CHAPTER 6

HUNGARY AND HER NEIGHBOURS IN THE CONTEXT OF MINORITY ISSUE

To get a complete picture of the Hungarian minority problem it is necessary to look at one of the main actors which complicate the issue - Hungary. The presence of Hungary is simultaneously a source of encouragement for the Hungarians in the adjoining states and a constant irritant for the respective states. This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section we briefly touch upon the history - history of Hungarians focusing on the events that reduced the bulk of her population from the ruling nationality to minorities in adjoining states. The initial reaction and effort of Hungary was to recover her losses. Their 'passionate irredentism' is what perhaps even today makes the neighboring states nervous when Hungary shows slightest interest in her conationals. Selective use of historical events are used by all parties to substantiate their claims and counter claims.

Of late Hungary has come to openly support the fight of Hungarian minorities for their demands and redressal of their grievances. This interest has perhaps played no mean a role in the reappraisal of Hungary's policies towards minor-
ities residing within her borders. This is the area on which we focus in the second section. Hungary it appears is making earnest effort to set exemplary standards for minority Treatment. The last section deals with the inter-state relations i.e. relation of Romania, Slovakia, Serbia is-avis Hungary. All these countries have their eyes set on the European Union. All of them are aware that minority tensions could be allowed to heighten only at the peril of their efforts of integration. The way these considerations have affected minority related tensions has also been dealt with in this chapter.

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of the Hungarian people in Europe goes back to the late 9th century when Magyar tribesmen from the steppes crossed the Carpathian mountains and settled in Pannonia.¹ The invaders spoke a Finno-Ugrian language unrelated to the Indo-European languages used in their areas of settlement.

In 1526 the king of Hungary was slain by the Turks on

the field of Mohacs. The Turks subsequently occupied the central portion of the kingdom and the Habsburg rulers of Austria claimed the vacant throne. Over the succeeding two centuries the Habsburg pushed the Turks out of Hungary, eventually incorporating the entire kingdom within the Habsburg monarchy of Central Europe. Hungary resisted the Habsburg over-lordship through repeated rebellions that culminated in the 1848 revolution. Though the Hungarian uprising was suppressed with Russian help, Hungary was awarded home rule in 1867. The Habsburg monarchy was re-fashioned as the dual of Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and Hungary was permitted to have her own parliament. About half of the population of Habsburg Hungary were Hungarians, the rest consisted of Romanians, Slovaks, Serbs, Croats, Germans, Ruthenian and Jews. The 19th century, Hungary, however, proclaimed itself a 'nation - state' and between 1867 and 1918 it made continuous effort to transform the ethnic composition to its advantage. Forced 'magyarisation' became the order of the day. Most of the Hungarian governments particularly that of prime minister-

Baron Dezso Banffy (1895-1899) readily employed any means to Hungarianize artificially the bulk of the population. The Hungarian chauvinists legislated to magyarize the name of cities and villages and exerted severe pressure on people to magyarize their often Slavic or German names. The influential author and journalist Jeno Rakosi (1842-1929) widely publicised his dream of an empire of 30 million Hungarians in his popular Budapesti Hirlap, in which he called for forced magyarization of the various national minority groups.

Forced assimilation, however, had also strong Hungarian critics as Endre Ady, Oszkar Jaszi. Jaszi correctly assessed that forced assimilation makes real assimilation impossible. He supported democracy and equality instead of the declared linguistic supremacy of the Hungarian Nation.

Internal criticism notwithstanding aggressive magyarization policies in Austria-Hungary remains an undeniable fact and at the end of World War I Hungary much to its dismay found the tables turned. Entering World War I on the


4. ibid.

5. ibid., pp. 224-227.
side of Habsburg, Hungary emerged in 1918 defeated and diplomatically isolated. The ensuing peace treaties transformed from being half of a huge multinational empire into a small nation state. She lost 2/3 of her territory and over 3 million ethnic Hungarians had to accept a new identity as citizens of different neighboring states.

'The Treaty of Trianon is not only one of the most crucial turning points in Modern Hungarian history but certainly a watershed in the history of Hungarian nation', comments Peter F. Sugar. 6 'No, no, never' was the slogan all children in Hungarian schools were brought up reciting during the entire inter war period. For these generations 'mutilated Hungary was no country, while the whole (original) Hungary was Heaven.' 7

After the shock of World War I and the series of major social and political aftershocks' in 1918 and 1919, Trianon gave birth to a defensive protective interpretation of nationhood. 8 Hungarian foreign policy throughout the entire period between the wars was based upon the philosophy and political strategy of revisionism. All political parties

6. ibid., p. 229.
7. ibid.
8. ibid.
agreed that Trianon was unjust and forced upon Hungary by the overwhelming military and political power at the Paris Peace Conference. "Treaty revision" became the official government policy.

This passionate irredentism made them serve in World War II as one of Hitler's calculating satellites. Romania and Hungary in fact constantly competed for Axis favour over Transylvania. Initially Hungary successfully outclassed Romania and regained its lost territories with Axis help between 1938-1941. However, as Rothschild observed, Hungary's hope of exploiting German power to restore her historic frontiers while avoiding identification as part of axis camp was unrealistic and based on an overestimation of their own dexterity. In the end, as the Axis tide turned to ebb, Romania skillfully executed a volteface from the Axis to Allied camp and in Allied eyes enhanced their claim for the eventual revision of 1938 borders. It was a blow from which Hungary never recovered.

Thereafter though dissatisfaction with Trianon continues attempts at territorial revision has been abandoned.


10. ibid., pp.40-44.
Trianon as noted earlier meant displacement of sizable Hungarian population, Trianon also meant a near homogeneous Hungary.

