

E-Dossier Series Nr. 1

Documentary Evidence

ON THE HUNGARIAN
MEDIATION EFFORTS BETWEEN
THE U.S. AND THE DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM (1965-
1967)

VOLUME I

The Early Stages of the Mediation
1965

Edited by
Csaba Békés and János Kémény

COLD WAR HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER
BUDAPEST 2017

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INTRODUCTION

East European secret mediation during the Vietnam War

Csaba BÉKÉS

It is well known that US–Soviet and Soviet–West German backchannel diplomacy played a crucial role in the settlement of the German question and the success of the CSCE process in the golden years of détente between 1969 and 1975, but the same willingness for cooperation was also perceivable already during the escalation of the Vietnam war in 1965–1966. In public the Soviets and their allies harshly condemned the American aggression; therefore official Soviet–American relations were rather strained. In reality, however, the Kremlin, interested in a rapprochement with the US was aware of the sincerity of the Johnson administration’s wish to find a peaceful solution to the crisis. Therefore Moscow urged some of the Soviet Bloc countries, notably Poland and Hungary with a mission to conduct secret negotiations with the leaders of North Vietnam and to urge them to enter into negotiations with Washington and eventually accept the division of Vietnam.¹ These mediation attempts failed because of the Chinese leaders who, by that time had a predominant influence over Hanoi and who urged the North Vietnamese to fight until a final victory over the Americans.² At a meeting with Hungarian leader Kádár in May, 1965, Brezhnev himself expressed his belief that the Chinese wanted to use the conflict in Indochina to cause a direct military conflict between the Soviet Union and the US and he added that Moscow would do everything possible to thwart that evil plan.³ “It seems to be that using the war in Vietnam the Chinese want to force the Soviet Union and the United States into a direct conflict. This provocation will be rejected by the Soviets. [...] The Soviet Union will give all support to Vietnam but it will prevent the conflict from developing into a World war.”⁴ Brezhnev also confessed that “since the existence of the Soviet Union they have never been engaged in a

¹ Békés Csaba: Magyar–szovjet csúcstalálkozók, 1957–1965, [Hungarian–Soviet Summit Meetings. 1957–1965. Documents]. Évkönyv, 6. 1998 /szerk. Litván György. Budapest: 1956-os Intézet, 1998. 143-183, 179.

² Békés Csaba: *Európából Európába. Magyarország konfliktusok keresztjében, 1945–1990. [From Europe to Europe. Hungary in the Crossfire of Conflicts, 1945–1990]* Budapest, 2004, Gondolat, 249–251. For a contemporary eyewitness account see: János Radványi: *Delusion and Reality. Gambits, Hoaxes and Diplomatic One-Upmanship in Vietnam.* South Ben, Indiana, 1978. On Soviet policy see: Ilija Gaiduk: *The Soviet Union and the Vietnam War.* I. R. Dee, Chicago, 1996. On the Chinese role see: Qiang Zhai: *Beijing and the Vietnam Peace Talks, 1965–68.* New Evidence from Chinese Sources, CWIHP Working Paper No. 18. See also: James G. Hershberg: *Peace Probes and the Bombing Pause: Hungarian and Polish Diplomacy During the Vietnam War, December 1965–January 1966,* *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2, Spring 2003, 32–67.

³ Békés Csaba: Magyar–szovjet csúcstalálkozók, 1957–1965, [Hungarian–Soviet Summit Meetings. Documents] 143–183.

⁴ Memorandum on the visit of HSWP PC members János Kádár, Antal Apró and Béla Biszku in Moscow on May 23–29, 1965. Hungarian National Archives (MNL-OL), M-KS-288.f. 5. cs. 367. ő.e.

fight where they did not know the tactics, the strategy and the goal. For the first time, they have no idea about the plans of the Vietnamese and indeed the Chinese, and this has a very bad effect. It must be added that they do not blame the Vietnamese for this. In spite of this, they will help wherever they can. ...they have the impression that the bombing pause was not just a tactical move on the side of the Americans, but it shows that they themselves do not know how they would get out of this situation. Their intention to negotiate should be taken as serious.”⁵

Ironically, the Chinese position voiced at a meeting with Ceaucescu by Deng Xiaoping in the same period, in July, 1965, basically confirms the above described Soviet view. „We have recently received precise information from which it results that the USA is still wondering whether they should bomb Hanoi and Haiphong, because this would mean bombing the guided-missile bases of the Soviet Union. However, through diplomatic contacts between the Soviet Union and the United States of America, the latter were officially informed about the locations of the Soviet guided-missile bases. That is what these common actions mean! To act jointly with them?! The Soviets wanted us to act jointly with them under the aegis of solving the Vietnamese issue on the basis of the collaboration between the United States of America and the Soviet Union. This is their real purpose.”⁶

Deng Xiaoping was right: by 1965 the Soviet leadership was determined to start a campaign for legalizing the post-World War II European status quo and they were fully aware that it would be impossible without a rapprochement with the other superpower, the United States.

This entails nothing less than the necessity of reconsidering the assessment of the nature of the Vietnam War, still dominant in the mainstream literature, that it should be seen, in particular, as a conflict between two superpowers, the Soviet Union and the USA, in the form of a local war that is similar to the Korean war. As shown in the sources, the Chinese, who took control of the Vietnamese party as early as the beginning of the 1960s, wanted to prevent any Soviet–American rapprochement in world policy by escalating the conflict and were trying to trigger a presumably real superpower conflict. This means that the real main actor in the Vietnamese conflict was *China* and the world did not suspect a thing about Beijing’s

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Stenographic Transcript of Ceaușescu-Deng Conversation 26 Jul 1965. In: Dennis Deletant, Mihail E. Ionescu, and Anna Locher.(Eds.) *Romania and the Warsaw Pact: Documents Highlighting Romania's Gradual Emancipation from the Warsaw Pact, 1956–1989*. PHP web site www.php.isn.ethz.ch, March, 2004.

destructive role.⁷ Moreover, it was not in the interest of the Soviet leadership to reveal everything because in that case it would have had to admit publicly that the North Vietnamese regime only accepted economic and military support from Moscow and the political orders came from Beijing.

Thus, the Soviets had gotten into a trap since on the one hand, they saw the support provided for their ally, the Vietnamese Communist state attacked by the “American imperialist”, as their internationalist obligation, but on the other hand, they made every effort to ensure that the clash should not turn into a direct conflict with the United States.

It was under these circumstances that Brezhnev, the general secretary of the Soviet party asked the Hungarian leaders in May 1965 to send a delegation to Vietnam and try to persuade Ho Chi Minh and his company to negotiate on peaceful settlement.⁸ Kádár and the Hungarians offered their services but they also immediately over fulfilled their mission. At its meeting on June 22, 1965 the Politburo made a decision not only on sending this delegation but also provided guidance for Foreign Minister János Péter before his visit to London on discussing with his partner the peaceful settlement of the conflict through negotiations.⁹ Thus, there were several attempts made both in the East and the West, and in the second half of the year, the negotiations were continued directly with the leadership of the USA. The Hungarian and the Soviet leaders (as well as the Polish leaders, who were conducting similar mediation¹⁰) were surprised to see that the Americans were really ready for peaceful settlement and with this aim in mind; they suspended bombardment from the end of December to the end of January. At the same time, the Vietnamese leaders, programmed by China, did not really seem willing to negotiate – although they sent several signs of willingness for negotiation – because in accordance with the Chinese orders this would only become possible when the USA had suffered a crushing defeat. This way, the attempts of Hungary and Poland at mediation had run aground in January 1966 because of the firm

⁷This view was first substantiated by the research carried out by the Russian historian Ilia Gaiduk, cf. Ilya V. Gaiduk: *The Soviet Union and the Vietnam War*. Chicago, I. R. Dee, 1996. Since then it has been confirmed in the research carried out in Eastern European archives, see: Békés Csaba: A kádári külpolitika 1956–1968, *Rubicon*, 1997, 12. sz., 19–22; Békés Csaba: Magyar–szovjet csúcstalálkozók, 1957–1965, In *Évkönyv*, 6. 1998, (szerk.) Litván György, Budapest: 1956-os Intézet, 1998, 143–183; James G. Hershberg: Peace Probes and the Bombing Pause: Hungarian and Polish Diplomacy During the Vietnam War, December 1965–January 1966. *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Volume 5. Number 2, Spring 2003, 32–67; Szőke Zoltán: Magyarország és a vietnami háború, 1962–1975. *Századok*, 2010. 1. sz. 48–97; James G. Hershberg: *Marigold: The Lost Chance for Peace in Vietnam*. Washington, D.C: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2012.

⁸ Békés Csaba: Magyar–szovjet csúcstalálkozók, 1957–1965, In *Évkönyv*, 6. 1998, (szerk.) Litván György, Budapest: 1956-os Intézet, 1998, 143–183, 179.

⁹ Jegyzőkönyv a Politikai Bizottság 1965. június 22-i üléséről, MOL, M-KS – 288.f/5. 368. ö. e.

¹⁰Cf. James G. Hershberg: Peace Probes and the Bombing Pause: Hungarian and Polish Diplomacy During the Vietnam War, December 1965–January 1966. *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Volume 5. Number 2, Spring 2003, 32–67.

position taken by the brotherly ally in Asia.¹¹ The Hungarian leaders made another attempt at mediation in the fall of 1966: in September, Foreign Minister János Péter paid a secret visit to Hanoi, where he talked with the Vietnamese leaders, including Ho Chi Minh. In October, during the time of the UN General Assembly, he conducted his negotiations with American Secretary of State Dean Rusk but this attempt also failed because of the uncompromising approach of the Vietnamese leaders.¹²

However, the Hungarian attempts did have some positive yields: both Poland and Hungary were selected to represent the Soviet bloc in the international supervisory committee set up under the peace talks that started in Paris in 1968 and which was responsible for supervising the cease-fire in Vietnam between 1973 and 1975.¹³

¹¹ The history of the Hungarian attempt at mediation has been studied most recently by Zoltán Szőke on the basis of some of the previous research of this author on the issue and by a comprehensive exploration of Hungarian archive sources. See: Szőke (2009). For a very special, see also: Radványi (1978). János Radványi was chargé d'affaires at the Hungarian Legation in Washington, who emigrated in 1966 and settled down in the United States. In his book, which is practically unknown for the public in Hungary, he presents the attempt at mediation on the basis of his own experiences and recollections in which, based on his position, he himself played a key role because he forwarded the messages of the Hungarian foreign minister to Secretary of State Dean Rusk. The essence of Radványi's concept is that Foreign Minister János Péter's activity was totally unfounded, which essentially means that he was merely feeding the American politicians with hopes, driven by his own ambitions, in that he was able to persuade the Vietnamese leaders to enter into negotiations under the given circumstances. On the basis of Hungarian archive sources (and the comprehensive research carried out by Zoltán Szőke), however, it is clear that János Péter was acting as a mediator all along with the authorization of the top Hungarian leaders. For more on the Hungarian and Polish attempts at mediation during 1965 and 1966, see also: James G. Hershberg: Peace Probes and the Bombing Pause: Hungarian and Polish Diplomacy During the Vietnam War, December 1965–January 1966. *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Volume 5. Number 2, Spring 2003, 32–67 and James G. Hershberg: *Marigold: The Lost Chance for Peace in Vietnam*. Washington, D.C: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2012.

¹² For the history of a later similar Romanian mediation attempt see: Mircea Munteanu: Over the hills and far away. Romania's attempts to mediate the start of US-North Vietnamese negotiations, 1967-68. *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Volume 14, Issue 3, 2012, 64-96.

¹³ The activity of the Hungarian section of the Control Committee was presented by Zoltán Szőke, see: Szőke Zoltán: Magyar békefenntartók Vietnámban. *Külpolitika* 5. 1999. 3–4. sz. 149–175.

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Documents Highlighting Romania's Gradual Emancipation from the Warsaw Pact,
1956–1989. PHP web site www.php.isn.ethz.ch, March, 2004.

DOCUMENTS

DOCUMENT 1

János Kádár's report at the HSWP Political Committee's June 8, 1965 meeting on the delegation's discussions in Moscow on May 23-29, 1965 (Excerpt)

Strictly confidential!

The report of our delegation that visited the Soviet Union

Comrade János Kádár: The whole meeting, both the official and the unofficial, went very well, and we could make the most of our time. The Soviet comrades completed a fast and good job; they were thorough and well prepared, therefore we could successfully agree on the concrete questions. The conversations took place in a very good atmosphere, and the Soviet comrades send their greetings to the Hungarian comrades.

We would like to make a few specifications with regards to the material.¹⁴

In the second-to-last paragraph on the third page there is mention of things related to Vietnam. I'd like to specify this a little. Word for word, the Soviet comrades said the following: since the Soviet Union exists, they have never been in a war where they did not know what the tactics, the strategy, and the goals are. It is the first time that they do not know what the conception of the Vietnamese and the Chinese is, and this has an extremely bad effect. It must also be said that they do not blame the Vietnamese for this. Nevertheless, they will of course help out with whatever they can.

It needs to be clarified that their impression is the following: from the American side the pause in bombing was not just a tactic, but the situation is rather that the Americans themselves do not know how they will get themselves out of this situation. Their intention to negotiate can be taken seriously.¹⁵

¹⁴ Informational memorandum to the members of the Political Committee on comrades János Kádár, Antal Apró, and Béla Biszku's May 23 – 29, 1965 Soviet meetings, June 5, 1965. Compiled by Károly Erdélyi. Hungarian National Archives 288. f. 5. cs.3 67. ő. e.

