

Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL) – Hungarian National Archive

KÜM TŰK 1984, IV. fej., ANGLIA, 30. doboz

6-13: "Jelentés a Minisztertanácsnak M. Thatcher brit miniszterelnök hivatalos magyarországi látogatásáról. /1984. febr,24./." 0080/14 – "Report for the Cabinet of the British Prime Minister, M Thatcher's Official Visit to Hungary /24 February 1984/"

Page 1

FOREIGN OFFICE
0080/14/1984

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL!
Created: in 54 copies
Copy n. **0054**

REPORT
for the Cabinet

about Margaret Thatcher British prime minister's official visit to Hungary /2-4 February 1984/

Margaret Thatcher, prime minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, for the invitation of György Lázár, president of the Cabinet, made an official visit to our country between the 2nd and 4th February 1984. She met Comrade János Kádár and was received by Comrade Pál Losonczi. György Lázár first had a tête-à-tête, then a plenary discussion with the British prime minister.

Margaret Thatcher invited György Lázár to an official visit which he accepted.

I.

Comrade János Kádár greeted the realisation of the meeting. It is clear for us – he said – that for the decision there was need of a certain degree of courage. He expressed his conviction that the visit in the present difficult situation of international situation serves an important and good cause. He judged our bilateral relations as good, we do not have unsolved problems. He expressed

Page 2

- 2 -

his thanks for the support that the British government and financial circles provided us, when our international financial situation became transitionally uncertain. He outlined the history of our country, he mentioned our traditions and specialities, the role of nationalities in the history of Central-Europe, main characteristics of our social system, our internal and external political pursuits. He reminded of the actual manifestations of will of peace of the Soviet Union. He explained in detail what he sees as the most important conditions of normalisation of East-West relations, that of Soviet-American relations, of the reduction of tension, of the renewal of negotiations about the restriction of arms.

Mrs. Thatcher explained that she came to Hungary first of all "for Hungary". With her visit, she feels, she makes up a huge leeway. Personal contacts are important and they help the relations between countries. The given international situation gives reason for worrying, we stand in front of a new spiral of armament, which would increase the danger. On the British part they see that they have to take actions, as in case of a military conflict the British island would be a primary target. The medium and small countries of the alliance systems have to do everything to improve the situation. The United States in the following ten months is going to concentrate on the electoral campaign, in the Soviet Union the 'uncertainty' around the person of the highest ranked leader [*Andropov*] means a problem.

The British government came to the conclusion that everything has to be done to maintain the balance of power, that the security of NATO and Warsaw Pact countries could be guaranteed at the lowest level of arms.

Page 3

- 3 -

There are remarkable differences of viewpoints between the member states of the two alliance systems, but they are connected by the joint interest, the importance of living together on this planet, for this reason there is no other solution than having negotiations and through negotiations make an agreement. We have to accept the other part as it is, and the goal of pursuits cannot be the change of the other part's system. Thatcher – according to her words – managed to persuade the American president of this. She characterised Reagan as an honest and decent [*original Hungarian: "who feels good"*] person, who also regarding his age wishes to do everything to secure peace.

Comrade Kádár remarked that it does not seem like this from the far distance.

According to Mrs Thatcher it was a great disappointment for Reagan that after taking office, to his hand-written, honest-toned letter after a long delay he received from Brezhnev a considerably standard, reticent and not returning the initiative letter. After this, he felt that only by restoring the power of America there is opportunity to have negotiations from an equal position with the Soviet Union concerning disarmament questions. In September 1983 upon her – Thatcher – convincing argument the American government started actions aiming to normalise the relations with the Soviet Union, and this process was interrupted by the South-Korean airplane-incident. It is her conviction that the president's speech of 16th January means the natural continuation of the started process. On Reagan's behalf there was need of courage to make this speech, as on his own right-side many accepted with disapproval his ideas [*original Hungarian "commentary"*].

