

E-Dossier Series Nr. 3

Documentary Evidence

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

VOLUME II

Mediation Efforts – Part One
(December 1965 – January 1966)

Edited by

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

COLD WAR HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER

BUDAPEST

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION An unexpected intermediary: Hungary's role in the mediation between the United States and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.....	1
Historical background.....	1
Contents of the current E-Dossiers	4
Bibliography.....	7
ABBREVIATIONS.....	9
DOCUMENT 1 Minutes of the HSWP Political Committee meeting on 4 January 1966	10
DOCUMENT 2 János Radványi, Charge d'affaires, Hungarian Legation, Washington, DC, Chronology of US–Hungarian Contacts regarding Vietnam, 23 December 1965–20 January 1966.....	23
DOCUMENT 3 Hungarian Foreign Minister János Péter, Report on a meeting with North Vietnamese Ambassador Hoang Luong, Budapest, 15 January 1966.....	47
MAIN ACTORS	50
Bibliography:.....	61
ABOUT THE AUTHORS.....	63

INTRODUCTION

An unexpected intermediary: Hungary's role in the mediation between the United States and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam

The current two volume publication of documents originating from the National Archives of Hungary (Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár, MNL) is the next edition in a series, which was launched in 2017 by the Cold War History Research Center¹. Its aim is to make the translation of the original Hungarian language documents available for the English speaking historian community, especially to those interested in Cold War history.

These two volumes contain the most important documents about the Hungarian mediation efforts from the most intensive period of late December 1965 through January–February 1966, which was a very important effort in the history of Hungarian foreign policy, and it was for long time virtually unknown for the larger public. The research work of three contributors to the current volumes was very important in uncovering the real significance of these events: Csaba Békés, James G. Hershberg and Zoltán Szőke, who published important articles and sources about the events. The current Publication is the largest effort to make these documents available to a large audience, and the editors hope, it will bring a new depth to the understanding of the events and Hungary's role in this little known effort to mediate between the warring parties.

Historical background

1965 was a very active year in the Vietnam War. The National Liberation Front (NLF), better known as Viet Cong published its five point peace plan in March,² in April the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) published its four point peace plan;³ President Johnson offered peace talks to the DRV, which was refused. The DRV began its own diplomatic offensive, and the Soviet Union and the PRC provided modern air defense

¹ See: *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)*, Editors: Csaba BÉKÉS and János KEMÉNY, Contributors: Barbara BUKÓ, Dorisz DOMOSZLAI, Dean JOLLY, Dániel KOCSIS, Zoltán SZŐKE. Cold War History Research Center E-Dossier Series Nr. 1. Cold War History Research Center, Budapest 2017.

² *Pentagon Papers, Part VI.A Settlement of the Conflict (6 Vols.) Negotiations, 1965-67: The Public Record* p. 77. <https://nara-media-001.s3.amazonaws.com/arcmedia/research/pentagon-papers/Pentagon-Papers-Part-VI-A.pdf>

³ Ang Chen Guan: *The Vietnam War from the Other Side: The Vietnamese Communists' Perspective*, RoutledgeCurzon, 2002 pp. 88-89.

equipment to the DRV.⁴ In March 1965 the U.S. sent the first ground units to the Republic of Vietnam (RVN).⁵ The U.S. military efforts grew and in June U.S. forces took to the offensive against forces of the NLF. The ferocious battle in November in the Ia Drang valley has become widely known since then.⁶

Diplomatic efforts were of course not new to the conflict. The most important after the Geneva Peace Accords in 1954, was the Geneva Conference of 1961-1962 on Laos, which on paper guaranteed the neutrality of the country.⁷ Although the U.S. political involvement had a long history, the military efforts were relatively new, and there was hope on the diplomatic front that the two sides could be brought together. As part of a very intensive international diplomatic process many actors tried to limit the military escalation. One such early effort was Operation Mayflower in May 1965, which resulted in failure.⁸

The Soviet point of view on the conflict was a unique one, as it was not less defined by its hostility against the U.S. than by its growing competition with the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC), which grew somewhat hostile against the USSR. The PRC had also its own reasons to support the DRV, as it did not want a state allied with the U.S. on its southern border. (Washington feared again provoking a Chinese entry into the war – as had happened during the Korean War in late 1950 after U.S. forces crossed the 38th parallel – and moderated its escalation accordingly, in part due to a secret message it received from Beijing.⁹)

There was also the Korean precedent, Mao's rhetoric, its material support as well as its geographic closeness to the DRV, which made it an important player in the Vietnam War. The leadership of the USSR felt, that it had to compete with the Chinese in Vietnam, so it won't lose face in front of the Third World, and inside the Soviet camp. The USSR however, had little leverage with the DRV, and Soviet leaders feared the Chinese influence on Vietnamese

⁴ Tilford, Earl H. Jr.: *Setup: What the Air Force did in Vietnam and Why*, Air University Press, 1992. pp. 121-122.

<http://www.dtic.mil/get-tr-doc/pdf?AD=ADA421969&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf>

⁵ Turley, William S.: *Second Indochina War: A Concise Political and Military History*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2009.p. 85.

⁶ Harold G. Moore–Joseph L. Galloway: *We Were Soldiers Once...and Young: Ia Drang The Battle That Changed the War in Vietnam*. Random House, 1992

⁷ Ruane, Kevin: *War and Revolution in Vietnam, 1930-75*, UCL Press 1998, p. 53

⁸ Karnov, Stanley: *Vietnam a History: The First Complete Account of Vietnam at War*, Penguin Books, 1985, p.421.

