

E-Dossier Series Nr. 6.

Documentary Evidence

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

VOLUME IV

Post-Mediation Events – Part One
(February 1966 – September 1966)

Edited by

Csaba BÉKÉS, James G. HERSHBERG, János KEMÉNY and
Zoltán SZÓKE

COLD WAR HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER

BUDAPEST

2019

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About this E-Dossier series

The E-Dossier series presenting the Hungarian mediation efforts between the U.S and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) started in 2017 with the aim of shedding light on this still little known piece of diplomatic history. The first volume, with the subtitle [The Early stages of the Mediation 1965](#) was published at the end of 2017, containing eight documents, describing the genesis of the diplomatic efforts.

The second collection of documents was published in two volumes at the end of 2018, because the amount of material made it advisable to split it into two: [Mediation Efforts Part One](#) and [Mediation Efforts Part Two](#). Part One contains a short report about an ambassadorial meeting and two lengthy documents about the Hungarian efforts, one written to the foreign minister of the Hungarian People's Republic, János Péter by the Hungarian charge d'affaires in Washington, János Radványi, the other being the minutes of the HSWP Politburo meeting covering the issue. Part Two contains 12 documents, covering Hungarian Foreign Ministry documents about communications with the Vietnamese, Polish and U.S. counterparts, as well as reports and minutes covering the issue.

The current dossier contains the documents of Volume 4. It details the post-mediation diplomatic activities of the Hungarians, including some of the exchanges with the Vietnamese, Polish and Soviet partners. It provides a valuable insight into Hungarian and Soviet Bloc thinking about the Vietnam War. (For a more detailed overview see the Contents of the Current E-Dossier.)

The second part of the post-mediation diplomatic activities (Volume V, October, 1966 – May, 1967) will be published in 2020.

INTRODUCTION

Developments after the failure of the Hungarian mediation effort in 1966

János KEMÉNY

The failure of the mediation did not end the efforts of the Eastern Bloc to find a political solution to the war in Vietnam.¹ The war itself however developed its own dynamics, which would prove difficult to break in the years following the mediation effort. Despite the failure, the Hungarian leadership did not give up, and tried to maintain its role as a mediator. As the documents in the current E-Dossier show, the Hungarians tried to walk a fine line, maintaining positive relations with the U.S. and offering to act as intermediaries if new proposals came up as well as supporting the Soviet line in international bodies, such as the UN, and coordinating their efforts with partners like the Poles. The dynamics of the war, however, made things for mediation rather difficult.

In the Vietnam War, 1966 stood for the continuation of the Americanization of the war, with the build-up of U.S. forces in the Republic of Vietnam (RVN). As a reaction, 1966 also saw intensification in military activities from the DRV's side. The U.S. armed forces launched big unit sweeps in the South-Vietnamese countryside (such as Operation ATTLEBORO, which involved 22 000 US and South Vietnamese troops and the use of tactical as well as strategic air power).² That year, the U.S. also intensified its strategic bombing campaign, in order to force the DRV to decrease its support for the Southern war effort, and possibly force Hanoi to start some kind of direct talks with the U.S.³ The U.S. nevertheless was open to mediation and there were Western initiatives after the failure of the Hungarian and Polish efforts. The best known example for that is the so called "Ronning Mission", which was an effort started by the Canadian government and consisted of sending Chester Ronning, a retired diplomat to the region. The Canadian intention was to send him to the PRC and the DRV as well, but the Chinese declined to receive him. The North-

¹ For an overview of the Hungarian mediation efforts in 1965 see: Csaba Békés: Introduction. East European secret mediation during the Vietnam War. In: Csaba Békés – János Kemény (Eds.): *Documentary Evidence on the Hungarian Mediation Efforts between the US and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (1965 – 1967) Volume I. The Early Stages of the Mediation (1965)*. Cold War History Research Center, 2017. Cold War History Research Center E-Dossier Series, No. 1.

² Turley, William S.: *The Second Indo-China War: A Concise Political and Military History*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2009, p. 113

³ Tilford, Earl H. Jr.: *What the Air Force did in Vietnam and Why*, Air University Press, 1991, pp. 118-120 https://media.defense.gov/2017/Apr/07/2001728434/-1/-1/0/B_0040_TILFORD_SETUP.PDF

Vietnamese did receive him on two occasions, and Ronning was able to talk to senior officials in the government, but he was unable to achieve a breakthrough.⁴

The leadership of the DRV was in a difficult position due to the increasing casualties and losses, the domestic debates about the conduct of the war as well as international developments, such as the Cultural Revolution starting in 1966 in the PRC and the deepening of the Sino-Soviet split. The U.S. bombing had serious effects on the Northern economy, and some part of the Vietnamese leadership in the Vietnamese Workers' Party favored a negotiated settlement, which however was not supported by leading members, according to research conducted by Lien Hang T. Nguyen.⁵ Also, the Vietnamese were in a difficult geostrategic position. They had to be mindful of the Chinese as they were a major supporter of the war effort, and the possibility of a Chinese military intervention was a major deterrent for Washington not to widen the ground war and attack the DRV. The Vietnamese had to make a balancing act and stay out of the dispute in a way, so that neither the Soviet, nor the Chinese cut their support. With the drastic increase in Soviet and Eastern Bloc support and aid this was a difficult task as the PRC viewed the Soviet efforts and encroachment in its backyard rather negatively. The Chinese also viewed the DRV as a buffer zone against the US and they were willing to increase aid to the DRV despite the increasing Soviet efforts.⁶

For the Soviets, competition with the Chinese in the DRV was important, but their increasingly visible political and material support also had drawbacks. The financial burden was great, the issue of Vietnam was souring Western diplomatic relations, and the Soviets had difficulties with their Vietnamese counterparts, as the Vietnamese were uneasy about the Soviet view of the war. Soviet support increased drastically, and in 1968 the Soviets became the biggest supplier of arms for the DRV. Soviet influence, however, did not grow according to its "investments", it remained rather limited. Therefore Soviet political efforts towards the DRV leadership had to be subtle, in order not to alienate the Vietnamese partners.⁷ That is why the role of Eastern Bloc proxies, such as the Hungarians was valued by the Soviets during the mediation efforts.

The Hungarians, probably unaware of some of the developments mentioned above, were motivated in trying to maintain their position as an intermediary. This may be due to

⁴ Pentagon Papers VI. C. 1.: Settlement if the Conflict: History of Contacts (1965-1966) pp 149-151 <https://nara-media-001.s3.amazonaws.com/arcmedia/research/pentagon-papers/Pentagon-Papers-Part-VI-C-1.pdf>.

⁵ Nguyen, Lien-Hang T.: Hanoi's War: An International History of the War for Peace in Vietnam, The University of North Carolina Press, 2012, pp. 76-77

⁶ Khoo, Nicholas: Collateral Damage: Sino-Soviet Rivalry and the Termination of the Sino-Vietnamese Alliance, Columbia University Press, 2011 pp. 27-28 and 31

⁷ Gaiduk, Ilya W.: The Soviet Union and the Vietnam War, Ivan R. Dee, 1996, pp. 43-45, 64 and 67

several different reasons. First, the Hungarians wanted to score points with the Soviet leadership, as a partial success in the mediation would be seen as a great achievement, after the failure of many Western and some Eastern initiatives. The start of negotiations between the U.S and the DRV no doubt would have had the positive side effect of decreasing the ever growing economic and financial burden on the Eastern Bloc, which the support of the DRV started to entail. Also, a secondary objective may have been to improve relations with the U.S. as relations between the two countries were still not fully settled after the Revolution of 1956.

Historically, we now can state that during the years from 1965 to 1967 the situation for negotiations was not ripe, predominantly due to the role of the Chinese leaders who continually exerted pressure on the DRV to reject any talks with the U.S. and fight until the final victory over the Americans. According to one source, an estimated 2000 attempts had been made during this period to establish some form of contact between the two sides, and none of them succeeded.⁸ The Hungarian initiative was a promising attempt, and accordingly, the main motivation of the Hungarian leadership remained that it could play an important role in the settlement of the conflict. This, however, proved unrealistic, and open negotiations between the warring sides could only start in 1968, after the “Tet” offensive, and an agreement was concluded as late as January 1973, which merely ensured the exit of the U.S. from the war, but not the end of it.

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⁸ Brigham, Robert K.: *Guerrilla Diplomacy: The NLF’s Foreign relations and the Viet Nam War*, Cornell University Press, 1999, p. 59

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Contents of the current E-Dossier

Document 1 is a summary about the communication between the Hungarians and the representatives of the DRV. The document, which was compiled by the Hungarian ambassador to Hanoi, contains soft criticism of the Vietnamese, as in the opinion of the ambassador, they were not telling everything to the Hungarians, which would have been necessary for the peace effort. The attachments of the document contain the statement of the DRV as well as a summary of the exchange of messages between the Hungarian and Vietnamese sides.

Document 2 is a report of the Hungarian charge d'affaires to Washington, János Radványi about the talks between U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk and the Soviet ambassador to Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin. The talks were centered on the issue of Vietnam, and according to the Radványi's report, Rusk repeated much of what he has offered to Radványi during the Hungarian mediation effort.

Document 3 is a report about the visit of the Polish deputy foreign minister in Budapest. In the part dealing with the issue of Vietnam, the Polish partner states, the according to their impressions, the Vietnamese could be more willing to negotiate, as the situation was more favorable to them.

Document 4 is a report of Radványi about a conversation he had with Under Secretary of State George Ball. Radványi reports that Ball encouraged the Hungarian side to act as intermediaries between the U.S. and the DRV in the future, and Radványi reaffirmed the Hungarian willingness to do so.

Document 5 is an example for the Eastern Bloc cooperation on the Vietnamese issue in the UN. The report details how, on a Soviet initiative, the representatives of the Eastern Bloc countries were asked to condemn a letter sent by the U.S. ambassador to the UN to members of the Security Council on the issue of Vietnam. The document highlights some of the diplomatic issues in this field, including problems with some friendly countries. In the attachment of the report the text of the Hungarian letter to the UN SC is made available to the readers.

Document 6 is a report to the Politburo of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP) about the visit of a Vietnamese delegation. It details the talks between the Vietnamese, led by Le Thanh Nghi and the Hungarians, including a detailed report on the events from the Vietnamese perspective. The report discusses the reaffirmation of the

Hungarian support to the DRV, including some aspects of the Hungarian economic and military aid.

Document 7 deals with the preparation of the trip of the Hungarian foreign minister, János Péter, to Hanoi in September 1966. The Polish Foreign Ministry advises the Hungarians who had asked their Polish counterparts for advice on the trip, and the wider issues of supporting the DRV and the possibility of renewed negotiations between the U.S. and the DRV.

Document 8 is a detailed report about Soviet –Vietnamese talks in Moscow on the issue of support to the DRV. The document details the Vietnamese stance on issues of the war as seen by the Soviets, revealing their misgivings on some of the issues, including the accuracy of the information provided by the Vietnamese and their reluctance to utilize the help provided by Moscow according to Soviet vision.

