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INFO EAST EUROPEAN POSTS, UKDEL NATO, WASHINGTON, PARIS, BONN.

HUNGARIAN VIEWS ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT IN THE  
LIGHT OF CHERNENKO'S SUCCESSION.

## SUMMARY

1. I HAD AN HOUR WITH THE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER TODAY.  
HE SAID THAT THE HUNGARIANS HAD NOTED WITH PLEASURE THE  
PRIME MINISTER'S DECISION TO GO TO MOSCOW FOR ANDROPOV'S  
FUNERAL, WHICH THEY SAW AS 'A SIGNAL'. THEY BELIEVED  
THAT THE EAST EUROPEANS AND WEST HAD NOTHING TO FEAR FROM  
CHERNENKO'S SUCCESSION. HE STOOD FOR THE CONTINUITY OF  
MOSCOW'S COLLECTIVE POLICY. PROSPECTS FOR FRUITFUL EAST-WEST  
DIALOGUE MIGHT EVEN BE BETTER NOW THAT THE PROBLEMS POSED BY  
ANDROPOV'S SICKNESS HAD BEEN RESOLVED.

## DETAIL

2. I SUGGESTED TO DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ESZTERGALYOS THAT  
WE MIGHT REVIEW THE PROSPECTS FOR ANGLO-HUNGARIAN AND  
EAST-WEST RELATIONS NOW THAT THE DUST HAD SETTLED AFTER THE  
PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT AND IN THE LIGHT OF CHERNENKO'S  
ACCESSION.
3. ESZTERGALYOS SAID THAT THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT, WHICH  
REVIEWED THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT YESTERDAY, HAD BEEN  
HONESTLY PLEASED BY HIS SUCCESS. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WERE  
KEEPING A CLOSE EYE ON EVERYTHING CONNECTED WITH THE FOLLOW-UP.  
THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT HAD ALSO BEEN PLEASED BY THE PRIME  
MINISTER'S DECISION TO GO TO MOSCOW AND SAW IT AS 'A SIGNAL'.
4. THE HUNGARIANS BELIEVED THAT THE ONLY WAY FOR THE WEST AND  
EAST TO GET OUT OF THE HOLE THEY HAD DUG BETWEEN THEM  
WAS THROUGH DIALOGUE. BOTH SIDES NEEDED TO REVIEW THEIR POSITION.  
IN PARTICULAR, THE TWO SUPERPOWERS DID NOT UNDERSTAND  
EACH OTHER'S PSYCHOLOGY. SOVIET LEADERS LAID SUCH EMPHASIS  
ON BEING TREATED AS EQUALS PRECISELY BECAUSE OF THEIR INSECURITY  
COMPLEX. THIS FLOWED FROM HISTORY BUT WAS EXACERBATED BY THE  
WAY PRESIDENT REAGAN SPOKE.

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5. THE HUNGARIANS WERE TRYING TO ARGUE THE ADVANTAGES OF DIALOGUE WITHIN THEIR OWN ALLIANCE SYSTEM, JUST AS WE, NO DOUBT, WERE DOING IN OURS. IF HUNGARIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN THIS REGARD WAS MORE ACTIVE AND OPEN THAN THAT OF SOME OF ITS NEIGHBOURS, THIS DID NOT JUST REFLECT THE FACT THAT THEIR INTERESTS MIGHT DIFFER. IT ALSO REFLECTED THE GREATER FREEDOM OF ACTION HUNGARY ENJOYED, IN PART BECAUSE WESTERN COUNTRIES WERE PREPARED TO TALK TO IT. OTHER EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES MIGHT BE PREPARED TO PLAY THE SAME ROLE BUT THEY LACKED HUNGARY'S WESTERN CONTACTS.

6. I COMMENTED THAT THE TONE OF CZECH COMMENT ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT WAS NOT ENCOURAGING. ESZTERGALYOS AGREED. HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER THE CZECHS WERE MORE DETERMINED TO ATTACK HUNGARY OR THE UK ABOUT THE VISIT. BUT SOME SURPRISING EAST EUROPEANS, SUCH AS THE EAST GERMANS, WERE MUCH MORE OPEN-MINDED THAN THE CZECHS. WITHIN THEIR OWN ALLIANCE SYSTEM, THE HUNGARIANS BELIEVED IN A DIVISION OF LABOUR. HE FELT THAT THE WEST WERE NOT PRACTISING THIS IN THEIR APPROACH TO HUNGARY.

