

DOCUMENT NO. ~~57~~ Telegram from Imre Nagy to Diplomatic Missions in
Budapest Declaring Hungary's Neutrality,
November 1, 1956

Nagy, then serving both as prime minister and acting foreign minister, sent the following telegram to every foreign diplomatic mission in Budapest in a desperate attempt to prevent another Soviet intervention. The Hungarian demand for a withdrawal of Soviet troops, the denunciation of the Warsaw Pact, and a declaration of neutrality meant an open break with the Moscow-led socialist camp. Unfortunately, the appeal to the four great powers and the United Nations to protect Hungary's neutrality was an impossible demand under the circumstances, since firm action by the Western powers would have risked direct confrontation with the Soviet Union and, many in the West feared, even nuclear war.

The prime minister of the Hungarian People's Republic, in his role as acting foreign minister, informs your excellency of the following:

The Government of the Hungarian People's Republic has received trustworthy reports of the entrance of new Soviet military units into Hungary. The President of the Council of Ministers, as acting Foreign Minister, summoned Mr. Andropov, the Soviet Union's special and plenipotentiary ambassador to Hungary, and most firmly objected to the entrance of new military units into Hungary. He demanded the immediate and fast withdrawal of the Soviet units. He announced to the Soviet ambassador that the Hungarian government was withdrawing from the Warsaw Pact, simultaneously declaring Hungary's neutrality, and that it was turning to the United Nations and asking the four Great Powers to help protect its neutrality.²⁸⁰

The Soviet Ambassador acknowledged the objection and announcement of the president of the Council of Ministers and acting foreign minister, and promised to ask his government for a reply without delay.

Your Excellency, please accept with this my most sincere respects.

[Source: Hungarian People's Republic, The Counter-Revolutionary Conspiracy of Imre Nagy and his Accomplices (Budapest: Information Bureau of the Council of Ministers, [1958]). Also published in József Kiss, Zoltán Ripp and István Vida, ed., "Források a Nagy Imre-kormány külpolitikájának történetéhez," Társadalmi Szemle 48, no. 5 (1993): 86. Translated by David Evans.]

²⁸⁰ See Document No. 67.