The Second World War ended on a marked note of distrust and hostility towards minorities. Consequently, many who remained in Hungary after 1948 chose to identify themselves as Hungarians to protect their property and avoid possible expulsion. The spirit of Article 49 of Hungary's constitution of 20 August 1949 was heartening for minorities but there was no drastic increase in minority percentage. The article which prohibited discrimination '... against any citizen on the grounds ... religion or nationality ... and guaranteed to all nationalities living within its borders the possibility of education in their native tongue and the possibility of developing their culture' apparently failed to assuage the fear of minorities. A comparison of 1930 and 1949 ethnic composition of Hungary reveals no palpable increase in the number of minorities. To the contrary other than gypsies proportion of all other ethnic groups either fell or remained constant.\(^{11}\)

As post-World War II Hungary turned red the official attitudes in Hungary towards minorities were influenced by


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Stalinist internationalism. Ethnic and minority identity were part of 'bourgeois ideology' which would lose relevance. Death of Stalin on 5 March 1953 meant change in how minorities were perceived and the treatment meted out to them. By the end of 1950s the country's ethnic groups had five high schools, where subjects were taught in their own languages, three colleges for minority teachers and 280 secondary schools. A total of 27,968 students were studying subjects in their own language. The government gave these groups 6,000,000 to 7,000,000 forints annually to help underwrite other development 'programme'.

In November 1958 the Political Committee of the Hungarian Communist Party issued a resolution that committed the government to a policy of active legal support for the development of minority cultures and education. Much effort was put to reassure the country's minorities of their new status. Minority language was used in contact with government officials and in courts. The communist party also tried to ensure adequate minority representation in all types of political and social organisation throughout the country. Most importantly the government developed an extensive education program as the backbone of its efforts

12. ibid., p. 23.
to revive minority self-identity.¹³ The opportunities offered to minorities by 1949 constitution were upgraded by the 1972 constitution to 'inalienable rights.' Efforts were made to create a network of libraries and book clubs to strengthen language and cultural skills among general minority population. Government also encouraged the development of local minority clubs as well as music and dance troupes.¹⁴ But as with all activities under communist systems all rights were within the parameters fixed and set out by the party which robbed the efforts of any vitality.

II. POST-COMMUNIST HUNGARY AND HER MINORITIES

The Hungarian Communist Party, like its counterparts in neighboring states, was voted out of power in 1990. Power passed into the hands of the Magyar Democratic Forum. With the coming of the MDF a renewed interest in the Hungarian past could be witnessed. Prime Minister Joseph Antall's speech in January 1992 to commemorate the Battle of Don (1943) not only reopened a taboo subject but consciously attempted to erase any war guilt that Hungarians suffered from. Antall argued that under the circumstances culminating in the great war Hungary's action was justified. An

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14. ibid., p. 28.
option between Soviet Union and Germany was all that Hungary in any case had.  

An inseparable part of historical reevaluation was renewed interest in the Hungarians who, as noted earlier were forced to minority status after World War II. The Antall government became a vocal spokesman of rights of minorities living across the border. The succeeding Horn government which to date continues at the helm, toned down the vigour with which its predecessor had set to champion the cause of Hungarians beyond her borders but could hardly abandon the issue. The impact of minority issue on Hungary's relation with neighboring Romania, Slovakia, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, is dealt in the following section. Prior to that how minorities within Hungary are faring in the post-communist phase is studied. It appears that Hungary is well aware that if it desires the neighbors to behave responsibly towards her conationals, it should act

15. 'Switzerland' he says, 'was able to remain neutral not only because of its excellent army but also because its neutrality fitted into the German conception of things. Sweden was also able to remain neutral but no others could remain so ... But one thing is certain: nobody had a solution, there was no historical precedent by which Hungary, in such a geographical position could have escaped, the German invasion, and avoided joining the war and the Soviet invasion which followed. Extracts from Jozsef Antall's speech remembering the Battle of the Don delivered on 11.1.92 from East European Reporter, Vol.5, no.2, March-April 1992, pp. 66-67.
responsibly towards its minorities. Much positive work, thus on the front of minority rights is, being undertaken in Hungary.

i) Law on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities

The constitution of the Republic of Hungary establishes that minorities living in Hungary are constituent components of the state. The constitution guarantees them the right to collective participation in public life, the fostering of their culture, the wide usage of their mother tongue, mother tongue education and the use of names in their own language. To put the constitutional pronouncements to practice on 7 July 1993 the Hungarian parliament approved by vote of 304 to 3, with 8 abstentions Act LXXVII, Hungary's first law on the rights of National and Ethnic Minorities. The preparation of this law took more than two years and was marked by emotional discussions in the media and among representatives of political parties and ethnic minorities. Minority participation was ensured through the representatives they sent to the Minority Roundtable.

The law defines national and ethnic minorities as


18. ibid.

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groups that have resided for at least 100 years in Hungary and that have their own language and culture. Thirteen national and ethnic minorities scattered in about 1,500 settlements are recognised by law—Armenians, Bulgarians, Croats, Germans, Greeks, Gypsies, Poles, Romanians, Ruthenians, Serbs, Slovaks, Slovans and Ukrainians.19

With regard to their numerical strength figures provided by minority organisations and census figures vary. Table 6.1 shows the last census figures of 1990.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minorities</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%age as compared to permanent residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gypsies</td>
<td>48,072</td>
<td>0.4630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germans</td>
<td>37,511</td>
<td>0.3613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croats</td>
<td>17,577</td>
<td>0.1693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovaks</td>
<td>12,745</td>
<td>0.1228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanians</td>
<td>8,730</td>
<td>0.0841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poles</td>
<td>3,788</td>
<td>0.0365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbs</td>
<td>2,953</td>
<td>0.0284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenes</td>
<td>2,627</td>
<td>0.0253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greeks</td>
<td>1,640</td>
<td>0.0158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgarians</td>
<td>1,370</td>
<td>0.0132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainians, Rusins</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>0.0065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenians</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0.0004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>137,724</td>
<td>1,3266</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data from the 1990 Census, Fact Sheets on Hungary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Budapest, 1995.

19. ibid., p.58.
Article 3.3 of the Act states 'minorities living in the Republic of Hungary share alike in the power of the people that is, they are state-forming constituent elements. According to the law the minorities have the right to establish self-governments at local and national level (Art. 21.1; 31-34). A separate chapter (VI) deals with the cultural educational self-governments of the minorities (Article 42-50). The mother tongue of minorities living in Hungary does not divide the society, on the contrary it increases the cohesion of communities, Article 43.1. The Act contains in separate sections the individual rights (Article 7-14) and the collective rights (Article 15-20) of the minorities.  