⁹ See James G. Hershberg and Chen Jian, "Informing the Enemy: Sino-American 'Signaling' and the Vietnam War, 1965," in Priscilla Roberts, ed., *Behind the Bamboo Curtain: China, Vietnam, and the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press/Stanford University Press, 2006), pp. 193-257.

leadership, so they chose not to engage in direct diplomatic mediation efforts. So the only option they had, was to rely on other Eastern Bloc states to do their bidding in this field.¹⁰

There were two obvious choices for this role. The first and best was Poland, as the country was one of the members of the International Commission for Supervision and Control, generally known as the International Control Commission (ICC), the body created by the 1954 Geneva Peace Accords, in order to observe the situation in the three countries of Indo-China.¹¹ The second was the Peoples' Republic of Hungary, which at the time tried to create good relations with the West, and although it was not a member of the ICC, it had good relations with the DRV. Both countries engaged in serious secret diplomacy in order to establish direct contact between the U.S. and the DRV. The Polish effort during LBJ's 37-day bombing "pause" (from 23 December 1965 through 31 January 1966) included secretly sending a special emissary, foreign ministry official Jerzy Michalowski, from Warsaw to Hanoi to urge the North Vietnamese to enter negotiations with Washington, but Ho Chi Minh and other DRV leaders rejected the overture. Later in 1966, the Poles were central players in another Vietnam peace initiative aiming to broker the opening of talks between Washington and Hanoi; that bid, which U.S. officials code-named "Marigold", is explored in James G. Hershberg: *Marigold: The Lost Chance for Peace in Vietnam*.¹² The Hungarian track has remained more in the shadows, as it was somewhat shorter and at the first Western publication about it came from the disgruntled former Hungarian charge d'affaires, János Radványi, who defected to the US in 1967. Based on his own limited view of the events, he declared in his book, that the Hungarian effort was nothing more than an effort of buying time for Hanoi.¹³ The current document collection will show that this was not true, as the Hungarian state and party leadership engaged in an intensive effort to build a genuine channel between the two warring parties.

¹⁰ Szöke, Zoltán: Delusion or Reality? Secret Hungarian Diplomacy during the Vietnam War, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 4., Fall 2010, pp. 123–124. See also: James G. Hershberg: Peace Probes and the Bombing Pause: Hungarian and Polish Diplomacy During the Vietnam War, December 1965–January 1966, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2, Spring 2003, 32–67 and James G. Hershberg: *Marigold: The Lost Chance for Peace in Vietnam*. Washington, D.C., Stanford University Press/Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2012.

¹¹ Turley, 2009. p. 16.

¹² James G. Hershberg: *Marigold: The Lost Chance for Peace in Vietnam*.¹² Stanford University Press/Wilson Center Press, 2012.

¹³ See an in-depth refutation of Radványi's claims by Zoltán Szöke in his article: Delusion or Reality? Secret Hungarian Diplomacy during the Vietnam War, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol.12, No. 4., Fall 2010, pp. 119–180.

Contents of the current E-Dossiers

Volume II

The documents in the two E-Dossiers (Volume II and III) cover the most important period in the Hungarian mediation effort – from late December 1965 through the months of January–February 1966. This period saw intensive efforts by the Hungarians to create a channel between the Americans and the Vietnamese.

Document 1 in this volume shows that the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP) leadership intensively communicated its efforts regarding the mediation efforts with the Soviet, Polish and the Vietnamese leaders. It also provides an overview of the events of December 1965, which provided the immediate groundwork for the mediation efforts.

Document 2 is the report of the Hungarian Charge d'affaires in Washington about the major events in Washington between the two main players: Secretary of State Rusk and János Radványi, the Hungarian Charge d'affaires. Radványi provides a day-by-day overview of his visits, phone calls and what information was given and received. This document was intended for the highest party leadership, i.e. the HSWP Political Committee for the best possible understanding of what has taken place in Washington.

Document 3 gives a glimpse into what information the Hungarians gave to the Vietnamese in the course of the mediation efforts, as the report gives a description of a meeting between the Hungarian Foreign Minister and the Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Volume III

Document 1 in **Volume II** is the minutes of the HSWP Political Committee held on 21. January 1966. It covers the events in detail, which happened since the last meeting of the body held on 4. January, and gives detailed description of the Polish efforts to the members of the Political Committee. It is a very important document as it not only covers the events in Washington, but also gives an overview of the communication with the Vietnamese leadership. It provides information on the Hungarian embassy in the DRV and it also gives an insight into how the Hungarian leadership thought about other mediation efforts, known to them at the time.

Document 2 gives an insight into the communication between the Hungarians and the Polish diplomats. The report details the information the Poles gave to the Hungarians about

the visit of Averell Harriman, who travelled to Eastern Bloc capitals on behalf of President Johnson, in order to help the diplomatic process.

Document 3 shows the diplomatic exchanges between Hungarian and U.S. diplomats in Budapest. This document shows U.S. efforts in Budapest, to get an answer to their proposals.

Document 4 is a Foreign Ministry record for the Political Committee of the HSWP, in which the measures undertaken by the Foreign Ministry are listed, and also a chronology of the events is included. The document also includes information on the communication with the North Vietnamese leadership, as well as information on the mission to Hanoi of the Soviet envoy Alexander Shelepin, as well as information from the Polish Foreign Ministry.

Document 5 details a meeting between the Hungarian Foreign Minister and the State Department's Hungarian desk officer, who talked about the results of the Hungarian mediation.

Document 6 is a memorandum about the Polish Ambassador's visit, in which he reports about the failure of the mediation and what information the U.S. representative gave the Poles about the effort.

Document 7 is the minutes of the meeting of the Political Committee of the HSWP, held on 1 February 1966. At this meeting the members of the PC talk in detail about their impressions and plans of the Hungarian mediation effort, and propose to maintain the channel, or at least the possibility of acting as a go-between in the future, when the need arises from both sides.

