow for these activities.

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