On 11 December 1994, local minority self-governments were elected for the first time under the law. 654 minority self-governments were put up in about 1500 settlements with minority populations. Of these 644 were considered valid. Minority candidates fielded on separate minority

21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
lists garnered nearly 1.8 million votes nationwide.24 Official sources claim this was because Hungarian voters who formed the majority were sympathetic to the idea of minority self government and in many places voted for minority candidates. The adjoining table 6.2 shows that 622 directly elected minority self governments were formed. In other 45

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NATIONALITY</th>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Indirect</th>
<th>Settlement</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gypsy</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatian</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovak</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serb</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovene</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgarian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rusin</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td>622</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>681</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


24. Ibid.
cases minority deputies forming a majority in local self-governments decided to declare themselves minority self-governments. In yet another 14 settlements deputies constituting at least 30 per cent of the self-government formed minority self governments. The fundamental aim of the law appears to be encouraged national ethnic minorities to freely declare their identity and to help them to preserve that identity. And the local self-governments are of extreme importance in this scheme, for it is through these institutes that minorities would enjoy cultural autonomy.

The Office for National and Ethnic Minorities was established in September 1990.25 Aside from its governmental duties one of the key tasks assigned to it was continuous communication and coordination with minority organizations. Until late 1994, this office managed the 'Foundation for National and Ethnic Minorities in Hungary' established by the Government. Between 1990 and 1994 the Foundation allocated a total of 357.7 million forints for local minority activities, children camps the fostering of traditions, mother tongue education, support of nationality, religious life and scholarships. On 1, January 1995, the role of the Foundation was taken over by the 'Public Foundation for

National and Ethnic Minorities in Hungary. It was entrusted with more sweeping financing duties. It had an initial equity of 470 million forints.26

In 1991, Hungarian parliament allocated 200 million forints in budgetary subsidies to cover the operating expenses of the minority organizations, from 1992 to 1994 an annual sum of 220 million forints. In 1995, the newly established local and national minority self governments also received budgetary subsidies.27

ii) Minority Education in Hungary

The Minority Department at the Ministry of Culture and Education is responsible for coordinating nationality education and culture at State level. This department is responsible for plan outlay and distribution of state resources. The budget provides special subsidies to minority education. Self-governments maintaining nationality kindergarten and nationality schools receive 5,500 forints per kindergarten child and 16,500 forints supplementary subsidy per primary or secondary school pupil in 1995.28

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27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.
Institutions teaching nationality languages operate at all levels of the Hungarian educational system. In the 1993-94 school year 19,680 children in kindergartens and 48,712 children in primary schools had the opportunity to study their mother tongue. A total of 1,878 students attended 15 nationality grammar schools or special secondary school classes in Hungary. Training is also offered in nationality languages at universities and colleges, primarily for trainee teachers.29

An independent programme is being drafted for Gypsies aimed at providing appropriate professional training in easing the disadvantageous position of Gypsies on the labour market. Unemployment among unskilled or semi-skilled Gypsies, majority of whom live in the most backward zones in the country is 4-5 times the national average. The government is sensitive enough to comprehend that solution to the complex Gypsy problem lie beyond the framework of general minority policy. Elaboration of a comprehensive programme aimed at improving the position has been underway at the office of Gypsy programmes established in October 1, 1994,

29. Ibid.

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within the office for National and Ethnic Minorities.\textsuperscript{30}

As part of their public service duties the Hungarian Radio and the Hungarian Television compile and now broadcast longer minority programmes on a more frequent basis than earlier. As for the printed press, five newspapers of five minorities received full budgetary subsidy in 1990, and 12 papers for as many as nine minorities in 1994. From 1995, the Public Foundation for the National and Ethnic Minorities in Hungary has also taken over the subsidizing of the ethnic minority press, with 150 million forints at its disposal for this purpose.\textsuperscript{31} Minority culture-oriented foundations launch special projects to support the operation of seasonal or locally distributed minority newspapers.

III. IMPACT OF THE ISSUE OF HUNGARIANS HUNGARY ON INTER-STATE RELATION.

The bane in Hungary's relation with her neighbours has been not her treatment of her minorities as much as the treatment of her neighbours of those whom Hungary considers to be her co-nationals. Hungary strongly holds the view that any Hungarian situated / living outside Hungary contin-

\textsuperscript{30} Fact Sheets on Hungary 1995, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Budapest.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
ues to be rightfully part of the Hungarian nation and, therefore, it is the duty of Hungary to uphold and protect their rights. Article 6 of the Hungarian constitution categorically states, 'The Republic of Hungary assumes responsibility for the fate of Hungarians living outside the borders and furthers them to keep up their contacts with Hungary. While this stance is welcomed by the minorities her neighbours look upon such commitments as interference in their internal affairs aimed at undermining their sovereignty and achieving territorial revision. The overriding concern of all post-Communist East European States to integrate into West European structures may have kept tensions within manageable proportions but has not enabled them to hit on a enduring formula of cooperative coexistence. The minority issue continues to plague their relation.

The three guiding goals of Hungarian policy since 1990 has been integration into the Euro-atlantic structures - European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation; development of friendly and good relations with neighboring countries and promoting the rights of Hungarian minorities abroad. The three goals are, one could say, hopelessly

entwined. Good relations with neighbours depend on tangible improvement in the condition of Hungarian minorities and integration depends on resolving the minority issue enough to develop good relations.

The previous section outlined Hungary's policies for minorities on her territory. One dare say it attempted to set high standards which would enable it to fight for the cause of Hungarians across the borders with some justification. In the following section we concentrate on Hungary's policy vis-a-vis her co-nationals which has affected interstate relation substantially.

i) Antall and the Minority Issue

In the spring of 1990 when after 40 years a democratically elected government was formed under the prime ministership of Joseph Antall, Hungarian politics undoubtedly entered a qualitatively new stage. In foreign policy the Antall government retained the thrust towards West only bending farther. The new element was perhaps that the first post-communist government openly declared the perusal of interests of Hungarians living beyond the borders as one of its foreign policy objective.

In his speech on 2 June, 1990, on the eve of the 70 anniversary of the Treaty of Trianon, Antall clearly stated that Hungary still condemned the treaty and went on to declare that his government was for all Hungarians including the 3 million living in neighbouring countries. Reference was also made to the Helsinki Final Act (1975) highlighting that while it excluded forcible alteration of borders it did not rule out a 'peaceful revision'. Similarly foreign minister Geza Jeszensky with reference to the southern slav conflict condemned change of border by force but the possibility of change of frontiers by peaceful means was left unanswered.