Document 8 is a report of Hungary's ambassador to the DRV, about his experiences with his Vietnamese counterparts and how he related messages to the Vietnamese leadership.

Document 9 is a memorandum about a meeting between the Hungarian foreign ministry officials and the Polish ambassador to Hungary. The Polish ambassador shared important information about the intentions of the U.S. in the RVN as well as the view of the DRV leadership on the U.S. intentions. The ambassador also gave details about Shelepin's visit to Hanoi and also some information about Chinese intentions in the conflict.

Document 10 is a memorandum about the meeting between the Hungarian ambassador to Poland and the Polish Foreign Ministry Director-General Jerzy Michalowski about his experiences during his mission to the DRV. Michalowski confirms that the leadership in the DRV was of the opinion that the time for the talks with the U.S. has not yet arrived, but some members show intentions to end the conflict through peaceful means, the NLF leadership is however determined to achieve a military victory.

Document 11 is also a memorandum of Hungarian–Polish talks, this time the Polish Ambassador to Hungary reported to his Hungarian colleagues that the DRV leadership was in fact of the opinion that a military solution is the only way forward, based on the experiences against the French. The Ambassador also gave an update on the intention of the European countries in regard of the Vietnamese issue, as well as the Chinese role in European thinking.

In **Document 12** the Hungarian Charge d'affaires details the events in the final days of January and the early days of February on the diplomatic front, how the U.S. reacted, what the Poles did and what the international diplomatic situation regarding Vietnam looked like in those days.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AP – Associated Press

CC – Central Committee

DRV – Democratic Republic of Vietnam

HSWP – Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party

ICC – International Commission of Control

MOL (Magyar Országos Levéltár) – Hungarian Archive

MNL (Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár) – Hungarian National Archive

NLF – National Liberation Front

RVN – Republic of Vietnam

PC – Political Committee

SD – State Department

SEATO – Southeast Asia Treaty Organization

UN – United Nations

UPI – United Press International

USIA – United States Information Agency

DOCUMENT 1

Minutes of the HSWP Political Committee meeting on 4 January 1966

TOP SECRET!
3 copies made

MINUTES

of the Political Committee meeting on 4. January 1966

1.) a.) About Vietnam:

Comrade JÁNOS PÉTER:

Honorable Political Committee,

On 23. December we have reported in the daily confidential report of the Foreign Ministry compiled for the members of the Political Committee, that in Washington soon after the joint official announcement of the Christmas truce by both sides, Rusk summoned comrade Radványi and informed him about the particular platform steering American behavior on the Vietnam issue. What he told us was amended several times since then, and as a matter of fact it was published in several forms. During the talks there was no suggestion that we should mediate or make suggestions in any form to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, but the intention was obvious.

After receiving this briefing there was a brief meeting with János Kádár on the 24., as a result of which comrade Komócsin called comrade Andropov and informed him about the situation and the fact, that the Vietnamese deputy prime minister, who was staying in Budapest at that time, should be informed about the briefing. Comrade Andropov has agreed with this and on the same day comrade Fock informed the leader of the delegation and the Vietnamese ambassador, who both said they will inform to Hanoi, but they requested to do this through our technical means, which was made possible. During the transmission we stated:

First of all, we stated, that we do not suggest anything, we told them, that we will tell our opinion about the proposal to the Americans, and if the Vietnamese comrades have remarks or suggestions regarding it, we will welcome them. We also told them, that we weren't asked to

become official mediators, but in accordance with our earlier conduct of providing information on certain topics on a friendly, comradely basis, we also inform them about this. At the same time the information was provided to Moscow as well. We also sent a draft reply to Moscow, which we formulated for the possibility of getting no reply from Hanoi. To this draft we had received the answer from Moscow, saying that as of that time they have no remarks and they suggested that we must wait for the possible reply of DRV. During this period Rusk inquired several times from comrade Radványi, if there were any reactions from our side and every inquiry had the feeling of an ultimatum and he always added that the bombing halt against the DRV is only for a few days – this was repeated by him in several different forms. During the talks Comrade Radványi inquired by Rusk if his messages and the parts of his messages relating to the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam could be interpreted as sign that they are willing to negotiate with the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam? Rusk provided a long and complicated answer to this, the essence of which was, that under certain circumstances and conditions they are willing to do even that, and if the negotiations materialize, there will be no objection against the participation of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam.

Those new remarks were also sent to Hanoi but without any opinion of ours, stressing that we are going to reply and if they have any suggestions, they should share it with us.

During the course of the last week, there were two reactions, the first one was that the Vietnamese comrades are reviewing the situation and if a concrete concept emerges, they will inform us in timely manner. The second reply was, that they asked us not to reply to the Americans until we do not know their position, and they requested a consultation about the reply. Insofar the exchanges of messages seemed formally as an exchange of messages between the U.S. Secretary of State and the Hungarian foreign minister.

In the middle of the week, on the 28. the situation changed, as Rusk handed over a written note to comrade Radványi in which Rusk did not speak on his own behalf, but he had a mandate to say that there is no decision on restarting the bombing of the DRV and the bombing halt will be extended to the new year as well, and the further extension of the bombing pause depends on the reaction of Hanoi. In the second point of this note was the first reference to the government, as they are led by the assumption that the government is interested in a peaceful settlement of the Vietnamese situation, they assume it is important to share the above mentioned proposal, and our government will be able to use it appropriately.

We replied that the substance of his messages was provided to the government, and we will provide an appropriate answer. So far, we haven't provided any answer. This message was also forwarded to Hanoi.