Document 9 is a report to the HSWP's Central Committee about the visit of General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Brezhnev and secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Andropov. The report details the Soviet view on the "Chinese question" in the international arena. The report also details the views of the Soviet leadership on the issue of the Vietnam War and the role of the war in the Soviet–Chinese relationship. The Soviet leaders echo their displeasure vis-à-vis the DRV on the same issues and difficulties covered in the previous report, adding that some problems might be caused by the Chinese, who encourage the Vietnamese to ask for an irrationally high level of support from the Soviets. The document contains a remarkable comment by János Kádár on the potential outcome of the conflict. He argues that in case the failure of the mediation efforts led to an escalation of the war and eventually to an American landing in North Vietnam, the DRV may ask for direct military help from the Soviet Bloc. This, however, must be rejected, even if this would cause "great moral and political harm" to the Communist movement worldwide.

ABBREVIATIONS

CC	Central Committee
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
DRV	Democratic Republic of Vietnam
EC	Executive Committee
HSWP	Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party
HWP	Hungarian Workers' Party
ICSC	International Commission of Supervision and Control
JCP	Japanese Communist Party
KISZ	[Hungarian] Young Communist League (Kommunista Ifjúsági Szövetség)
MNL OL	Hungarian National Archive (Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár – Országos Levéltár)
NLF	National Liberation Front
PC	Political Committee (Politburo)
PRC	People's Republic of China
RVN	Republic of Vietnam
U.S.	United States
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly

DOCUMENT 1
Messages of the DRV Foreign Minister to János Péter
February 3, 1966

Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic

TOP SECRET ..!

Made: in 3 copies

2 for the Center

1 for the Embassy

Hanoi, February 3, 1966

Subject: Exchange of messages
between Comrade Péter and the
Foreign Minister of the DRV

Typed by Erzsébet Várnagy

Attached: 1-1 envelopes

43/Szig.t./1966.

In the attachment to this report I'm sending the written responses of Comrade Foreign Minister TRINH to the messages of Comrade Péter, as well as the statement of the Foreign Ministry of the DRV from January 4, 1966. I've already made my reports about the delivery and the discussion during the delivery using other means.

During the Soviet-Vietnamese interparty talks the Vietnamese comrades have stated, that they greatly value the help of the Hungarian party and state, which is made in order to solve the Vietnamese situation. They were able to use the valuable information given by us in the evaluation of the situation and in the creation of their response.

In my opinion the responses and forwarded information of the Vietnamese comrades to us were not as straightforward as would have been necessary. For example, to our question about what happened in Rangoon, we received different information from the foreign minister and his deputy. I think it would have been better for the objective, had the Vietnamese informed us about the fact, that some kind of a liaison had been established between the US ambassador and the Vietnamese negotiator in Rangoon for more than two weeks, at the time our embassy forwarded the message of Comrade Péter. One has to assume, that with this knowledge opinions would have turned out different, especially when Rusk made his offer in this regard.

Dr. Imre Pehr
ambassador

Attachment 1

Declaration of the spokesperson of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the subject of the so-called 'peace efforts' recently undertaken by the United States (4 January, 1966)

Recently, the government of the United States has launched a grand campaign of deception on matters of peace, all while resorting to the 'temporary suspension of bombardments' in North Vietnam as a sign of 'good will'. President Johnson has declared several times that the United States are determined to 'exhaust all the prospects for peace', and will 'search for peace tirelessly'. The American government has sent a number of envoys to negotiate abroad and has made a number of 'peace plans' which are in fact merely a repetition of old proposals.

The fact is that despite repeated military and political defeats, the American policy of aggression in Vietnam remains unchanged. The U.S. sabotaged the 1954 Geneva Accords in an impudent fashion, despite their agreement to abide by them. They continue to refuse to withdraw their troops from South Vietnam. They continue to shamelessly declare that they will keep their 'promises' with regard to the puppet government in Saigon, a creature of their own creation, and this in the goal of clinging to the South and perpetuating the division of Vietnam. They still refuse to recognize the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam, the only genuine representative of the South Vietnamese population and the leader of its struggle against American imperialist aggression. They still refuse to let the South Vietnamese population manage its own affairs, in conformity with the program of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam. What is more, they continue with all their energy to use American and puppet troops to burn down and raze villages, harvests or massacre the South Vietnamese population. Their insolence is such that they have even demanded the South Vietnamese population lay down their arms and accept the rotten puppet regime in Saigon. They impudently assume the right to launch aerial attacks against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, an independent and sovereign nation. They speak of respect for the 1954 Geneva Accords, yet still refuse to recognize the four-point position of the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, which is no more than the military and political provisions of said accords. They still play the same tune, that of 'unconditional

discussions' in fact designed to allow the realization of negotiations from a position of force, with the goal of imposing on the Vietnamese people their own conditions.

The peace proposals from American authorities completely contradict their maneuvers and acts of war. While making great fanfare about their 'peace efforts', the United States are feverishly preparing to double the number of their troops in South Vietnam. The 3rd brigade of the 25th American division has just been sent there for the occupation of Pleiku. The United States continue to use toxic chemical products as weapon of war, and have made public declarations to this effect, while B-52 strategic bombers continue to bombard numerous densely populated regions. In the North, the United States have threatened to bombard the populous industrial regions of Hanoi and Haiphong. American planes have not ceased their serious violations of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam's airspace, for the purpose of spying and preparing new crimes. President Johnson has again threatened to take 'strong measures' in Vietnam. In the meantime, the United States have intensified their attacks against liberated zones in Laos and brazenly authorized American troops to enter middle and lower Laos, as well as Cambodia, extending the war in South Vietnam to these two nations.

The facts have proven that each time the American authorities have sought to intensify their war of aggression, they speak more of peace. The current American 'peace efforts' constitute a simple attempt to appease public opinion in the United States and in a world which is in the midst of an energetic uprising against America's policy of aggression in Vietnam. The United States seeks to use the world's authentic aspirations for peace to present black as white, act as champions of peace, slander the Vietnamese people and give themselves a new pretext to take new steps in the undertaking of their plans to intensify and extend the war. Despite the American authorities' efforts to camouflage their aggression through sophistry, however, they are fooling nobody.

The United States is located thousands of kilometers away from Vietnam, and has never been touched by the Vietnamese people. The American government has no right to send troops to invade South Vietnam or launch aerial attacks against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. It has no right to impose any condition whatsoever on the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam relating to the stoppage of these attacks.

The aggression of the American imperialists is the deeper origin, and immediate cause of, the current serious situation in Vietnam. The cessation of such aggression will immediately bring peace back to this country.

The Vietnamese people ardently seek peace so as to be able to build their nation, but know very well that to have real peace, it is important to have real independence. The invariable position of the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam consists of a strict respect for the 1954 Geneva Accords, and the correct execution of their fundamental clauses as expressed in the following points:

1. Reaffirmation of the fundamental national rights of the Vietnamese people: peace, independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. In conformity with the Geneva Accords, the government of the United States must withdraw its troops, military personnel and any type of arms from South Vietnam, close its bases there and abrogate its 'military alliance' with Saigon. In conformity with the Geneva Accords, the government of the United States must end its acts of war against the North, and completely cease any violations against the territory and sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.
2. While waiting for the reunification of Vietnam through peaceful means, and while our nation remains provisionally divided into two zones, it is important to strictly respect the military provisions of the 1954 Geneva Accords, such as: abstention from international military alliances by both zones, a ban on the establishment of foreign military bases and the introduction of foreign troops or military personnel on their territory.
3. The affairs of South Vietnam must be dealt with by its own people, in conformity with the program of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam, without foreign intervention.
4. The reunification of Vietnam through peaceful means will be accomplished through the population of both zones, without foreign interference.

A political settlement of the Vietnamese problem will only be feasible once the government of the United States has accepted the four-point position of the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, proven this acceptance through concrete acts, and at the same time definitively and unconditionally ceased aerial attacks and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

The just struggle and constant goodwill of the Vietnamese people and the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam have always received strong support from peace-loving governments and peoples the world over. The Vietnamese people are deeply thankful for this support. The government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam calls on socialist governments and peoples in Asia, Africa and Latin America and the rest of the world, the American people included, to support the just and patriotic liberation struggle of the Vietnamese people even more actively and oppose more resolutely than ever all imperialist American plans to intensify the war and all their deceptive peace maneuvers.

As long as the American imperialists continue their war of aggression in Vietnam, use troops from the United States and its satellite nations to invade the South, and launch aerial attacks against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the population of both zones will not fear sacrifices and will resist until the end, fulfilling their sacred duty to defend the sovereignty of the fatherland and the independence of the nation, and to contribute to the defense of world peace.

(4 January, 1966)

Attachment 2

Communications by DRV Foreign Minister Trinh to János Péter

1. American acts of aggression are unchanging. The United States still seek to transform South Vietnam into a neo-colony and an American military base, thereby indefinitely prolonging the division of Vietnam.

The government of the United States continues to refuse the four-point position of our government and the 5 points enunciated in the Declaration of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam. It has taken no practical action in the direction of such an

acceptance, but rather feverishly prepares for new military adventures: sending reinforcements to South Vietnam and intensifying the war of destruction against the North.

2. If you deem it necessary to express your views to the Americans, we propose that you stress once more the following points: firstly, that it is the right of the Vietnamese people to sort out their own problems. That the government of the Hungarian People's Republic supports the four-point position of the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and the 5 points enunciated in the Declaration of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam. And that if the Americans seek something, that they should address their queries directly to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam.

Our position is as follows: we accept to meet all those, Americans included, asking to talk to us, so that they may make their point and also understand our position. These are normal diplomatic activities, and it is after the initial request is made from the other side that we will decide whether they should be made public or not.

Our position and viewpoint on the Vietnamese problem are known to you, and have had your support. They are as follows:

A political settlement of the Vietnamese problem will only be feasible once the government of the United States has accepted the four-point position of the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, proven this acceptance through action, and definitively and unconditionally ceased aerial attacks and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

On their end, the United States have up until now given no indication of any change whatsoever in their acts of aggression in Vietnam.

Attachment 3
Aide-mémoire of the DRV Foreign Ministry to János Péter

1. Thank you for your information from January 7.
2. Up until now the United States have given no indication of any change whatsoever in their acts of aggression in Vietnam. In the South, they are currently launching frenetic attacks, committing the most barbaric crimes and at the same time preparing themselves for new military adventures in both zones.

The so-called peace offensive, at this very moment the object of a loud American propaganda campaign, is solely aimed at appeasing public opinion in the United States and the wider world, profiting from the legitimate aspirations for peace of the world's peoples, constraining the Vietnamese people to negotiate under American condition and serving as a pretext for new and extremely dangerous escalations of conflict.