Echoing this spirit Defense Minister Lajos Fur explained at a meeting of the main governing party the MDF in February 1991, that the Hungarian nation in the Carpathian Basin was not restricted to the population of the Republic of Hungary but that the Hungarian nation also meant a linguistic nation, one third of which had been reduced to minority status in the aftermath of the treaty of Trianon.


35. Laszlo J. Kiss, n. 33, p. 243.
Such statements have led to nervous apprehension in Romania, Slovakia and Serbia that lurking behind the demands of rights of Hungarians are attempts at peaceful border revision.

On 20 August 1992, Istvan Csurka published a manifesto on the fate of Hungary in his paper Magyar Forum. With regard to Hungary's boundaries Csurka argued that the yalta agreement of 1945, which in practice had conformed to the Trianon boundaries were due to expire in 1995. He believed that the next generation would have the opportunity to create a common living space for Hungary - Lebensraum.36

Time and again Hungarian ministers attempted to argue the feans that her neighbours harbored by refuting the suggestion that Hungary had any territorial claims. Thus Antall said, we never said that minority question was the only factor in interstate relation but we find it impossible to have good relations with a country that mistreats Hungarian minorities.37

Hungarian President Arpad Goncz also stated ' we don't want territories back, because we don't see any territorial

36. Kritan Garner, n. 34, p. 64. Antall and MDF distanced themselves from this stance.
solution to the problem of minorities. What we want is the right for Hungarian and any other ethnic group to retain their identity, study in and use their mother tongue, foster them relations with their brethren across the border and consequently make the borders permeable to allow free flow of ideas and movement of people.....38

Communism convene on 28 June, 1994, witnessed the spectacular return to power by the former communists.39 A coalition government headed by Hungarian Socialist Party Chairman Gyula Horn took office in July. The new government's main foreign policy pre-occupation has been to integrate the country to West European Structures by the end of the century. Mr. Horn, in his first speech to parliament as prime minister, said Hungary's most urgent foreign policy task was to eliminate tensions with her neighbours and negotiate basic friendship treaties. Horn government perceives improvement of relations with neighbors as the best way to promote the interests of Hungarians living there. So long as Hungary's relation with Slovakia and Romania remained strained, not much could be hoped for the Magyar

minorities.  

Under the MDF Hungary sought to publicize the grievances of the Magyar minorities at OSCE and other international conferences. It expressed concern that the rights of its ethnic minorities in Romania, Slovakia and Serbia had no legal base and that legislation passed in some cases eroded existing rights. The MDT viewed the granting of collective rights and autonomy as fundamental to ensure group identity. All the three states on the other hand viewed minority issues as their domestic problem and repeatedly rejected the idea that Hungary had any special obligation towards Magyar minorities. On the twin issues of collective rights and inviolability of borders bilateral treaty negotiations were all but grounded.

The Hungarian government since 1994.

Hungary's second democratically elected parliament since the fall of In a marked departure therefore the Horn government agreed to guarantee inviolability of borders which had stalled Hungary's basic treaty with Slovakia and Romania.

Laslo Kovacs, the new foreign minister in Horn Cabinet declared that foreign policy thinking would be based strict-

ly on rational elements and would be free of any 'sense of mission' which could be misinterpreted.

**Hungary-Slovakia**

Hungary's relation and interaction with Slovakia began when the latter attained independent statehood in June 1993 after the Czechoslovak divorce. The Hungarian minorities had already a brush with Slovak authorities, when in October 1990 the Slovak parliament approved the Slovak language law. In 1992 bilingual signs were removed by the Internal Affairs Ministry. The minorities feared that their identity would be obliterated in independent Slovakia, eager to assert her sovereign status. To the end therefore, they consistently supported the continuation of Czech and Slovak republic as one.

The Hungarian minorities fear was not totally unfounded. Immediately after June 93, Slovak government mooted a redistricting proposal which designed to divide Slovak territory into seven regions each stretching from north to south leaving small number of minorities in each. The proposal met with strong minority opposition. Hungarians

42. Details of law already mentioned in Chapter 4.
gathered at Komarno in January 1994 and voiced demands for territorial autonomy.

Prime Minister Antall and his Slovak counterpart Vladi-mir Miciar met in Budapest in September 1992 but relations remained strained because of the minority issue and Gabciko­vo Nagymoros hydroelectric project on river Danube. As the Meciar controlled Slovak parliament prevented the passage of minority legislation recommended by the Council of Europe 44 negotiations on a bilateral treaty between Hungary and Slovakia did not bear fruit.

Meciar was ousted out of office in March 1994, his successor former foreign Minister Moravick and Slovak President Michael Kovac tried their best to stabilize domestic policy, avoid international isolation and improve the country's image abroad as well as its relations with Hungary. The Hungarian Prime Minister Peter Boross met Moravick on 1 May 1994 to discuss all outstanding bilateral issues.45 No agreement was reached but both sides agreed that the talks were a positive step towards meaningful dialogue.

1994, was the election year in Hungary. In the final weeks of Hungary's election campaign Horn and Kuncze paid

44. Slovakia was admitted to Council of Europe in June 1993.
separate visits to Moravick in Bratislava and offered Slovakia the opportunity to achieve a 'historic reconciliation' through a treaty ensuring the inviolability of current borders and providing guarantees for the protection of the rights of Slovakia's Magyar minorities. The victory of the Hungarian Socialist Party in 1994 was welcomed by the Slovaks.