On that day when Rusk handed over this note to comrade Radványi, the State Department called comrade Radványi with the following request: Harriman is starting his European tour in that night, and he will visit Warsaw, and he has the mandate, provided the Hungarian government is interested in negotiating with Harriman, to visit Budapest. On the same day comrade Dobrynin was also summoned to the State Department and was given the same note – which was given to comrade Radványi too – and comrade Dobrynin was also informed about the talks with Radványi. It was revealed during the night that comrade Shelepin will travel to Hanoi, and on the following day, we have received an urgent message sent by comrade Rapacki that Harriman will arrive in Warsaw and he wants to know when we will receive Harriman. We looked at what the appropriate answer would be under the leadership of comrades Kádár and Kállai and the opinion emerged – which was proven right since then – that receiving Harriman would not be appropriate, so we sent out two messages, one to Warsaw and one to Washington. The message to Warsaw was also appropriate, because Harriman also ordered the Ambassador in Warsaw to ask us when we could receive him. We replied to Warsaw as well as to Washington, that there are no developments, which would make Harriman's visit to Budapest urgent, but his visit would endanger the secrecy, which was agreed upon with Rusk.

On the following day, Rusk reacted to our reply and assured us of his full understanding of why we did not receive Harriman and he tried to assure us that by sending Harriman to Budapest they did not intend to force a reply from us, but assumed that we would be interested in talking personally with an authoritative American representative. Later, the Polish comrades informed us about their talks with Harriman, which was practically identical in its substance to that which was sent to us by Rusk through Washington. The Polish comrades stated immediately, and they would also inform Harriman about it, that in their analysis it would be practical to send a leading member of the foreign ministry to Hanoi, who was a former member of the Polish delegation of the International Control Commission in Indochina. This was done. Today morning I have received a report about this mission from the Polish ambassador.

During the weekend only that much happened, that on the 31. a message was received from Hanoi, which was a written message, the substance of which was, that the United States intends to intensify its the aggression against Vietnam and wants to

make Vietnam into a new type of colony. The United States didn't do anything to accept the DRV's practical points, but states hypocritically, that some of the 4 points are acceptable, though the U.S. is working on the expansion of the war. The second point stated, which was handed over in written form by them too, like Rusk did in Washington, stating, that if I consider it necessary to argue with the Americans, we should tell the Americans, that the decision is an exclusive right of Vietnamese, and if the United States wants something, they should turn directly to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam or the National Liberation Front.

I thanked the comrade Vietnamese Foreign Minister on the following day, 1. January for this message, and I stated that we are in no hurry to reply, only in the case if the bombing of the DRV would restart. At the same time I inquired about the last part of the message, respectively the last sentence of the message, meaning that if the Americans want something, they should contact the Democratic Republic of Vietnam or to the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, could be interpreted in a way, like the ambassador of the People's Republic of China and the ambassador of the United States are in regular contact, and if the Americans intend to do this or suggest this, could they in a similar way contact the representative of the National Liberation Front or the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and if the answer is yes, should it be a secret or an official meeting? This was sent to the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry but until this time no reply was received. Which is understandable considering the situation.

The comrades in Moscow and comrade Rapacki were informed about these steps. In Moscow comrade Andropov was briefed via phone by comrade Komócsin and comrade Andropov briefed him about the trip of comrade Shelepin. Today we received a briefing about the mission of Michalowski to Hanoi from Poland. The main points are these: comrade Michalowski was not only sent to Hanoi with the task to inform the Vietnamese comrades about the meeting with Harriman, but to elaborate on the position of the Polish Central Committee and the Polish Government on the assessment of this situation, and also to make suggestions to the Vietnamese comrades, moreover he was ordered to negotiate about these issues in Moscow and in Beijing as well.

The opinion and the suggestion of the Polish comrades is the following: it is difficult to determine the American behavior at the moment, to what extent this series of propaganda efforts is based on real difficulties, which are the result of the war, the deterioration of the international situation, or the domestic problems and to what extent is it due to the intention to provide cover for the expansion of military activity. It is hard to decide in their opinion and therefore they propose, that the Vietnamese comrades should

establish a direct contact with the Americans and accept their offer in some form in order to learn more about the American intentions. If they do not establish a contact, even in the case the U.S. has some difficulties, which will force the U.S. to make concessions, they would help the United States to get a cover for restarting the bombings. But if they establish direct contact with them, and if it turns out to be true, that the U.S. does not have a real intentions to negotiate, and they decline the Vietnamese comrades' rightful demands, we are going to be in the better position. Comrade Michalowski went to Hanoi with this message to submit this information to the highest leadership levels and beforehand to negotiate this in Moscow and in Beijing.

On Wednesday he reached his destination without any problem and the comrades in Moscow completely agreed with the Polish position. In Beijing, the talks proceeded with the participation of one of the comrade deputy foreign ministers and the Polish ambassador, and during the talks comrade Michalowski revealed the above-described position and he pointed out that from Harriman's statements they concluded that the Americans are flexible regarding both to the format of the negotiations and the composition of the negotiating parties, and during the preparation this flexibility could be exploited. Afterwards, the deputy foreign minister gave a two-hour lecture to comrade Michalowski about the current international situation and the position of the United States in Vietnam pointing out that the U.S. has severe difficulties in Vietnam, they suffer supply problems and heavy losses on the battlefield, despite that they don't consider to admit defeat. They admit that the time will come, when they will have to shift from the battlefield to the diplomatic and political fields, but that time has not arrived yet, and it will come when the Americans admit their military defeat in Vietnam. In their opinion, any mediation effort like the one carried out by the Polish is harmful, and the Polish comrades made a mistake when they accepted the request of the United States for mediation, they should have declined the offer, or maybe they should have informed the Vietnamese comrades about it. The Polish moves only supported the deceitful maneuvering of the U.S. Of course, comrade Michalowski further explained his own point of view, but the Chinese foreign minister stressed that it is certain, that the Vietnamese will reject the Polish initiative. It was mutually agreed, that there are basic differences between their positions. Comrade Rapacki made two comments on these reports. First: comrade Michalowski will probably only arrive today in Hanoi, the second is, that he requests that our embassy establish contact and coordinate with Michalowski. The Czechoslovak, the Bulgarian and the GDR ambassadors have been informed about this as has been Moscow. They were also asked, that their ambassadors in Hanoi also should cooperate.