7. I COMMENTED THAT WESTERN COUNTRIES WERE MORE PREPARED TO TALK TO HUNGARY THAN ITS NEIGHBOURS PRECISELY BECAUSE IT REPRESENTED THE MORE ACCEPTABLE FACE OF SOCIALISM. ESZTERGALYOS AGREED: BUT HE LEFT ME WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT HE WAS MAKING A CONSIDERED PLEA THAT WE SHOULD ADOPT ELSEWHERE IN EASTERN EUROPE, AND SPECIFICALLY TOWARDS EAST GERMANY, THE RELATIVELY OPEN POLICY WE HAVE ADOPTED TOWARDS HUNGARY.

8. ESZTERGALYOS POOH-POOHED SUGGESTIONS THAT CHERNENKO'S ACCESSION MIGHT CALL HIS OPTIMISM ABOUT THE VALUE OF EAST-WEST CONTACTS INTO QUESTION. WESTERN PRESS COMMENT MISSED THE POINT ABOUT CHERNENKO. HE HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN THE DETENTE POLICY EVER SINCE HELSINKI. HE MIGHT HAVE LITTLE PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE WEST BUT HE HAD BEEN VERY CLOSE TO BREZHNEV. MORE IMMEDIATELY, MOSCOW'S POLICY WAS A COLLECTIVE ONE. CHERNENKO HAD MADE CLEAR THAT THERE WOULD BE A CONTINUITY OF POLICY. THAT WAS EVEN MORE BELIEVABLE WITH CHERNENKO AT THE HELM THAN IF A YOUNGER MAN, WHO MIGHT HAVE WANTED TO INTRODUCE TOTALLY NEW CONCEPTS, HAD BEEN ELECTED. IN ANY CASE, THE LEADERSHIP IN MOSCOW HAD HAD A LONG TIME TO PREPARE ITSELF FOR ANDROPOV'S DEATH.

9. IT WAS EVEN POSSIBLE, ESZTERGALYOS THOUGHT, THAT CHERNENKO REPRESENTED A BETTER OPPORTUNITY FOR EAST-WEST CONTACT THAN THE STATUS QUO ANTE, WHEN ANDROPOV'S ILLNESS HAD GOT IN THE

WAY OF PROMISING DEVELOPMENTS SUCH AS TRUDEAU'S PROPOSED VISIT TO MOSCOW. BUT IT WAS UP TO THE WEST TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE. AS WE KNEW, HUNGARY WELCOMED INITIATIVES SUCH AS THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO BUDAPEST AND MOSCOW. BUT THERE CONTINUED TO BE DOUBTS IN HUNGARY ABOUT PRESIDENT REAGAN, PARTICULARLY IN THE RUN-UP TO THE ELECTION.

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10. I ASKED ESZTERGALYOS IF HE WAS REALLY SAYING THAT CHERNENKO'S SUCCESSION HAD OPENED A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY. HE IS EASILY CARRIED AWAY BY HIS OWN IDEAS AND NEEDS TO BE TAKEN WITH A PINCH OF SALT, BUT ESZTERGALYOS WAXED ELOQUENT IN REPLY. THERE MIGHT INDEED BE A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY, BUT IT WAS RUSTED AND FROZEN SHUT. THE EFFORTS OF ALL CONCERNED WOULD BE NEEDED TO FORCE IT OPEN AND LET FRESH AIR INTO ROOMS FILLED WITH THE SMOKE OF PAST HAGGLING.

11. LASTLY, I ASKED ESZTERGALYOS ABOUT THE EFFECT OF THE CHANGE OF GUARD IN MOSCOW ON EASTERN EUROPE AND, SPECIFICALLY, HUNGARY. HE REPLIED THAT THE WESTERN PRESS (AND HE MIGHT HAVE SAID MOST HUNGARIAN COMMENTATORS TOO) HAD EXAGGERATED THE IMPORTANCE OF ANDROPOV'S PREVIOUS CONNECTION WITH HUNGARY. IT HAD BEEN AN ADVANTAGE THAT HE KNEW HUNGARY AND KADAR PERSONALLY. BUT KADAR HAD GOT ON WELL WITH KHRUSCHEV AND BREZHNEV TOO. AND HE SAW NO DIFFICULTIES ABOUT HIS OWN PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH CHERNENKO.