The positive effect of the outcome of the Hungarian elections on Slovak - Hungarian relations was reinforced by the Slovak government's approval, on 3, May 1994 of the long awaited law legalizing the official use of Hungarian names. Another law allowing the use of bilingual road signs in the nearly 600 localities where an ethnic minority made up at least 20% of the population was passed by the


47. ibid., Moravick commented that the pragmatic HSP's victory provided opportunities for improving Slovak - Hungarian relations. Peter Weiss leader of Democratic Party of the left in Slovak parliament was related with HSP's victory. while he is in favor of a border clause, Weiss like virtually all Slovak politicians resists any form of autonomy for minorities.

parliament on 7 July 1994. 49

Prime Minister Horn viewed the beginning of dialogue between Slovakia and Hungary as a result in itself. The Horn government as noted was ready to recognize the inviolability of current borders (which was to be crossable). It also wanted the treaty to guarantee minority rights in the spirit of European norms and documents but going beyond general declarations about minority rights and state obligations. Budapest wanted, in line with the wishes of Slovakia's Magyars, the treaty to include concrete formulations of those rights and obligations and make the state accountable for observance of the same. Slovakia called Hungary's goals 'unrealistic'. Moravick argued that the parties to the treaty should confine to the norms set by United Nations and various European documents and 'not go beyond them'. 50

Slowly the two countries edged towards an understanding and on 19 March 1995 the Slovak - Hungarian treaty on good neighbourly relations and friendly cooperation was signed. Slovak - Hungarian tensions finally appeared to have been diffused. In its preamble the treaty recognised that per-

49. ibid. The adoption of these laws were long overdue. The Council of Europe had asked Slovakia to fulfil these obligations when admitting Slovakia. The Meclir dominated parliament had stalled them.

sons belonging to national minorities constitute an integral part of the society and state of the contracting party whose territory they inhabit, and concurrently contribute to the enrichment of life and to deepening the confidence, friendship and cooperation between their countries, and declaring that they feel a responsibility to extend protection to and promote the preservation and intensification of the national or ethnic cultural religious and linguistic identity of the minorities inhabiting their territory.

Article 3.1 put fear of territorial revision to rest by stating that the confirming parties affirm in accordance with the fundamental principles and norms of international law that they shall respect the inviolability of their common state border and each other's territorial integrity. They affirmed that they had no territorial claims on each other and will advance no such claims in the future.51

Clauses 6, 7 and 8 of Article 12, Article 13, 14, and 15 contained guidelines for minority treatment. Article 15.2 stated specifically that the contracting parties would refrain from policies and practices aimed at assimilation of persons belonging to minorities against their will and shall protect these persons from any action aimed at such assimilation.

51. Article 3.1 of the Treaty.
lation.  

Even before the ink was dry and before the Slovak parliament ratified the treaty, relations soured. On 15 November 1995 the National Council of Slovak Republic adopted the state language law (that nullified the earlier law of 1990). The restrictive nature of this law has already been discussed in detail has made a detailed analysis of the state language law and the provisions the Slovak Hungarian treaty which stand in clear contradiction.

Article 15.2/g of the Hungarian - Slovak basic treaty stated that the 'persons belonging to the Hungarian minority in the Slovak Republic and those belonging to the Slovak minority in the Republic of Hungary shall have the right to use freely individually or in community with other members of their group, orally or in writing, their mother tongue in public or in private life. (...) The Contracting Parties in accordance with their international commitments shall take all the necessary legal administrative and other measures for the implementation of the aforementioned rights unless their respective domestic law already contains such provisions.' The Slovak language law specifies in Article 1

52. Article 15.2 Treaty.
53. Slovak parliament ratified the treaty in March 1996.
Introductory Provisions (...)

(4) The law does not regulate the use of languages of national minorities and ethnic groups. The use of these languages is regulated by separate laws.

Further Article 15.2/9 entitles the minorities in conformity with the domestic law and with the international domestic law and with the international commitments undertaken by the two contracting parties to use their mother tongue in contacts with official authorities including public administration, judicial proceedings, to display in their mother tongue the names of municipalities in which they live, street names and names of other public areas, topographical indications, inscriptions and information in public areas... The contracting parties in accordance with their international commitments, shall take all the necessary legal, administrative and other measures for the implementation of the aforementioned rights unless their respective domestic law already contains any such provisions.

In direct contradiction to this treaty the Slovak state language law article 3 mandates the use of state language by all state agencies, authorities proficiency in state language (both spoken and written) as a condition to employment use of state language in official contacts, official records, so on and so forth. Articles 8 outlines the sweep-
ing use of state language in economic sector, service industries and health care which left the minority with option of assimilation or being marginalised.

Apart from complaining at OSCE, Hungarian government seems to have not taken much action against this blatant disregard of treaty commitments. Hungary appears to be guided by the consideration that simultaneous integration of herself and her neighbors in European structures is the utmost guarantee that will go a long way to better minority conditions. Hungary, however, had not abandoned the cause of minorities across the borders. In July 1996 the Hungarian government issued a joint declaration with minority organisations reiterating its commitment to the minority cause. The joint declaration called for the establishment of local governments and autonomy in line with European practice and the spirit of international norms and stated that self rule was vital to preserving the identity of ethnic Hungarians living abroad and their development as a community. The declaration further mentioned Budapest's constitutional responsibility towards the minorities. It stated that Hungary would provide coordinated support to the minorities' autonomy aspiration and also specified that a certain percentage of the annual Hungarian budget would be put aside for them.
The declaration also expressed support for NATO and European Union membership for all Hungary's neighbours. It is in the interest of every Hungarian living in various countries in the Carpathian basin, it is a chance for Hungarians to come together.\(^{54}\)

The declaration sparked instantaneous outrage in Slovakia. The Slovak government called the declaration 'a step against the trend of positive development and mutual relations' and accused Hungary of trying to 'destabilize the region and even violating the basic treaty that the two countries had signed.

**Hungary - Romania**

The December 1989 revolution was greeted with intense joy, relief and enthusiasm by the Hungarian community of Romania. The Romanian participation to defend a Hungarian pastor signaled a new era of cooperation and toleration.\(^{55}\)

For minority and majority alike it was a time for celebration. However, the hopes of the minorities were soon dashed. As the violent Tirgu Mures clashes in March 1990\(^{56}\) proved, the question of rights of the estimated 2 million of

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54. ibid.