By the way, it is Comrade Rapacki's opinion, that the Vietnamese comrades will show some flexibility, they see slim shades of difference compared to the past, but the assumption is, that the Chinese have some tools to force the hands of the Vietnamese, which would make a more flexible Vietnamese position impossible. The Polish comrades requested us to be in touch with them and inform each other and coordinate our actions. Bucharest was informed only in general terms, and the Romanian ambassador was not asked to cooperate in Hanoi.

So that we wouldn't be late with our effort, I told the following to the Polish ambassador: I emphasized, that I will report to the leaders in charge, and we will share our official position with him. It looks like, that what was right in our case, by not receiving Harriman, it will not be right there, if the ambassadors of the socialist countries would hold conferences in Hanoi and would coordinate their actions, it may easily look like the European socialist countries want to put pressure on the Vietnamese comrades, so as to force them to make a move in spite of Chinese pressure. The best solution looks like to be, to stress that only the Vietnamese comrades are the only ones competent to make formulate a position on these issues. I stressed, that I may contact him today again.

My request to the Political Committee is, to approve the steps taken until today, and to approve the report and the measures. I stress again, that officially we did not commit ourselves to a predestined mediator obligation, but in order to get to know the different positions, it would be useful to continue the exchange of messages with the Vietnamese comrades irrespectively from what the future U.S. behavior might show, either openly, or in a diplomatic way, or through some proposal, or even through the publication of our condemning statement, but before that, we will have to take the proposal over here.

Comrade ZOLTÁN KOMOCSIN:

We held a meeting yesterday with the agreement of comrades Kállai, Biszku and Péter, I spoke with comrade Andropov. He explicitly stressed that he only can state his own opinion and not the official position of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. According to his personal opinion, the Americans have with the initiation of bombings pause and with the diplomatic propaganda effort made a smart move from their point of view. It is beyond doubt, that they were able to create internationally a huge advantage for themselves. In his opinion the Americans were forced to make this move – at least partly – because the military situation in Vietnam, which is disadvantageous to the Americans and to the Vietnamese as well. The Americans – according to him – want to create an advantageous basis for the negotiations with their actions. This one was his first point. The second was, that according to

comrade Andropov there is nothing new in the behavior of the Vietnamese comrades, they are on the same platform as they were, and he outlined the statement the Vietnamese gave us. They don't have any information and they didn't see any signs that would show, that the Vietnamese comrades have altered their position.

The third one: he told us, respectively we got a confidential notification beforehand, that comrade Shelepin will leave Hanoi on Thursday. The main point is, that comrade Shelepin received a very important mission, and in all his official dealings it will be stressed, that the Soviet Union continues to support Vietnam, and on the other hand at unofficial or secret meetings he will elaborate on the position, that the Vietnamese comrades should steer their activities to a political-diplomatic level and should conduct higher diplomatic activity more intensively than before. At the same time, and partly before that, when the Soviet comrades came into contact with the Americans and tell the Americans to reach out to the Vietnamese, if they really want the negotiations, the agreement, and they should not conduct propaganda, but should turn to the DRV and to the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam. Comrade Andropov said, that at least for a few days, they will not respond to the American propaganda campaign. The most important is firstly, to wait for the position of the Vietnamese. There may be a change, and they might uncover the American diplomatic-political campaign. For now, they are on the side of steady propaganda.

Finally, based on the discussion with the comrades, I suggested to comrade Andropov, that it would be useful, if the foreign ministers of the Soviet Union, Poland and Hungary would sit down at an unofficial, secret meeting on this particular subject. Comrade Andropov liked this idea personally, and he said it was a good idea, he promised to report it to comrade Brezhnev and he promised to call back comrade János Péter on this matter, and he will inform Rapacki about this through the Polish ambassador. In the meanwhile I was thinking, that if this will be organized this week, then comrade Gromyko may not be able to participate, because he is in Taskent right now.

Comrade ANTAL APRÓ:

I have the feeling, that the position of democratic Vietnam is not being written or compiled right now. I have read different news articles about the experimentation of the American regarding this issue. Are we expecting any further statements?

Comrade BÉLA BISZKU

One message was sent, and we are waiting for a clarification on how they interpret the last sentence of their message.

Comrade ANTAL APRÓ

I have a feeling, that despite their interests, the Vietnamese are under such pressure, that they will not be able to make a statement.

Comrade REZSŐ NYERS

I agree with the report and with all the measures that were taken so far. It is unlikely, that the Vietnamese would change their tactics. According to the news we received, it is unlikely. With these replies, we should play for time and wait until the end of the trip of comrade Shelepin, and close the initiative down, saying it was unsuccessful, but in a way not to estrange the Americans from the Vietnamese, so that later, if necessary this existing channel could be utilized.

Comrade JÁNOS PÉTER

I would like to suggest that closing the case we should wait for – or with the creation of another step – the result of the negotiation with Michalowski in Hanoi and but mainly the end of comrade Shelepin 's mission.