3. A political settlement of the Vietnamese problem will only be feasible once the government of the United States has accepted the four-point position of the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, proven this acceptance through concrete acts, and at the same time definitively and unconditionally ceased aerial attacks and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.
4. The American 14 points constitute an affirmation of the United States' refusal to withdraw their troops from South Vietnam and of their demand that the South Vietnamese population lay down their arms and capitulate.
5. The substance of what our comrade the Hungarian chargé d'affaires stated to Rusk, the subject of your information from January 7, risks creating the erroneous impression that the current American peace initiative is acceptable and has found support on the Vietnamese side. At the current moment, the United States are seeking to present our position in a false light and deceive public opinion on their peace offensive. It is a strong possibility that they may publish the content of the discussions between the Hungarian chargé d'affaires and Rusk, with the goal of spreading

confusion amongst the public and causing suspicion in the socialist camp. This would lead to regrettable complications.

6. As we told you last time, it is up to Vietnam to sort out the Vietnamese problem. If you deem it necessary to respond to the Americans, we propose that you stress once more our position and our viewpoint on the Vietnamese problem, which you know and have offered support for.

[Source: MNL OL XIX-J-1-j-Vietn-IV-14/001409-1966 (111. d.)

Translated by: János Kemény, Samuel Blanès Targett]

DOCUMENT 2
Report on the Rusk–Dobrynin meeting
24 March, 1966

144-1/1966

Tné (sic)

Strictly Confidential

Washington, 24. March 1966

002350

Subject: Rusk–Dobrynin Meeting

Comrade Dobrynin Soviet Ambassador travels home in order to participate in the CPSU Congress, and prior to leaving has met Secretary of State Rusk. According to the information received from the Soviet comrades during the meeting all questions of international significance have been discussed.

The central topic of the meeting was of course Vietnam. Rusk basically had no novel proposals, repeated the known American position and strongly emphasized that the United States would like a settlement in Vietnam based on a peaceful political solution as soon as possible. Rusk expressed his hope that the Soviet comrades shall be able to meet with the Vietnamese leaders participating in the Congress, and recommend suitable solutions in the interest of peaceful settlement. On their part, they are still ready to negotiate with the representatives of the Vietnamese.

Comrade Dobrynin asked if there has been any change in the official American position regarding the Viet Cong, since lately there has been much talk in the United States that a peaceful solution is possible only if the United States establishes direct contact with the representatives of the Liberation Front. At this point Rusk again gave the usual response that the Viet Cong will not find it difficult to have its voice heard at any conference, there is no insurmountable obstacle for the Viet Cong to represent themselves in negotiations.

Comrade Dobrynin said that according to his best knowledge there was no change in the previously stated Soviet position.

The issue of disarmament was discussed as well and Rusk strongly emphasized the signing the nuclear non-proliferation treaty to comrade Dobrynin, but at the same time he

could say nothing new about the West-German government's desire to get nuclear weapons. Rusk especially emphasized the importance of the new American proposal in relation to this, submitted in Geneva. Comrade Dobrynin asked if the United States government invariably insists on on-the-spot inspections in relation to underground nuclear tests, or whether it accepts the correctness of the Soviet argument that modern seismographic equipment, using the newest research, is today suitable to distinguish between underground nuclear tests and earthquakes. Rusk said that experiments on the issue are underway in the United States, West German companies too – according to his information – are conducting relevant research, but thus far could not build a wholly suitable instrument.

Bilateral issues were only very briefly discussed at the meeting. Rusk again expressed his regrets over the back-and-forth around the cultural agreement. The issue of the consular and aviation treaties were also mentioned, but in connection to this Rusk merely said, that the President is trying to find the best time to concretize the two treaties.

János Radványi
Charge d'Affairs

[Source: MNL OL XIX-J-1-j-USA-4-IV-10/002350/1966. (15. d.) translated by Márton Szirmai.]

DOCUMENT 3

Memorandum on the visit of Polish Deputy Foreign Minister Winiewicz

10 June, 1966

Péter Mód

Memorandum

Subject: The visit of Polish Deputy
Foreign Minister, Comrade
Winiewicz

On the 10th. I received Comrade Winiewicz, who had been invited to Budapest by the Foreign Ministry to spend his holiday here. He provided valuable information concerning the following two topics:

1./ He said that the Polish member of the ICSC had pointed out that during the Commission's latest visit to Hanoi he had gotten the impression that the Vietnamese comrades had now shown an inclination toward negotiations. This had been his impression during his conversation with Pham Van Dong, too, although he had not brought up the issue explicitly. He believed that the Vietnamese comrades had been convinced that the Americans had now been in a bad situation but it would improve as soon as the rainy season passed. Therefore, the present period would be more favorable for negotiations. According to him this was supported by the information that the Vietnamese comrades invited Ambassador Chester Ronning (Canada) to repeat his visit.

2./ [paragraph on Polish–Vatican relations not related to Vietnam].

Budapest, 10 June, 1966

[Source: MNL OL, XIX-J-1-j 1966, Polish Relations, Foreign Ministry records, Top Secret, box 77, 001383/10/1966, obtained by James Hershberg and translated by Zoltán Szőke.]

DOCUMENT 4

Discussion with Under Secretary Ball about the Vietnamese question

30 June, 1966

16-11/1966.

Top Secret!

Washington, 30. June, 1966

Subject: Discussion with Under Secretary Ball about the Vietnamese question

To Comrade János P é t e r
Foreign Minister

The report contains the inquiry of Under-Secretary Ball about the potential message of Comrade Péter

B u d a p e s t.

Under-Secretary Ball initiated a conversation about the Vietnamese issue during the dinner held in honor of the financial delegation led by Comrade Réti.

He stated, that the Americans are still grateful for the Hungarian activities exercised during the 'peace offensive'. They still hope, that North Vietnam will understand, that they do not have any intention to destroy the system in Hanoi, but they have invested too much in their support for South Vietnam, just to withdraw from there.

As Secretary Rusk has written in his letter to Comrade Péter, the Americans would happily welcome any future ideas or proposals, because they are committed to the peaceful settlement of the conflict as soon as possible.

As to myself, I kindly reminded the Under Secretary what Comrade Péter emphasized in his letter: the initiative should come from the American side. Ball then asked me when I intend to start my holiday and whether will I travel home or not.

In my reply, I told him that according to my current schedule, I am leaving around the 10. June for home to start my holiday. Ball said that before I leave it would be desirable to further discuss this matter.

As to myself, I assured the Under-Secretary, that like in the earlier period, I am at his disposal, but I kindly ask him to take into account the proposals contained in Comrade Péter's letter. Ball appreciatively noted my request.

/János Radványi/
Charge d'affairs

[Source: MOL XIX-J-1-j-Vietn.-IV-43-00549/34-1966 (112. d.)]

DOCUMENT 5

Hungarian memorandum to the UN Security Council on the issue of Vietnam

1 August, 1966

66/3/1966. T. S.
Rapporteur: László Pintér

TOP SECRET!
New York, 1 August, 1966

Made: in 4 copies
Center: 3 copies
Mission: 1 copy
Typed by: U.E.

Subject: Memorandum to the
Security Council on the
Issue of Vietnam
Reference No.: - none
Attachment: 2

We're attaching the copy of our memorandum on the issue of Vietnam, which was sent to the President of the Security Council.

Regarding the preceding events, we report the following.

Goldberg, the U.S. representative at the Security Council, has sent a letter as a Security Council document to all the members, in which he tried to justify the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong.

As a response to the U.S. letter, the Soviet, Belorussian and Bulgarian representatives sent a strongly worded memorandum on 11 July, 1966, and they rejected the letter. Among the friendly countries a proposal came up, according to which all those friendly embassies should also react to the U.S. letter, which are not members of the Security Council. An oral agreement was made, according to which a decision would be made at the next consultation of friendly countries.

The consultation however only took place on 28 July, 1966. The previous day, the Romanian representative announced, that he already sent the memorandum of protest to the Security Council. The other participants decided on an urgent response, with the exception of the Polish comrades, who did not receive any instructions, but probably will decide the same way.

In accordance with the instructions received from home, the attached memorandum was sent on 1 August, 1966.

handwritten signature
ambassador

Attachment
Hungarian letter to the UN Security Council on the issue of Vietnam, 1 August, 1966

No. 373

The Permanent Mission of the Hungarian People's Republic of the United Nations presents its compliments to the President of the Security Council of the United Nations and in connection with the letter of the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations of June 30th, 1966, under the instruction of the Hungarian Government, has the honour to communicate the following:

The Permanent Mission of the Hungarian People's Republic rejects to accept the arguments contained in the said letter because they are contrary to the facts. As it is widely known throughout the world the United States Government continues to wage an aggressive war in Vietnam, suppressing the just national aspirations of the people of South Vietnam and barbarously attacking the sovereign state of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

This shameful war flagrantly contradicts to the accepted norms of international law, to the Charter of the United Nations and violates the provisions of the Geneva Accords of 1954 on Indo-China.

It is not a mere coincidence that the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations sent his letter to the Security Council at the very moment when his Government made a major step in expanding its aggression by bombing Hanoi and Haiphong. This action has been deliberately chosen to camouflage a new fact of aggression, by attempting to use again the United Nations forums as cover.

The Permanent Mission of the Hungarian People's Republic to the United Nations reiterates the well-known position of the Hungarian Government that the only solution to restoring peace in Vietnam lies in the cessation of American aggression there, in the application of the four points program of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the five points program of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam.

The Government of the Hungarian People's Republic, faithfully adhering to the Declaration of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact on the aggression of the United States in Vietnam, signed in Bucharest on 7th July 1966, is ready to render all possible assistance to the Vietnamese people in their just fight against the wanton and unjustifiable aggression of the American imperialism.

The Permanent Mission of the Hungarian People's Republic would be obliged if the President of the Security Council would kindly arrange to have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

The Permanent Mission of the Hungarian People's Republic to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the President of the Security Council of the United Nations the assurances of its highest consideration.

New York, 1 August, 1966

[Source: MNL OL XIX-J-1-j-Vietn-IV-43-004208/1966 (113. d.)

Translated and transcribed by János Kemény]

DOCUMENT 6

Briefing for the Political Committee and the Council of Ministers on the visit and negotiations of the Vietnamese governmental delegation in Hungary from 9–13, September, 1966

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Strictly Confidential!

copies made

Briefing

for the Political Committee and the Council of Ministers on the Hungarian visit and negotiations of the Vietnamese governmental delegation.

(9–13 September, 1966)

Between 9–13 September, 1966 we received in our country the economic governmental delegation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, in order to discuss our military aid for 1967, the 1967 Hungarian–Vietnamese trade and payments treaty, and the training of Vietnamese specialists in Hungary. As on two occasions in the previous year, the DRV delegation was led by comrade Le Thanh Nghi, member of the Vietnamese Workers Party Political Committee, Deputy Prime Minister. The Hungarian negotiating team was headed by comrade Jenő Fock, member of the HSWP PB, Deputy Prime Minister.

I.

Political exchange of views

The leader of the Vietnamese delegation was received by comrade János Kádár during their Hungarian stay.