56. ibid., pp. 145-159.
Romania's Hungarians was far from settled. Worse still, from the minority point of view, was the emergence in 1990 and 1991 of extreme national organisations such as Vatra Romaneasca, PRNU, the Greater Romanian Party and the heavy reliance of the ruling Social Democracy of Romania party on their support since September 1992 elections.57

Between 15-19 September 1993 Hungarian foreign minister Geza Jeszensky paid an official visit to Romania. Jeszene-key's visit to Romania could be assessed as the beginning of a detente in Romanian - Hungarian relations after years of mutual distrust and tension. Given Romania's deep seated antagonism to Hungary's interest in the Hungarian community residing in Romania and the continuing sensitivity of Transylvania the outcome of the visit was not spectacular. PRNU strongly opposed the Hungarian ministers visit. The Romanian press was no less hostile. It was widely believed that Hungary would cast a negative vote, obstructing Romania's entry to the Council of Europe. Romanians made it clear that they would closely watch how Hungary would vote as an indicator of their sincerity to develop good relations

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57. ibid.
with Romania. These facts, however, do not overshadow the importance of the dialogue that was initiated. Documents prepared by Triedrich Kenning, Gunner Jansson, Theodoros Pangalos assessing Romania's preparedness to join Council of Europe praised Romania's progress since the end of communist rule but also criticized her for failures in various areas including - treatment of minorities.

Adrian Severin, a deputy for the opposition Democratic Party - National Salvation Front a leading negotiator of his Romanian integration in Strasbourg appealed for a pragmatic approach to minority related problems. He argued that the biggest impediment in being accepted at Strasbourg do not stem from Hungarian minority but the governmental majority.

58. REF/RL Research Report Vol.2, no. 42, 22 October 1993 pp. 26-32. The Hungarian delegation went to Strasbourg with a host amendments to the Council of Europe's draft proposal on Romania's admission. Hungarian amendments received considerable support and were accepted. The Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the Scandinavian countries took the lead in pointing out the continuing deficiencies in Romania's political and judicial system and called for specific commitments and establishment of control mechanism to examine Slovak and Romanian compliance with the council's conditions. Even France, Romania's foremost patron in the West warned that noncompliance might result in its suspension from the Council of Europe. On 28 September 1993 after an emotional three hour debate the councils 224 member parliamentary assembly voted with seven against and eleven abstentions (including the seven Hungarian delegates) to admit Romania as a full member.

59. REF/RL Research Report, 5 November 1993, p. 41., other areas were - judiciary, secret service, police, freedom of press.
The political formations (party of Social Democracy and its allies) lack true commitment to the principles and standards of European democracy, he remarked.60

As noted earlier in the chapter, the Horn government tried to replace the foreign policy of emotional elements by pragmatic and realistic goals, was willing to incorporate provisions regarding inviolability of borders but the treaty between Romania and Hungary was still stalled for a good five years. The main reason behind such prolonged torturous negotiations was the insistence of Hungary that the issue of the rights of national minorities can be solved exclusively through a legal document. The legal rights of the minorities was anathema to the Romanians who claimed that their implementation of minority rights were above international and European standards.

Hungary wanted Council of Europe Recommendation 1201 on collective rights be included in the treaty, Romania resolutely opposed this fearing that any autonomy would encourage secessionist ambitions.

Recommendation 1201 has a number of components that have triggered lengthy technical and political debates. Articles 6, for instance, emphasizes the right of associa-

60. ibid., p.43
tion expanding it to include the right to set up political parties on an ethnic basis. Article 7 states that in regions inhabited by a substantial number of persons belonging to a national minority, they have the right to use their mother tongue in their relations with administrative authorities and in legal proceedings before courts or legal authorities. Article 7 thus is in direct conflict with Romanian law which calls for local public administrative procedures to be carried out in the official language - that is Romanian.

Article 11 of the recommendation states that in regions where they are in a majority, persons belonging to national minorities shall have the rights to make use of appropriate local government or autonomous authorities or to have a matching the specific historical and territorial situation in special status but mentions local government. Article 11 would thus impose no fresh restriction on Romania. Nonetheless Article 11 evoked lengthy debates and most of the Romanian politicians and mass media aggressively campaigned against it.

Romania's growing isolation because of its failure to honour international commitments on various fields including that of minority rights prompted it to soften its attitude. In 1996 at a conference marking the 55th anniversary of the
President Ion Iliesces proposed that Romania and Hungary follow a model of Franco-German reconciliation and make historical grievances a thing of the past. 

Ironically, however, Iliescu appeared steeped in history when he opened his speech by describing the 'brutality of the four apocalyptic years of the Hungarian occupation which had forced Romanians to drink again after centuries of humiliation and suffering from the cup of the dreadful terror.' As a Romanian journalist rightly summed up 'against that poisoned background, Iliescus message of reconciliation was entirely out of place.

A week later Budapest accepted Iliescus challenge but made it clear that it considered the settlement of unresolved issues including the status of Romania's Hungarian minority to be a preliminary condition for starting the reconciliation process. In a meeting with his counterpart Todor Melescanu in New York foreign Minister Laszlo Kovacs stressed again that the issue of the rights of national minorities 'can be solved exclusively through a legal docu-

61. By the Vienna Award the axis powers had transferred Transylvania back to Hungary.
63. ibid.
64. ibid.
ment. 65 This issue had been conspicuously avoided by Iliescu in his proposed reconciliation.

On 16 September 1996 the lengthy unending debate abruptly culminated in the signing of the Romanian - Hungarian treaty. Hungary, for its part, agreed to incorporate a provision securing current borders (Article 4) and Romania agreed to a provision on Recommendation 1201 (Article 15). But a detailed analysis reveals that from the point of minority rights the treaty leaves much to be desired.

During the negotiations concerning the basic treaty between Hungary and Romania the main differences of the two parties revolved round the following issues - the use of the mother tongue of the minorities; the right of persons belonging to national minorities to establish political parties; restitution of the confiscated properties of the Hungarian churches and institutions in Romania, the mutual acknowledgement of certificates in school and professional education, academic diplomas and research degrees; the establishing of consulates in each others territory; the enforcement as domestic law of the Recommendation 1201 (1993) of the CE, the establishing of an intergovernmental joint commission which has to deal with minority question.

The way these issues were settled is dealt below.

The provisions relating to the use of minority language are limited. No doubt the treaty makes provision for mother tongue education at all levels within the state education system, according to their needs. It is not clear, however, who decides those needs, arguably 'needs' decided by Romanian state and by minority organisations vary. Minority language provisions (Article 15.31 and 15.4) are circumscribed by riders 'in accordance with the domestic legislation and 'within the framework of their domestic legislation.' Moreover the treaty contained no specific provision for the reopening of the Hungarian University in Cluj (Kolozsvar) which has been a long standing demand of the Magyar minority.

