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cc Mr Fergusson
Chancery, Budapest

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HUNGARY

1. The following were the main points at my lunch today with the Hungarian Ambassador.

Afghanistan, detente etc.

2. The Ambassador took the expected line that Afghanistan was not by any means the most important problem in the world. I said that the trouble was that it was affecting the most important problems. It had been a failure of imagination by the Russians not to foresee that the West would treat the invasion of Afghanistan differently from the earlier invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia. I hoped they would pay more attention to the warning, which I understood Giscard to have given Brezhnev in Warsaw, about abstaining from large-scale summer offensives against the Afghan resistance movement.

3. The Ambassador's other point, also as expected, was about the need to maintain contact between East and West. He implied that it was at the instigation or with the encouragement of Hungary and others that Gierek had promoted the Brezhnev-Giscard meeting. I said that so far as the UK was concerned Lord Carrington had spoken out weeks ago, before it became fashionable, in favour of keeping lines of communication open. The meeting with Gromyko in Vienna was further evidence of the British view, because it was we who had taken the initiative in organising it. The Ambassador then rather surprised me by repeating, in tones which suggested that he believed it, Lunkov's claim to have been chiefly responsible for that encounter.

My visit to Budapest

4. I explained the difficulties: I should be busy until the end of June, after which Mr Cartledge would be away from Budapest, after which in turn I should be on leave for 4 weeks. This took us to 10 August. Was it feasible to plan a visit to Budapest in the second half of August? The Ambassador said he would enquire. Nagy would certainly be at his desk at the beginning of August, when there was due to be a conference of Hungarian Ambassadors from all over the world.

5. The Ambassador confirmed that Racz was expected to go to New York, Nagy to succeed him and Nagy's place to be taken by Sarko (? head of the UN and International Organisations Dept). He asked whether I would still be prepared to go to Budapest to meet Nagy's successor, and I said I would.



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Other questions

6. I said I had a piece of paper in my pocket headed Marth Family Case and ending with the words '' in October 1979 Racz undertook to examine the matter, since when nothing has been heard. '' The Ambassador said that he had been present at the PUS' talk with Racz and that the latter had given no commitment except that the case would be handled in accordance with Hungarian law. But he noted that I had raised the matter.

7. We gossiped a bit about the Secretary of State's meeting with Puja, the role of Hungarian communities abroad and other matters. None of this needs recording.

JL.

22 May 1980

J L Bullard