Today a letter arrived from comrade Dobrynin and comrade Radványi, if I may, I would like to read it out loud. Comrade Radványi is in agreement with comrade Dobrynin, provides the following assessment: regarding the events that happened until now, despite the behavior and propaganda actions of the United States, the instance, that the talks with Rusk weren't publicized until now, shows some signs of a potential compromise, and it creates the impression, that the United States continues to consider Hungary as the most important channel. It is certain however, that there were some rumors, but comrade Radványi visited Rusk seven times, and news only about one of the visits was publicized, and on one day there was a funny situation, as a reaction to these we sent a warning to comrade Radványi, to beware of the press, and he replied that it is not a source of danger anymore, as he uses another secret entrance to the State Department.

Comrade ANTAL APRÓ

The Political Committee should formulate a statement, that it considers this initiative useful, it must continue, in order for this channel to stay open. I agree with the

initiative, that the Foreign Ministers should meet, and according to the information they receive – if there will be a new proposal from the Americans – should they formulate a position. I support our help for the betterment of the Vietnamese situation. Regarding the question, whether we constitute the main channel of communication, I cannot give a definitive answer, but I believe, that the Hungarian Foreign Ministry does a useful job.

Comrade DEZSŐ NEMES

In my opinion, it would be feasible to keep this opportunity open. It must be sustained, but at the same time, we must be careful, so that this opportunity cannot be used by the Americans for their propaganda purposes. I think the move of declining Harriman's visit was a skillful one. I believe it is the right option to wait with the reply until after comrade Shelepin completes his mission. On the 10. the U.S. Congress will be in session, where this issue will be on the agenda. And the fact whether they receive a reply or not, could influence the discussions in the U.S. Congress. In this reply, which arrived at the end of last week, there is a slight indication, a reference, that if the American want to achieve something, they should establish direct contact with them, but it is so slight, that it was indeed necessary to ask, how it should be interpreted, because it is an important part of our potential reply. It gives me food for thought, that on 10. the Congressional session will take place, and the way they will present this propaganda campaign depends partially on the fact, whether they will be referencing that they do not have any proposal at hand.

Comrade ISTVÁN SZIRMAI

I consider the following important: we should consider, that according to different news stories, parallel to the American peace propaganda efforts, the situation in the Far East has gotten tense as well. The statement of the Vietnamese comrades' shows, that the pressure of the Chinese has reached its goal, because we received three replies from Hanoi. The first one was very welcome as it stated, that they are reviewing the situation. In the second one, they asked us for more patience, which also showed, that they were reviewing the situation. At the same time, we received reports that they have engaged in a conflict with the Chinese. The third one shows, that the Chinese did not tolerate any concessions. This is the current situation. In this situation, are we allowed to formulate a statement, saying that the Chinese have put pressure on the Vietnamese? I don't think we have to suggest such an option to the Political Committee, we don't have to formulate such a statement, like the Polish did, and

neither do we have to follow what comrade Andropov said about the goal of comrade Shelepins's mission.

We will continue to inform Hanoi with our outmost honesty, as we did before, we have shown the ways, possibilities, but we should not go any further than that.

The other point is: we should deal with same correctness with the Americans on this issue. Exactly because, as comrade Nyers stated, this channel could be useful in the future. We should keep the highest possible level of discretion, so as to show, that we are fair mediators indeed.

Comrade BÉLA BISZKU

I propose that the steps – which were taken in the last few days, since 26. December, since the arrival of this message were undertaken by the Foreign Ministry, should be approved by the Political Committee. Yesterday it was a huge problem for us, how to classify the American initiative. As things stand, it could include a lot of possibilities. They have initiated an expansive diplomatic initiative, there is military pressure etc. Besides that, we must accept, that the front is causing great difficulties for them, and there is their domestic situation as well. They are looking for possibilities to negotiate. The possibility is there, that if this doesn't succeed, they could improve their standing in the international arena, and in front of their domestic audiences as well. They have to report something to Congress as well. I believe we should interpret the American position this way.

Regarding the behavior of the Vietnamese: shades of slight differences could be detected. The hands of the Chinese are on the throat of the Vietnamese. This must also be reckoned with. We also must consider, that they will do everything, in order for that position to stay the way it is. That is why it is important for us to keep our correct approach during the negotiations. Moreover, we even discussed, that we should recommend the same approach for the Polish comrades. In the current situation, no further steps should be taken, although they have leaked it through multiple channels, that they had undertaken this initiative.

We have informed Hanoi and the Soviet comrades about these steps. Later we decided, that we will inform the Polish comrades as well. All these steps should be written down, as it would be a very important document. It must be put into writing point by point, what we have done.

We do not plan any further steps towards the Americans, the exchange of messages were on the level of the foreign ministries. We have gone so far, that the Foreign

Minister informed the government, but there was no word to the Americans, whether we forwarded their message to anywhere. This should be kept this way.

There is the summit of the foreign ministers, I feel, that we are terribly slow, and we cannot negotiate on vital questions. We are slow...

Comrade ZOLTÁN KOMÓCSIN

This must be done in a more patient way. When the Americans presented their initiative, they prepared for it for a very long time. These are military maneuvers and not small actions. Comrade Andropov and his colleagues are dealing with the Taskent situation also with great patience.

Comrade BÉLA BISZKU

We are calm, but we need to harmonize our positions. The foreign ministers should meet under such circumstances ...

Comrade ZOLTÁN KOMÓCSIN

The main point is, that Political Committee should agree in theory with such a meeting: or if it proves necessary, the Soviet, Hungarian and Polish foreign ministers should consult with each other.

