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Topic A: Adapting to climate change and climate security

It is undeniable that the fossil-fuelled growth model adopted by Western countries after the Second World War is at the roots of the environmental challenges we are facing today. The success of this model has led to profound changes in our planet's systems, marking the onset of a new epoch, the Anthropocene. Where classical geopolitics explored the influence of climates and environments on shaping societies, cultures, and politics, the Anthropocene era has completely reversed this dynamic, with human activities and decisions driving the course of climate change, which in turn shapes societies, cultures, and politics (Dalby, 2021).

As the strongest military alliance in the world, NATO must maintain its operational excellence while recognizing that human-induced environmental changes pose significant risks to global stability and regional security. Indeed, over the past 60 years, at least 40 percent of internal armed conflicts have been associated with disputes over natural resources, and the most destructive conflicts between 1950 and 2000 took place in regions identified as biodiversity hotspots (Farhan et al., 2023).

As a landlocked country in Central Europe whose territory consists of a plain region surrounded by mountains, Hungary is particularly vulnerable to various climate-related risks such as droughts, floodings, and agricultural disruptions (Climate-ADAPT, 2023a). For instance, Hungary's agricultural sector suffers from changes in precipitation patterns, extreme weather events, and water scarcity. To enhance climate resilience in agriculture, Hungary supports investments in agricultural research and innovation to develop sustainable farming practices, including crop diversification, soil conservation measures, and efficient water management techniques (Climate-ADAPT, 2023b).

Additionally, Hungary recognizes the need for a transition to renewable energy sources and has already pledged in that direction through its National Adaptation Strategy, which outlines an action plan to bolster climate resilience in the energy sector. The strategy delineates both short-term and long-term priorities, which strive to fully integrate climate change considerations into energy policy (International Energy Agency, 2021). Besides, in April 2021, as part of its Green District Heating Program, Hungary announced the construction of its inaugural large-scale geothermal project, which aims to transition the heating market from natural gas to renewable energy sources. This facility holds the potential to reduce CO2 emissions by 14 to 21 thousand tonnes annually (Simoes, 2021).

Furthermore, Hungary highlights the significance of the NATO Climate Change and Security Center of Excellence in Montreal as a platform for sharing knowledge and capabilities to tackle climate security challenges. The Hungarian delegation presses the centre to adopt a comprehensive approach that not only integrates environmental considerations into defense planning and operations, but also assesses the specific climate security needs of each alliance member. This steward position held by the centre would enable each NATO member to receive the necessary support in adapting and mitigating the risks associated with climate change.

Finally, as a stakeholder of the North Atlantic Council, Hungary asserts that it will unequivocally condemn any fearmongering tactics put forth by any foreign leaders or groups with regards to climate change. We reiterate that fear is not the way to go, as it can only breed defeatism, hence perpetuating a self-fulfilling prophecy of hopelessness and stagnation (Martuscelli, 2023).

497 words (without in-text citations)

Topic B: Integrating responses to emerging threats and cybersecurity

Claiming that technological innovation has surged at an unprecedented pace in the past decades would be an understatement. In fact, the developments in AI and quantum computing have followed a pace so exponential that we no longer speak about them in decades or years, but rather in months and days. Nevertheless, this progress is bringing unheard of challenges in the realm of cybersecurity, which must deal with ever-evolving threats to our interconnected world.

During a conference in Budapest, U.S. Embassy Officer Neil Pickett rightfully put forth that "Recent events in Ukraine [and now Gaza] clearly show us that modern warfare is not fought with just guns, missiles, and brute force, it is being fought with drones, artificial intelligence, and secure telecommunications." (U.S. Embassy Budapest, 2022) Nowadays, ensuring the integrity and resilience of our supply chains, whether physical or digital, has therefore become fundamental. In this regard, Hungary has always stood as a pioneer nation in Central Europe. In 2013, it formulated *The National Cybersecurity Strategy of Hungary* (NCSS) in 2013, a document which proposed a unique model for collaboration between government officials and private sector experts, of which Hungary is still a great supporter (Kovacs & Szentgali, 2015).