Comrade Le Thanh Nghi forwarded to comrade János Kádár the warm greetings of his government and people, thanked us for the aid already provided for their patriotic war against American aggression, expressed his pleasure over the strengthening and improving relations between our peoples, then by authority of his government briefed us about the Vietnamese situation and their plans.

At the outset he sketched the preludes to the current Vietnamese situation, then informed us about the events of the 1965-66 “dry season” /November-May/, as follows:

The South Vietnamese situation.

In the dry season the United States increased to 200 000 its occupying force, and wished to strike a decisive blow against the forces of liberation. In November–December of 1965, however, the American army and its puppets suffered heavy defeat, both north of Saigon and in the Western Highlands. The Western Highlands are of special strategic importance for the liberator armies, since the United States sought with its military operations in the region to preclude the arrival of Northern aid to the forces of liberation.

The United States army and the South Vietnamese puppet army, following the setbacks of November-December 1965 prepared in March 1966 for another great offensive, but the Buddhist movements emergent in South Vietnamese cities at that time prevented execution of their plans. Therefore, their offensive planned for the dry season did not succeed, they did not achieve their goals of:

1. Striking a decisive blow against the forces of liberation;
2. Reconquering large swathes of land and their population from the forces of liberation;
3. Consolidating the Saigon puppet regime;

The battle morale and combat effectiveness of American troops lags far behind that of the soldiers of the liberating army. Comparison of the casualties on the two sides shows that generally for every five eliminated soldier of the American or the puppet regime's army, there is one fallen freedom fighter. There have been battles, where the ratio was ten to one, but even in the worst cases two to one.

Although the freedom fighters have sustained losses and face difficulties themselves, their fighting spirit is still good. Both experience and technical readiness have improved further.

On the basis of the victories of the previous period, we may solemnly assert – said comrade Le Thanh Nghi – that we do have the strength to defeat the American aggressors, be their capabilities ever so formidable. We base our belief in victory on the following:

1. By transporting so large an occupying army to South Vietnam, the United States has brought much misery to the South Vietnamese people /inflation, corruption, uncertainty of livelihood, deterioration of general conditions etc./ that as a result the people's resistance, patriotism and hatred of the enemy is steadily on the rise. (Desertion from the puppet army is constant and large scale [written in hand – the translator])
2. The liberating army has the right policies, strategy, has the necessary resolve to continue the fight.

3. The Americans are forced on the defensive, only 30% of their equipment is mobile, thus their technical superiority cannot make itself felt.
4. Although the enemy army is great in numbers, its battle morale is rather low.
5. The terrain and climate advantages not the enemy, but the forces of liberation.

Further plans of the United States.

The United States is preparing another large offensive in the coming dry season, and is aiming to decide the war. ~~They are impelled by the approaching elections too.~~ They are rapidly increasing troop numbers which are already above 300 000, discounting the forces of the 7th Fleet. By the end of the year they want to increase the numbers of the occupying army to over 400 000. This army is supplemented by 3000 aircraft, of which 1000 fighters, and five hundred of the remaining 2000 are reserved for the bombing of North Vietnam.

This force is already larger than the American force deployed during the Korean War.

They are stepping up their North Vietnamese bombing as well in the hope that with “military successes” they can compel their foes to negotiate, where they can bargain from a position of strength.

The following two circumstances are worth examining – said comrade Le Thanh Nghi.

1. Intelligence reports indicate that the United States is planning to extend operations to Laos in the coming dry season. With this they are seeking to cut off the liberator army’s aid from the north. Realization of this plan, however, will encounter great difficulties, because in South Vietnam the freedom fighters strike great blows on them, and in Laos the jungle terrain does not benefit them. Nevertheless, we must prepare for this eventuality, said the head of the Vietnamese delegation.
2. The United States plans to extend the war to North Vietnam as well. This plan too is hampered by their South Vietnamese setbacks on one hand, and on the other hand by the probable reaction of socialist countries. Nevertheless, we are prepared for this eventuality as well – said comrade Le Thanh Nghi.

It is possible that in order to create panic the United States may land smaller units in North Vietnam. If, however, the freedom fighters fight well in the South, they can again achieve nothing with it.

For the coming period the NLF has settled on the objective of striking a decisive blow on the main forces of the enemy, ramping up the political fight in the cities and securing the North-South supply lines. Thereby it can restrict the South Vietnamese war and may create

better conditions for the successful continuation of the political and diplomatic war. As a result, it would make a significant step towards ultimate victory.

The liberation army utilized the previous period to gather its strength and prepare the counterattack for the new dry season. That is why there have lately been no spectacular operations by the liberation army.

The North Vietnamese situation.

Due to its failures in South Vietnam, the United States is stepping up the bombing of North Vietnam. Currently it flies 100–150 missions daily, sometimes 350 /one mission one aircraft/. Previously bombing targets have been roads, military objects, while now industrial plants, waterworks, dams, bridges and living quarters are being targeted. More than 40 factories have been destroyed, all five railways of the DRV are routinely attacked, of the bridges with a span of over 50 meters 400 have been demolished. Reparations are organized, constantly ongoing and successful. The most serious step of the escalation was the commencement of the bombing of Haiphong and Hanoi. Bombing creates difficulties in transportation, but despite that, the growing tasks in transportation are fulfilled. There is an effort underway to move factories out of the cities. Greatest damage has been to the unmovable thermal power plants. As a result, electricity generation has fallen by 50%. As a result of the bombings there have been 8 thousand dead, and 13 thousand wounded.

Comrade Le Thanh Nghi thereafter elaborated that the North Vietnamese people, in the spirit of comrade Ho Chi Minh's radiobroadcast of 17. July, continue the fight against aggression with total resolve and unbroken faith in victory. We will fight on – said the head of the Vietnamese delegation – so long that the aggressor does not recognize our people's right to independence, and as long as the precepts of the Geneva Accords are not observed. In our fight we are supported by the socialist countries. We make no steps that could lead to expansion of the war. We aim to restrict the war to South Vietnam, and defeat the aggressors there. How long the war lasts cannot be predicted. We aim to secure victory as soon as possible, with the least casualties. The longer we fight, the stronger we shall be – said comrade Le Thanh (sic) Nghi. We forget not the political and diplomatic battle either, but combine it with the military battle, conducting politics flexibly. Our flexible politics is expressed in that we do not refuse meetings even with representatives of the Americans / Canadian representative Ronning is an agent of the Americans /.

Comrade Kádár in his response thanked the Vietnamese delegation head's greetings in the name of the Central Committee, the government and the people. Then with warm feelings

stated that of our people's relations we think similarly to our Vietnamese comrades, which relations are comradely, fraternal and constantly improving. The current visit fosters them too. Then he stated: we welcome the decision expressed by comrade Le Thanh Nghi that the Vietnamese people will fight on in defense of its independence, which aim is further expressed in the substantive clauses of the Geneva agreements. We welcome the communication that they shall do nothing in order to expand the war and welcome that they shall prepare for a long fight, but do everything to shorten the war and reduce the number of victims.

With these aims we are solidary. We welcome their successes thus far, and wish sincerely further successes both in the North and in the South in pursuit of those objectives, which were sketched by comrade Le Thanh Nghi in his briefing. We are solidary both in spirit and in practice, and we help where we can.

We are glad that our help is valued. We hold that the measure of our help is: what you need, and what we can provide.

Comrade Kádár thereafter, as in the meeting of the previous December, emphasized that we examine the requests of the Vietnamese comrades conscientiously, but that we can promise only such aid as we can fulfil, because we respect and value the fight of the Vietnamese people, and if we could not provide what we promised, we would thereby harm the fight of the Vietnamese people. What we undertook in the present agreements, we will fulfil.

Comrade Kádár reacted positively to the statements in comrade Le Thanh Nghi's briefing concerning the political and diplomatic fight and pointed out: we agree that in the present stage the military conflict is decisive, but yes, the political and diplomatic fight carry great significance as well. We hold that all resources have to be mobilized in aid of this fight, and on the one hand must hit the enemy on the battlefields as much as we can, and on the other hand must isolate the aggressor in the political, diplomatic and ethical realms.

Comrade Kádár emphasized the importance of the collaboration and unity of action of the socialist countries and pointed out: we have not forgone to make further efforts in order to create unity of action, since the war is not only for the independence of individual countries, but is also a clash of world reactions and the progressive forces of the world. The aim is great, but so is the blood of the Vietnamese people expensive. Lack of unity of action is regrettable, because the enemy is precisely aware of the situation and strives to utilize it in its own anti-popular efforts.

In our position and readiness to help there is no change, we would prefer to help more to bring closer the day of victory. The fight against the aggressors requires an all-round preparedness, and without giving up our principles, we have to be able to live with the various forms of the fight, we have to be able to maneuver so that we can best isolate the enemy.

Finally comrade Kádár asked comrade Le Thanh Nghi, that he on his return home may give the DRV Central Committee, government and its people the greetings and well wishes of the HSWP Central Committee, the government and the Hungarian people.

The head of the Vietnamese delegation also called regrettable the lacking unity of action, but expressed his conviction that this cannot prevent the Vietnamese people's ultimate victory, given that all socialist countries support their fight.

II.

Military and economic agreements

1./ We have signed on 13. December the agreement on non-repayable military aid to be provided by the government of the People's Republic of Hungary to the government of the DRV in 1967, fixed at 13,3 million rubles. Of this sum military equipment and materials are 11.6 million rubles in value, the value of the merchandise provided from the goods of the national economy is 1.7 million rubles. /machine tools, machinery, communication devices, machine parts, instruments, etc./.

The main articles of the military equipment: the complete equipment of one 37mm and one 57mm anti-aircraft regiment, with 60 guns, anti-aircraft machine guns and infantry weaponry, munitions, special and transport vehicles /in total 281 vehicles, communications, chemical protection devices, medical materials, clothing, food-equipment items and food./.

Over and above the material aid, we have undertaken that the training of the operators of the Hungarian made electronic targeting device and of the mobile vehicle repair station will be provided in Hungary.

Aid in military equipment, unlike earlier, may be partly from production, with resupply. The total value of the military equipment to be resupplied is 3.1 million rubles, that is 124 million forints. /112 million forints need to be resupplied to the Ministry of Defense and 12 million to the Ministry of Health. The materiel to be resupplied consists, in part, of the vehicles and ammunition, the communications and chemical protection devices, and various medical materials. The National Planning Office and the Ministry of Finance shall provide this sum and secure production of this equipment.

The further need for large amounts of ammunition raised by the Vietnamese comrades can be fulfilled only from production.

We shall send part of the aid by the end of the year.

2./ We signed the Hungarian–Vietnamese Trade and Payments Agreement for 1967.

Preceding the negotiations the Vietnamese delegation handed over a list of goods offered of a value of 1.5 million rubles and a list of goods required of a value of 23 million rubles. Of the latter ca. one third consisted of complete production lines and two thirds of normal goods. The delegation requested that we make a proposal addressing the deficit between the two sides. They were thinking in terms of aid or long-term loans, perhaps a combination of the two.

