
**Foreign Ministry Memorandum on Hungarian Foreign Policy Initiatives
Between 1975 and 1985**

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International Security Department

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Memorandum

Subject: Hungarian foreign policy initiatives and declarations between 1975 and 1985

1.) The Hungarian foreign policy campaigns of the past 15 years have mostly been conducted in the framework of the Warsaw Treaty, as part of the member states' joint initiatives.

Hungarian foreign politics engaged in a major diplomatic effort, which was directed at the convocation of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. This effort formed part of a several-year-long struggle by the socialist countries to get the process of security and cooperation in Europe going. It was in recognition of Hungary's foreign policy efforts that the member states of the Warsaw Treaty decided to publish the call for convoking a conference on security and cooperation in Europe after the Budapest meeting of their Political Consultative Committee, held on the 17 March 1969.

There was another major initiative in recent history, also announced within the framework of the Warsaw Treaty, which was linked to both Budapest's name and the active cooperation of Hungarian diplomacy. In their Budapest Call published on 8 May 1984, the member states gave their support to the Prague Declaration issued by the Warsaw Treaty's Political Consultative Committee on 5 January 1983, which proposed that the Warsaw Treaty members and the NATO states sign an agreement about the mutual renouncement of the use of military force and the preservation of peaceful relations. The Budapest Call underlined the significance of that agreement, recommending that by building on the results of bilateral consultations, the sides should start a round of multilateral consultations. In their call, they drew the circle of participants in a European context, inviting the non-allied European countries also to participate fully. They reiterated their willingness to exchange views about their proposal in the framework of the Stockholm conference.

2.) From the viewpoint of Hungary's foreign policy goals, the European process dedicated to security and cooperation offers the appropriate framework for our independent foreign policy initiatives.

The measures launched by the Hungarian Government and the appropriate Hungarian authorities, which serve to broaden the scope and improve the conditions of exercising the democratic rights in accordance with the Helsinki Final Act, and which enhance the efficiency of our institutions, improve our laws and legal system and adjust our everyday practices to the realities of a changing world, are instrumental in building the foundations for our initiatives to broaden the range of options available to Hungarian foreign politics on the one hand and to further develop the bilateral relations on the other. In this way the tasks associated with making communication and contact between people easier will permanently be kept in the focus of the Hungarian authorities' attention. The regulations concerning the visa requirements of foreigners have been simplified. At the moment, tourists arriving from the West are able to acquire a visa at the Hungarian embassies within 48 hours by filling in a form containing 12 questions, submitting 2 photographs and paying the prescribed fee. A visa can be obtained on the spot at the Ferihegy Airport and the border crossing stations designed to be used by the public. Therefore, the Hungarian practice is far more lenient than are the procedures used by most of the western countries. In the area of family reunification, we act considerably and humanely. The overwhelming majority of the requests are granted by the Hungarian authorities. Only those applicants are rejected who are not eligible under the law. Foreign journalists have appropriate conditions for practicing their profession. In step with the advancement of mass communication, and in view of the increasing demand for it, the Hungarian Government ensures, in compliance with the directives listed in the Helsinki Final Act, that the working conditions be improved and modernized. This is evidenced, for example, in the establishment of the Information Bureau for Foreign Journalists in 1979. Its task is to help the foreign journalists as well as the representatives of any other branches of mass communication, who are either visiting Hungary or working in the country, by supplying them with information and all the other necessary services. Steps have been taken to gradually increase the sale of western newspapers in Hungary in line with the changing conditions and requirements.

It was partly due to the domestic background that, ever since the Helsinki summit, the issues of the security and cooperation in Europe were firmly placed on the agenda of political discussions and negotiations at the highest levels. In reference to the recommendations and directives listed in the closing document, the Hungarian side calls the capitalist partners' attention to both the obstacles that are still hindering the progress in commercial and economic relations and the difficulties that the various protectionist and discriminative measures are causing. The Final Act also empowers us to point out in these negotiations that in the area of humanitarian relations, such as the easing of foreign travels or the exchange of information and culture, we experience a certain imbalance at our disadvantage and at the advantage of most of the capitalist countries.

The initiative that, of all the participating states, Hungary alone made in the second half of 1976, under the terms of which "relational proposals" were handed over through diplomatic channels to the governments of the 19 capitalist states participating in the Helsinki process, was designed to aid the execution of the Helsinki Final Act. The proposals were compiled so as to promote the execution of the general and concrete recommendations of the Final Act in a way that was in our best interest on the one hand and, when met with the partners' positive reaction, served the further development of the bilateral relations on the other. The subjects of the proposals followed the structure of the Final Act, while also taking into consideration the existing level of relations and the concrete problems of any given country.