¹⁵ The written report on the issue of Vietnam includes, among others, the following statement by Brezhnev: "It

On the 4th page there is mention of (and it was brought up in connection with many issues), that the Soviet comrades believe the following: in order to achieve certain goals, it would be necessary that several parties take initiatives, not just the CPSU. They consider that to be the case, for example, concerning the following: since there is currently an opportunity to contact the Vietnamese comrades, it would be necessary and useful to travel there, on the one hand because we could influence them in the good direction, and on the other because according to our past experiences (for example, with the Italian and others), they make considerations more realistically and accurately there. We also have a recommendation to push our agreement pertaining to the autumn forward.¹⁶

[...]

Source: Hungarian National Archives (MNL-OL), M-KS-288 f. 5/367. ö.e.

seems that the Chinese want to force the Soviet Union and the United States into a conflict in connection with the Vietnam War. The Soviets will not consent to this provocation [...] The Soviet Union will give all kind of help to Vietnam, but it will avoid seeing the conflict grows into a world war.”

¹⁶ After the meeting, the Hungarian delegation began a vigorous diplomatic line of action in order to promote a peaceful settling of the Vietnamese conflict. For information on the secret mediation attempts, see: János Radványi: *Delusion and Reality. Gambits, Hoaxes, and Diplomatic One-Upmanship in Vietnam*. South Bend, Indian, 1978, Gateway Editions; Csaba Békés: *A kádári külpolitika, 1956-1968. Rubicon*, January 1998.

DOCUMENT 2

Report about the negotiations of Foreign Minister János Péter in London, 30 June 30 – July 3, 1965

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
189/PJ/1965. "C"

Top Secret!
5 copies made
Copy Nr. 1

*[handwritten note] Zoltán Komócsin should read it
5th July, 1965*

Report

about the negotiations in London /30th June – 3rd July, 1965/

On the invitation of the British government, as a guest of Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart, I visited London between the 30th June and 3rd July, 1965, where I conducted official negotiations with Prime Minister Harold Wilson, Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart, Ministers of State for Foreign Affairs Walter Padley, London Chalfont, and Minister of State at the Board of Trade Edward Redhead. The Foreign Secretary together with the British-Hungarian parliamentary committee gave a dinner in my honor, while the Foreign Press Association, and our Ambassador held a reception in my honor. At the end of the visit, we published a joint statement, ~~which is attached.~~

In compliance with the PC-resolution dated 22nd June, 1965, in its pursuance I held talks about the following issues.

International issues.

1. Southeast Asian situation. The issue of the Vietnam War took a central place during the discussions with Prime Minister Wilson, and Foreign Secretary Stewart. I stated our standpoint to Prime Minister Wilson, whereby the British government, as many times in history before /like at the Geneva Conference in 1954, and during the Berlin Crisis in 1958-

59/, should be acting as an intermediary. We suggest that they convince the US government to end the bombing of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, without maintaining the threat of restarting it, as it has done previously. This would create a new situation, and would help create a new political climate, which would make starting the negotiations possible. I articulated this proposal to a broader audience, for example at the dinner given by Foreign Secretary Stewart, where I emphasized the importance of the British role as an intermediary. I quoted the words of MacMillan during World War 2, that “after World War 2, the British have to play the same role towards the Americans, as the Greek Empire did towards the Roman Empire back in ancient times – meaning, they taught the Romans how to achieve their interests in an acceptable way”.

Prime Minister Wilson received our suggestion with great interest, but as an offset for ending the bombings, he suggested that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam should cease the armed support of the “Viet Cong”, and should give an advance guarantee of their negotiating intention.

Foreign Secretary Stewart – who himself proposed the topics to be discussed – only wanted to get a guarantee of North Vietnam’s intention to negotiate, in return for ending the American bombings. The Prime Minister emphasized, that in his opinion there is no hope for a military solution in Vietnam. Repeating this, Foreign Secretary Stewart was greatly surprised, and visibly nervous, when I informed him, that it is only the United States that can be militarily defeated in Vietnam, and that the Vietnamese people have great perspectival chances of a military victory. American military losses will only increase. Citing the Korean War I mentioned, that currently, the people of Vietnam are fighting under more favorable circumstances, because South Vietnam does not have a stable government or military, but at the same time, if needed, the whole socialist bloc will support the Vietnamese people.

During the discussions it was noticeable, that the British were constantly consulting the Americans about the issue. My negotiating partners were trying to ascertain multiple times whether I have a mandate from the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, or the socialist bloc, to mediate. I did not give a straightforward answer, but I emphasized, that a high-ranking Vietnamese government delegation visited us, and that I had exchanged opinions with the – outgoing – Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to Budapest before my departure, furthermore, that I will also meet Soviet Foreign Minister Gromiko in the near future.

The Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister subtly implied, that they are ready to intercede, citing their proposal for a conference on the neutralization of Cambodia as an example, as well as the putting together of the Commonwealth peace mission.

To the complaint of Prime Minister Wilson, that no one wants to hear about the Commonwealth peace mission in the affected capitals, I firmly said that they should have travelled to Washington first, to convince the US government to end the bombings. I emphasized, that according to world public opinion, the British government is perceived as an unconditional moral supporter of the American aggression, and it could help make the British initiative easier, if they did not support it, and would convince the public opinion of the sincerity of their initiative.

2. During the talks related to the issue of the UN and disarmament, the British took a stand for solving the UN-crisis. They emphasized, that this is a financial crisis, and to solve it, they are disbursing 10 million dollars out of turn, and they hope, that other countries – socialist ones likewise – will follow the example. They also think changing the [UN] Charter is necessary, especially the abolishment of the veto power of the five great powers in the Security Council. Their proposal is, that the issues the five great powers cannot agree on, should be decided by the General Assembly.

I in contrast said, that in our opinion, the UN is not in a financial, but in a political crisis, and solving this would also result in solving the financial issues. I emphasized, that if Article 19 is mended, and if the issue is solved based on the [UN] Charter, then the Hungarian government would not seclude itself from a financial contribution.

I pointed out, that the veto power of the great powers, the United Kingdom included, is in the interest of the whole world, but especially that of the smaller nations. Lasting peace in the world is only possible if the five great powers cooperate. It has to be aspired to abstain from to use the veto power. I stated, that it seems like we are more invested in the veto power of the British, than the British government itself.

I approved of the French proposal to hold a conference with the participation of the five nuclear powers. To the contrary, my British negotiating partners supported the continuation of the Geneva [Disarmament] Conference with the participation of 18 nations, and the proposal of the Yugoslavian government to convene a world conference. The British voiced concerns about the conference of the five [nuclear] powers were held now or later, other countries in possession of nuclear weapons – for example India or others – would want to participate. I alluded to the fact, that France and China are not part of the disarmament conference of the 18 nations, so its resolutions cannot be valid and complete. We support all kind of conference on

disarmament, but due to the Vietnam War, expecting any kind of results of disarmament conferences is unrealistic. The British Foreign Secretary considered this to be an overly pessimistic stance.

To my inquiry, Prime Minister Wilson said that he will probably attend the UN General Assembly this year, where he would like to meet Prime Ministers Kosygin and Zhou Enlai – and since he hasn't met the Hungarian Prime Minister either: wants to meet him as well.

3. The issues of European security.

a/ During the negotiations, the British saw an opportunity to prevent to spread of nuclear weapons in the framework of the NATO, and they think that the fear of the Eastern European nations of the MLF and ANF is baseless. They would not even oppose if the members of the Warsaw Pact created a multilateral nuclear strike force.

Contrarily, I highlighted, that we have to settle the issues of European security, and without the use of military options. The MLF is not only significant on the military, but on the political level as well, as it concerns, and hinders the solution of the German situation, and encourages the revanchist forces in West-Germany. The recognition of the GDR would facilitate the solution of the latter problem, as it is an existing country, which contributes to the peaceful development of the world, and Eastern Europe. Contrary to Foreign Minister Stewart's hypothetical, that they do not recognize the GDR because it is only a "Soviet zone", and after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops it would tumble down – I suggested, that we should test the durability of the system by withdrawing all foreign troops from European countries. The Foreign Minister thought this to be unrealistic, because of the nuclear weapons, that could be stationed in the western parts of the Soviet Union, which would put the United States in an unfavorable position. I emphasized, that the issues should be examined in the framework of a European security conference.

b/ I agreed with the Polish proposal of convening a European security conference, and suggested to Stewart to discuss it in more detail at his meeting in Warsaw scheduled for September, 1965. I suggested, that we organize a preparatory meeting with the participation of Great Britain, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary.

Parallel to the preparation of this conference, we could conduct talks on solving the European economic problems, and the perspectives of the cooperation of the Comecon, the Common Market, and the EFTA.

Foreign Minister Stewart agreed with the idea of holding a European security conference in principle. He added, that the US also has a stake in this. I replied that naturally, the results of the conference have to be acceptable for the US.

Hungarian-British relations.

We mutually agreed, that our relations are developing favorably.

1./ Cultural relations: Stewart judged its development to be important. He suggested to prepare the newer long-term cultural exchange program at the end of this year. He thinks, that the Hungarian reservation towards the British Council and the East European Committee makes it more difficult to develop cultural relations. It would be a positive step, if we accepted their proposal on the establishment of the British-Hungarian Association, to improve our relations. He thinks, that it is possible to examine the question of improving the technological-scientific relations as part of the cultural exchange program.

I proposed, that later on we start negotiations about making general cultural agreements, which could include the development of technological-scientific relations, although we could also make separate technological-scientific cooperation agreements. I considered the visit of the British Secretary of Education, A.R. Crosland to be useful. I suggested, that they negotiate the cultural agreement during the return visit of Minister Ilku.

Concerning the British Council and the East European Committee, I evaded the negotiation by saying that I do not wish to renew old Cold War topics, but I think it is possible to revisit the topic during the meetings with Minister Ilku.

Stewart expressed his disappointment, that I was not willing to go into a detailed debate regarding the British Council and the East European Committee. He suggested, that we continue exchanging our views on the cultural and technical-scientific agreements through diplomatic channels. I accepted.

Stewart will propose the invitation of comrade Pál Ilku to Secretary Crosland.

The British repeated their previous proposal on holding a round-table conference. We agreed, that prior to any meaningful decision, we prepare the topics of the conference through diplomatic channels.

2./ In the context of Hungarian-English trade relations, I expressed our difficulties due to our passive trade balance . I emphasized, that increasing our purchases can only be achieved if we increase our export. To further develop our trade relations, and discuss our existing problems, I suggested the meeting of the concerned Ministers, and the invitation of comrade József Biró.

Minister of State at the Board of Trade Edward Redhead said, that the meetings in the spring of 1965 between Hungarian-British experts were really helpful towards the clarification of the problems. They agree, that Hungary should find the foreign currency it

needs for purchase on the British market. They welcome Minister Biró to London on a later date.

3./ Foreign Secretary Stewart proposed making a consular agreement. He suggested starting talks next year. I accepted it by saying that they write the draft text, and forward it to us.

4./ On the issue of League of Nations bond debts, the English Foreign Minister expressed his hope, that the negotiations starting in July in Budapest will facilitate a solution, and that an agreement can be reached until the fall of 1965.

5./ Foreign Secretary Stewart's return visit. I invited Foreign Secretary Stewart and his wife to visit Hungary on a date that is suitable for them. Stewart gladly accepted the invitation for the spring of next year. I said that he could come sooner, but the date of his visit depends primarily on him. He said he will revisit it later.

Budapest, July 5, 1965

/János Péter/

Source: MNL-OL, XIX-J-1-j-Vietn-IV-146-18/Pé/1965 (107. d.)

DOCUMENT 3

Memorandum on meeting the Vietnamese Ambassador Hoang Bao Son, July 8, 1965

Memorandum on meeting the Vietnamese Ambassador Hoang Bao Son

János Péter

18/Pé/1965.

Top Secret!

Comrade Mód

“ Bojti

“ Erdélyi

“ Szarka

“ Szilágyi

“ Marjai

“ Pataki

“ Házi

TÜK¹⁷

Internal Use

Memorandum

On the 7th of this month, I received the outgoing Vietnamese Ambassador to Budapest, comrade Hoang Bao Son, to whom I handed over a written note on my visit to London in Hungarian, but also informed him about the main points of its content orally, especially the content of the discussions related to the situation in Southeast-Asian. In the end, I told him, that in case the proper Vietnamese party and government organs deem it necessary, that the new Ambassador engages in direct contact with the British Ambassador to Budapest, we will offer our help.

The Ambassador deemed the briefing most valuable, and promised the immediate relay of both the written and the oral communications.

He requested further information on some aspects of the negotiation, his most notable request was to describe what the nature of the American and British perspective towards the war in the course of the meeting was. I told him, that when I was talking about the chances of a military victory of the Vietnamese people, the British response did not imply, that the Americans are ready to continue the war to the very end. Essentially, this is a positive sign.

Budapest, July 8, 1965

[no signature]

Source: MNL-OL, XIX-J-1-j-Vietn-IV-146-18/Pé/1965 (107. d.)

¹⁷ Titkos Ügykezelés - Secret Document Handling

DOCUMENT 4

Letter of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and the State Council of the People's Republic in China to the Soviet Union, July 14, 1965

To the Central Committee of the Communist
Party of the Soviet Union,
to the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union

Dear Comrades!

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, and the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China have received, and studied the letter sent on the 17th of April, 1965, by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union.

According to the norms concerning the relations between sister parties, every communist party is independent and equal. Any party has the right to voice its own opinion on the proposal of one party or another, and it is not bound to unconditionally agree with them. In the letter dated 11th April, 1965, written by the CC of the CPC, and the Chinese government disagreed for a number of reasons with your 3rd April proposal regarding the highest-level meeting between the DRV, the PRC, and the Soviet Union. This is a completely normal phenomenon in relations between sister parties. However, in your letter dated 17th April, you hurled harsh words and abuse at us, moreover, made defamatory allegations about "encouraging the aggressors". Does this look anything like independent and equal relations between sister parties even a little bit? What else is this, if not the manifestation of a father-figure-party that puts itself above everything else?