We accepted in whole the list of goods offered. This comprises primarily goods for public consumption /canned food, tea, flip-flops, etc./.

We undertook to ship goods worth 10.5 million rubles from their list of goods required. /of these 1.5 million rubles are complete small-size production lines, 9 million rubles normal goods/.

Some of the main items of the Hungarian export: road and bridge repair equipment 0.9 million rubles, 15 small hydroelectric power plants with a performance of 15 kW individually, 56 small radio transceivers, machine tools 0.5 million rubles, diesel engines and aggregate 0.7 million rubles, medicine 1.5 million rubles, communications devices and parts 1.2 million rubles, instruments 0.8 million rubles, rolled products 3 thousand tons.

To cover the deficit we provided an interest free loan, to be repaid over 8 years in equal instalments starting in 1972.

The Vietnamese side during negotiations emphasized on multiple occasions their need for some complete production lines /factory of mass-produced ironwares, light bulb factory, power line factory, etc./, we, however, as during the negotiations of last December emphasized that because of the state of war we cannot supply these, since their transportation, installation and production in Hungary would be problematic. We again expressed our readiness to participate in the development of Vietnam's industry at the conclusion of the war, and for now supply small appliances which are easy to move in a state of war and satisfy a real need. /small road and bridge repair equipment, fodder mixing appliances, small hydroelectric power plants, small radio transceivers, small mills and vegetable oil presses, etc./.

We also mentioned during negotiations that our people's material aid is expressed not only in the agreements reached here, but in other forms as well. We referred to the direct

agreements between the Ministry of Transport and Postal Services, the Ministry of Interior, the Central Committee of the KISZ [Hungarian Young Communist League – the translator] and their Vietnamese partners. Although the aid is not very high in volume, it is significant because it satisfies a pressing need.

3./ We communicated to the Vietnamese comrades, that satisfying their request, we undertake to further train 1000 of their specialists in Hungary, at our cost. We cannot, however, receive all 1 000 in 1966-67. We proposed that they send their specialists from September 1966 until September 1968, in three years, in equal numbers. We are ready to receive the first group due in September 1966 immediately, 27 engineers, 50 trained technicians and 200 candidates to become skilled workers. Let 23 engineers, 50 technicians and 300 candidates to become skilled workers arrive in September 1967 and in September 1968 again 50 technicians and 300 candidates to become skilled workers.

We proposed further that the trained engineers participate in a one year, the trained technicians in a one-and-a-half year and the candidates to become skilled workers a three year further training and drill.

The Vietnamese delegation agreed with our proposal. The agreement concerning the method of sending of the specialists has been fixed in official correspondence between the heads of the two delegations.

The Vietnamese comrades were pleased with the degree to which we satisfied their requests, despite the fact that for certain items / primarily complete production lines / we could not fulfil their requests, while for others / materials / we could fulfil their requests only partially. They were particularly satisfied with our military aid, where we surpassed their expectations. During negotiations, unlike earlier, they acted more purposefully, presented more realistic requests and the attempt was visible to ask for what they really need.

Budapest, 15. September, 1966

Compiled by: Sándor Pataki, commissioned head of the IV. Regional Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

[Source: MOL M-KS 288. f. 5/405. ő.e. (1966.09.20) 59R/201; document located by János Kemény, translated by Márton Szrimai]

DOCUMENT 7

Polish opinion on the preparation of János Péter's trip to Hanoi, 13 September, 1966

In response to the information [on Péter's trip] and our request for the opinion of the Polish United Workers' Party's Central Committee, we received the following message on 12 September through Comrade Kiljanczyk, the Polish ambassador in Budapest:

The Polish sister party expresses its heartfelt thanks to the Hungarian comrades for the information. The CC instructed Comrade Rapacki to forward the following [message]:

- 1) The Polish sister party's CC is convinced that the Hungarian comrades have given this step careful consideration, and take into account the possible external [or "outside"] consequences of Comrade Péter's trip to Hanoi.
- 2) The Polish comrades are of the opinion that it is rather improbable that the Vietnamese comrades would say anything new beyond their well-known point of view.
- 3) The CC of the Polish sister party agrees with the opinion of the Hungarian sister party's CC: the fraternal socialist countries should take an active role at the upcoming UNGA, and should condemn the American aggression. The fraternal countries should shape their opinions in accordance with the spirit of the Bucharest declaration both at the general assembly and during their contacts with other delegations.

The Polish sister party finds the initiative of the Hungarian comrades interesting and requests to receive information about the future developments of the issue.

[Source: MNL OL XIX-J-1-r, 1966, Secretariat, Foreign Ministry records, Top Secret, box 10, 1/PJ/1966, Document "G", obtained and translated by Zoltán Szőke.]

DOCUMENT 8

Report from the Hungarian Embassy in Moscow on the Soviet–North Vietnamese talks, Moscow, 21 September, 1966

The Embassy of the
People's Republic of Hungary

Strictly Confidential!

Moscow, September 21, 1966

Subject: Soviet–Vietnamese
talks about the Soviet
help

Copies: 3 copies made
2 for Headquarters
1 for the Embassy

64/1/1996/Strictly Confidential

Rapporteur: József Oláh

In the first half of August and then on September 5th, a Vietnamese delegation arrived to Moscow under the leadership of Pham Van Dong and Le Thanh Nghi respectively, in order to talk about the help of the Soviet Union for Vietnam in the year 1967. The Central Committee of the CPSU officials told the following information to comrade Oláh:

In the first half of the year the Vietnamese informed us that they were planning to visit Moscow to talk about further Soviet aid. The Soviets originally invited comrade Ho Chi Minh. The Vietnamese later stated that Pham Van Dong would lead their delegation, the members of which would be the deputy prime minister, the defense minister and some experts. The delegation arrived in Moscow in the first days of August. Despite that Ho Chi Minh did not come to Moscow, the Soviet delegation was led by Comrade Brezhnev. Comrade Kosygin also participated in the talks.

During the talks about the aid political issues were also discussed. The leader of the Vietnamese delegation said the following about the current situation of the Vietnam War and its perspectives, and the intentions of the Vietnamese leadership: Vietnam wants to continue its fight against the Americans – until the final victory. This decision of the Vietnamese leadership cannot be changed even by the fact that the Americans intensified the intensity of bombing in Vietnam and that they were attacking Hanoi and Haiphong. The people of Vietnam are prepared for such a fight, and fights successfully against the Americans and defeat the attacks successfully. The bombing could not paralyze the economy of Vietnam, there were no major disturbances neither in road traffic nor in the supply of the population. There was no significant decrease in the agricultural production, the agriculture could produce what the population needed. The leadership of Vietnam knows that this war could take long time, but they are willing to prepare for a long war and continue it until – as Pham Van Dong stressed several times – “the new Dien Bien Phu arrives” the Americans would be defeated and chased out of Vietnam.

Pham Van Dong painted a similarly optimistic picture about the South Vietnamese situation as well. The units of the National Liberation Front of Southern Vietnam dealt the enemy heavy blows and their activities in general were successful. In the upcoming dry season the units of the Front were planning to execute wide ranging military operations in several areas of South Vietnam. They were expecting great results from these operations and they were convinced they could deal the enemy crushing blows. They had information that the Americans were also planning on large scale military operations in this period but the Front was planning with that possibility, and would be initiate the necessary countermeasures.

Regarding the solution of the Vietnamese issue through talks – continued Pham Van Dong – the Vietnamese leadership is still on the opinion that it can only be solved on the basis of the Geneva Agreements, and by the fulfillment of the North Vietnamese 4 point plan and the NLF’s 5 point plan. The Americans are often talking about negotiations, but those statements serve only to deceive the people of the world, and serve as a disguise for their real goals. Symbolically – according to the Soviet comrades, for the very first time – Pham Van Dong was talking about the necessity to solve the problems flexibly, but from the answers given to the questions of the Soviet comrades it was clear to them, that the raising of the issue had no real practical background to it, and it remained a mystery what Pham Van Dong meant by flexibility and why he raised it. (The Soviets have information that the Vietnamese were

trying to make contact with the Americans through their diplomatic representatives twice – once in Rangoon and once in Paris – but they had no information about the nature and the result of those talks. Pham Van Dong did not mention these talks.)

The Soviet Comrades added the following remarks to the information above:

The Vietnamese most probably have an unrealistic expectations about the military victory. It is not enough to say “Dien Bien Phu”, but the condition have to be created. They must see the huge difference between the France of those times and the U.S. of today. In the proper form, the Soviet leaders have expressed their doubts to the Vietnamese.

In relation to the talks the Soviet comrades told the Vietnamese, that they were aware of the fact that the often touted American willingness to initiate talks is only a cover up to deceive the international public, but they think, that the Vietnamese comrades were not taking advantage of these statements politically, they do not respond with the necessary politically counteractions to such American initiatives, and in the field of informing and mobilizing the international public the Vietnamese have to suffer negative effects. The Vietnamese did not respond to these Soviet comments.

In relation to this issue, the Soviet comrade giving the information noted: The (4-point) demand of the Vietnamese towards the Americans is without any doubt ultimatum-like. As a result, Vietnam would only be willing to negotiate after the Americans had agreed to these. The Soviets added the comment: If the Americans would agree to these points and would withdraw from Vietnam, then what would the Vietnamese negotiate about with them?

The Soviets expressed some discontent about those statements that covered the issues of the Vietnamese military activities, the effectiveness of the Vietnamese defense and of the internal situation. For example, the Vietnamese stated that there were no major disruption in traffic, while according to Soviet information, the traffic stood almost at a standstill, almost 80% of the railway and road systems were damaged or rendered unusable. Severe damage was done to the industrial base as well, which was only passingly mentioned by the Vietnamese. According to the Vietnamese reports since the start of the bombing about 8000 people died and about 12 000 had been injured. But the Soviets had information about 200 000 dead and injured. Also, the Soviets noted, that according to the information provided by Vietnamese, the NLF had control over four fifth of the territory of South Vietnam, but during

the South Vietnamese elections in September, the number of the people who participated in the vote was 4 million, which would be unimaginable had they had control over such vast territories. All these lead to some inconsistency and point to the inaccuracies of the information given by the Vietnamese.

The following questions were raised by the Soviets during the talks in Moscow:

Why is the efficiency of the anti-aircraft weapons, delivered by the Soviets to Vietnam, considered weak, how is it possible that despite of the increased amount of military aid from the Soviets the Vietnamese the quality of the air defense system was not improving; (In a period, when the U.S. was flying 100 to 150 sorties a day, the number of downed planes didn't exceed the number recorded in earlier periods with lower number of flown sorties. The Soviets at the same time provided concrete examples to prove, that the ineffectiveness of the Soviet weapons was caused by the lack the operating expertise of Vietnamese crews and disregard of the instructions of the Soviet advisers.) There was also a question formulated in relation to the issue of why the Vietnamese didn't let the Soviet experts to examine the remains of any downed American aircraft right away?

The Vietnamese delegation evaded the response by stating, that this would have to be discussed and studied at home and they would be able to provide answers for them later.