In specific, the bilateral relations proposal handed over to the United States on 21 December 1976 called for an improvement in the Hungarian - US political relations, regarding both their content and their level; for lifting the barriers standing in the way of expanding the trade and economic relations; for signing an

agreement designed to promote tourism and to speed up the visa process; for better work conditions for journalists, etc. Our proposal to the American partner included the following elements: in consideration of the guiding principles regulating inter-state relations, the USA should withdraw its financial support to Radio Free Europe; we should act according to the spirit of the Final Act in the areas of family reunification and immigration; we should make steps to improve the conditions of cultural cooperation between Hungary and the United States.

This diplomatic initiative must surely have contributed to the progress made in Hungarian - US relations in the late 1970s. In early 1978, an American delegation headed by the then secretary of state Cyrus Vance returned the crown and the coronation insignia to Hungary. Representatives of the two countries signed a Hungarian - US trade agreement, in which they mutually granted the most favored nation status in their bilateral economic relations in accordance with the international practice.

On 19 October 1979 we handed over another bilateral relations proposal to the United States, one that was very similar to our 1976 proposal in substance. Greater emphasis was laid on economic matters (the annual review of the most favored nation status, American export license system, inter-governmental trade committee, visits by businessmen, etc.) However, our 1979 proposal mostly repeated - in some places word for word - our 1976 proposal, which demonstrates that very little progress had been made on the part of our American partners in the issues we had raised in the given period.

Regarding the main elements, we made essentially similar bilateral relations proposals to the other capitalist partners. Among other things, the proposal handed over to the Federal Republic of Germany on 3 November 1976 called for an agreement on the mutual exchange of military attachés; it also requested that - in line with existing the GATT agreement - the FRG stop limiting the volume of Hungarian export; it suggested that we should eliminate double taxation; and take steps to encourage cultural cooperation and tourism between our countries. Our bilateral relations proposal was received with interest by the FRG, with the result that the respective foreign ministers carried out consultation on the subject. The questions of cultural cooperation were discussed in a separate round of negotiations, which ended with an agreement signed in 1977. Still in the same year we signed an agreement on the abolition of double taxation. An agreement was reached in principle about the exchange of military attachés, although the plan has not yet been put into action. Some progress has been made in the negotiations about the double accreditation of journalists.

Although the discussions about the other issues we had raised were either evaded or blocked, the bilateral relations proposals have brought some results. Our proposals helped clarify several concrete questions regarding the bilateral relations. The subsequent discussions were helpful in showing the way towards improved relations. Gradually more and more opportunities have opened up for making progress.

The rest of the NATO members and Common Market countries received our proposals in much the same vein as the USA and the FRG. However, every one of our partners recognized the usefulness of our actions and the sincerity of our motives. The smaller capitalist countries, such as Finland or Austria, for example, responded to several of our proposed ideas positively. We handed over bilateral relations proposals to Finland on 8 June 1976 and 14 September 1979, respectively. In comparison to the proposals we handed over to the NATO countries, the Finnish version had a few specific aspects. For example, we suggested that our countries organize joint actions in preparation for the Belgrade meeting. We also proposed the continuation of the time-proven cooperation between the two countries' defense ministries. We raised the possibility of expanding the economic joint committee's activities. We recommended that the two sides

should encourage their companies to make better use of the opportunities offered by the agreement. We supported the idea of intensifying the youth and sport programs and producing joint television programs. We proposed to sign an agreement on legal counseling in the areas of health, civil law and criminal law.

In addition to reiterating some of our earlier initiatives, our 1979 bilateral relations proposal to Finland recommended - among other things - that both sides work towards making the Madrid meeting a successful one. The proposal underlined the need for the Hungarian - Finnish joint committees to encourage bilateral cooperation between academic institutions and other organizations, for example, by making available the official records of proceedings for a period of one or two years. The proposal describes the regular cooperation between the Hungarian and Finnish academies of sciences, statistical bureaus, several universities and sister cities as exemplary. The Hungarian side proposed to hold regular meetings between the economic managers and planners of Hungary and Finland. We should encourage the cooperation between the two countries' mass media, their news agencies and the professional bodies of journalists. The volume of cultural exchanges that are not language-specific should be increased; bilateral cultural seminars for professional people should be held; direct contact between cultural institutes should be established; an exchange program between libraries must be organized, etc.

The proposals Hungary made in 1976 sparked off an intensive dialogue between both the respective foreign ministries and the various joint committees and other bilateral bodies. In general, our Finnish partners welcomed our new initiatives, without actually putting their own proposals on the table. Since the Hungarian - Finnish relations are in harmony with the directives of the Final Act (in some respects they even go beyond these), the Hungarian bilateral relations proposal could not have given a spectacular boost to the Hungarian - Finn relations. Nevertheless, the proposal did help intensify the relations in some areas, such as the youth exchange programs and the economic cooperation.

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As the above examples can demonstrate, the Helsinki process can form an important framework for Hungarian foreign policy initiatives and diplomatic activities. The initiatives we made to help the execution of the recommendations of the Helsinki Final Act can also help develop our bilateral relations.

