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CONFIDENTIAL ENH 020/2



REGISTRY NO. 15
FEB 1980
BRITISH EMBASSY
BUDAPEST

M. Garry

Pre copy as being. Para 3 is interesting. There seems to me little point in this note forming a visit by the S/S. But let us re-examine when we have M. Pridgen's views.

18 February 1980

C L G Mallaby Esq
EESD
FCO

2 Mr. B. H. Carver

Handwritten initials

Handwritten notes:
- RO
- Annex staff
- Planning staff
- OLD
- FUSD
Handwritten signature

My dear Christopher,

UK/HUNGARIAN RELATIONS: CALL ON STATE SECRETARY PÁL RÁCZ

I paid my first call on State Secretary Pál RÁCZ, whom you will remember from your visit here with the PUS and who was abroad at the time of my own arrival, on 14 February. I expect that you, as I did, found him a person of considerable intelligence and subtlety with whom it is possible to have a useful dialogue; I look forward to further talks with him. I enclose, for the record, a copy of Michael Atkinson's note of our discussion; I certainly would not suggest that you need wade through it yourself and this letter therefore summarizes the main points of interest.

2. RÁCZ took up my expression of hope that the political dialogue between Hungary and the UK could be continued this year at at least the same level as in 1979 by remarking that the right conditions would have to exist for this and that this "did not depend on Hungary alone". The development of bilateral contacts, he went on to say later, could not be



hermetically sealed from the general international situation and this applied particularly in the sphere of high-level political contacts. Rácz subsequently remarked that he, personally, regretted that it had not been possible to prevent certain developments which had occurred as a result of events in Afghanistan and that Hungary would have been happier if those events could have been averted. He commented, again on a personal basis, that he found it ironic that Hungary should be accused of having taken certain steps recently in response to pressure from outside whereas, in fact, Hungary had been less "solid" with the Soviet Union in the aftermath of Afghanistan than had the United Kingdom with the United States. (This gave me an opportunity to emphasize that the UK's current policies were not dictated merely by considerations of Alliance solidarity but reflected HMG's and the British people's profound concern over the implications of Soviet behaviour.)

3. In a nutshell, the message which Rácz wished to convey was that Hungary at present found itself under definite constraints so far as the continuation of a political dialogue with the UK at a high level was concerned; for this reason it probably would not be possible for him, for the time being, to accept a return invitation to visit London; that this situation is not of Hungary's choosing nor welcome to her; but that we can count on Hungary's co-operation in developing those areas of our bilateral relationship which do not fall under Moscow's anathema.

3. This fully confirms the impression which we and our partners had already formed of Hungary's present

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situation and attitudes (my tel no. 72).

Yours ever,
Bryan.

(Bryan Cartledge)

cc (without enclosure):

Chanceries at East Berlin, Warsaw, Prague, Moscow,
Bucharest and Sofia

SUMMARY RECORD OF A CALL BY HM AMBASSADOR, MR CARTELEDGE, ON
STATE SECRETARY PÁL RÁCZ AT THE MFA, BUDAPEST, ON 14 FEBRUARY
1980 AT 10 AM

1. After Mr RÁCZ had welcomed Mr Cartledge, the latter said that he had already been confirmed in the liking for Budapest which he had formed during his very short visits in 1975. Mr RÁCZ said that Anglo-Hungarian bilateral relations were quite good: Mr Parsons had worked hard to build up Anglo-Hungarian relations and the Hungarian authorities had appreciated his understanding of the particular conditions existing in Hungary. Mr RÁCZ said that he was glad that Mr Cartledge had a wide political experience both of the Soviet Union and of the other socialist countries. He was acquainted with developments in the socialist countries over a period of time. It was of special importance at present that a diplomat, through familiarity with the milieu, should be able to recognise both the possibilities which existed and the limits of such possibilities. Diplomats should know what was and what was not in the interests of their countries - eg which moves could be counter-productive. Mr RÁCZ said that Mr Cartledge could count on every assistance from the Hungarian authorities, and wished him success in his mission, not only in representing his country, but also in the interests of developing friendship and international co-operation.
2. Mr Cartledge said that he was grateful to Mr RÁCZ for receiving him so soon after the State Secretary's return from abroad. He was also grateful to the Foreign Ministry and its Protocol Department for the effective action they had taken to enable him to start work quickly in Budapest. He had inherited from his predecessor a very constructive and worthwhile bilateral programme. We were looking forward, for example, to the visit to Britain by Hungarian poets in March, and also to the visit by Mr Kóvari of the Planning Office. He hoped that the Anglo-Hungarian dialogue would continue this year at at least the level achieved in 1979. It had now become more difficult to make progress in détente but HMG would continue to work for this even though the circumstances were less favourable. In spite of these difficulties, every effort should be made to maintain the forward movement in UK/Hungarian relations and to improve and deepen contacts in all fields.
3. Mr RÁCZ assured Mr Cartledge that the Ministry would give him every help and assistance in getting to know the realities of the domestic situation in Hungary and of Hungary's foreign policy. He said that Hungary wanted her objectives to be presented accurately. She was not always successful in this as sometimes official or semi-official statements were to be seen in the press which did not

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correspond with reality. But Hungary wanted to maintain substantive, meaningful working contacts with Britain both on multilateral and bilateral matters. The Ministry supported the visits to the UK of the poets and of Mr Kóvari.