In your letter you wrote: "The demonstration of the unity of every socialist state, especially the unity of the Soviet Union and China, the public and mutual declaration, that both powers are determined to stop the aggressive imperialist designs, would in itself be of great support to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and it would cool off the vehemence of American militarists."

At a time when the American imperialists are increasing their aggression against the Southern part of Vietnam, and are carrying out savage bombings against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the socialist countries should dedicate themselves to crush the

aggression of American imperialism, and to stand firmly on the side of the Vietnamese people in their patriotic fight against the American aggressors. This is the unchanged resolve of the Communist Party of China and the Chinese government, and is taking this firm stance. We sincerely hoped, that every socialist country, especially the Soviet Union, will reach a unified decision, and take the same stance as us.

However, what happened, is the complete opposite of our wishes. Your actions regarding the Vietnam issue made it clear, that your standpoint is the complete opposite of the theoretical standpoint, that a Marxist-Leninist party should take.

The circumstance caught our attention, that this January, the American authorities expressed their hopes, that the Soviet government will use its influence, and induce the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to: 1/ cease helping the South, mainly with the sending of artillery pieces; 2/ cease attacking the cities of the South. Instead of rejecting the shameless demands of the American governing circles, you officially handed these demands over to the Vietnamese comrades. This shows, that you are acting in accordance with the demand of the American imperialists, and that you want to hinder the patriotic battle of the Vietnamese people against American aggression at all costs.

Taking this circumstance into consideration, we clearly and precisely told comrade Kosygin this February, when he visited Beijing on his way to Vietnam, that the socialist countries have to respect the standpoint of the Workers Party of Vietnam and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, it is their duty to support the rightful war of the Vietnamese people for the liberation of the South, for the defense of the North and the unification of the homeland, and they are obliged to demand from the US to withdraw every single one of their troops from Vietnam. The Vietnam issue has to be solved by the Vietnamese people themselves. We expressed our hope, that the Soviet comrades will respect the opinion of the Vietnamese comrades, and that they will join Vietnam and China on their stance, and participate in the common war against the American aggression.

During the Chinese and Soviet talks, Kosygin underlined the necessity to help the US to “find a way out of Vietnam”. We immediately remarked with complete seriousness, that since the American imperialism is broadening the flagrancy and intensity of its aggression against Vietnam, this is not the time to negotiate with the American aggressors, but it is the time to grab our weapons and resist the American aggressors. We expressed our hopes, that you will not look for a way out for the US, and will not use the Vietnam War as a tool to bargain with the US. Comrade Kosygin agreed with our point of view, and said, that the new leadership of the CPSU “will not bargain with others on this topic”.

However, as soon as comrade Kosygin returned to Moscow, you immediately belied yourselves, and started extensive international negotiations about the “peace-talks” behind the backs of Vietnam and China.

It is especially conspicuous, that on the 16th of February, the second day after comrade Kosygin returned to Moscow, the Soviet government made an official proposal to Vietnam and China to convene a new international conference on the Indochina issue, and was de facto aiming for the commencement of “unconditional negotiations” about the Vietnam issue. On the 23rd of February, disregarding the stance of the Vietnamese government, which refused this proposal, and without waiting for the answer of the Chinese government, through the Soviet Ambassador to France, you debated the possibility of a preliminary, unconditional convening of an international conference with the French President. More than one month later, as deception, Johnson himself also proposed an “unconditional negotiation”. Is it not clear, who is benefiting from your proposal of unconditional preliminary negotiations?

After the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam firmly refused the “unconditional negotiations” offered by Johnson as a deception, you started to insinuate in your official communications, that as soon as the US ceases the bombings of North Vietnam, the negotiations can commence. So as to realize this notion, you got active on an international level. You officially informed multiple sister parties, that you are for the negotiations with the United States, on the condition that the latter ceases bombing North Vietnam. Moreover, you made it clear, that the ways and means of a negotiated settlement have to be searched for. The “conditional negotiation” you are currently advocating for, and your previous proposal on the “unconditional negotiation” – is the same thing. Because with bombing North Vietnam, the US is aspiring to have “peace talks”, so as to get a little bit of a breathing room, and to continue to suppress the revolution in South Vietnam, so they are able to legitimize their occupation of South Vietnam through negotiations for good. Commencing negotiations in return for ceasing the bombings – this is what they seek to achieve at all costs, and this is what the American imperialists are not able to achieve. Soon after you put the notion of ceasing the bombings forward, Johnson’s government suspended the bombing of North Vietnam for 5 days, and demanded of the 30 million Vietnamese people, to end the patriotic fight against the American aggression. Isn’t this notion of yours closely coordinated with the martial blackmail of the American aggressors?

When the American imperialism initiates aggression against socialist Vietnam, you, instead of fighting the American imperialism mercilessly, are exchanging information, and in your actions you are signing the same tune as the American government. Every now and then

you condemn the American aggression in Vietnam with a couple of phrases, but whatever you say, your ultimate goal is always to seek the improvement of Soviet-American relations, and your main principle is always not to disturb the Soviet-American cooperation. Indeed, this is what both your 8th February, and 4th March statements regarding the Vietnam issue suggest. You are still continuing the same line of thought, wanting to achieve Soviet-American world domination through cooperation.

The above facts testify, that you are not only not determined to crush the American imperialist aggression, but you are looking to find a way out for the American aggressors at all costs. How could we demonstrate unity with you under these circumstances? If we demonstrated unity, would we not have to follow you on the road towards friendship and cooperation with the American aggressors? Would we not have to shepherd the settlement of the Vietnam issue towards the Soviet-American cooperation targeting world domination? We will never be willing to do that.

The Communist Party of China, the Chinese government, and the Chinese people do their utmost, to give effective help to the Vietnamese comrades according to their needs in their patriotic war against the American aggression. The Vietnamese people, who heroically resist the American imperialist aggression, are defending the South-Eastern positions of the socialist bloc, and are making huge sacrifices, to do an incredibly big service to every socialist country. To provide every support to the Vietnamese people – this is our proletarian internationalist obligation. Unlike you, our opinion is that we do not have to boast and brag about this support. And, while we are talking about thankfulness, then we should be thanking the Vietnamese people /every one of us/ for their services.

While the Vietnamese people achieved newer and newer victories in the fight against the American imperialism, and the American aggressors are facing ever-growing difficulties, lately, you have been giving certain help to the Vietnamese people. This help is needed. We think the more and more effective this help is, the better. However, up until this point, the help you have been giving is not in accordance with the power and capacities of your country. The criticism we expressed in our 11th April letter in your direction is completely based on facts. However, instead of admitting your mistakes, you labelled us as “wanting to be the supreme judge of the relations between socialist countries”. Are we not allowed judge your mistakes? Is the judge of your mistakes is the “supreme judge”? This just also goes to show how deep your great power habits run.

In your letter you state, that “Even if there was some delay in shipping the Soviet military equipment to the DRV, this – as you well know – was not because of the Soviet

Union's mistake". If you suppose that it was not the Soviet Union's mistake, then consequently, you imply it was China's. In fact, you have been spreading this fabrication around the world for a long time, that China supposedly hindered the Soviet military shipments to aid Vietnam. You wanted to mislead those who do not know the real state of things with malicious, anti-Chinese slander.

However, lies have short legs. The real state of things is the following: in accordance with the agreement we made, mobilizing our utmost capacity, we quickly forwarded all Soviet military equipment they sent to the Vietnamese, they needed. This fact is known by the Vietnamese comrades, and neither is it unknown by you. You used our disagreement as the basis of your fabrication, that we did not want one of your not that big arms shipments /only 18 anti-aircraft guns, 75 anti-aircraft machine guns, and a certain amount of ammunition/ to be transported through our territory with 45 AN-12 airplanes. These airplanes would have had to execute their great distance flight to Vietnam through China with big visibility through the airspace of China. We thought, that this would have violated our requirements of utmost secrecy. Moreover, neither have the Vietnamese comrades asked for aerial transportation. Taking all these into consideration, we made our proposal to transport the arms shipments on land in time. Later you agreed to it, so that is what happened. What kind of ridiculousness have you reached, that you are using even this for your anti-Chinese goals?

We also have to mention, that in the process of providing military assistance to Vietnam, you planned to send a fully equipped, complete regiment of 4 thousand soldiers to Vietnam through China, without the prior consent of Vietnam. Under the pretense of defending Vietnam's airspace, you wanted to take over one or two South Chinese airports, and deploy a Soviet air force with 500 people there. Furthermore you wanted to open air corridor through China, and wanted to get the privilege for Soviet airplanes to use Chinese airspace freely. These steps, and your flirtation with American imperialism give us every reason to think: while you are helping, you are also following special goals.

To be honest, we cannot believe you. Back then, us, and the other brotherly countries received a bitter lesson from Khrushchev's sinful practices, who executed control under the pretense of help. Now, when you are trying to play the same tricks regarding the Vietnam issue, you will not be successful. China is not a county of the Soviet Union. We cannot accept your control, and we will not be assisting you in the control of others. It goes without saying, that we categorically reject your above-mentioned baseless demands.

In the previous months, we took a great interest in your actions concerning the Vietnamese issue. A number of facts made us inclined to conclude, that through the Vietnam

issue, you are carrying out the reconciliation policy with the US, you want a political deal with American imperialism, and you want to betray the cause of the liberation of the Vietnamese people; that in the relations of the brotherly countries you act as a chauvinistic great power, you want to put them under military supervision, and want to use them as a tool to achieve your goal of Soviet-American cooperation targeting world domination. Your 3rd April proposal for a highest-level meeting between the DRV, the PRC, and the Soviet Union was another important step to achieve reconciliation, and your chauvinistic great power aspirations. With that meeting, you wanted to lead us into a trap, to get consent for acting on behalf of Vietnam and China on the international stage, in order to strengthen your position in the political bargain with the American imperialism, and to strengthen your position to mislead the revolutionary people around the world.

In circumstances like these, a meeting between the highest-level representatives of the DRV, the PRC, and the Soviet Union would not only have been useless, but damaging as well. This is why we disagreed with your proposal.

So as to blur the dividing line between Marxism-Leninism and revisionism, you hypocritically state, that putting disagreements aside, it is in fact possible to join forces in the fight against imperialism, and that we can carry out joint efforts. All this is transparent demagogy. The essence of the fundamental disagreements between us and you, is whether we fight the US-led imperialism, whether we incite the revolution, whether we support the revolutionary fight of other people. How could we put aside such fundamental disagreements?

You incessantly reiterate, that we have to create unity of action. Then why are you continuing to pursue hostile policies towards brotherly Albania?

You incessantly reiterate, that we have to create unity of action. Then why are you continuing to scheme against the Japanese Communist Party, conspiring with the American imperialism, and Japanese reactionaries?

You incessantly reiterate, that we have to create unity of action. Then why are you continuously spreading your anti-China propaganda, and why are there anti-Chinese presentations everywhere in your country? Then why are you still spreading your anti-Chinese fabrications among the sister parties, and in the international democratic organizations, and why are you conducting anti-Chinese diplomatic activities in the background in a number of capitalist countries?

With convening the conference in Moscow this March, you made a further step towards the open schism of the international communist movement. Not only did you not do anything

to correct your mistakes, you still continue your separatist actions. And if this is the case, then in the end, what does your clamoring about the creation of unity of action actually mean?

It is crystal clear, that unity of action means the following for you: the sister parties are obliged to submit themselves to your orders, as those of the patriarchal party; the sister parties and brotherly countries have to become your tools in your ambition of world domination by executing your American-Soviet cooperative policies; the sister parties have to adjust to your revisionist doctrine. However, you are waiting in vain for the Marxist-Leninists to establish such a unity of action with you.

The Vietnamese issue is currently in the focus of the international struggle. If you are, in fact, aspiring to establish unity of action with the Marxist-Leninists, and the revolutionary people of the world, you have to completely abandon your incorrect position on the Vietnamese issue.

You have to cease your open and secret negotiations with the American imperialism immediately, you have to abandon your political bargain with the US, the aim of which is to betray the fundamental interests of the Vietnamese people, you cannot continue your machinations hand in hand with American imperialism concerning the “peace-talks”, and you cannot undermine the revolutionary struggle of the Vietnamese people.

You have to sincerely support the efforts of the Vietnamese people to carry their resistance war until the end, until the last American aggressor is expelled from Vietnam. You have to send bigger quantities of quality military and civil equipment to Vietnam appropriate to their needs, and not superfluous, outdated, inadequate, bad quality equipment, that is only good to keep up the pretense of you fulfilling your obligations, and to follow your demagogic goals. You have to give up your wicked great power habits, and have to honestly fulfil your internationalist obligations, and you are not permitted to use this so-called support to your own, ugly purposes.

You have to reorient the edge of your struggle against American imperialism, not against the brotherly parties and countries. You have to abandon your hostile policies against brotherly Albania, you have to abandon your machinations against the Japanese Communist Party and other Marxist-Leninist parties. You may not continue your fight in alliance with American imperialism which is continuing its aggression against Vietnam, with the Indian reactionaries serving American imperialism and with the Tito clique, against Socialist China, which is resolutely supporting Vietnam. You have to cease your anti-China smear campaign regarding the Vietnamese issue, you have to cease creating your anti-China fabrications, you have to abandon your despicable attempts to drive wedges between brotherly countries.

Only if you do all this, can we talk about unity of action with the Marxist-Leninists, and the revolutionaries regarding the Vietnamese issue. Otherwise, you cannot count on the trust of the people, regardless of your nice words, or shameful tricks.