Naturally, one must not overestimate the effectiveness and usefulness of the Final Act. The recommendations of the Final Act were not powerful enough incentives for our capitalist partners to eliminate the obstacles hindering the development of trade and economic relations. Nevertheless, the Final Act has been the foundation, which has allowed us, under the increasingly difficult conditions characterizing world politics and world economics in recent years, to keep the important issues of cooperation between East and West in the focus of attention, and also to develop the bilateral relations with the capitalist countries with a view to broadening the cooperation based on mutual advantages and to maintain the dialogue even at a time of growing confrontation between the two sides.

3.) Hungarian diplomacy conducted a vigorous campaign at the multilateral meetings, which were held in the framework of security and cooperation in Europe. Instead of making spectacular initiatives, our diplomatic activities have been directed at building a constructive atmosphere and reaching an evenly balanced agreement. Representatives of the 35 countries taking part in the Helsinki process reviewed the implementation of the Helsinki Final Act and made recommendations about the further prospects of security

and cooperation in Europe at the Belgrade meeting, the first conference after the Helsinki summit. On this occasion the Hungarian delegation submitted proposals in the subjects of the right to work, the facilitation of the international trade of medical equipment (jointly with the German Democratic Republic), and the promotion of teaching minor European languages and translating and publishing books in those languages. Our delegation was similarly active at the next meeting in Madrid. To advance the joint interests, it cooperated with the delegations of the other socialist countries. Within the realm of possibilities, it protected the concrete Hungarian interests. It maintained, and even expanded when deemed necessary, its relations with the representatives of the neutral countries and the countries of the western alliance. In its work, the delegation always bore in mind the importance associated with the bilateral relations with each one of the participating countries. The meeting recognized the international prestige of the Hungarian People's Republic. The Hungarian proposals submitted in the subject of several economic topics, as well as in the areas of youth travel, cultural cooperation and the teaching of minor European languages were incorporated in the Final Act. It was involved in the negotiations leading to the concessionary formula regarding the national minorities. Of the international events following the Madrid meeting, Hungary won the right to organize the Cultural Forum. This was in line with the interests of the socialist countries, because this would be the first all-European meeting to be held in a Warsaw Treaty country.

At the current human rights meeting our delegation has expressed Hungary's interests in furthering the process of security and cooperation in Europe, along with her determination to honor the human rights recommendations of the Helsinki Final Act and her willingness to make further progress in this area in harmony with all the other chapters of the Final Act according to the ten principles guiding relations between states. It stood up for the constructive atmosphere of the discussions regarding the human rights issues and the observance of the principle of non-intervention. With Hungary hosting the event, our delegation was able to present the country's constitutional and institutional framework for protecting human rights, along with the development of the Hungarian practice and the democratic foundations, in a constructive spirit. Although there was no independent Hungarian proposal, we co-authored the Soviet proposal, which wanted to record the principles guiding the relations in the area of human rights in a document to be drawn up by the conference. Our delegation took an active part in the current stage of wording the document. Also, it was concretely involved in the review of the draft regarding the right of national minorities.

4.) The HSWP documents, along with the published material of high-level meetings, the foreign minister's speeches (in Parliament, in the UN General Assembly, etc.) and the articles in the printed press (essays published in magazines, newspapers articles and interviews, etc.), can give a faithful picture of Hungary's foreign policy declarations of the past fifteen years.

Of the statements made by the Hungarian government, two must be held up as examples, each recording the state of affairs rather than launching a separate initiative. Entitled "The US Ballistic Missile Bases are Against the Interest of Mankind," one was published on 29 November 1983 (Appendix 1). This statement justifiably puts the blame for the escalation of tensions on the leading circles US and NATO circles, backing the Soviet Union's counter-measures against the US missile program with well-chosen words.

Another significant foreign policy document was the Council of Ministers' statement made on 3 February 1983 in connection with the Swedish proposal about creating a 300-kilometer wide nuclear-free zone for tactical missiles along the line of contact between the NATO and the Warsaw Treaty nations (Appendix No.

2.) The announcement published in the newspapers on 4 February 1983 with a reference to the Information

Bureau made the following important observation, which has lost none of its relevance to this day: "The Hungarian government is ready and willing to clear up all the problems regarding the establishment of such a zone and to work towards the success of such negotiations." We must point out, however, that the Star Wars program launched by the US, along with the Soviet-American talks with three topics in Geneva, completely eclipsed the Swedish proposal.

Another example of the Hungarian foreign policy declarations was the statement issued by Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee on 1 April 1981 in connection with the 26th Party Congress of the Soviet Union. It contained the approval of the assessment that the HSWP's Central Committee had given on March 26, 1981 of the new Soviet initiatives. (Appendix 3.)

The above examples serve to demonstrate the character of the relatively more important foreign policy statements of the past 15 years, and also the framework in which they were made.

Budapest, 12 June 1985.

[Translation by Ervin Dunay]