The treaty does not contain a specific provision granting minorities the right to form their political parties but Article 15.5 does recognise their existence and legitimacy. "... both contracting parties shall, in the process of decision making concerning questions related to the protection and enforcement of the national identity of these persons, consult the organisations, political parties or

66. Sandor Vogel, The Integration Aspirations of Hungary, the Basic Treaties with the Neighboring Countries and the minority question, Hungarian Institute of International Affairs, Budapest, n.d., pp. 6-12.
associations of these persons according to the democratic decision making procedure as provided by law."

The treaty does not contain any article referring to the return of confiscated properties of the Hungarian churches and institutions in Romania. Opinion No. 176 (1993) of the Council of Europe had called upon the Romanian government to return property to the churches and permit the establishment and operation of church schools with particular view of teaching children of minority groups their mother tongue. Inspite of such specific instruction the Hungarian government failed to convince Bucharest to concede on this issue. All that was accepted was that the problem would be settled through exchange of letters between their foreign ministers. The Permanent Conference of the Hungarian Christian churches in Romania took strong exception to this failure.67

67. On 22 September 1996 the Conference worded its disleasure we regret and condemn especially the way as the contracting parties in the question of the by the Romanian communist state illegal confiscated and arbitrary continuously retained properties and immovables at the cost in the problem interested Hungarian Historical clunches proceeded. The Hungarian and the Romanian governmentas inspite of the unambiguous standpoint of our churches published on August 27, and the support and intervention of the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania, the opposition parties in Hungary, the world union of Hungarians and other churches, social and political organisations and corporations and manifestations were not dispossed to change the content of the treaty and to reneact Article 15/6B, referring to the returning of
At present the school certificates and academic degrees attained in Hungary are not acknowledged in Romania. That is to say Hungarian's from Romania who accomplish their studies in Hungary cannot make use of their certificates and degrees in Romania. Article 12.5 of the Hungarian-Romanian treaty goes no farther than Romania's commitment to examine the issue of recognition of diplomas with a view to conclude an appropriate agreement in time field. The Romanians have time spurred the issue and postponed to distant decision to future.68

During the communist period there was a General Consulate of Hungary in Cluj-Napoca (Kolozsvar) in Romania. The consulate was closed and officials expelled by Ceasescu in 1988. Since 1989 Hungary has pressed for reopening the consulate but Romania never responded. The treaty mentions extending of consular relations (Article 19.2) but contains no concrete measures.

...Continued...

the properties and immovables of the Hungarian churches and institutions according to the original draft of the basic treaty.

68. The Hungary-Slovak treaty had successfully resolved the issue in Article 12.5 "The contracting parties shall on the basis of the respective agreements, recognize certificates on school and professional education as well as academic and research degrees of the other contracting party issue in accordance with respective domestic legislation."
The Hungarian - Romanian treaty enumerates international documents which shall be applied as legal obligations. The debate that Recommendation 1201 sparked off has been mentioned. The Romanians (like the Slovaks) were extremely reluctant to accept Reco 1201. Their extreme reluctance in a way strengthens in our opinion what they were vocal in denying, that Recommendation 1201 goes beyond individual rights and quite clearly indicates the collective nature of minority rights. In the end a compromise was reached where by the Annex of the treaty enumerates the Reco as a document which shall be applied and enforced as domestic law. A footnote is added which states that the contracting parties agree that Recommendation 1201 does not refer to collective rights nor does it impose upon them the obligation to grant to the concerned persons any right to special status of territorial autonomy on ethnic criteria. This corresponds to the policy of the Democratic Alliances of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR) which does not want to create the claimed territorial autonomy based on ethnic criteria.

The issue of intergovernmental joint minority commission was also much debated. Initially Romanians were closed to the idea. Later the two parties held diverse opinion on the name of the commission. The Hungarian party proposed the name 'intergovernmental joint commission', Romanians wanted it named 'expert working group'. The actual difference was regarding the parameter of its function and power. Ultimately it was decided that an 'intergovernmental expert commission' would be formed. The Hungarian-Slovak treaty made the presence of minority representation possible by stating that the parties shall set up an intergovernmental joint commission, entitled to make recommendations consisting of sections whose composition will be determined as they deem necessary." (Article 15.6) The Hungarian - Romanian basic treaty rules out any involvement of minority representatives and organisations in decisions or situations affecting their lot.

Neither the Romanian constitution nor the basic treaty makes any provision which could be taken as measures of

70. The Hungarian - Ukrainian declaration, Hungarian - Slovenian declaration and the Hungarian Croatian convention on minority rights declare that the representatives of the minorities are also members of the intergovernmental joint commissions, moreover the members of the commissions shall be appointed upon the proposal of their organisations
positive discrimination. The treaty has, as discussed earlier, numerous shortcomings. The DAHR commenting in the treaty said that while integration in euro-Atlantic structures is of crucial importance for future of Hungary and Hungarian nation, these foreign policy efforts should not prevail over the fundamental interest of Hungarian national communities abroad.

Hungary - Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

Hungary's interest in Serbia's more than 4,000,000 ethnic Hungarians has led to periodic tension between Belgrade and Budapest. Several incidents have sparked acrimonious exchanges between the two countries.

In January 1991, for instance, Belgrade discovered that Hungary had sold arms to Croatia in October 1990. The Belgrade media reacted immediately - portraying the Vojvodina Hungarians as pro-Croatian subversives bent on destroying the rump Yugoslav state.71

Hungarian government statements that Hungary had by the 1920 Treaty of Trianon ceded Vojvodina to what was then the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes - not to Serbia, only served as ammunition for the Serbian government to establish the irredentist tendencies of Hungarians and whip up anti-

Hungarian sentiments.

Referring to the situation of Hungarians in Romania, Slovakia and Vojvodina Hungarian President Arpad Goncz categorized the situation in Vojvodina as most dangerous. Hungarian foreign minister Geza Jeszensky also expressed similar fears and urged the UN to protect the Hungarian minority in Yugoslavia.\(^\text{72}\)

The Serbian government on its part denied reports and allegations that Belgrade was persecuting Hungarian minorities as a result of which they were fleeing the country in large numbers. While authorities in Belgrade admitted that Hungarians were feeling, they argued that this was to avoid military service.\(^\text{73}\) However threatening letters to Hungarians to vacate the area question the explanation provided by Belgrade.\(^\text{74}\) Agoston moreover, rightly questioned the obligation to provide military service when called upon by commanders guilty of war crime.\(^\text{75}\) In September 1992 Karl Mitterdorfer president of the human rights group the Federal

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74. SWB, BE/1527 C1/6, 2 November 1992.