After all, the mistakes you have made regarding the Vietnamese issue are the unavoidable consequences of the stubborn revisionist line you started at the 20th and 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, enshrined in the Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. If you stubbornly insist on following this incorrect line in the future, you will be banging your head against a brick wall on every significant matter. We hope, that you will exercise self-criticism, realize your own mistakes, give up your revisionist thinking, give up your aspirations of world domination through Soviet-American cooperation, give up your great power chauvinism and separatism, and return to the right path, the path of Marxism-Leninism, and proletarian internationalism.

With brotherly regards:

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China
and the State Council of the People's Republic of China

July14, 1965

Source: MNL-OL, M-KS 288.f. 9/1965/5.ö.e

DOCUMENT 5

Report by the Hungarian Ambassador after Visiting Le Duan, September 15, 1965

Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic

75/1/Top. Sec./1965

Typed by: Erzsébet Várnagy

Top Secret !

Copies made: 3 copies

2 for the Center

1 for the embassy

Hanoi, 15th September, 1965

Subject: Visiting Comrade LE DUAN

Comrade Le Duan, First Secretary of the VWP, received me on the 25th of August. During our conversation, the Vietnamese interpreter of our Embassy, and a colleague from the Department of Foreign Affairs were also present. I relayed the personal greetings of comrade KÁDÁR, which he requited heartily, then cordially thanked with warm words, in the name of the VWP, for the welcome we gave to the delegation, led by comrade LE THANG NGHI, and the invaluable material, moral, and political support provided by our party, government, and people to the people of Vietnam. After conversing about general topics, when I felt an adequate level of directness, I asked him two questions:

1. Whether the SVNNLF had a concrete plan, or objective until the end of the monsoon season, and if so, to what extent was it achieved?

2. Other than the four conditions specified by the government of the DRV, what other possibilities does he see for the political settlement of the Vietnamese situation?

Comrade LE DUAN gave the following answers:

Militarily, the SVNNLF not only achieved, but overachieved its set goals, as it managed to put about 100.000 people out of action, and succeeded in stopping the enemy from infiltrating the liberated areas. The population of the liberated areas stand firmly behind the SVNNLF, which is incredibly important for the logistics and the resupply for the army. He considers the situation to be serious, especially since the Americans expanded the war to the DRV. The bombing raids have caused severe damage to the people's economy, which could only partly fulfil the economic plans, especially the industry is deeply affected by this. Although there have been no problems regarding the supply of the population so far, the bombing of, and subsequent destruction of the transportation routes means that they have to be ready for that as well. The people of Vietnam have still an extremely serious fight ahead of

them, and they absolutely count on the material support of the socialist countries in securing the necessary means.

Concerning the political solution of the situation, that relies solely on the further actions, and willingness of the Americans. Are they going to increase the expansion of the war, are they willing to leave South Vietnam? The government of the DRV considers the Geneva Accords as a starting point, and although it has already made concessions – temporarily forgoing the unification –, if the Americans would show honest, sincere intentions to achieve a peaceful settlement, it would probably be willing to give further concessions. However, the Americans are not showing sincere intentions, but engage in diplomatic maneuvering, and while they talk about peace, they continue to bomb the DRV, and increase the size of their army. Many are talking about a possible compromise solution like in Cuba, with a small number of American forces staying in South Vietnam at a small military base. Vietnam cannot be compared to Cuba, as there was already a military base at Guantanamo in Cuba before the revolution, while the Americans came into Vietnam illegally, with the contravention of the Geneva Agreements.

Finally, comrade Le Duan explained, that the fundamental objective of the government of the DRV, and the VWP is achieving the country's total national independence, however, to achieve that it is necessary for the peace and unity amongst the socialist countries to be restored, so that the whole socialist bloc can support the people of Vietnam in a unified way, based on common views.

At the end of our conversation, comrade Le Duan told me that he is really happy, that the delegation of the HSWP is coming to Hanoi, and hopes that it marks the start of an intensive relationship between the two parties.

I have to note, that it came as a surprise, that comrade Le Duan received me, considering that at the protocol [office] they repeatedly told me, that in the past half year he did not really receive the ambassadors due to his crowded schedule, and because of that he did not receive the Bulgarian and Romanian Ambassadors after their multiple requests, not even for an introductory visit, despite them being in-country for a longer time than I have. My reception is probably related, on the one hand, to the arrival of our party delegation in the near future, on the other hand, comrade Kádár also received the new Vietnamese Ambassador to Budapest, but our much valued support by the DRV may also have played a part.

Dr. Imre Pehr
Ambassador

Source: MNL-OL, M-KS-288 f. 5/376. ó.e.

DOCUMENT 6

Report by Foreign Minister Péter about his 1965 meeting with US Secretary of State Rusk, October, 13, 1965

466/1965
Report by: János Radványi

Top Secret!
Washington, 13th October, 1965

Subject: Péter-Rusk meeting in 1965

At the military reception of 29th September, Deputy Head of Department McKisson inquired about me by Comrade Sluka. He asked him if I was staying in New York. He asked a similar question from the Romanian chargé d'affaires, who was also present during the conversation, a similar question. Next Lisle, Head of Division asked Comrade Radványi whether I'm currently there, then he asked about the experiences I gathered in Korea. After Comrade Radványi informed Lisle that I spent part of my vacation there, on the invitation of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, he brought up my earlier visit to London. He told him that they paid special attention to my visit, knew the details and are aware, that I made important statements on the topic of Vietnam of which the highest ranking American leaders became aware.

Comrade Radványi then asked Lisle why he was telling all this at that moment. Lisle responded that in his opinion it would be preferable if Secretary of State Rusk, and I could arrange a meeting this year also. He thinks, that in regard of the questions concerning both countries, only questions of general nature would be discussed, although the Secretary was familiar with the latest developments of the Mindszenty case. In the course of the talks the Vietnamese question will most certainly arise, and most certainly Korea would be another topic of interest.

In his reply to Lisle, Comrade Radványi stated openly that he could only deal with the matter, respectively report the content of the conversation to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, if he could give a definite answer to his question – if the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs wished to meet Secretary of State Rusk – was ready to meet Foreign Minister Péter despite his busy schedule. Comrade Radványi suggested to him not to answer the question right away, but to inform him on the phone the next day if he deemed it necessary.

At 10 am on September 30th Lisle told Comrade Radványi on the phone that Secretary of State Rusk would positively like to have a meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary – if Minister János Péter wished to meet him – certainly /positively/ wants to have a meeting with the Hungarian Foreign Minister.

The next day, October 1st Comrade Radványi – according to my instructions – informed Director Lisle of the following: Minister of Foreign Affairs Péter was currently feeling indisposed and he was preparing for his speech for October 6th, but after the 6th he was going to spend one more week in the United States and during this time he would be ready to meet Secretary of State Rusk if he wished so too. Lisle almost did not let Comrade Radványi finish and informed him that Rusk's New York Secretariat – depending on the approval of the Hungarian minister – arranged an appointment for 4 PM on October 7th.

Comrade Radványi accepted this appointment – in accordance with our discussions – and the meeting took place similarly to last year's in the New York headquarters of the UN Mission of the United States.

The meeting took place on October 7th in the building of the American UN delegation, in which on the American side besides Rusk, a staffer of the European Department of the State Department participated, who took notes. From our side, Comrade Radványi was present at the meeting.

At the beginning of the meeting, Rusk started to talk about Europe. I asked him when was the last time he had been to Europe. Rusk said that last time he flew to Europe where he attended a NATO meeting. Then it came up that the Secretary of State has already been to Hungary in 1956 as a representative of Rockefeller. Regarding this I remarked that if he visited Hungary again in his current position that would be a really good sign of improvement in the international situation. I asked him which other socialist countries he had already visited. He said that he had been to the Soviet Union at the time they signed the PTBT and at that time he also visited Leningrad. He had already told Gromiko – added the Secretary – that if there was a new treaty to sign like the 1963 Moscow Treaty, he would be glad to visit Moscow again. With that he switched to some of the details of the disarmament negotiations.

Rusk said that due to the issue of Vietnam the problem of Southeast Asia was spreading like a cancerous growth and hindered the improvement in the most important areas of international relations as well as the resolution of other pending questions. In terms of disarmament there is a serious lack of the necessary grade of mutual trust between the United States and the Soviet Union. Both sides made several proposals but they have not yet reached a common point. Regarding the PTBT the American side is ready to consider the scientific,

technical opinion of scientists as a base in the matters of underground nuclear tests and on-site inspections. While for the Americans the solution is a technical issue, for the Soviet Union it is a technical and political issue – as the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gromiko had expressed in recent days.

Rusk said that the American side is ready to cut back on military spending with adequate controls which ensure the equal decrease in American and Soviet spending. Two years ago the United States and the Soviet Union managed to cut back on military spending, but the Soviet Union unilaterally increased the budget for research that created a disadvantaged situation for the American side. None the less, as Rusk said, only two countries had a real stake in the general disarmament: the Soviet Union and the United States. This could clearly be seen two years ago because after the UN made its decision concerning the general disarmament more than 70 countries asked for military assistance from the United States and 20 countries from the Soviet Union. Rusk stated that the disarmament was a question that had to be kept on the agenda because since 1960 defense spending cost more than 800 billion dollars to the Soviet Union as well as the United States. Generally the Americans side thought that the Soviet Union had a serious interest in the realization of disarmament.

Then I mentioned that i didn't see any possibility to move forward in this matter without including China and France. Rusk then explained that he did not think Beijing would take part in the negotiations, however the Americans would not oppose the participation of the People's Republic of China in a disarmament conference that concerned conventional weapons.

I made the point that unless the United States developed a direct official contact with the People's Republic of China, no real improvement could be achieved in this matter. Rusk said that their contacts were more intensive with Beijing than the contacts of those countries that had diplomatic relations with it. Among other things they had their 127th official negotiation with the Chinese, during the beginning of which the Chinese side made the usual political statement demanding Formosa back, emphasizing that until the "American imperialists" don't give it back, the People's Republic of China was not willing to discuss neither the questions of Southeast Asia nor other smaller matters – like for example the exchange of journalists or doctors, the latter of which they tried to make the Chinese accept.

Rusk turned back to Southeast Asia where, in his opinion, Beijing was hindering finding a solution. I asked him what his opinion was, where he sees the way out the Vietnam problems.

In his response, Rusk was first contemplating that one of the fundamental problems was to find out, what moves Hanoi was ready to make and what moves it was able to make. They thought that Moscow would prefer the resolution of this matter through negotiations and would participate in one, if Hanoi agrees. At the same time Beijing was rigidly against negotiations. He said that Hanoi was in between the two positions but in their opinion they were closer to Beijing. By the way – the Secretary of State added with a smile –based on the speech of the Hungarian Foreign Minister in the General Assembly journalists have engaged in a guessing game, according to which he has new proposals to solve the Vietnamese issue.

I told the Secretary of State that there was only one way towards the unfolding of the solution, if they stop the bombing of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. I'm not a military man, but I think that they would not gain anything by bombing North Vietnam, however they could lose much, including prestige, at the same time the ending of the bombings could help everyone, who are for solving the conflict in a peaceful way; us included.

Rusk responded that the American soldiers were not in Vietnam to obtain rights for the United States to maintain military bases there or to occupy parts of Southeast Asia. The United States was only interested in the peaceful resolution [of the conflict]. Of course the United States wants to keep South Vietnam as its ally. But if South Vietnam wants, it can become a non-aligned country, the United States doesn't mind it. At the same time the United States was by all means interested in the right of self-determination to be practiced by small countries. Rusk noted at this point that after 1960 they had waited for four years with initiating the bombings. In 1962 at the Geneva Meeting concerning the situation in Laos they believed the claims of Hanoi but they did not pull out the North Vietnamese troops from the territory of Laos and they are using a part of Laos to this day to send troops from the North to the South.

I told him that if they're tying their own hands by continuously mentioning the past, then there was no peaceful way out and the consequences will be unimaginable. I emphasized once more that the key [to the peaceful resolution] is in their hands and on the topic of reducing military action the first step needs to come from the American side by stopping the bombing.

Then Rusk asked what would happen if they stopped the bombings. He said that this question had come up a number of times but they were not able to get any information regarding the possible Vietnamese response in exchange. They had been waiting for weeks

for the withdrawal of the 325th North Vietnamese Corps¹⁸ from South Vietnam. This would have been interpreted as such a concrete move, which would have been enough for stopping the bombing on North Vietnam. But this had never happened. American soldiers most certainly would rather be in San Francisco than in Saigon. The problem was – he said – that the leaders of North Vietnam miscalculated when they thought that the United States intends to achieve peace in Vietnam at all costs. During the presidential elections – he said – President Johnson had promised a quick end to the Vietnamese issue. This was possibly interpreted by Hanoi and Beijing that they were free to do anything in South Vietnam. He was emphasizing this, because the big units were sent to the south only after the elections.

Then I interrupted the Secretary of State and I explained that until the United States continued the bombing of North Vietnam, the Vietnamese can't do anything, they cannot initiate negotiations. This must be understood. It would be a sign of weakness. It would look as if the imperialists had reached their goal because they forced the start of the negotiations by the force of arms. Rusk immediately responded that using this argument they could also be accused of being weak in front of public opinion if they would end the bombings. Beijing would declare them paper tigers and would try to convince Moscow that a war was not a terrible thing after all. If the Chinese leaders would not evaluate the ending of the bombings correctly, it would have serious and far reaching consequences. In my response I stated that if the United States would end the bombings it will not be perceived as a sign of weakness. I think that the United States is the greater power, isn't it? Quite the opposite, this would cause an increase in its prestige.

Rusk then told me that they had been trying to learn through numerous “private channels” if Hanoi was willing to sit down and begin negotiations in case the United States ceased the bombings. In every case the answer was negative.

I responded to Rusk's remark that I can say with absolute certainty and great responsibility that if the United States ended the bombing of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam it would most certainly create an atmosphere, which would make it possible to approach the negotiations. Of course, it could be a long way to the negotiating table. During the Korean issue the ceasefire negotiations alone had lasted almost three years.