The Soviets provided the following information about the Vietnamese requests for aid:

The Vietnamese acknowledged that they were fighting the war basically based on the support of the Soviet Union, and they were appreciative. In contrast to earlier requests they required an extremely huge amount of aid both in the military and to the economy spheres. The requested amount of aid for 1967 was about 500 million Rubles. The request covered weapons and a series of other items, for which – according to the Soviets – Vietnam had no need and was not able to utilize them. For example, the Vietnamese requested a lot of goods made of rolled steel and the requested also included large amounts of – aluminum. These are materials required for the production of airplanes, but it is well known, that Vietnam doesn't build airplanes. When the Soviets asked about how they intended to use the aluminum, they did not get adequate answer. The Soviets noted that it is beyond doubt that the Vietnamese

asked for such materials because the Chinese urged them to do so, and that the Chinese intended to keep those for themselves.

The general Soviet position about the Vietnamese request was that the Soviets would provide all support that was requested. At talks conducted at the level of experts, they tried to find out the real Vietnamese needs and determine the amount and type of goods needed. Except for the aluminum, the Vietnamese requests will be fulfilled with smaller and bigger corrections. Aluminum will also be provided but only in the amount that the Vietnamese will be able to use.

In terms of the delivery of the aid, the Soviets drew the attention of the Vietnamese to the difficulties raised by the Chinese. The Chinese declared that the only railway road leading from China to Vietnam is capable of carrying only a certain number of railway carriages. The Chinese also transmitted the exact data (which according to Soviet estimates, were false, the transit capacity is much higher than stated). The current Vietnamese request of flour for the next year would take up about 70% of the transit capacity based on the Chinese data. In light of these numbers, the issue of other deliveries was raised. The Vietnamese responded to this with a request: the Soviet Union should send aid also by sea. But the Soviets position was, that this would only be possible, if South Chinese ports would be made available for the unloading.

The Vietnamese also made a request to send thousands of Vietnamese specialists for training to the Soviet Union. The answer for this request was also positive, but most certainly the Vietnamese requests would not be fulfilled in some aspect. The reason for that is that the Vietnamese wanted to send a lot of trainees for training in such fields of specialty, which aren't related to the development of Vietnamese industry, and most probably they will not be needed for quite some time in the future. They were mainly referring to the request for training Vietnamese in the fields of cybernetics and some areas of nuclear physics related to the production of nuclear weapons. The Vietnamese wished to send their people to scientific institutions that are closed for foreigners.

The Soviets noted in relation to the role of Le Thanh Nghi, that he left Moscow after the Soviet–Vietnamese talks, held in the first week of August, but travelled only as far as Beijing and conducted talks with the Chinese about the Chinese aid to Vietnam for the next year. On

5 September he returned to Moscow together with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade and with some experts in order to further discuss the Soviet aid. He was not willing to elaborate on the agreement made with the Chinese, he only said that the aid was “extensive”. Le Thanh Nghi also visited comrade Brezhnev, but his report to comrade Brezhnev didn’t contain any new details. According to the Departmental Head at the Foreign Ministry, it was an “editorial style” report, which contained only general information. Afterwards Le Thanh Nghi traveled to Hungary, Bulgaria and Poland then returned to Moscow to sign the agreement about the Soviet deliveries. (During his visit to here and the two other socialist the talks were continued at expert level in Moscow).

The following Soviet comment was added to the whole report:

There is little chance in the change of the Vietnamese position until the known problems with China remain. Symbolically stated, the head is in Beijing, Vietnam is only one of its limbs. During previous talks with the Vietnamese they could sense Vietnamese opinions slightly deviating from the Chinese position and could often see minor efforts for expressing their different position. In this sense, they had had positive experience with Pham Van Dong. But in contrast to that, now Pham Van Dong expressed several times the close unity of Vietnamese and Chinese leaders, and used the symbolic discretion , that China and Vietnam were as close to each other as "lips and teeth".

[József Szípká]

Ambassador

[Source: MNL OL XIX-J-1-j. 1966, 107 doboz (Soviet relations) 64/1/1966/Sz.t. (strictly confidential), obtained by Csaba Békés and translated by Aliz Agoston.]

DOCUMENT 9

Report to the Political Committee on the visit of Brezhnev and Andropov in Hungary, 30 September, 1966

Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party
Central Committee

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REPORT TO THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE

On the visit of comrades Andropov and Brezhnev

The two-day Budapest visit on 25-26. September 1966 took place on the initiative of comrade L. I. Brezhnev General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee. Comrade Brezhnev was accompanied on his visit by comrade Andropov, secretary of the CPSU Central Committee. We provided the comrades with an adequate program for the duration of the visit. During their stay a total of 5 hours of discussions took place. From the Soviet side L. I. Brezhnev, J. Andropov, [ambassador] F. Tytov and Alexandrov (personal secretary to comrade Brezhnev), from the Hungarian side comrades János Kádár, Béla Biszku, Zoltán Komócsin, Károly Erdélyi and András Gyenes took part.

I.

Comrade Brezhnev during the discussion gave the briefing:

1.) On the position of the Soviet Union

The domestic situation of the Soviet Union is very good. The Party membership received the resolutions of the XXIII. Congress well. Within the Party and amongst the Soviet people the mood is good. There are no internal political problems. The atmosphere within the intelligentsia has become calmer.

As a result of the CPSU Central Committee's May resolutions and measures provisions for the population have improved. Bread supply is good, the situation with respect to meat, meat products and dairy products has improved. A 100 000 tons of butter have been amassed,

its storage causes problems. Sunflower oil reserves would last a year, sugar reserves are also substantial. 4 billion 300 million poods (69 million tons) of grain have been purchased, this is the highest amount achieved in the 49 years of the Soviet Regime, and allows for the creation of small reserves. The cotton, sugar beet, sunflower quotas are fulfilled, potato is satisfactory, the grape and fruit cultivation and the vegetable supply are good. The fodder supply is secure; foreseeably the animal stock will not decrease during the winter. Lately the people are starting to go back to the villages.

The industry fulfils the quotas. Labor productivity is growing normally. Investments in construction are 2.5 billion rubles behind. Changes have been made to senior leadership in the construction industry, steps have been taken to improve the provision of technical documentation and the supply of technical tools.

Exploration of various natural resources is progressing successfully.

The five year plan envisages the doubling of car production and a nearly similar increase in the production of tractors. They are pondering that on the basis of the Skoda Works, using Czechoslovak technology and the contributions of other socialist countries could be building a plant producing 200 000 trucks. Participating countries would produce different parts and would receive trucks proportionate to their contributions. This has been mentioned to comrade Novotny and received the idea well, and comrade Zhivkov is ready to support the plan as well. If the Hungarian comrades agree, we welcome their participation in the cooperation. This type of cooperation could create a new path in the Comecon as well.

The situation of the Soviet Union in international political field is stable, it can be deemed good. We mutually inform each other about our tactical steps. The policies of the Soviet Union are attractive, are supported by the progressive people all over the world,, because it is without platitudes, it is realistic. Even the West is forced to admit this.

2.) On the Chinese Question:

The most important question of the international communist movement is the Chinese problem. Because both their domestic and foreign policies have been failures, there is a political crisis in China.

We must study the new phenomena, their causes and expected effects, because significant political and social changes are ongoing which have nothing to do with Marxism-Leninism. We have to stay very alert, because we do not know where all that is happening in China leads.

China has been isolated even before the so-called Cultural Revolution. Previously several parties judged that it is just the bickering of the CPSU and CCP. These illusions have largely vanished. Different party leaders have believed that the CPSU should show patience in the dispute, that it should prepare the restoration of unity through bilateral, regional and other meetings. The CPSU for two years has shown remarkable patience. There have been many discussions with numerous party leaders; the general sentiment of these has been that the position of the CPSU was correct. The CCP's Latin American, African policies, the Indonesian events, the Pakistani conflict and the events of the Vietnam War have shown that we are dealing with a well-developed alternative line.

The destruction of party organizations is currently ongoing in China. Zhou Enlai, in the presence of the Political Committee explained to a hundred thousand schoolchildren, that they are the ones who will give lessons in the continuation of the revolutionary struggle, and that they are the ones who have to protect Mao Zedong and the Central Committee. Individuals in influential position are side-lined. Of the Central Committee's eight secretaries five have been removed. What they are doing is entirely the politics of adventurism.

Meanwhile they are working on provoking a U.S.-Soviet Union conflict – and this would be equal to a world war – their ambassador to Warsaw meets continually with the representative of the U.S., and while they are denouncing the U.S., they are engaged in endless discussions. We must be very alert, whether anything is going on behind our backs.

The behavior of the Korean comrades shows that they are slowly moving away from the Chinese position. Several articles published in their press bear witness to this, most recently the article written against Trotskyism, which obviously is addressed to the Chinese. Their behavior towards the Soviet embassy has changed as well. Kim Il-Sung requested an unofficial Far Eastern meeting. This has taken place. During the meeting he said that they would like to make friends with the CPSU, and they will do everything to improve relations. It was discussed also this time, what the Korean comrades' intentions in South Korea are.

Kim Il-Sung stated that they do not want to conduct a war in South Korea, because there is no realistic basis for guerrilla warfare, and other conditions are unfavorable as well and they would not like to engage in adventurism. We brought up the previously anti-Soviet tone of their media; Kim Il-Sung promised that in the future there will be no such attacks.

We have conducted correspondence with the Japanese Communist Party concerning the facilitation of a high-level meeting. Preparations are currently being made by both sides. The meeting will take place after the Congress of the JCP. What happened in the Japanese party indicates that they are striving to remove themselves from Chinese influence.

The Indonesian situation is unclear. Individual communists have appeared and spoke. Some agreed with the position of the CCP, others spoke in support of the CPSU. We are carefully starting to get our relations in order; we must study what is actually going on there.

In our interstate relations we do a lot not to let them slide rightwards. The entire domestic situation requires serious analysis. It is difficult to say whether Sukarno is to be supported further, or whether Nasution will move to the foreground. Foreign Minister Malik visits the Soviet Union, and we hope we will learn a few things from him.

We have to change our current position. Today we are able to provide suitable analysis of the situation and therefore we should prepare an international meeting of communist and workers' parties. This is pressing also because the CCP's position carries the risk of a large military conflict. If the dangers of a Chinese revisionism are growing clearer to us, it grows more and more difficult to explain why we stay silent. At the international meeting we can certainly expect the participation of 70-75 parties. Above all, we must discuss this issue with the parties closest to us, in a confidential manner. The plan is that the CPSU Central Committee will hold a closed session in the near future and following that the members of the Political Committee will inform the Party membership during closed meetings.

3.) On the Vietnam issue.

The CCP has tied the hands of the Soviet Union on the Vietnam issue. The Vietnamese comrades act on Chinese instructions, and we are acting like we don't know this. We must be clear that Vietnam cannot win this war. On this issue we need to be vigilant, bigger unity, than ever before. We need to sustain a constant dialogue so together we can find the adequate steps.