4. Mr Rácz said that Hungary, like the UK, looked forward to maintaining political contacts at at least last year's level; but the conditions for this had to be propitious and this did not depend on Hungary alone. Mr Rácz said that it was a characteristic of diplomacy that there had to be a basic degree of concurrence, which depended on both sides. It was fine to say that one wanted détente to continue but if one's partners did not want the same, then it was difficult to have it. Hungary believed that détente and good bilateral relations had to be advantageous to both sides. If one looked at the balance of "cultural presence" in Europe, it was unquestionable that Western countries' cultural presence in Hungary was greater than vice versa. However, the important thing was that cultural exchanges were mutually advantageous. The same applied to détente. If détente were not preserved, both sides would suffer.

5. Mr Rácz went on to say that, despite differences of view, Hungary wanted not only to maintain but to develop further bilateral contacts. These could not however, be hermetically sealed off from the general situation. This applied especially to the sphere of high level political contacts. Mr Rácz said that Hungary and Britain belonged to two different alliance systems. However, this was not an obstacle to the development of bilateral relations. Hungary had not changed her mind on this and Mr Cartledge should be aware that Hungary wished to continue on that path.

6. Mr Cartledge said that he very well understood the points which Mr Rácz had made to him. It was most useful to have this clear guidance at the beginning of his stay in Hungary. He agreed that the wider conditions prevailing at a given moment had to be taken into account but when those conditions were unfavourable it was all the more important to preserve what had been achieved and to develop relations further in the areas where this was still possible. Mr Cartledge said that he hoped that international circumstances would eventually become more favourable to this. As Lord Carrington had recently said in Parliament, a return to the Cold War would be in nobody's interests.

7. Mr Rácz said that Hungary maintained her solidarity with the Soviet Union. She also wished to keep up the process of détente. In this each alliance and each member country could make contributions, not necessarily of equal weight. He said that he noticed that, in

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particular, the members of the Western Alliance did not have a uniform policy. He welcomed statements about the need to maintain détente, but these were not enough. Practical steps had to be taken to put détente back on the rails as soon as possible. Hungary's membership of the Warsaw Pact did not prevent her from pursuing that policy. If Mr Cartledge carried out his mission as an Ambassador in the same spirit, he would be very successful.

8. Mr Cartledge said that it was true that the Western Alliance was not always very disciplined. There had not been complete unison in the responses of individual countries to recent events. But on one point there was unanimity: the certainty that in resuming the process of détente we should be under no illusions. Détente had to be indivisible: no country, least of all a great power, could take action anywhere in the world without affecting developments elsewhere. If that were understood, the prospects for East-West relations would improve.

9. Mr Rácz said that in his opinion the consequences of actions by a great power could vary widely: it depended on how the members of the Alliances reacted. There was a very wide range of options: one could condemn actions by Resolutions in the United Nations, break off diplomatic relations, attempt to organise boycotts of the Olympic Games. He repeated that there was no great unison within the Western Alliance; he felt, as some Western politicians had said, that some countries had not reacted, but rather over-reacted.

10. Mr Cartledge said that he knew that Sir Michael Palliser had enjoyed a useful talk with Mr Rácz in October 1979. Mr Rácz would probably recall that Sir Michael had expressed the view that the super-powers had differing perceptions of détente: in particular, the USSR believed that it could pursue détente in one area while pursuing policies of a different character in others. Sir Michael Palliser had expressed apprehension over the possible consequences of this disparity. Unfortunately this apprehension had soon proved to be all too well-founded.

11. Referring to the "cultural imbalance", Mr Cartledge said that he had recently discussed this with Mr Ronai. As the visits of the poets, and the forthcoming exhibitions of Hungarian art in London showed, we were trying to create opportunities for the British people to become better acquainted with Hungarian culture.

12. Mr Rácz said that he would agree that where the possibility and where the will existed bilateral contacts should be developed. He agreed that his talks with Sir Michael Palliser had been useful: there had been mutual understanding even if not always agreement.

/Mr Rácz

Mr Rác said that he personally regretted that it had not been possible to prevent certain events which had come about as a result of what had happened in Afghanistan. Hungary would have felt much better if the Afghan events could have been prevented and if the USSR had not been compelled to take the steps it had taken. He repeated that it was not enough to say that one wanted to maintain détente nor enough to express regret about what had happened: each and every country should help to restore détente.

13. Mr Rác said that Hungary did not need to be shown examples of solidarity within alliances. He said that, speaking off the record, Hungary had not been as "solid" with the USSR recently as Great Britain had been with the United States. In spite of that, Hungary had been accused of acting under foreign pressure!

14. Mr Cartledge said that, also speaking personally, he would like to tell Mr Rác that the British reaction to events in Afghanistan had not been determined merely by considerations of alliance solidarity. It would have been the same even if President Carter had reacted differently. It had been a spontaneous and profound reaction, reflecting the deep concern of British Ministers and of the British people over the implications of developments in Afghanistan.

15. Before the meeting ended, Mr Cartledge raised the Marth case with Mr Rác (this is being separately recorded). The meeting, which was very friendly throughout, ended at 1045.

BRITISH EMBASSY

BUDAPEST

14 February 1980