Rusk then asked me again if Hanoi was in the position, to sit down to the negotiating table even if Beijing expresses opposition.

¹⁸ Although the original text mentions corps, the numbering of the unit indicates that they refer to the 325th division of the People's Army of Vietnam.

In my response I informed him that Hanoi is certainly in a position to act on its own. We [Hungary] are in contact with our friends in Vietnam; a delegation of our party's Political Committee is on its way there or is arriving there now. The few days long bombing pause a while back and Hanoi's behavior at that time should not be considered as a counterargument, because back then the United States had ceased bombing while it made a threatening statement to renew the bombings again.

Rusk then asked for how long it would be necessary to cease bombing so the first signs of a negotiation could be felt. A couple of weeks – I said – but added, that this needs to be done without threatening renewed bombings. Rusk then said, that this would constitute a serious step for their side, because the public opinion of the world was in favor of a peaceful solution, except for Hanoi and Beijing, and if the United States had stopped the bombings without guarantees, renewing the bombings would be impossible in case they were to be disappointed. In Rusk's opinion the United States needs to receive some kind of hint, indication on private channels that both sides will respect the 17th parallel because there is no big difference between an exploding bomb delivered by air or by land.

Then I repeated that the question needs to be approached from a different angle. The United States has the key to the current situation. The first step needs to be taken by the United States. If it would do it, it could gain a lot and would lose nothing. Rusk then repeatedly emphasized the need for preliminary guarantee because it was to be feared, that Beijing would not let Hanoi begin negotiations, just as it happened in the cases of Laos and Cambodia. At first the Soviet Union had agreed to the plan for a new Geneva conference regarding Laos and Cambodia. But Beijing intervened, influenced Hanoi and Sihanouk and the conference could not be convened. Even if the Soviet Union and the United States wanted to convene a new Geneva Meeting concerning Southeast Asia, Beijing would oppose it – he said.

Regarding the failure of convening the Geneva conference I implied that if the United States had not bombed the Democratic Republic of Vietnam during the time of the proposal, there would not have been a problem with convening the conference. The cessation of the bombings would create an atmosphere that would make the preparations of the negotiations possible.

I said that I was sure that in this case many countries, including the Soviet Union and us [Hungary], would support an effort to begin the negotiations as soon as possible. We on our side – I emphasized – are interested in the peaceful resolution of the Vietnam question

through negotiations. Here Rusk noted: “it looks like Hungary wants to resume its diplomatic traditions known from the 16th century.”

Unfortunately – Rusk said – the distance between Beijing and us as well as Hanoi and us is today way too big. In my opinion – I replied – the distance is much smaller than it seems. This was the impression I got when the Secretary of State was talking about the withdrawal of their troops from South Vietnam. The United States had to take the first step by ending the bombings. Rusk replied that the United States and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam had to take simultaneous steps in initiating the negotiations. He said: “The copers in our country – but probably in Hungary as well – say that if you’re deceived once it is their fault, but if they deceive you twice, it’s yours.”

In my opinion – I told him – there was no reason to be afraid of being deceived. The United States had to take the first step because before the start of the bombings it hadn’t made any proposals to Hanoi about negotiations. It started the bombings without any prior warnings. With the bombing they paralyze all peaceful elements, including us [Hungary]. It also has to be considered that there is a qualitative difference between bombing of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and military activity in South Vietnam. The situation is becoming more and more grave and hopeless. That’s why the military activities need to be decreased at some point and the United States has to take the first step in this direction. If the United States takes this step, the plan for negotiations will receive a lot of support. We [Hungary] are also seriously interested in a peaceful resolution. But if you feel you have been deceived, you still can restart where you left off. That’s why the United States cannot lose anything with the termination of the bombings – I summarized.

In response Rusk stated very seriously the following: “I don’t want to mislead you. They have had long internal negotiations on how to end the Vietnam War as soon as possible and through peaceful means. The fighting could deteriorate to the point which would result in the destruction of South and North Vietnam. They assessed it and know that through war nothing can be accomplished nowadays. They assume that in Moscow and the Socialist countries the thinking is similar, but not in Beijing. They are continuing to look for the possibility of a solution but until the lack of reciprocity exists, there will be great obstacles in the way. This was all he could say at that point in time, he wasn’t authorized to tell more, but of course he will take the topics discussed here over to the governmental level and will subject it to a thorough further study.

At this point, turning the tone to a strikingly personal one, he said: “Now I tell you, as a Calvinist to another Calvinist, what my Calvinist grandfather used to say: we will make what you told us the subject of a prayerful deliberation!”

I said I was hoping so. I reemphasized that ending of bombings would bring reciprocity. But they had to be the initiating party because ending the bombing campaign doesn't mean a unilateral concession.

Rusk then promised once again to thoroughly examine the things I told him.

János Péter
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the
People's Republic of Hungary

Source: MNL-OL, XIX-J-1-j-USA-IV-135-004912/1965, 13.d.

DOCUMENT 7

Report on the Vietnamese, Korean journey, on the stay in Beijing and on travelling through Moscow of the delegation of the HSWP CC, November 2, 1965

Top secret!

Made: in 30 samples

Report

on the Vietnamese, Korean journey, on the stay in Beijing and on the travelling through Moscow of delegation of the HSWP CC

Vietnam

The organizing of the journey and the welcoming of the delegation surpassed the prior expectations. On the part of the party leaders the welcoming was cordial, comradely.

Contrary to the prior notification in Hungary, the negotiators of the Vietnamese delegation were led by First Secretary Le Duan and both at the airport and at other receptions he was the host.

The negotiations, and our visits in Hanoi and to the countryside made it possible for us, to meet directly the many different people and to meet in many different circumstances with workers and peasants. They organized three smaller gatherings for us without any prior requests. Taking the current circumstances into consideration, the Vietnamese comrades assured every possibilities to us.

The negotiations gave a more detailed, more analytical, more open and honest summary of the situation in Vietnam and of the policy of the Vietnamese Workers Party than known previously. On the other hand our experiences show that the Vietnamese comrades are in pain, vacillating because of the closeness and omnidirectional strong influence of China. This was expressed in the course of the negotiations as well. The honest tone at the beginning of the first answer of comrade Le Duan – when he reacted to our information, opinion and questions – stiffened. In our opinion this is in closely related to the ending of negotiations in Beijing on the previous day by a delegation led by comrade Pham Van Dong. The tone changed significantly and became more realistic at the extra round of talks requested by us. Here we repeatedly expressed our opinions about the existing disagreements in the international workers movements and about its dangers. Among other things [we talked

about] exactly the latest anti-Soviet, chauvinistic incitement of the Chinese regarding the support of Vietnam. The toast of comrade Le Duan at the farewell dinner was really warm and open-minded and emphasized the topics on which we agreed. According to our impressions, the political committee members present were honestly pleased and reacted honestly to this toast.

In the course of the negotiations we had several times an impression that the comrades were happy that we mentioned topics they couldn't due to their situation. Several times we endured such ambiguous situations and atmosphere.

On the whole the negotiations were characterized by fairness, striving for sincerity even when there were disagreements in some very important, theoretical political questions. To our important questions, such as the support of South-Vietnam by the DRV we got a surprising answer, to others nothing at all. Definitely there must have been a decision by the PC for this, because once the PC held a session to discuss our suggestions and there they must have worked out the line of the answer given to our questions.

The Vietnamese comrades took great care of the negotiations – which took two and a half days –, as the appendices show.

It is likely, that the delegation's impressions regarding the general morale – considering that we didn't go to heavily bombed territories – don't mirror the morale of the entire Vietnamese people, or at least it is inaccurate. We met everywhere big self-confidence and hatred against Americans. This self-confidence, optimism can be experienced in every respect. This is especially obvious in those self-defense units and regular formations where the absolute majority of the personnel is consisting of young boys and girls. There is also versatile educational work in progress towards such objectives. This stretches from the press, radio right up to propagandistic songs. On the people who lived on the visited territories, no signs of stress can neither be seen nor a word be heard from on any difficulties due to the bombings, military readiness or work. In their opinion everything is going well, which is the guarantee for political and military victory over the Americans.

Our impression is that this self-confidence and optimism is not entirely realistic. They talk about opposing forces in a depreciative but jovial way, and talk a lot about how the American airplanes – especially recently – are really afraid. Neither do they appreciate the difficult and serious problems of the production. They think it less difficult than it reality is.

The leading functionaries prove confidently, with a host of arguments, why the military victory over Americans is possible and assured. They raise people in this spirit, and this makes from a domestic perspective perfect sense: this gives courage and faith in the future for

the Vietnamese people. It is strongly based on historical examples and keeps patriotism at a high level. The fighting spirit of the Vietnamese people, the geographic features of the country makes it in fact unrealistic, to militarily seize it and permanently occupy it. It is a deep and honest conviction of many party functionaries and military leaders. On the other hand comrade Le Duan also expressed his worries regarding the future and emphasized, that in order to achieve victory there is a need for the more intensive support of the socialist countries. This assertion can be understood as an answer to our statement regarding the lack of coordinated help, unified appearance, which we emphasized on several occasions.

The leadership has talked about the help of the socialist countries in general terms, without concrete facts. As a matter of sequence they mentioned the Soviet and Chinese support. Below that level the lines get blurred and they don't talk about foreign support, although statements referring to this are welcomed extremely enthusiastically and sympathetically by the people. The experiences of our gatherings prove this. The broad masses know about the support in general, but nothing concrete.

The cities, streets, villages show the picture of a country at war. Bunkers, communication trenches, anti-aircraft positions, women and men with rifles can be seen everywhere, and camouflaging. The behavior, attitude of the people is calm, and we have also met contradictory behavior where they didn't take orders seriously enough. For example in the city of Nam Dinh the city is fully illuminated and there is heavy street traffic during the night, at the same time when American airplanes are able to fly over the city in a couple of minutes. It definitely contributes to the calm behavior, that no information on the losses is provided. (Regarding this we didn't get any information either. And in one of the provinces they didn't provide honest casualty data. In the province where 1.700.000 people live, Americans bombed 62 times. According to the county party secretary 30 people were killed, according to the military commander 80 people died.)

Regarding production the situation is mainly positive in the agricultural sector. They expect a very good harvest this year again and during the 5-year-plan the rice production has increased 30%. The industry delivers on its production plan, but the evacuated factories fell behind in their output. The effectiveness of the production process of the evacuated factories encounters big difficulties. We visited for example the biggest textile factory of North Vietnam, the power plant and certain parts of which were bombed. The factory now gets electricity from Hanoi, from a distance of about 120 km. More than half of the factory has already been evacuated until today.

It is rather difficult to negotiate about economic questions, because they primarily concentrate on the military and political tasks. It is understandable, that they respond to questions about technological standards, living conditions and similar question only when asked, and even then with great uncertainty. The negotiations about concrete topics are made more difficult by the fact, that they don't have any plans.

It is already decided, that due to the current situation there won't be a 5-year-plan, only a 2-year one. This has yet to be finished. During the talks regarding the questions of economic nature– which took place on the request of the Vietnamese in Hay-Fong¹⁹ (Deputy Prime Minister Le Tangi and the President of the Central Planning Office participated) – they asked for a new loan of 6 million Ruble. (By the way they provided this request already together with the list of goods to the trade counsellor previously.) Atypically, the head of the Central Planning Committee said, that they would only come to negotiate in Budapest, if their request is approved beforehand.

The main targets of the air-strikes in North-Vietnam are primarily transportation routes and nodes, and power-plants and factories in strategic positions. The bombing of the cities in North-Vietnam is not general, it shows significant differences. Cities near to the border of South-Vietnam depending on their position /larger transportation nodes/ are bombed constantly and in these cities the level of destruction is significant (50-70%). Civilian losses are according to the provided information low, thanks to evacuations. According to information originating from a private source in individual cities the number dead and injured is between 1 and 5000.

Until now Hanoi and Hai-Fong are untouched, but the Vietnamese general staff expects the possibility of an air-strike, they continue their preparations /evacuation, building of air raid shelters/ accordingly.

The American efforts in South Vietnam aim to conduct operations launched from bases established on the seashores against the forces of the South Vietnamese liberation front, in order to isolate them from each other and from North Vietnam and to eliminate them in a piecemeal fashion.

The objective of the North Vietnamese political and military leadership is to organize and arm a regular army capable to conduct the battlefield specific and objective oriented tasks, which is capable to conduct successful actions against the enemy in the air and on the ground.

¹⁹ Hai Phong

According to the experience and the information received from the Vietnamese general staff we reached the conclusion that they had begun to realize this task late, parallel to the mass arrival of the US troops and air-strikes. Intrinsicly the Vietnamese army didn't have air defense, engineer, signal and other troops, until August 1964 the air force didn't have fighter jets, and only in May 1965 did the establishment of the anti-aircraft (missile and anti-aircraft artillery) units begin. Because of these reasons the lack of cadres causes a big problem, experts have to be trained simultaneously with the establishment of units, moreover with the partial deployment of the units.

The more successful conduct of the NLF is hindered by the lack of adequate number of infantry weaponry, although recently there has been an improvement on this field. Because of the intense lack of automatic weapons (light-machine guns, machine guns) they weren't able to operate effectively, not even against helicopters. Among other things this explains (beside the mantra and theory of the people's war, which led to many disagreements and some damage in the process of building the army) that the use of self-defense forces armed with rifles against the combating airplanes became primary, which is basically the right approach.

The state of the arms supplies mentioned above and the replacement of combat losses would make in our opinions the coordination of arms replacement and supplies necessary, at least between the armies of the Warsaw Pact.