We have in the recent past invited comrade Ho Chi Minh and other Vietnamese leaders to talks. A delegation headed by comrade Pham Van Dong arrived in the Soviet Union at this invitation. We were determined to raise certain questions with the Vietnamese comrades. We have conducted a three-day meeting with the Vietnamese comrades. The Vietnamese leaders again recounted their great victories; sadly the reality is different. They presented their requests, which we concluded were not dictated by necessity, but suggested by the Chinese to ask for as much as possible. This is one side of the issue, the other is that they are fighting and need to be helped.

We again clearly told Pham Van Dong that the U.S. can talk constantly of a peaceful solution and pose as the champion of peace because the Vietnamese comrades show no

activity in the political struggle. The creation of the unified anti-imperialist front would be paramount, but all such attempts fail because of Chinese resistance.

We told the Vietnamese comrades that we agree with them, that the war must be kept within its current limits, and added that we under no circumstances would approve its extension, nor the outbreak of a world war in connection to the conflict.

We forcefully demanded that they tell us at last what the Chinese are telling them. Pham Van Dong evaded the question stating that they are not talking with the Chinese; after they returned to Hanoi, they will talk to them, and tell us what they are saying. The issue of supplies was discussed as well. Lately everything is transferred to Chinese train carriages on the Chinese border, and they announced, that only 9–10 thousand tons of supplies can be transported per month. This is a fraction of the supplies the Vietnamese comrades requested and we promised to deliver. Pham Van Dong asked us not to raise the issue with the Chinese lest they are angered, and that they will raise these problems with them.

When we asked directly what the Chinese are supplying to them, they said they help restore roads, they are building an airport and they provide space for a military hospital on Chinese territory. The not so great capacity of Vietnamese railways have decreased by 70–80%. The goods supplied are stored in China, and we do not know what part is delivered to the Vietnamese, and what part is used up by the Chinese.

The Hanoi visit of comrades Lénárt and Péter are deemed good, maybe the Vietnamese comrades can be influenced. History at least will preserve our recommendations and proposals.

The HSWP recommended that a PC level meeting take place, on the Vietnam issue. I do not know whether the other parties have responded yet, we received the letter right before our departure for our visit and have therefore not yet discussed it, but are in support of the idea. We meet in three weeks in Moscow, I believe by then an opinion will have formed everywhere.

Comrade Brezhnev briefed us about their Bulgarian and Yugoslavian visit as well.

4.) The Bulgarian visit was the reciprocal visit for the visit of comrade Todor Zhivkov in the Soviet Union. Bulgaria had a record grain harvest, and fruit and vegetable were good as well. Bulgaria's significant industrial development is surprising. They told us they are in a bad spot with resources, their iron ore is scarce, and what little they have is of low quality. They have no oil, gas, and other important natural resources are also lacking. They have further large plans for industrial development. We cautioned them about the dangers of

upsetting the proportions of the people's economy, because that has serious consequences even in the Soviet Union.

The questions of economic cooperation were much discussed. Both the Soviet and the Bulgarian parties have wishes which have not been fulfilled. We make further efforts to develop our economic relations, albeit these relations are generally good. By 1970 Bulgaria will conduct 72% of its trade with the Soviet Union.

In our appraisal of international affairs our positions were entirely harmonic. In Bulgaria's judgment the general atmosphere is better in the Balkans than in previous years. Lately the Romanians come and go quite frequently, courting them. During these meetings they hint at the particular interests of small countries too. They firmly rejected these advances, and the Romanian comrades ceased with their attempts.

5.) The Yugoslavian visit was requested by Tito long ago, and he urged it multiple times during the summer. We win nothing by not attending it. The Yugoslavian domestic situation and international events occasioned this visit. If we won't work under these circumstances perhaps others will work against us.

Our economic relations are developing, no disputed issues arose.

We deemed economic reform paramount, and in connection to this the clarification of the role of the state, the party's leadership and its position.

We said it is not the naming of various leading bodies that is important, nor the forms of organization, but whether the leadership of the party is realized. Tito gave a 10 minute answer to our question, I did not understand everything he said. He explained they were in a phase of social and economic development where they have created from distinct republics a federation, in which socialism is being built and this leads to various complications. They want an increased role for the party, because its prominence has decreased lately. After Tito, Todorovic explained the questions of self-management for an hour, it was very confusing, we did not understand it. He spoke about the need to increase the national income, the growing role of banks, talked of the relations of the bank and company, the regulation of prices etc. We received no clear answer to our interjected questions either, because they either evade them or because not even they know what they want.

We said that beside the unique characteristics of individual countries there are general characteristic principles of socialist society, which have to prevail everywhere.

We said in connection with the party, that communist parties have for years criticized the principles laid down in the program of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. After Rankovic's congressional speech we had thought the situation was changing. Comrade Tito

delivered several speeches which fuelled this conclusion. However, the experience of recent times is different. We could read time and again that the EC has examined such and such issues, but we know of no passed resolutions. It is as if they viewed the party as some organ of education.

Tito said platitudes as evidence for their desire to increase the leadership role of the party. During a private meeting he said finally that some of our ideas are thought-provoking, and worth pondering. They are thinking that perhaps they will not call for a special congress, but wait for the session of the regular congress. They still have a year to settle economic issues and they will think about that too.

II.

In connection to those related by comrade Brezhnev, comrade Kádár said the following:

What comrade Brezhnev said about the domestic situation of the Soviet Union is good to hear.

What comrade Brezhnev said in connection with the truck production is of interest to us. We too need trucks. We will examine our participation in the cooperation, and will provide a response.

Our position in relation to the international affairs of greatest significance is the following:

1.) We too think analysis of the Chinese situation is very important. If the Soviet comrades deal with this issue and inform us, we will be grateful. The analysis and conclusion of the Soviet comrades provides indispensable help to sister parties on such issues. The analysis we received in February on the Chinese issue was of great help to us.

2.) The Vietnamese issue, like the Chinese one, is worthy of more thorough analysis. The DRV had to support South Vietnam and we had to support the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. This has, however, meant that we were sucked into an issue, which the Vietnamese comrades have not once since the beginning discussed their decisive mover with the European socialist countries. Even today we do not see clearly what the Vietnamese comrades want, what perspective they are having.

Some kind of turning point has to happen soon in the course of the Vietnam War, for which we have to prepare. Within a few months, but by next year at the latest it will be decided whether the war takes a more serious form, perhaps expands further, or whether the situation is resolved in some other way. Currently the Vietnamese are exposed to multiple

influences. On the one hand the Soviet Union and the European socialist countries influence them in one direction, and on the other the Chinese are pushing them in the opposite direction. Either our policies will effect that they incline towards a political settlement, or if they pay no heed to common sense, they will listen to the Chinese.

The U.S. is entertaining the idea of a naval landing. The question crops up, what happens if war is fought on the soil of a socialist country Politically, that a socialist country, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, is being bombed by aggressive imperialists and we – as the common people say – endure it, is already a serious burden on us. Our political difficulties will increase in the eventuality that the battlefield is transferred to the territory of the DRV as a result of naval landing by the aggressors or through provocations in the demilitarized zone. It is possible that they will ask us for support, which, judged by sober consideration and responsibility, cannot be fulfilled, and our decision will then have to be explained to the people. Our position is defined by the fact that our party and government have openly committed itself of sending volunteers at the request of the Vietnamese comrades. In this scenario, naturally, the character of the war qualitatively changes, and becomes graver. The request cannot be denied without great moral and political harm.

Even now we must be aware of the foreseeable developments, lest in the critical situation – when there will be no opportunity for any analysis or substantive discussion by neither the Soviet Union, nor the socialist countries generally – because when a decision has to be made in a matter of hours, a possible hasty decision bears the possibility of a mistake with unforeseeable consequences.

That the Soviet comrades in the current situation analyze the Vietnamese issue again and thoroughly, and all the possible related developments and work out all the steps to be taken in the possible scenarios is necessary also because in possession of these they could consult the interested socialist countries in relative calm. If the Soviet comrades consult the representatives of the various parties through informal discussions that can create the impression that the Soviet Union has no firm position. Such impressions can have extraordinarily negative effects and create further uncertainty and confusion among the socialist countries, and even among the sister parties fighting in capitalist countries.

Cognizant of all these, our opinion is that the Soviet comrades, who have the greatest factual knowledge and have best overview over the issue should inevitably subject the current situation in Vietnam to the most thorough analysis and all the issue's political, military, economic and every other dimension, and must create a plan, working out all conceivable

possibilities for the solution of the various eventualities and for the definitive resolution of the issue.

3. The circumstances are indeed ripe for calling an international conference. The situation has changed compared to that of three years ago. The illusions have indeed vanished, but questions remain for consideration. We agree that we weigh the possibility of calling an international conference in a more serious manner. At the same time we must give consideration to the format, such as regional discussions, or a party's suitable statement. This is warranted by the fact that some parties still do not agree with the idea of an international conference, even though in theory they entirely reject the position of the Chinese leaders, yet deem the exclusion of the Chinese from the discussion detrimental.

The issue of publicity has to be considered carefully, especially by the CPSU. In certain questions the CPSU is in a more difficult position than the other parties. Anti-Soviet policies are at the forefront of the CCP's politics. The CPSU must confront this, but can do so with more difficulty than other parties. We do not want to hurry the CPSU into hasty pronouncements, but when we say that we cannot realize wide-ranging talks, and yet there is need for a public stand to which all those in agreement can subscribe to – perhaps for the statement of a party – then we are not talking of that of the Norwegian or the Hungarian party, but that of the CPSU – because only the CPSU can act autonomously and with adequate gravity – to make such a statement. Such a statement need not bring up all the old issues, execrate anyone, or oblige any party to accept the position stated as correct.

We are mentioning different variants still, in case of dire need perhaps a statement by the CPSU or the Soviet government, because – sadly – the critical events of the Vietnam War and Chinese politics develop at a rate much faster than the rate at which the conditions for the international conference and of a common stance of communist and workers parties mature.

4.) Communists in every country – ours included – are interested in what is happening now in Yugoslavia. I think, we need not pick a quarrel with them, but we would need to see what the matter is concerning the leadership role of the party. In certain questions perhaps not even they themselves see clearly what they want. They maintain good relations with us. We think they too want this relationship sincerely. Frank discussion with the Yugoslavian comrades is possible – they take even criticism calmly – but we do not always understand what they say. Our discussions are not ineffective. They do not seek to force their own recipe on us. We are also interested in the Yugoslavian situation, because it concerns a neighboring socialist country, and therefore certain reciprocal interactions take place.

Comrade Brezhnev, responding to the remarks of comrade Kádár, said the following:

What comrade Kádár said is very valuable. We are facing a new world situation. There are many questions where we cannot see clearly. Such is the Vietnamese issue, and also the Chinese issue. The suitable response to the issues has to be found through discussions with the leaders of sister parties, and through frequent consultations. Our efforts have to be directed towards analytical work. The idea of consultation arose because we think the situation has ripened and the Chinese line has become very dangerous. We are not intending to sparking a controversy. We intend to put the question on the agenda at the consultation. We will maybe reach the conclusion that some kind of statement has to be made. The suggestions of comrade Kádár gave us food for thought.