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12. ESZTERGALYOS WAS MANIFESTLY SINCERE ABOUT THE IMPACT OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT. ON CHERNENKO, METHINKS HE BOTH PROTEST TOO MUCH. MY ITALIAN COLLEAGUE WAS WITH HIM AT THE AIRPORT WHEN THE NEWS OF CHERNENKO'S APPOINTMENT CAME THROUGH AND SAYS THAT ESZTERGALYO'S FACE FELL WHEN HE HEARD IT. I SUSPECT THAT HIS LINE WITH ME ON CHERNENKO CONTAINS MORE THAN AN ELEMENT OF WISHFUL THINKING. IT IS NEVERTHELESS INTERESTING THAT EVEN WITH A NEW GENERAL SECRETARY ABOUT WHOM THE HUNGARIANS MAY ENTERTAIN DOUBTS AND FEARS HE FELT FREE TO ADVOCATE CONTINUING EAST-WEST DIALOGUE SO OUTSPOKENLY.

13. SEE MIFT FOR AN ANALYSIS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENTATION HERE OF CHERNENKO'S SUCCESSION.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

6 February 1984

*Jan Th...*

*Revised memo submitted to*

The Prime Minister's Visit to Hungary

*P.R. A.F.C. 7/2.*

The Prime Minister told President Reagan in her letter of 19 January that she would let him have her impressions of her visit to Hungary. I enclose a draft which the Foreign Secretary has seen.

I understand that the Prime Minister would welcome suggestions as to how to carry forward the impetus given to East/West relations by her visit. The Foreign Secretary has already commissioned urgent work on this and will be sending you advice in a day or two.

*Yours  
R B Bone*

(R B Bone)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing Street



Mr Gromyko's jokes are thin and cold, hanging like icicles in the wintry diplomatic air. But he himself has something to smile about just now. The Gadarene shuffle back to Moscow - symbolised by his long queue of visitors in Stockholm - is now underway. It is easier for the West to stand fast together than to move forward in decent formation. Having failed to split allied governments and peoples, the Russians will now put the accent on dividing the Alliance itself.

Their affected indifference to President Reagan's speech shows that they want it to become a starting signal for competitive concessions by the West. The wedge driving is often crude, but can be effective. The Soviet soldier manning the new missile close to West Germany dwells, in the Soviet Press, on its

horrifying destructive power ...

TASS issues a frosty communique on Gromyko's talk with Shultz two hours before the end of the (slightly warmer) talks themselves. The Russians want to scare and cajole the Europeans, though without sacrificing the option of a new relationship with America. Hence the resumption of the MBFR talks, but not the nuclear ones.

The obvious reaction is to close ranks - but not around a policy vacuum. An orderly return to dialogue with Moscow means a dialogue in the Alliance first to



develop a concerted and consistent political strategy. NATO has modernised its nuclear weapons: it should now modernise its diplomacy too.

That means being frank about the past. There is no point in disguising that the West is in a less than ideal posture. We are living with the consequences of the failure to play the diplomatic card as energetically as the defence card - to walk on two legs as Chairman Mao would have said. The pressure on the President to restart the arms talks is greater than on Mr Andropov. The Russians have no elections this year, or next ... It was not especially clever to get into this position. That is water under the bridge - <sup>though</sup> there are lessons here too. Those who think it wrong to criticise one's major ally even when it is manifestly <sup>mistaken</sup> ~~wrong~~ should imagine what we would look like today if we had not refined our attitude to Moscow well in advance of the President. Britain is not Bulgaria. Maybe we should even be giving Mrs Thatcher a little credit for showing Washington the way?

Looking back, we are struck by the extraordinary disproportion between the real sources of East/West tension, and all the war talk and nuclear neurosis. The tensions are real enough, and result largely from Soviet actions. **B**ut they can be contained with firmness and imagination. Once the fundamental sense of proportion goes, other disproportions follow. Because the Americans mismanage



their relations with the Russians, people start to equate the two. Then the Alliance coughs, and there is instant talk of drastic cures.

Once the debate is derailed, false strategies abound. Should America revert to isolationism in the face of Europe's "neutralism"? False policy options duly follow: why didn't the West "do something" about Poland?