During our trip we met such phenomenon that are unusual by our standards. There were many formal features in the process of gatherings or factory visits (we walked through a row of people ordered to build an applauding line-up), so that they provided an intense, but at the same time very striking assurance. Incomprehensibly, although one or two members of the Political Committee were always with us, they never spoke up, only the local party secretaries spoke to the people, or to us.

The delegation's stay in Vietnam can on the whole be valued as positive. Despite the fact, that we declared clearly in several questions, there are disagreements between us, the negotiations continued in a correct, comradely spirit. There is hope that the Vietnamese comrades, like it was evident during the talks, will think about some questions raised by us. In their current difficult situation this can't be overestimated, especially regarding the practical steps. Comrade Le Duan's final statements also show, that the Vietnamese Party thought the visit of the delegation to be positive and useful. In our view, we have to emphasize to a high degree the mutual information sharing and exchanging of views in the future as well, because we can provide essential help through these activities.

Due to the well-known situation of the Vietnamese comrades they don't actively strive to be proactive in political questions. They don't even use their very limited possibilities—which they admitted – which lie in the political work and diplomatic activity. During our negotiations we alluded to this, and to the support the socialist states can provide in these fields.

In our opinion every effort must be made in order to start the process of political settlement. To support this process intensive military and political support must be provided to strengthen their positions.

Korea

The work of the delegation began circumstantially and controversially. The reason for this probably is – but not primarily – that the negotiations in Budapest in connection regarding the visit were not adequate enough. The Korean comrades pointed out, that we stated back in Budapest, that the delegation is not on an official visit. They kept themselves to this arrangement; despite the fact, that we affirmed the official nature of the visit citing arrangements through the Political Committee, but they didn't respond to this.

During the trip the delegation has experienced politeness and attention. After our arrival they didn't make recommendations for a program, noting that they didn't know, „what do we want to see”. Previously the embassy reached out on this topic, but this attempt was shunned by them. They didn't even mention negotiations, only talked about „conversations”. To our determined request, that we are here to negotiate, they made the program recommendation in one day, which we accepted and performed.

Deviating from customary, the Korean comrades asked us that we inform them first. The honest and open manner of the opening remarks, and the topics raised in it influenced on the Korean comrades in a positive way. During their opening statements the atmosphere became friendlier, they spoke openly about their situation in several questions as well.

We experienced during our whole journey, that the Korean comrades emphasized self-reliance at every turn. Every party should think and decide with its own head – they told us. At the same time, politically they are in a difficult and constrained position. They have views which are identical to the Chinese positions – although the degree of this differs by individual leading figures -, then again when it comes to differences; they don't talk about them openly. It is a characteristic example that they didn't officially react to the Chen Ji speech which was criticized by us. On the other hand in private meetings both of the participating PC members

told us, they disagree with it either and it is an impossible assumption, that the Soviet Union would attack a socialist country.

During the first days tensions arose on the following topics:

1. 1./ Whether the delegation is of official nature, or not
2. Whether a joint statement should be published about the visit /we asked for one – the Korean comrades refused this request/.
3. Our proposals concerning to the intensification of the relationship between the two parties /with the exception of jointly organized holidays/ we got evasive answers.

We expressed our observations in connection with these points firmly to the negotiating delegation as well as to comrade Kim Il-sung. In the end the talks – with the exception of the common statement – produced results.

The official and other statements of the leading comrades usually are positive about the current policies of the Soviet Union and about the support they provide to Vietnam and Korea. It was striking, that during the talks with Kim Il-sung China wasn't even mentioned and no references were made about it.

Our experience shows that ideologically the principle of self-reliance is deeply indoctrinated into the party and economic functionaries. The Korean people's economy reached truly great, impressive results since the end of the war. People everywhere are really proud of this and tell that everything was made and produced by them. In the creation of this general public mood – according to our experience – unfair methods were also used. We can count in this category that the labels of foreign made machines and equipment – primarily made by the Soviets –are chiseled off. We heard assertions more than once – which are not free from nationalism – that we Koreans are able to produce every kind of machinery. Despite the improvements of Korean industry lately, this of course doesn't correspond to the facts.

In our opinion the Korean Worker's Party executes a very single-minded policy in order to achieve rapid growth of the economy in the post-war period. They do this with the consideration of proving to the superiority of the Northern socialist system to the people of the South making it appealing to them. It is undeniable that the living standard of the regular people increased significantly. For example the agricultural production /primarily that of rice/ with the help of large-scale development of the irrigation system solved the supply of food to the population, although this was thought to be impossible in the North previously. This line of official policy ensures a great popularity for the party in the rows of the masses and

enhances the spirit of combat readiness on the one side to defend the achievements of the North, on the other to liberate the South.

In the light of our experiences there is currently an economy policy underway in Korea, which has the primary objective to „to provide”. It is really of secondary or tertiary importance whether the produced goods are economical or not. Thus from an objective point of view it is unsurprising that they don't pay enough attention to the technological standards, production standards, quality requirements, economic viability. At the same time the economic leaders of the factories visited by us impressed us as well-educated and well-read people. They referred several times to shortcomings, they see and feel the need for improvement in their work.

But beside the deep rooted propaganda of self-reliance, it is a matter of fact, that we saw quite a lot of machines and equipment which were not of Korean origin. As far as we know, even now there are quite extensive negotiations with socialist and non-socialist countries regarding the purchase of different kinds of machinery etc. This is self-evident, yet they still only occasionally concede, that they got this machine, instrument from here or there. They only admit upon inquiry, from where the equipment was imported.

We couldn't get a really coherent picture about the role of the party in the field of economic directions. They refer everywhere to the TEÁNI method. The essence of this method is that the party committee is responsible for the production.

The principle of one-man management is replaced by a collective leadership in the economy. The economic leaders – as they say – manage administrative issues. Our questions regarding this field usually were answered by the party secretaries, but their answers were always amended or explained by the accompanying member of the Central Committee. The economic leaders usually didn't participate in these debates. In the end effect it looks like that in economic management the director is the actual person responsible behind the collective leadership, because first of all he is blamed for the failures personally.

We experienced on several occasions situations unusual for us. At the places we visited they emphasized without exceptions in the briefings, that at some time Kim Il-sung visited the factory or in the collective farm and gave a personal direction, instruction regarding what and how should be done. They work based on these and execute the directions of the comrade Prime Minister. (Comrade Kim Il-sung is called Prime Minister everywhere and has great standing.)

They have an extensive security measures (larger than in Vietnam). For example on a 200 km road stretch – it was secured by military in full. In the cities, when the motorcade

drove through, the vehicular and as well as the pedestrian traffic was stopped. The same also happened on the highways. In many cases the pioneers and the children greeted with a bow the people completely unknown to them who were sitting in the car.

For the work of the delegation with the Korean comrades the Vietnamese journey and the joint statement proved to be a good „reference”, which was published in its entirety by the press.

The trip of the delegation considering the existing circumstances can be seen as a success. This is shown by the following: following the welcoming and the first talks press and radio coverage increased substantially, more than anticipated. The central party newspaper covered the journey of the delegation on six occasions, in a quite detailed manner, and contrary to their initial opinion, they published a special communique – unilaterally – about the fact that negotiations are taking place.

The delegation never even gave a hint of wanting to meet comrade Kim Il-sung. Comrade Kim Il-sung’s one and half an hour long, nonprotocol, honest, open conversation with the delegation – in our opinion – surprised even our negotiating partners. It is characteristic, that Kim Gvan-Hjop, the lead negotiator admitted, that we had an honest conversation with comrade Kim Il-sung. (Primarily comrade Kim Gvan-Hjop, but also others avoid controversial questions by stating, that each party knows what is in their interest to do – debating this is useless. It must be accepted and supported – this is the task of the other parties.)

In order to realize what has been agreed on during the talks, will require us to remain on the initiative, so that the relationship between the two parties could expand gradually and constantly. With keeping the initiative we can manage to avoid longer breaks in the relationship of the two parties. Based on the realistic and constant evaluation of the opportunities, the economic and cultural ties can be and need to be broadened.

China.

In the current situation our delegation received a more favorable welcome and hospitality, than expected. VU HSZIU-CSUAN, a member of the CC, Deputy head of Foreign Affairs Department of the CC, who received the delegation, greeted the delegation as a guest of the CPC and provided accommodation in the government guest house. But on the whole the level of hospitality fell far short of the expected, which is usually provided for party delegations or leaders who support or aren’t opposed to the policy of the CPC. (eg. the Romanian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, who spent his holiday here was welcomed on

the highest levels.) From the CPC the highest ranking leader was VU HSZIU-CSUAN for the entire time and they didn't propose meetings with higher level leaders. The accommodation of and catering to the delegation was impeccable, the conduct of the officials during the realization of the program were correct.

...

On October 15, 1965 VU HSZIU-CSUAN welcomed the delegation to a friendly dinner. At the dinner – which was meant by the hosts as non-protocol event – an interesting conversation began between comrade Fock and VU HSZIU-CSUAN. On the request of the Chinese comrades comrade Fock summarized the events and experiences of the Vietnam trip, in which he emphasized the indispensable necessity of the common support to the heroically fighting Vietnamese people. Furthermore he emphasized, that in a situation when imperialism violently attacked a socialist country, disputes should be put aside, or at least narrowed and toned down, and we should have invest this energy instead into the supporting the heroically struggling Vietnamese people. The dispute, even if it concerns other questions, weakens our resolve on the question of Vietnam. We think – said comrade Fock – that both the Chinese comrades and we have enough on our hands even if we would ignore the dispute, and here he alluded beyond the question of Vietnam to the situation in Indonesia.

In his answer VU HSZIU-CSUAN explained he didn't agree with the position of comrade Fock, because in to the opinion of the CPC the dispute can't be put aside. This – so to say – would mislead and deceive the people and also ourselves. The question of Vietnam and the dispute are to different things, which can't be negotiated linked together. According to our opinion there is no realistic base to end the dispute. We are not objecting to other parties stating their opinions, but we also tell our opinion. The essence of our fundamental opinion is that the dispute can't influence the support provided to the people of Vietnam, then again, no one has died in the dispute, so it can be continued without disruption. There can be other opinions, but we, Chinese communists cannot be convinced today about the ending of the dispute. There is no realistic basis for this.

Comrade Fock noted, that we didn't want to deceive any people, and weren't alluding to the complete termination of the debate, what we meant was putting aside, perhaps keeping it warm for the sake of the supporting of the Vietnamese people, but we should tone down, narrow the dispute, so that imperialism does not to have a chance to exploit the difference between us.

VU HSZIU-CSUAN answered that we could talk about this, but there was a difference between what comrade Fock said and what the Hungarian press, especially in the last month

had done. Namely there are more and more articles published recently in the daily Népszabadság²⁰ directly attacking the CPC, although we didn't raise a word with the HSWP. To this comrade Fock replied that before his starting his journey he talked with the Chinese ambassador in Budapest, who expressed the exact opposite opinion about our press' coverage about China. At this point Vu remarked: maybe he is a diplomat who doesn't express his real opinion directly. But I am a party worker, and as such, I speak in a straight and honest way. To the question, what these offensive articles are exactly – they didn't provide a definitive answer and comrade Fock asked, if it was maybe related to the publishing of Chen Ji's latest press statement, or to our statement in connection with the Indo-Pakistani conflict? Comrade Fock remarked at this point, that the whole world was speaking about the statement of Chen Ji, it was impossible not to publish it in our press. Of course it must also be said, that we weren't delighted about comrade Chen Ji's statement. To this Vu answered, that in Chen Ji's statement there wasn't anything related to Hungary. Maybe there are many who weren't happy about the statement, but comrade Chen Ji expressed not only the opinion of the CPC CC, but the attitude of the entire Chinese people, and the entire Chinese people are pleased, because they want to fight against imperialism. Here comrade Fock expressed, that this was not the part we disliked, but the part mentioning the „Northern neighbor” he equated the Soviet Union to the USA. Vu replied, that this would be decided by history, and when it will be proven, that they were wrong, they would apologize to the Soviet comrades. Comrade Fock responded, that until history proves who is right, unity and the support for the Vietnamese people is still essential, not to mention the damage, which the dispute will cause until then. After this Vu steered the conversation to the Gromiko-Rusk meeting and his speech in the UN, which he assessed to be a nicely worded attempt by Gromiko to mislead and in essence was a call by Gromiko to deepen the friendly relations between the Soviet Union and the US and to enhance mutual cooperation so that the Soviet Union and the US would solve the problems of the world. Comrade Fock remarked: in my opinion the essence is not this, but the support provided by the Soviet Union to the people of Vietnam, which I met at every turn, and which we have to enhance together.

Concerning the negotiations of comrade Gromiko we don't know, how closely you are following it, but probably you are aware of it as well, that a few months ago during the talks with the British Foreign Secretary he made huge efforts to detach the British policy from the USA's line on the issue of Vietnam. So his position is far from betraying the interests of the

²⁰ Népszabadság [„People's Liberty”] was the official daily of the HSWP and it was also one of the most read Hungarian newspapers.

Vietnamese people. Speaking about the Soviet-US relations comrade Kosygin recently declared, that fundamental change is not possible as long as the US commits aggression against Vietnam. Our Minister for Foreign Affairs has also negotiated with Rusk and not to sell out the people of Vietnam, but for their interests. Similarly, the Hungarian-US relations will not improve because of the Vietnamese and similar issues. The distrustful behavior of the Chinese comrades causes extensive damage to our position.

We are happy when the French, the British or other Westerns come to China to negotiate and we don't say that the Chinese comrades are marketing or selling out the interests of the Socialist Bloc. Due to my position I'm also in regular contact with the British ambassador or the Austrian chancellor and with others, and for example I hailed the US participation at the international fair in Budapest and at the same time our government issued their support for the DRV's four point-declaration. After all these it would really hurt if someone said that I had sold out our common interests. Comrade Halász interposed a remark, that China continuously negotiates with the US in Warsaw, and that they welcome the British exhibition in Beijing, although we know that the British support the Vietnamese policy of the US. Still, we have never written that this would be the betrayal of the interests of the Socialist Bloc. Here Vu avoided the direct answer and thanked for the conversation and he clinked glasses to the health of the delegation. After finishing the dinner comrade Fock noted: he is very happy about this conversation, which he considers not as a debate, but as a comradely conversation, and the US can't exploit something like this against us.