We will not broach the issue of international discussion to the sister parties in writing, but preparations are to be cautiously continued, we would not give up on this.

We continue our work of persuasion towards the Vietnam; at the same time we put political pressure on the U.S. The Vietnam War must be viewed not only in a Vietnamese frame, because there is no guarantee that the war will stop within its current scope.

Comrade Brezhnev rated the relations of the CPSU and the HSWP as amicable, fraternal and relaying a calm atmosphere. The CPSU wants to make sure to stay on this road.

Budapest, 30 September, 1966.

The Report was compiled by:

(signature)

(András Gyenes)

Approved by:

(signature)

(János Kádár)

[Source: MNL–OL M-KS 288. f. 5/406. ő. e. (1966. 10. 04.) 92R/231 file located by János Kemény, translated by Márton Szrimai]]

MAIN ACTORS

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 after 4 November became a member of the Soviet supported Kádár government. From 1957 until 1971 he was a deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers. From 1961 he led the government commission on foreign affairs, and was the Hungarian 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 1984.⁹

BÍRÓ, József (1921-) technician, welder, economist. He became head of the Hungarian Trade Office in London (1957-1960), and deputy minister of foreign trade (1962-1963). From 1963 until 1979 he was minister for foreign trade.¹⁰

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 party organs in Budapest. In 1951 he was demoted from his position, due to family issues. He

⁹ Apró Antal, Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága
<https://www.neb.hu>

¹⁰ Bíró József; Ki kicsoda? in: Bencsik Péter (ed.): Az államszocializmus kora Magyarországon és Kelet-Közép-Európában
<http://allamszocializmus.lapunk.hu/?modul=oldal&tartalom=718655>

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. From 1957 to 1980 he was a member of the HSWP PC and in 1962 he was named a member of the Secretariat of the HSWP Central Committee (1962-1978). He had an important role in party organizational work. He became a Member of Parliament, and remained a member until 1985. 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 also from the Central Committee. 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 suspended prison sentence.¹¹

ERDÉLYI, Károly (1928-1971) He was a diplomat, deputy minister for foreign affairs and a confidant of János Kádár. He earned a teaching degree in the Soviet Union, and started his career in the Hungarian Foreign Ministry in 1953. He served a short term at the embassy in Moscow, and after his return he became an aide for Kádár. He served as deputy foreign minister between 1962 and 1970, and moved on to become the leader of the HSWP's Foreign Affairs Committee (1970–1971) and he also became a member of the HSWP CC (1967–1971). He committed suicide in 1971.¹²

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 national assembly. 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

¹¹ Biszku Béla Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága
<https://www.neb.hu/asset/phpc7CWuX.pdf>

¹² Erdélyi Károly Ki kicsoda? in: Bencsik Péter (ed.): Az államszocializmus kora Magyarországon és Kelet-Közép-Európában
<http://allamszocializmus.lapunk.hu/?modul=oldal&tartalom=718660>

1955 he became one of the secretaries of the Central Council of the Hungarian Trade Unions, and in 1956 he was elected as a substitute member of the Central Leadership of the Hungarian Workers' Party. After the defeat of revolution 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 member of the Presidential Council. He took part in the planning of economic reforms, which would have given a bigger role for market economic methods. He became Prime Minister in 1967. As the reform plans were partially shelved from 1972, he was sent into retirement in 1975, but remained a member of the Politburo until 1980 and a member of the Central Committee until 1989.¹³

GYENES, András (1923-1997) He was a diplomat, later deputy minister for foreign affairs. He was a member of the Politburo and secretary of foreign affairs of the HSWP.¹⁴ He came from a working family in Transylvania, and learned to become a butcher. During the Second World War he tried to illegally enter Hungary, and he was detained for a short time. He worked in a factory until 1947, where he was the head of the local communist party organization. In May 1948 he joined the labor union, in 1949 he was sent to a communist party school, where he became an instructor. He was one of the leaders of the trade unions in 1954–1955, when he was sent to the Soviet Union to study at a communist party school. As a reaction to the revolution of 1956, he returned to Hungary and participated in the reorganization of the labor union. He was penalized in 1961 for mistakes committed as a trade union leader and was transferred to the field of foreign relations. In 1968 he was promoted to be the successor of Frigyes Puja as the head of the HSWP's Foreign Relations Department. In 1970 he was promoted to the position of deputy foreign minister until 1971, when he was transferred back to the HSWP's Foreign Relations Department as its head. In 1974 he became ambassador to the German Democratic Republic. In 1975 he was promoted to be a member of the HSWP Central Committee and Secretariat. He was a member of parliament from 1980 until his retirement in 1989.¹⁵

¹³ Fock Jenő, Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága
<https://www.neb.hu/asset/php4wGGVm.pdf>

¹⁴ Gyenes András Ki kicsoda? in: Bencsik Péter (ed.): Az államszocializmus kora Magyarországon és Kelet-Közép-Európában
<http://allamszocializmus.lapunk.hu/?modul=oldal&tartalom=718663>

¹⁵ Gyenes András, Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága
<https://neb.hu/asset/phpa0hL3K.pdf>

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 Hungarian inhabited territory of Slovakia was re-annexed to Hungary in 1938, 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 national assembly, and he remained a member of the parliament until his death (with the exception of one legislative period). He was named to be the deputy head of the HWP's 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 minister of culture 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 reserve member of the Politburo (1962–1970.)¹⁶

KÁDÁR, János (1912-1989) born as a chance-child in Fiume, he was the son of 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 could not 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 in 1943, 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 November, 1956 he was chosen by the Soviets to head the new government. He was a member of the Central Committee and the Politburo from 1956, becoming first secretary of the HWP on October 25, and then head of the newly founded HSWP from October 31, 1956. He was also prime

¹⁶ Ilku Pál, Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága
<https://www.neb.hu/asset/phplZBtIN.pdf>

minister between 1956 and 1958, and again from 1961 to 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 popular pressure. Combined with his declining health, he was removed from all his positions and died shortly thereafter.¹⁷

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).¹⁸

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 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 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

¹⁷ Kádár János, Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága
<https://www.neb.hu/asset/phpuoKyAw.pdf>

¹⁸ Kállai Gyula; Ki kicsoda? in: Bencsik Péter (ed.): Az államszocializmus kora Magyarországon és Kelet-Közép-Európában
<http://allamszocializmus.lapunk.hu/?modul=oldal&tartalom=718668>

the HSWP's daily *Népszabadság* (1961-1965). He was named regular member of the Politburo (1962-1974) and became the secretary for 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.¹⁹

OLÁH, József (1926–2004) was a language teacher by training, but started his career working for book publishers until 1955. In that year he was transferred to the Foreign Ministry, which sent him as a diplomat to the embassy in Belgrade until 1959. He was transferred to the embassy in Moscow and served there as a cultural counsellor until 1962. He was sent back to the Belgrade embassy as deputy head of mission and served in this position until 1965. In 1966 he was transferred back to the embassy in Moscow, where he served as deputy head of mission until 1969. After his return to Hungary, he served in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as leader of the third territorial main department until 1974. In 1974 he was named ambassador to Denmark, where he served until 1979. After his return, he served as leader of the Ministry's Cultural and Scientific Main Department until 1985. In 1985 he was named ambassador to India, in which position he served until 1988 (and was also accredited to some neighboring countries). He retired in 1988.²⁰

MÓD, Péter (1911-1996) He was an officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He returned from exile, and worked in different positions at the Hungarian Workers' Party. He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1947. He was arrested and sentenced for life in a show trial and was freed in 1954. He worked as the director of a library and in 1956 he rejoined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He served at the Ministry for a short period and was named envoy to Athens for a few months. From December, 1956 to 1961 he was the Hungarian representative to the United Nations. He was promoted to the position of first deputy minister of foreign affairs, a position he held between 1961 and 1968. He was sent to Paris as an ambassador (1968-1974), and later became ambassador to UNESCO. He was a member of the Central Committee between 1975 and 1988.²¹

¹⁹ Komócsin Zoltán Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága
<https://www.neb.hu/asset/phpR7ev2n.pdf>

²⁰ Baráth Magdolna, Gecsényi Lajos (ed.): *Főkonzulok, követek és nagykövetek, 1945-1990*, MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2016, p. 234

²¹ *Leading Politicians of the Hungarian Workers Party (1948-1956) and the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (1956-1989)*, Cold War History Research Center, 2003, <http://www.coldwar.hu/biographies/leading.html> and

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.²²

PÉTER, János (1910-1999) A Calvinist 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, he became deputy foreign minister (1958-1961), and joined the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party in 1961, becoming a member of the HSWP 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 of the Hungarian parliament.²³

PUJA, Frigyes (1921-2008) He finished 5 classes of high school, and learned to become a printer apprentice, and worked as such between 1942 and 1945. He worked as a party worker, later as a political worker. After he finished the Party College, he was invited to work for the Foreign Ministry. He became minister to Sweden (1953-1955), later to Austria (1955-1959). He was deputy foreign minister between 1959 and 1963, and he was the leader of the Foreign Relations Department of the Central Committee of the HSWP between 1963 and 1968. He was promoted to first deputy of the foreign minister in 1968, and state secretary in 1973, becoming foreign minister in the same year. In 1983 he was named as ambassador to Finland. He held this position until his retirement in 1986.²⁴

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

²² Baráth Magdolna, Gecsényi Lajos (ed.): Főkonzulok, követek és nagykövetek, 1945-1990, MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2016, p. 238

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

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²⁴ Baráth Magdolna, Gecsényi Lajos (ed.): Főkonzulok, követek és nagykövetek, 1945-1990, MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2016, pp. 242-243

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 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.²⁵

SZIPKA, József (1908-1994) He was trained as a chemical industry worker. He was a member of the Social Democratic Party and later became an illegal member of the Communist Party. He was arrested and sentenced on more than one occasion. After the Second World War he participated in the reorganization of the trade union of the chemical industry, and was general secretary of the trade union until 1949. He also was a member of parliament. He started his career at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1950, leading two departments at the Ministry. He was sent as a diplomat first to China (1952-1953) and later to Romania (1953-1954). He was named envoy to Finland in 1954, and became ambassador in 1960 until 1963. He became a member of the HSWP Central Committee (1962-1970), and in 1963 was named ambassador to the Soviet Union. He served in this position until 1969. He served as the Hungarian representative in the Danube Commission. He retired in 1972.²⁶

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²⁵ Baráth Magdolna, Gecsényi Lajos (ed.): Főkonzulok, követek és nagykövetek, 1945-1990, MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2016, p. 243

²⁶ Baráth Magdolna, Gecsényi Lajos (ed.): Főkonzulok, követek és nagykövetek, 1945-1990, MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2016, pp. 271-272

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