Page 4

- 4 -

Comrade Kádár pointed out: in the judgment of factors which created the dangerous situation we obviously do not agree, it is not worthwhile to discuss them, what is important is that it is out joint interest to maintain peace. He talked about the differences of magnitude between Great Britain and Hungary, our different roles fulfilled in the international situation, and about with what – according to his opinion – we can contribute to the reduce of tension.

Mrs Thatcher asked the consent of Comrade Kádár that in case she sees the international situation very dangerous, she could send a message to Comrade Kádár.

Comrade Pál Losonczi stressed that we grade as important Thatcher's visit, as although the two world powers can contribute the most to the changing of world situation, also smaller countries have their own roles and responsibility. He expressed his hope that the present British-Hungarian discussions will give new stimulation on every field to develop our relations.

According to Mrs Thatcher the world situation is so serious that we cannot watch in idle how it worsens, there is a rather huge need for dialogue in our days. He found it unfortunate that between the states being part of the two opposite military alliances at the moment there is not enough dialogue. If we do not change this urgently, fatal misunderstandings may happen in the world. He underlined that the outbreak of both nuclear and traditional wars has to be prevented.

As a conclusion Comrade Losonczi asked Mrs Thatcher to give his [*hearty*] regards and best wishes to Queen Elizabeth II and her husband, Prince Philip.

Page 5

- 5 -

II.

Comrade Lázár praised the fact and importance of the visit both at the tête-à-tête and the plenary discussions.

Mrs Thatcher agreeing with Comrade Lázár also judged as of great importance both the visit and its timing. As she said, she wishes to make up an old leeway, on the other hand the visit was hastened by the fact that the United States will now be occupied with the election for months, and they could not see the "other side's highest leader" for a long time, thus the responsibility of each member state has risen.

She thinks that due to historical and geographical reasons in its own alliance system both Hungary and Great Britain have a prominent role. In spite of our different social systems and our membership in different alliance systems we are labouring on the solution of several similar economic and other problems. Our people and the nations - she said - are worried because only a small [*in original Hungarian "a few"*] progression has been made. The disarmament discussions in part were eliminated, in part are temporarily suspended. Be the governing atmosphere of any kind, we have to live in it. There is need of efforts that the events could turn to a positive direction. Both of us profess the importance of understanding between the two alliance systems. Also these factors were given an important role upon deciding to fulfill the visit.

According to Mrs Thatcher the USA and NATO honestly wish the disarmament, Reagan's last speech was a courageous step. The situation is very pushing, as the quick development of technology may overturn the balance of power. This could result not only a dangerous situation, but it may consume those power sources as well, which we wish to apply for the raising of our people's standard of living.

Contact between the two superpowers has not only reduced, it has narrowed down to sheer technical questions, which prevent the formation of understanding in the fields of politics and economics, although such a solution should be pursued which would make it possible that both parts shape their fate according to their own imagination, that the tranquillity of living together be secured.

On the British side they wish to promote this with the development of bilateral relations, which could have an influence on the progress of discussions concerning the most important questions. She qualified as realistic the latest suggestions submitted by NATO in Stockholm, which aim is to increase trust. From the simpler one has to move to the more complex, this is what the Hungarian Foreign Secretary suggested in Stockholm.

The United Kingdom is interested in strengthening European security, in the decrease of military opposition. Now not the reasons of break of Geneva talks have to be discussed, but the continuation of negotioation has to be achieved as soon as possible, we do not have to look back, but in front of us.

Comrade Lázár while describing our foreign policy's cornerstones explained: we judge similarly the international situation, and although we have different opinions on the reasons for tension, we find possible and necessary the maintenance of dialogue. The maintenance of dialogue can have results only if there is a mutual readiness to recognise and respect each others' interest, if there is search for acceptable compromises, in case the USA and her allies give a testimony of a higher sense of reality than that of they have now.

Any calculation would be faulty which builds upon the internal weaknesses of socialist countries, or that with our alliance system one can negotiate from the position of power. In the following he told about our social and alliance commitment, and about the fact that those are seriously [*original Hungarian "heavily"*] wrong who behind the so-called Hungarian specialities,

our negotiating skills, our openness are searching for some hidden reason. Those who count on this, are to be disappointed.