In summary: the main points of VU HSZIU-CHUAN's views can be summed up the following way:

1. The issue of Vietnam and the debate are not related.
2. No one can convince the CPC about the need to end the dispute.
3. The Soviet Union joins forces with the USA, in order to solve the problems of the world together. /In order to support his argument he referred to the Gromiko-Rusk talks, as well as the persistent negotiations between the USA and the Soviet Union./
4. China never attacks Hungary, respectively the CPC the HSWP, but the Hungarian side initiates many attacks against the CPC.

...

The delegation made the participated in the following programs during its stay in Beijing:

1. Visit to the Thermionic Tube Factory in Beijing

2. Visit to the no. 1 Machine Tool Factory in Beijing
3. Viewing of the building of the National People's Congress
4. Visit of the recently opened Japanese economic exhibition in Beijing
5. Visit to the Summer Palace

...

Moscow:

During its first Moscow stay the delegation met comrade Andropov, who provided the latest informed about Vietnam.

On the way back home the delegation spent another circa 5 hours in Moscow. On behalf of the Presidency, instead of Andropov – who wasn't in Moscow – comrade Kirilenko welcomed the delegation. Comrade Fock briefed the Soviet comrades about the observations of the trip. Comrade Kirilenko briefed us on the Moscow trip of Fan Van Dong and shared his Chilean experiences as well, which he gathered at the congress and on his following journey.

Budapest, November 2, 1965

Signed personally by
Jenő Fock

Had they said that the topic is not timely, they will provide an answer next year or until the end of the year, I would have deemed it acceptable. The answer we've gotten is unusual even for normal party relations. If the opinion of the Korean comrades is what they have said, our delegation can head back home with it as well, but this is contradictory to the intent of improving the relationships. Or pointing back at the invitation of the parliamentary delegation. I don't know, whether the Korean comrades could tell, when a parliamentary delegation visited Hungary.

Comrade Kim Gvan-Hjop cut here in, stating, that the parliamentary delegation still has to be agreed on, and to the party delegation they have given a clear answer, as they had thanked comrade Kádár for the invitation. If they would send the delegation right now, he doesn't know, what they would negotiate about, because we have discussed everything.

Comrade Fock than explained the following: For us it is enough, when they accept the invitation in theory and through the embassy we will clarify the timing of the visit. Our request would be to add to their answer, that the visit will take place in five years.

Recently three Vietnamese delegations visited Hungary. During their visits we made similar proposals to the Vietnamese comrades. The day following our proposal the Vietnamese comrades informed us that the Political Committee of their Party discussed the proposal and accepted it. It felt good for us. We arrived to Vietnam in such an atmosphere, but we sense an uncertainty here regarding the improvement of the relations. I am not a diplomat, so I tell my opinion directly. If someone talks to me openly, I respect this. If the Korean comrade's answer is what they have given us, I respect it as well, I will report it to our Central Committee and it will respect your point of view as well. I would like to return home with the sense of a job well-done, so I ask you to sit down one more time and discuss these questions, although I'd like to add, that we don't intend to change your opinion on any topics.

Comrade LI DZU-JONG took the floor and said the following:

Thank you for your visit in order to improve relation. Due to different events the relations deteriorated, and this wasn't good. We are striving to improve relations. Your visit is also a step in this process. On the issues of the fighting imperialism, the support for the national liberation movements our views came closer. The reason for your visit was the fact that both of us are supporting the fight of the Vietnamese people. Whether the delegation will go to Hungary, can't be a serious question. We fight together against imperialism and colonialism. Isn't it a formality, to send a delegation immediately after yours visited. We were apart for five years, now we approach each other gradually. Is it necessary to direct the world's attention towards this rapprochement? Undeniably questions may emerge, which will make it necessary to meet, but this shouldn't happen on a formal basis. Our aim is to improve relations step by step, by holiday exchanges, by the improvement of cultural, trade ties. So it can't be a central question of the improvement of the relations, whether the meeting will take place sooner or later. You as well as we are executing the instructions of the Central Committee. We consider it to be essential, that the principal theoretical lines of policy get closer. We will certainly meet, if we keep ourselves to the principle of self-reliance and non-interference. Based on this we hope, that the meeting will take place shortly.

Comrade Fock reacted to what was said the following way:

After telling my opinion I accept all answers. Indeed there is no need for a formal visit. The comrades know their own situation, they know, what they say and what they do.

Comrade KIM GVAN-HJOP: If we wouldn't accept your invitation we would tell so. The only question is the determination of the timing, about which I think, it isn't necessary to argue.

Source: MNL-OL, M-KS-288 f. 5/379. ó.e.

DOCUMENT 8

MINUTES of the session of the HSWP Political Committee on November 9, 1965

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL!

Two copies made

1.) Verbal account of the Party's delegation to the Far East.

Comrade ZOLTÁN KOMÓCSIN

We have a written recommendation on how to report to sister parties. The question also arises of how we should report to other members of the Central Committee. The suggestion of Biszku, Fock and myself is that we report to the Central Committee verbally about what we are planning. In this case we can work through the more important parts of the three documents sent to the members of the Political Committee, and read this out. In this way the three thick documents would not have to be sent to the members of the central committee.

Comrade JENŐ FOCK:

I agree that the written material does not have to be sent to the members of the Central Committee, but discussed together with other foreign matters. And if necessary I can also speak,

I think that things should not be taken too far as regards informing public opinion. Comrade Kállai's speech will also discuss the Vietnam question, and it will be discussed again on Television within two weeks; therefore this should be dealt with in the normal, accustomed form in the press.

To start with, I apologize in the name of the delegation for producing a document which has managed to become so thick. We wanted to describe the course of the negotiations and the atmosphere that was there, and we had no way to do this except to relate the discussions in such detail – albeit not verbatim.

I think it would be correct for us to decide at the session of the Political Committee that it was right for the Central Committee to insist on these two visits. In the end it was the two parties that invited us, but we were the ones who initiated it. Our general impression is that it would be right to continue with such initiatives, and we need to think about whether we

should initiate similar things with other parties: this would include the parties in capitalist countries, as well as other parties whose opinions are not entirely the same as ours. In general we can conclude from the fact (with which we implicitly agree) that for a few years we cannot insist upon – and it would be pointless for us to insist upon - productive, large-scale talks, that in these years we must be much more active in conducting talks with those parties, with which we have differences on disputed questions about the international workers' movement.

Perhaps I should have begun with this: it could regularly be heard in both countries that they spoke of our Party, the Central Committee, and Comrade Kádár personally, with respect and admiration. However in Korea and Peking it could clearly be felt that in praising us, they wanted to attack the Soviet Party at the same time. They strongly emphasized that they have never harmed us, and so we should accept that they can harm the S[oviet] C[ommunist] P[arty] at any time. On these points we regularly had to emphasize that if they attack the SCP, they attack us as well, and that we take this personally.

I would like to say a few words concerning aid for Vietnam. The opinion of the delegation is that for our part there is no need to press for military aid. There are nearly a thousand vehicles on the border, and in the last year no work has been done to open more border crossings between Vietnam and China, despite the fact that the Soviet Union transported huge excavating machines with the intention of building more roads. The Soviet Union cannot use our machines that it has begun to transport, because there is no suitable airport in the whole of Vietnam - there is a need for more airports. So now is not the time to press for military aid! In my opinion we should not come to agreement with the Embassy staff and we should not go into the sort of negotiations where they read out from on high what help we should give to Vietnam, Formally we can press for it, directly with our Vietnamese comrades, but we should wait for their response saying what they need. We handed over the list and sent 10-15 specimens of things we can provide a lot of. We asked them to tell us, on the basis of the first, second and specimen deliveries, what they require.

With regard to the economic questions, it can strongly be felt that the soldiers recovered first. They can clearly see that they began preparations too late and that this caused much damage. The most sober noises about how the country's defense should be organized come from the side of the soldiers. In second place is the political side, where they are similarly drawing the practical conclusions from this, and in a short space of time practical steps will be taken in this sphere. It is quite clear that the sphere that is most behind is the economic sphere, where the watchword of "People's War" has caused the most damage. In very simple terms this says, "what they are going to bomb, they are going to bomb, so let's try to evacuate

people from the towns and if they bomb us to pieces, we will then reconstruct them with the help of the socialist countries; after all, with so little industry, there is not a lot to lose." This is why there is no significant sign of strength or considered planning on the part of those leading the economy as to how they will maintain the country's economic strength. This explains the complete uncertainty and confusion on their part.

They use a few slogans which would usually sound correct – the deconstruction of industry, the generation of local power supply (many of their power generators are ruined, not just the ones we dispatched, but others as well) - but from the way they listed the economic help they ask from us, it does not seem that they have a clear idea of what they need.

In any case our impression of the chairman of the planning office there was that he strongly supports the Chinese line, he spreads the People's War slogan, etc. If I could give advice, I would tell them to relieve this man from his office and replace him with someone who understands economic questions. He was aggressive, too, and he spreads the People's War slogans of the Chinese.

They spoke of the 6 million Rouble aid as if they wanted to increase next year's turnover. But these were not concrete negotiations; it was rather that they said this after we prompted them to clarify their own position on economic questions.

I think that what we have to do, before the Trade Minister arrives, is ask friendly countries for their opinion. We know that they will receive a further 200 million in aid from the Soviet comrades. This is in addition to the 600 million they have given in total. They have asked the other friendly countries as well - not for aid, but for loans, which they will gradually pay back later. They have not yet formally published the list. I am also thinking that we should see what they have need for, E.g. we should see whether the H[ungarian] S[tate] V[ehicle] and M[achine] F[actory] can manufacture the traction engine that they need, because this is a machine that eats anything, in which you can put anything from cow-dung to coal. In theory, knowing some of the positions held by the other countries, we should take the position that we will provide more help. As to how this should happen in practice, we will have time to return to this at the Political Committee and negotiate it with the Government. As I see it, we are not able to give a 6 million loan, but having inspected our foreign trade stores, we can recommend items from there. So we could turn the thing around so that we ask, and they reply. In this way we could give them two-thirds or a half of what they ask for.

A few words about our embassies. At the VDK they said that they strengthened the embassy with two men. Both of them are soldiers. Perhaps it would be better to understand strengthening as meaning one soldier and one civilian. Perhaps in future it would be possible

to strengthen the Embassy with someone who deals with economics. The trade advisor is on his own, and excluding the radio person there are three of them in total. These comrades work well there, but they have been away from their families for nearly half a year now. We should tell the Foreign Ministry to be more lenient, and bring these people home every 3-4 months, one after another, to report back.

With regard to the Korean Embassy, our ill Ambassador has become a doyen there. This is a completely impossible man, who should not even be an office junior in an embassy. He has wanted to come home for a long time, but opinion is divided as to who should replace him. If no one did, it would still be an improvement! Just by way of example: if the two of us walked down the street, he whispered such that I had to ask him five times what he wanted to say. Finally we went to the Embassy, and I said that he can talk here, this is a secure place, and then he said nothing. His wife does not fit in there. She goes to the shop, asks for meat and if it has any bones on it, she throws it to the ground. Or at the hairdresser she makes it a subject of complaint that there are vegetables hanging in the shop and she makes a fuss about it. A relaxed, level-headed trade union leader would be good here. If the current ambassador returns home, he must be sent into retirement. He is 59 now.

We will send the letter of invitation of the presidential council.

As far as diplomatic work is concerned, we should allow no ambiguity to surround the fact that aggression against a socialist country is at issue, and that we really are at Vietnam's side. Another thing: we should continue what Comrade Péter began, and in various ways press for to follow the route of negotiations. In fact the Vietnamese comrades explained - often going into detail - that they do not only see a return to the Geneva Convention as the basis for negotiations, they even made significant compromises on certain items. And it is certain that for the time being they do not want the country to be unified. Our press and our diplomatic activities should pursue this question - though not phrased explicitly.

As far as China is concerned, we said at the time that we want to improve interstate relations, not worsen them; at the same time my experience in China was that we do not keep to this, in fact we do the opposite. If there was mention of a Chinese cultural delegation travelling through Hungary stopping for three days, we would try to avoid them. We should make an effort to comply with the Cultural Convention and to press for its expansion. At the last Korean reception we discussed how Comrade Ilku has not yet been to China. I mentioned this to one of the Chinese with my tongue in my cheek, but he immediately replied that they would be happy to receive Comrade Ilku at any time. Thus as far as cultural, technical and academic cooperation are concerned, we should take more initiatives with China.

Comrade ZOLTÁN KOMÓCSIN

Is there any information about what the Soviet comrades discussed with Pham Van Dong and his colleagues?

Comrade JENŐ FOCK:

They discussed the 200 million Roubles. They said that they are very pleased with this. They should not be understood as meaning that the Soviet Union's help is inadequate, but rather as saying that this help should be better coordinated and that they should understand one another better.

Comrade JÁNOS KÁDÁR:

Let us take note of the delegation's report. The realization of the matter was useful and important from many points of view, including serving the cause of unity between the international communist movement and the socialist countries, even if it did not bring an immediate solution. Neither did it do any harm for contact to be made with the Chinese and opinions to be exchanged. This visit is also significant because we are finally overturning the sort of belief or unstated notion that the problems of the Soviet Union cannot be raised in this way. The Chinese concentrate their attack on the Soviet Union and disputed questions always concern the Soviet Union. And if the Soviet delegation mentions this, that is an insult; if the Hungarian one does so, it is just taking up a theoretical political stance!