Comrade BÉLA BISZKU

If it will be deemed necessary for the foreign ministers to meet and discuss this topic, we approve it. It is possible to continue our line, meaning that if there will be no success this time, but the channel stays open, it could be used in the future. I ask the Political Committee to approve this proposal, and approve the measures, which were already undertaken. We should mandate comrade Peter with the written formulation of the measures undertaken and this should be approved by comrades Komócsin and Szirmai.

Comrade ISTVÁN SZIRMAI

One more thing about the utilization of this. The U.S. Congress will be in session on the 10. Johnson will provide some kind of report there. Couldn't we maybe through some channel suggest, for instance through the Polish, respectively, wouldn't it be an appropriate step not to give a negative answer until the 10., so it can't be used by the Americans. Something like that should be agreed upon.

Comrade JÁNOS PÉTER

If I may, there is a piece of information. Congress as whole will not be in session on the 10. On the 10., the Senate and the House of Representatives will be in separate sessions. Sometime in January Congress will be in session, with a joint session of the Senate and the House of Representatives. At this joint session, the President will present the report on the state of the United States. It looks like that they are flexible with this term, as they intend to wait for the answer. Of course, they would like that answer to be negative, and they have an intention, that Congress should gather only after this negative reply.

Comrade BÉLA BISZKU

One more thing: the government should be notified about this. I propose, that comrade János Péter should inform it, stressing the need for discretion. Only about the substantive points, the substance of the initiative on the 23. and what happened afterwards. Only the main points.

Comrade GYULA KÁLLAI

I have an accompanying remark to the part about not making suggestions to Vietnam to accept the American initiative. When the Vietnamese comrades were here, we received them with comrade Kádár. During the conversation, this issue came up and our position was – comrade Kádár stressed it very explicitly – that we agree with their proposal for the solution of this issue, but we find it necessary that the Vietnamese comrades should conduct political maneuvers – but at that time only Johnson's phrases about peace were public. The Americans could mislead many people with those phrases about peace. Think about the initiative, which the South Vietnamese initiated for a ceasefire, Johnson was not willing to accept it, the public opinion of the world supported Vietnam, and even the American people found it incomprehensible why Johnson would want to refuse this very agreeable demand. He suggested to them that while keeping the current platform made up of 4-5 points, they should maneuver better politically, so that the Americans will not reap the rewards of these diplomatic successes.

I only told about this, because the Polish will go there as well, and it would be preferable, when they would make a move, they could reply, that it's very interesting what comrade Kádár said, and they will forward it. So, our point of view is included this much in the position of the Polish.

Comrade BÉLA BISZKU

Is there an agreement? Then that's agreed.

[Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár-Országos Levéltár (Hungarian National Archive-Hungarian Archive, MNL-OL) M-KS 288. f. 5./384. ő. e. (1966. 01. 04.) 1R/319]

DOCUMENT 2

János Radványi, Charge d’Affaires, Hungarian Legation, Washington, DC, Chronology of US–Hungarian Contacts regarding Vietnam, 23 December 1965–20 January 1966

1965. December 23.

1965. December 23—I visited Secretary of State Rusk, in his office at 5 in the afternoon in his office. The visit was requested previously by the State Department via telephone. The visit lasted for 40 minutes. I was accompanied by comrade Szluka, from the Hungarian side, and by Mr. Squire, the official in charge of Hungarian affairs from of the American side.

Mr. Rusk welcomed me and led me to his office.

Secretary of State Rusk referred to his meeting with Mr. Péter that took place in New York previously this year, and asked if there was any new information at my disposal. I explained to him that I did not have any new information, which he accepted. Mr. Rusk said that several articles had been published during the previous weeks about North Vietnamese peace feelers, which he had to negate, since he had not received any such information directly from Hanoi. He did receive some news through third parties – e.g. Nkrumah, U Thant, Wilson, La Pira – who were in contact with Hanoi through some means or another, and they thought it was important to let the Americans know about those information. The USA also had some initiatives, which partly were made public, and partly remained confidential. They have not received any reaction so far from the Vietnamese government.

According to Mr. Rusk, the key issue is the question of the third point of the National Liberation Front [program], which the Americans could still not accept. Referring back to the meeting with Mr. Péter again, he stated that as a background to the issue he wishes to describe the American standpoint:

But to give back South Vietnam was not in the 12 points. Their honesty can be tested in relation to any of the 12 points, e.g. he can fly to Geneva in 6 hours.

He felt it was necessary to inform me about the above – said the Secretary of State – before he asked me to deliver the following message: He was thinking about his meeting with Mr. Péter in New York, which he found extremely useful. He wanted to know whether there had been any new information, which could be added to their last meeting. He was promising complete discretion, and said if Mr. Péter had any new opinion or information at his disposal, he would greatly appreciate it if it was delivered to him – repeated Mr. Rusk. [underlined in original]

[sentence missing]

So as to be exact, I asked him how to interpret the 30 hour armistice during Christmas holiday. Mr. Rusk said that they found the 12-hour proposal of the Vietnamese too short, due to religious reasons, because they celebrate both Christmas Eve and Day. But the American soldiers are going to be armed at the Mass, as opposed to the Vietnamese proposal – added the Secretary of State. During the 30 hours they will pause any military activity in the North and will pause the bombing in the South.

The Christmas pause was not regarded as a major political initiative from the side of the Americans, because the time frame is too short for that. But it proved their flexibility towards the issue. Mr. Rusk asked me to report this exactly this way to Mr. Péter: We will see what would happen during those 30 hours, how the enemy would react. The New Year and the TET holiday are coming. Maybe we can reach peace by infiltration. Then the Secretary of State declared that the government of the US had not made a decision yet about the future of the Vietnamese question. He also added that since the South Vietnamese requested it, they did not make any public announcements about the issue in Washington or in Texas.