Mrs Thatcher responding to Comrade Lázár explained that she understands and appreciates our commitment to our social and alliance system, and she came here to discuss bearing it well in mind [*original Hungarian "in the bright knowledge of this"*]. The mutual proclamation of commitment – stressed Comrade Lázár – does not make difficult, on the contrary, it makes the dialogue between us easier. We are also aware of the fact – he said – that although the Soviet-American relation has a decisive effect on the shaping of world situation, also smaller countries have their own responsibility in creating a more favourable atmosphere.

The shaping of our bilateral relations was qualified as ordinary, good by both sides, and underlined their interest in the further raise of their level. Comrade Lázár said thank you for the British support and understanding experienced during our join to the International Monetary Fund and upon the Common Market consultation. According to the judgment of Mrs Thatcher certain members of the Community watch too much inside, are protectionists, which is what Britain is against, as she thinks that not new obstacles have to be raised, but the new ones have to be pulled down. In accordance with this they make efforts to promote the relations between the Common Market and other countries.

Mrs Thatcher highly appreciated the shaping of our scientific and cultural relations, the useful visits, the formation of tourism. She acknowledged with joy that Hungary is going to be the host of the Cultural Forum which is going to be organised in 1985. She mentioned that the accessibility to the library available at our embassy is restricted, which could promote the language teaching here and could secure a better accessibility to English language specialised literature.

Page 8

- 8 -

Comrade Lázár judged as important the different levels of meetings, thus the cultivation of parliamentary, artistic, scientific and generally human relations. In these questions we are open, we try to promote contact. He illustrated supported by data our existing primary interest in external economic relations. He talked critically about the slowing down which can be experienced in our economic relations. He pointed out that with joint decision, close cooperation, with the incitement of industrial and bank circles, by searching new forms we wish to change this situation, help the development of relations. He underlined that mainly the opportunity to get out to the British market should be improved, by pulling down the still existing obstacles, and in line with this to eliminate the bars raised by the regulation of the Common Market prevailing in England as well, which prevents our export. He also pointed out those new opportunities, which arise from structural changes, and whose better exploitation should be sought for in the bilateral cooperation and in the cooperation on third markets.

Mrs Thatcher repeated their interest in the ceasing of obstacles, she said that the improvement in our economic-commercial relations could be traced already in 1983. She gave huge importance to the Hungarian Days organised in April in England, which could offer [*original Hungarian 'secure'*] an other opportunity to increase our export, to develop or chamber relations.

There was an agreement that our well-developing relations have perspective, and both sides are interested in the further development of them on every field.

Page 9

- 9 -

III.

British prime minister Margaret Thatcher's visit to Hungary was useful. The rightness of our politics aiming to maintain dialogue was proven, at the same time it gave opportunity to explain the Hungarian standpoint and the urging of development – before anything else economic and commercial cooperation - of our bilateral relations.

The discussions were led in an open and constructive atmosphere, which suited our expectations. The visit confirmed that although the existing differences of views it is not only necessary, but possible to continue the dialogue, the exchange of thoughts aiming to search for the reduce of tension.

Budapest, 7 February 1984

The report was created by:

Ferenc Esztergályos m.p.
Deputy Foreign Minister

Approved by:

György Lázár m.p.
Head of the Cabinet

Page 10

- 10 -

IV.

The Cabinet's
resolution no. _____/1984.
about the British prime minister's official visit to Hungary

The Cabinet

1., approvingly notes the report created about Margaret Thatcher British prime minister's visit to Hungary

2., entrusts the competent ministers to take the necessary actions for the execution of tasks arising from the visit.

Budapest, 7 February 1984

Dr. Péter Várkonyi m. p.

[The folder contains an other copy of this document [copy no. 0051.] On the top of the first page there is a handwritten note: "Copy of Comrade János Nagy (handed in)" under it there is a signature, probably that of János Nagy. Under the document number there is an other number written by hand: "242/MT"]