As far as concrete recommendations about organization are concerned, we should take note of the delegation's opinion that the emphasis is now not so much on military as on economic aid. These questions will, at a suitable time, be put on the agenda of both the Political Committee and the Council of Ministers,

We should take note of the report about the state of the Ambassador to Korea and come to the decision that the Foreign Ministry should examine the question and make the necessary arrangements.

As far as reports are concerned, we should accept reports from the Soviet Union with the following technical recommendation: we should never pass on the same document that we received. That is our Party material and we never receive such material from the SCP. The heading and the signature must be rubbed out and it must be addressed to them.

Let us accept that the Foreign Department can give us reports. Let us also accept the recommendation as to how to inform the heads of mission from the socialist countries, our ambassadors, and our Italian and French sister parties.

With regard to domestic reports, I agree with what Comrade Fock said, if we understand it to mean that that certain often proposed theory succeeds. That is, the Central Committee must be informed down to the very last letter. E.g. Vietnam represents a whole group of questions, which should include the delegation's visit, Comrade Péter's visit, and what we want to achieve in the UN, and information must be provided to clarify the Chinese question up till the point mentioned in the last report. However in terms of our day-to-day work this does not mean that we should not execute the earlier decision, which says that we want significantly to broaden our state relations with the Chinese, and strive to make contact with them. Whether Comrade Ilku should go, or the dance group should come, is debatable, A proper order of priorities needs to be drawn up here: we should press for the broadening of state, political, economic and cultural relations. This should be the order of priorities!

In our experience it is, unfortunately, possible to sense a certain time-lag. The same was true with Yugoslavia. When we told them that they must be a bit more reserved, months later they were still pressing for the broadening of relations, and when we said that relations need to be strengthened, half a year later they were still lessening them. This time-lag must be diminished, because it is damaging. We have to be quicker with such matters; this would also be furthered by informing leaders more regularly and in more detail.

So the Central Committee must be informed in great detail. The Party members must also be informed, using internal, verbal reports, in as much detail as possible. Press propaganda is yet another matter - we will build this whole thing into the Vietnam question.

Source: MNL-OL, M-KS-288 f. 5/379. ö.e.

MAIN ACTORS²¹

Compiled by János KEMÉNY

APRÓ, Antal (1913-1994) raised in an orphanage, he became a painter. He joined the trade union in 1929, and in 1930 he joined a union dominated by communists, and became a member of the illegal communist party in 1931. He participated in organizing strikes and other illegal activities at the time. Due to his activities, he was imprisoned seven times by the authorities before and during the Second World War. After the war he was entrusted with organizing and leading the trade union department of the communist party, became a member of the provisional national legislature. From 1946 he became a member of the Central Leadership of the Hungarian Workers' Party, and held various positions mostly in connection with organizational work at the trade unions. In 1953 he became the minister for the building material industry but in the Nagy government he lost some of his important roles temporarily. He became a figure for the rehabilitation of victims of show trials, during the Nagy government. As the 1956 revolution broke out, he became a member of the newly established Military Committee, which was formally tasked with defeating the revolution and became a member of the Soviet supported Kádár government. From 1957 until 1971 he was a deputy in the Council of Ministers. From 1961 he led the government commission on foreign affairs, and was the permanent delegate to the Comecon. He became president of the Hungarian parliament in 1971, and he held this position until 1984. He went into retirement at the end of 1984.²²

BÍRÓ, József (1921-) technician, welder, economist. He became head of the London Trade Office (1957-1960), and deputy minister (1962-1963), from 1963 until 1979 he was minister for foreign trade.²³

BISZKU, Béla (1921-2016) Born into a peasant family, his family moved to Budapest in 1929. There he finished his schools and learnt to become a tool mechanic, and worked as such until 1942. He joined a union of steel workers, and actively participated in the resistance by supplying weapons. In 1945 he became a member of the communist party, and worked in

²¹ Short biographical sketches of Hungarian political figures found in the documents.

²² Apró Antal, Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága

<https://www.neb.hu>

²³ Bíró József; Ki kicsoda? in: Bencsik Péter (ed.): Az államszocializmus kora Magyarországon és Kelet-Közép-Európában

<http://allamszocializmus.lapunk.hu/?modul=oldal&tartalom=718655>

party organs in Budapest. In 1951 he was demoted from his position, due to family issues. He remained active in the party organization and in 1956 he joined Kádár and started to reorganize the party apparatus in Budapest. He became a central figure in the new regime, and was named interior minister (1957-1961) and played a central role in the retaliation. He became a Member of Parliament, and remained a member until 1985. In 1961 he was made vice president of the Ministerial Committee (1961-1962), and in 1962 he was named a member of the Secretariat of the Central Committee (1962-1978). He had an important role in party organizational work. Because of the economic reform plans, he distanced himself from Kádár and became opposed to him. He was relieved from his duties as secretary of the Central Committee in 1978 and was sent into retirement, in 1980 he was removed from the Politburo, and in 1985 from the Central Committee as well. Until 1989 he held a position in the Central Council of the Hungarian Trade Unions. He was tried for his activities in 1956 and its aftermath in 2014-2015, receiving a short prison sentence.²⁴

FOCK, Jenő (1916-2001) He learned as a technician and before the war worked as one. In 1931 he joined the youth organization of the trade union, and in 1932 he participated in activities of the illegal Hungarian Association of the Communist Youth Workers. He also joined the Social Democratic Party in 1933. He was drafted in 1939 and was arrested for his activities in 1940 and spent three years in military prisons. He escaped in 1944 and waited for the arrival of Soviet troops. He joined the Communist Party in 1945, became a member of the provisional legislative body. He worked on the workers' issues of the heavy industries. He was named in 1951 as deputy minister for defense industry, a few months later as deputy for machine industry. In 1954 he became the leader of the Hungarian trade office in Berlin, in 1955 he became the one of the secretaries of Central Council of the Hungarian Trade Unions, and in 1956 he was elected as a substitute member of Central Leadership of the Hungarian Workers' Party. After the defeat of rebellion in 1956, he became a member of the Kádár leadership circle. In 1957 he became the member of Politburo, in 1958 he became a Member of Parliament. He was in charge of economic issues. In 1961 he became a deputy in the Presidential Council. He took part in the planning of economic reforms, which would have given a bigger role for market economic methods. As these plans became shelved, he was sent

²⁴ Biszku Béla Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága
<https://www.neb.hu/asset/phpc7CWuX.pdf>

into retirement in 1975, but remained a member of the Politburo until 1980 and a member of the Central Committee until 1989.²⁵

ILKU, Pál (1912-1973) was born to a peasant family in Czechoslovakia. Having earned a degree as a teacher in 1932, he came into contact with the mass organizations with communist background. He became a devoted member, publishing articles and taking an active role in organizations. He joined the Czechoslovak Communist Party in 1937, becoming a youth organizer. After the territory was re-annexed to Hungary, he was arrested, released and placed under police supervision. In 1944 he joined the armed resistance. After the war he relocated to Hungary, where he became a member of the Hungarian Communist Party. He organized and lead a party school, held a party position in the city of Pécs and was elected to be a member of the provisional legislature, and he was a member of the legislature until his death (with the exception of one legislative period). He was named to be the deputy head of agitation and propaganda department. He was also named given the rank of colonel (later lieutenant general) of the Political Main Directorate of the Defense Ministry. He was sent to a military academy in the Soviet Union, from where he was called back in 1956 to lead and reorganize the armed forces. In 1958 he was named as deputy culture minister responsible for lower and middle education, becoming minister in 1961 until his death. He was also named a member of the Central Committee in 1958, and was named reserve member of the Politburo until 1970.²⁶

KÁDÁR, János (1912-1989) born out of wedlock in Fiume, he was the son a soldier and a maid. He took the family name of his mother, only took the name Kádár in 1945. He learned to be a typewriter mechanic, but couldn't find a permanent workplace. He joined the youth group of the illegally functioning communist party in 1931, was arrested multiple times before the war. In 1937 he joined the Social Democratic Party, and worked in the party apparatus. In 1940 he joined the illegal communist movement, and later became a Central Committee member. He disbanded and reorganized the communist party as the Peace Party, for which he was reprimanded after the war. He had important party functions from 1945, becoming deputy secretary general in 1946 (he held the position until 1951). He was named interior minister in 1948, and played a role in the organization of show trials. He was arrested in 1951 with other officials, but was rehabilitated in 1954. In 1956 he was chosen by the

²⁵ Fock Jenő, Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága
<https://www.neb.hu/asset/php4wGGVm.pdf>

²⁶ Ilku Pál, Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága
<https://www.neb.hu/asset/phplZBtIN.pdf>

Soviets to head the new government. He was named a member of the Central Committee and Politburo, and first secretary (with also being the prime minister between 1956 and 1958, and also between 1961 and 1965) and held various other positions as well. He consolidated the communist system in Hungary. Kádár also took an interest in the improvement of living standards and initiated reforms in 1968, but had to backtrack. In foreign policy, from the 1970s he acted increasingly independently, but with Soviet interests in mind. Due to economic problems in Hungary, he relied on Western partners to keep living standards at a relatively high level through loans. In 1985 he was named general secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. In the 1980s the economic crisis deepened, and he denied the seriousness of the problems. In 1988 he was sidelined with some of his closest associates due to the popular pressure. Combined with his declining health, he was removed from all his positions and died shortly thereafter.²⁷

KÁLLAI, Gyula (1910-1996) originally trained as a journalist, he was a member of the Hungarian Communist Party from 1931. He worked for the daily Népszava, and later for other dailies. After the war he held various state and party positions, becoming a member of the Central Leadership of the Hungarian Workers' Party (1945-1951), and was named foreign minister in 1949 until his arrest on false charges in 1951. He was rehabilitated in 1954. He held cultural leadership positions, and only shortly before the revolution of 1956 was he named a member of the Central Leadership. After the revolution he became a member of the Central Committee and Politburo, minister of culture (1957-1958), state minister (1958-1960) deputy prime minister (1960-1965), prime minister (1965-1967), speaker of the Hungarian parliament (1967-1971) and a member of the Presidential Council (1967-1989).²⁸

KOMÓCSIN, Zoltán (1932-1974) He had humble family origins, learned to become a trader. He joined the youth organization of the Social Democratic Party in 1938, he joined the trade union in 1939. After Soviet troops occupied Hungary, he joined the communist youth organization, a short time later also the party. He held various party position, until 1950, when he was elected as a member of parliament (1950-1974). He was sent to study to the Soviet Union, and after he came back, held high state and party positions. He was a member of the

²⁷ Kádár János, Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága
<https://www.neb.hu/asset/phpuoKyAw.pdf>

²⁸ Kállai Gyula; Ki kicsoda? in: Bencsik Péter (ed.): Az államszocializmus kora Magyarországon és Kelet-Közép-Európában
<http://allamszocializmus.lapunk.hu/?modul=oldal&tartalom=718668>

Provisional Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and helped to reorganize the party. He led the youth organization (1957-1961), was named editor in chief of the Hungarian daily Népszabadság (1961-1965). He was named regular member of the Politburo (1962-1974) and became the secretary of the foreign relations of the Central Committee (1965-1974). He was opposed to the economic reform plans in 1968, and started to form opposition against Kádár inside the HSWP. He fell ill in 1973 and died a short time later.²⁹

PEHR, Imre (1914-1977) He trained to be a doctor in Italy (1932-1938). After earning his university leaving certificate, he was drafted into the Hungarian army, served as a driver in Budapest (1940-1942), and was later transferred into the forced labor service (1942-1944). He was captured by the Soviets and was a prisoner of war until 1947. After the war, from 1948 to 1965, he became a civilian worker, later an officer of the Hungarian military intelligence service MNVK 2 (Magyar Néphadsereg Vezérkar 2. Csoportfőnökség – Hungarian People's Army General Staff 2nd Directorate). He later became a diplomat, serving in Switzerland and Italy, becoming ambassador in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (1965-1970) also accredited to Laos. After 1970 he worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.³⁰

PÉTER, János (1910-1999) A Calvinistic minister, he started working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1945. He became a bishop of the Calvinistic Church (1949-1956). After the revolution of 1956 he held positions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was a member of the Council of Ministers. He became deputy foreign minister (1958-1961), and joined the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party in 1961, becoming a member of Central Committee in 1968 and remained a member until 1980. He became foreign minister in 1961 and held the position until 1973. From 1973 he was deputy speaker for the Hungarian parliament.³¹

RADVÁNYI, János (1922-2016) After finishing secondary education, he became a trainee for skilled work (1940-1944). During the Second World War he was drafted into the forced labor service. After the war he studied, and joined the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in

²⁹ Komócsin Zoltán Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága
<https://www.neb.hu/asset/phpR7ev2n.pdf>

³⁰ Baráth Magdolna, Gecsényi Lajos (ed.): Főkonzulok, követek és nagykövetek, 1945-1990, MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2016, p. 238

³¹ Péter János; Ki kicsoda? in: Bencsik Péter (ed.): Az államszocializmus kora Magyarországon és Kelet-Közép-Európában
<http://allamszocializmus.lapunk.hu/?modul=oldal&tartalom=1203950>

1947. He worked as a junior diplomat in Turkey, Paris and Switzerland between 1948 and 1953. He was fired from the Ministry in 1954, but returned in 1957. He became charge d'affaires, consul-general and ambassador in Syria. He returned to the Ministry in 1958, until he was named charge d'affaires for the US in 1962. He defected to the US in 1967 for which he was sentenced to death in absentia. In 1971 he earned a doctoral degree at the Mississippi State University and taught history of diplomacy. He was founding member of the Center for International and Security Studies.³²

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Ilku Pál, Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága

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Kádár János, Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága

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