For NATO to bolster its cybersecurity measures, Hungary first suggests the increase of cyber defence exercises involving all NATO member states, to enhance readiness and coordination in cases of cyberattacks. Besides, Hungary has actively been participating in such exercises through the Cyber Europe series, which simulates extensive cybersecurity incidents escalating to crises across the EU. Organized by the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity, such exercises foster trust within the EU cybersecurity community and offer valuable training opportunities to enhance preparedness among participants EU-wide (European Union Agency for Cybersecurity, n.d.). Hungary proposes to expand such cybersecurity exercises within NATO, as they could be incorporated into already scheduled multinational trainings, like Steadfast Defender 2024, the greatest military exercise in Europe since the Cold War era. More similar trainings should be added to NATO's agenda, as they foster interoperability, efficiency, and resilience between allied forces and strengthen NATO's defense strategies (NATO's Strategic Warfare Development Command, 2024).

Proposals such as the establishment of a centralized platform for real-time information sharing among NATO member states regarding cyber threats and attacks, which would align with NATO's current Malware Information Sharing Platform, could also be explored. However,

Hungary reiterates the importance of upholding the sovereignty of each NATO member, considering that such a platform could certainly facilitate the rapid exchange of intelligence but could also pave the way for emerging threats to gather more effectively confidential information concerning all member states (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2023).

To this day, the 2001 Convention on Cybercrime, unveiled in the Hungarian capital of Budapest, still stands as the paramount international accord addressing cybercrime and electronic evidence (Cyber Range & Capacity Building in Cybersecurity, 2021). However, the technological landscape has drastically changed in the last 2 decades, highlighting the importance of developing new robust regulatory frameworks to govern the ethical use of emerging technologies. Since May 2021, the UN has been working extensively to draft a new international treaty which aims at combating cybercrime; taking this into account, Hungary encourages NATO to engage in similar discussions (Wilkinson, 2023).

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Topic C: Development of New Frameworks for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Responses

After the end of the Cold War, the 1990s was an era during which the end of confrontational geopolitics seemed possible, with the global spread of democracy, the triumph of market capitalism and the celebration of cultural globalization. In 1989, progress seemed so certain that political theorist Francis Fukuyama proclaimed, “the end of history” (Kagan, 2008). 30 years later, history proved Fukuyama wrong, as the realm of geopolitics could not be more topical than it is right now. The ongoing wars in Ukraine and Gaza demonstrate how torn apart the global landscape is, leaving millions of people displaced, vulnerable, and in dire need of assistance. As nations of the globe grapple with the devastating consequences of armed conflicts and natural disasters, it has never been more pressing for all international actors, including NATO, to provide humanitarian aid and effective crisis responses.

Undoubtedly, the far-reaching consequences of NATO’s military involvement in Libya serve as a stark reminder that military activities should be carried out following a comprehensive approach which protects civilians at all costs and that they should never engender worse repercussions than inaction. Nonetheless, Hungary argues that the involvement of military forces in disaster relief efforts remains essential, as it provides both human expertise and technical capabilities to address emergencies swiftly and effectively. For a small nation like Hungary, it is crucial to maintain a compact yet proficient military force capable of handling diverse crisis scenarios (Jozsef et al., 2020).

Therefore, Hungary recommends increasing investment in the NATO Response Force, which would benefit from improved readiness and mobility, and enhancing interoperability and coordination of the Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) by increasing its assets and capabilities. The creation of further HADR units such as the Tisza Multinational Engineer Battalion, which reunites Hungarian, Romanian, Slovakian, and Ukrainian forces, should be examined, as they foster collaboration and hold the advantage of intervening with a better understanding of the local and neighbouring populations’ needs (Jozsef et al., 2020).

In the same vein, Hungary reiterates that it will prioritize providing humanitarian aid within its region, namely Central and Eastern Europe, as this approach reflects Hungary's strategic interests in addressing humanitarian crises that directly affect its stability and security (*Hungarian Foreign Policy Is National Interest-Based*, 2023). For instance, Hungary has demonstrated its unwavering support towards Ukraine, as government entities, local authorities NGOs, and volunteers have joined forces under the Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) to look after the millions of Ukrainians displaced by war. The Hungarian people have also generously opened their homes, donated resources, and reached out to those in need (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2023).

Recent critics have yet raised concerns over Hungary’s opposition to Russian sanctions and its emphasis on diplomatic negotiations with Moscow, some even questioning Hungary’s loyalty to NATO. These criticisms largely overlook Budapest’ legitimate concerns that sanctions will not fulfill their intended purpose of weakening Russia enough to end the conflict and its substantial contributions to enhancing NATO’s defensive posture (West, 2023). Since 2019, Hungary’s significant increase in cutting-edge military technologies investments and strategic partnerships with Europe-based military contractors have undisputedly reinforced its role as key player in European defense (Trading Economics, n.d.).

498 words (without in-text citations)

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