The main debate - on Soviet policy itself - is falsified too. Some insist that the Russians are inherently aggressive, others that they are just insecure. Surely it is a truism of individual psychology that aggressiveness and insecurity are two sides of the same coin? The Soviet Union is self-evidently both. <sup>recurring discussion about</sup> ~~The same debate mirrors in~~ whether her policies are driven by nationalism, or ideology, is often equally academic. Wisely, the Afghan patriots do not break off their struggle to argue the point.

The West's view of Moscow is dangerously volatile. We now face a horribly predictable reaction to some of the moralistic extremism of recent years. Revisionism always revises too much: already some are straining over backwards to get the Soviet angle of vision on everything, forgetting that the purpose of knowing more about the Russians is to promote our interests, not theirs. Mr Kinnock himself is reverting to the traditional Socialist search for a cosy niche between the Superpowers.



He could shorten his apprenticeship by reading Professor Bullock's splendid biography of Bevin.

Others are asking whether there is really a Soviet threat at all? We don't need all these earnest reappraisals. The threat is real, and doesn't wax and wane with our re-evaluations. Like Dr Johnson's famous stone, it is just there. And if anyone doesn't believe it, he should try asking a Czech to kick a Russian, and see what happens.

Paradoxically, the relentless continuity of the Soviet system is symbolised by the intermittencies of Mr Andropov himself. We are dealing with a country which can function on automatic pilot, without visible leadership, for months on end. Imagine the strength of inertia at the other end of Soviet society.

Unstable assessments lead to inconsistent policies. The spasmodic approach to Moscow has a disastrous effect on Alliance relationships and public opinion. Dr Kissinger recently spelled out eight wise principles for dealing with the Russians, and chief among these was consistency. With the best will in the world, it is difficult to sway in time with American moods - and damaging domestically if you are seen to try.

So we are back to the need for long term policies of containment. Fancy talk about "crisis control" is not enough. The political context for controlling crises



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must be built up over long periods. Eastern Europe - a sullen mass of discontent - is a prime example. It is not hard to imagine the atmosphere in Berlin in ten years' time if half of what has happened in Poland is repeated in East Germany. Mr Shultz's remarks in Stockholm about the illegitimacy of the present structure in Europe may make the Poles of Chicago feel good, but they won't do much for those in Warsaw. He could have gladdened the hearts of both, and avoided a pointless exacerbation of Soviet neuroses, by asserting the West's legitimate right to economic, cultural and political contacts with the peoples of Eastern Europe as a whole.

But the immediate problem is the missiles. Here the lesson is simple: we ~~shall~~<sup>can</sup> not build an alliance consensus around pure mathematics. Numbers may tyrannise technocrats, but they simply frighten, and destabilise, the public. It is bad enough when they are large and abstract; it is even worse when they turn out to be wrong - like the CIA's over-estimate of Soviet military spending. It is especially dangerous to probe the paradoxes of nuclear weapons too far, and too frequently. They exist not to be used. Refinements and ramifications are infinite, but in political terms, they lead nowhere. There is a difference between facing nuclear realities, and rubbing people's noses in them. Western governments insist that weapons alone do not cause war; it follows that we should pay at least as much attention to the politics.



The most recent NATO communique spoke of the need for "adequate" defence. The expression could do with greater currency. In nuclear terms, it should mean a reliable sufficiency, rather than the illusory search for exact equivalence, let alone superiority. The eventual judgement will have to be political and will depend on a minimum of mutual confidence - a good reason in itself for meeting the people with whom you are negotiating.

Britain's credentials in all this are unquestioned: judged by the sophisticated "prosperity index share" which we deploy to some effect in the Community budget negotiations, we spend up to twice as much as most of our allies on defence. It is all the more important for us to be seen to "walk on two legs" as well. The Prime Minister's visit to Hungary, a country which embodies many of the contradictions and complexities of the communist system, will add to the collective wisdom of the Alliance.

Inevitably, the US election will give the Russians tempting openings. But they would do well to remember that the Alliance is far more stable than it contrives to appear. It is like one of those Russian dolls with weighted bottoms, which wobble but never fall over. Yet we on our side should remember that wobbling itself is a distracting activity. It unnerves one's friends, and God knows what it does to the adversary.