Union of European Nationalities alleged that Vojvodina's Croatia and Hungarian minorities were being singled out for a campaign of ethnic cleansing. According to Mitterdorfer Serbian refugees from around the former Yugoslavia were being moved into Vojvodina in an orchestrated attempt to forces ethnic Hungarian and Croatians to leave thereby changing the ethnic composition of the area.\textsuperscript{76}

In August 1993 the UN Committee Against Racial Discrimination raised the issue of the treatment of ethnic Hungarians and Croatians in Vojvodina. The committee noted that they were being systematically discriminated, harassed and segregated.\textsuperscript{77}

Such reports testify that contrary to Belgrade's claim minority rights in Serbia is in serious jeopardy. Given the circumstances Hungary cannot remain aloof especially because she receives the fleeing millions. More than 35,000 Hungarians fled to Hungary from Vojvodina since the outbreak of the civil war in 1991. The rate of unemployment among Hungarians is higher than among Serbs as they are the first to be laid off. The large scale emigration leaves the Hungarian community bereft of its young people, skilled


\textsuperscript{77} ibid., pp. 15-16.
workers and professionals - all the more poorer. In a letter to the Hungarian President Arpad Gounz in the winter of 1993 Agoston asked Hungary to prepare transit camps for about 40,000 children and old people who were in danger of freezing to death.\textsuperscript{78} The Hungarian government and charitable organizations collected food and medical aid to be distributed in Vojvodina by Vox Human, a charitable organization founded by DCHV.\textsuperscript{79}

The Hungarian government recognizes that the situation of ethnic Hungarians in Vajvodina is complicated by the ongoing civil war. It had to adopt a policy of negotiation to secure guarantees for the minority's safety. Hungary repeatedly stressed that changing Yugoslavia's borders offer no solution to minority problems since the minorities live dispersed throughout the country. However, when the Yugoslav break appeared imminent, Hungary waited till EC had formally recognised Croatia and Slovenia before following suit.\textsuperscript{80}

Supporting the DCHV's position the Hungarian government argued that "the future (Well being) of the Hungarian minor-

\textsuperscript{78} RFE/RL Research Report vol.2, no. 48, 3 December 1993, p.45.
ity in Vojvodina and of all minorities in the Southern Slav states can be safeguarded through the institution of territorial and cultural autonomy."\(^{81}\)

CONCLUSION

It is evident from the detailed discussion in this chapter that while substantial differences between Hungary and her neighbors on concrete issues like that of national minorities continue the parties are today guided by 'realpolitik' considerations. It is this which has led Hungary to a subdued reaction over the Slovak state language law or induced her to sign a rather weak treaty with Romania after years of difficult dialogue. The Hungarian governments participation in the joint declaration had met with disapproval from the west for which Hungary was eager to make amends. It is both Romania and Hungary's overriding concern to join NATO that directed them to negotiating table. As is well known admission to NATO was made contingent upon the resolution of any pending territorial and ethnic dispute. US Defense Secretary William Perry categorically stated 'NATO was not willing to import security problems.'

However emotional the issue of millions of Hungarians living across her border might be for Hungary it is well aware of its limitation. Borders revision as a solution is completely ruled out neither can it afford the influx of Hungarians within its border. The new citizenship law passed by the Hungarian parliament on 1 June 1993 can in no way said to be encouraging Hungarians from across the border to move in.\textsuperscript{82}

Inspite of palpable tensions over the minority issue cooperation between defense ministers of Hungary - Romania - Slovakia was not affected. A Hungarian Romanian agreement signed in 1990 called for wide ranging cooperation including cultural and scientific exchanges a sharing of information between military historians, and the setting up of joint committees at various levels.\textsuperscript{83} A Hungarian Czechoslovak military agreement was signed in January 1991. It provided for cooperation on security policy for five years and for an exchange of information about military manoeuvres and troop

\textsuperscript{82} RFE/RL Research Report, vol. 2, no. 32, 13 August 1993, pp. 42-46. The new legislation replaced the earlier citizenship law of 1957. It defines Hungarian descent as the main criterion for citizenship it requires the applicant for nationalization to have lived in Hungary for a minimum of eight years instead of the earlier three.

movements, especially in the border area. Even after Slovak independence in 1993 relations between the two military establishments and Defense Ministries are regular and close. Each side is well informed about the strengths and problems of the other. Even when relations between the Meciar government, the Magyar minorities and the Hungarian government was at its worse military cooperation continued. In the second half of 1992 when Meciar repeatedly made charges that Hungary was intensifying military activity on its side the Slovak defense minister Imrich Andrejcak himself denied the reports. Andrejcak moreover told NATO officials that Hungary had the right to modernize its air force and that as long as it observed CFE limits Slovakia had no reason to object. On 4 October 1993 Andrejcak and the Hungarian counterpart Tur signed a five year bilateral military cooperation agreement providing for an exchange of information regarding larger troop movements, an exchange of military observers, and coordinated air defense and aviation steps in border areas.

84. ibid, p. 27.

85. RFE/RL. Research Report, Vol.2, no. 50, 17 December 1993, pp. 22-23. Meciar however, kept on pressing allegations that Hungary was forcing her neighbours into an arms race by acquiring arms from Russia, Germany and USA.
On 18 March 1997 Yugoslav Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Ferenze Vegh and Hungarian Col. Gen. Mourcilo Perisic signed a military cooperation agreement in Budapest. Speaking after the ceremony they said the two armies would cooperate in logistics and in air force affairs and will also create direct relations between the two corps stationed near the border. The agreement would go a long way to strengthen confidence and security.86

These developments corroborate our argument that while the minority issue continues to be a source of tension in the region, the concerned actors have a realistic estimate of their capability aspiration which has induced them to resolve the problem through dialogue and prevented it from tainting all aspects of their relation.