I assured him about the delivery of the message and about my discretion.

But I also mentioned that the local media has already showed interest – e.g. the UPI News Agency already called the Legation – in the meeting. Mr. Rusk confirmed this right away, and added that apart from the UPI, AP has also inquired about the meeting at the State

Department. He informed me that his daily schedule was accessible for the journalist, and that is how they know about whom he had meetings with. Anyway, it is almost impossible to visit him in his office without the journalists knowing about it.

Mr. Rusk suggested to announce the same information to the public: “the meeting was requested by him, in order to continue the talks between Mr. Péter and himself, about general and bilateral issues.”

After reaching an agreement about a unified statement, I noted “for the sake of truth” we should talk in general about the bilateral relations as well, so as to tell “the truth” to the journalists. Mr. Rusk replied that they wished to improve East-West relations, but they knew that the war with Vietnam was an obstacle for the Hungarians in terms of improving the relations between the two countries. But he also acknowledged that it is an obstacle for the Americans as well, though it has less importance. In terms of the importance of the question from Moscow's point of view, “he was sure that the Vietnam War was a much more serious problem for the Soviets than for the Americans.” I added, that in my opinion, Vietnam had a negative influence on the relations, but it is important to note that the issue had similar influence on the American government.

Referring back to the first part of our conversation, he assured me that he would be happy to talk with me any time. I can reach him, regardless of the holidays, if I had anything to tell him. He can be reached through the operator of the White House, who always knows where he can be reached.

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As for the circumstances of the meeting I can report the following:

On December 22, at 15:30pm Mr. Squire, the official in charge of Hungarian affairs called me at the Legation. My secretary told him that I had been in New York, but would be back on the 23rd. Mr. Squire told her, that they wished to see me at the State Department at the office of Mr. Rusk on December 23, at 5pm.

On December 23, after receiving the message, I called Squire to confirm that I was ready to meet them at the agreed time, and that I would bring comrade Szluka with me, who would make notes during the meeting. He acknowledged what I said and told me that he would await me at the entrance of the State Department.

(Gwertzman published the circumstances of the meeting in the December 27th issue of the Evening Star based on his information from the State Department.)

While walking up to Mr. Rusk's office, Squire mentioned that Mr. Rusk wanted to see me about the Vietnamese issue that was raised at the Péter-Rusk meeting in New York, but of course he did not know exactly what Mr. Rusk would tell me. He also mentioned that some journalists had already inquired about the meeting at the State Department, but they did not make any comments.

After the end of the meeting with Mr. Rusk, 5-6 journalists – from major American news agencies, UPI, AP and USIA – had already been waiting at the reception area of Mr. Rusk's office. They asked the following questions:

1. Did we talk about Vietnamese questions?
2. Did Mr. Rusk give me any messages for delivery?
3. How did the meeting take place?

I gave the answer agreed on with the Secretary of State, and politely but firmly rejected to further comment on the meeting.

After the meeting, [State Department] spokesman Mr. McCloskey had a short news announcement, where he said that Mr. Rusk requested the meeting, and it was a continuation of the meeting between Mr. Péter and Mr. Rusk held in the same year in New York. Besides discussing general issues, the situation of the two countries was also touched upon during the meeting. If the journalist asked – said McCloskey – whether they discussed the question of Vietnam, I would say that it had only been touched upon.

1965. December 24.

13:30

After receiving the telegram, I called Secretary of State Rusk, through the operator of the White House. I could reach him at 13:30 (Eastern Time), since he was on his way home from the airport.

I told him on the phone, that I received an urgent message for him.

We agreed that I would visit him at his office at 14:00 at the State Department. During the first part of the meeting Mr. Rusk was alone with me. Later William Bundy, the deputy undersecretary responsible for Far East affairs, entered the room.

I told Mr. Rusk that Mr. Péter received his message, found it interesting and would get back to him soon. But until then, he suggests that the armistice be extended. Mr. Rusk was thankful for the message, and noted that he did not expect such a quick answer. He wrote down the message word by word and read it aloud to Mr. Bundy.

In relation to the message Mr. Rusk asked how he was supposed to interpret the extension of the armistice. Was it a bilateral armistice? I repeated the message, and said that that was all I could say. Mr. Rusk nodded.

Afterwards Mr. Rusk told that while the Vietcong announced 12 hours, the Americans announced 30 hours. He did not know the opinion of the Vietcong about the 30-hour pause. Did they accept that? Or did they not? Were they ready to extend it or not? If the Vietcong start the fight after the end of their announced pause, the Americans will fight back.

I told him that I would send a message about the American viewpoint, and about what he just said back to comrade Péter. But I wanted to ask if he had any other messages for him.

Here is what Mr. Rusk said verbatim:

“Please, tell Mr. Péter the Americans do not know the viewpoint of the Vietnamese towards the 30 hour pause, and so they do not know their viewpoint about the extension of the pause either. One party cannot agree on an armistice. Maybe we will know more in the afternoon, when the Vietnamese 12 hour pause will end in 4 hours, on December 24, at 18:00 Washington time. They are waiting for the time to come, and William Bundy will receive information from the scene in South Vietnam. He would inform me about the developments

later in the afternoon. Maybe the Vietnamese would make some kind of an announcement through the radio or would not restart the fight. If they start the fights the American troops will fight back.

He is still interested in the opinion of Comrade Péter, or if he is in the position to find out the Vietnamese viewpoint about what would happen if they stopped the shooting [“shooting” in English] and the bombing.”

With this statement the meeting was over. I promised to deliver the message right away. W. Bundy wrote down my phone number and Mr. Rusk told me if there was anything new, I could reach him through the operator of the White House.

The State Department was silent; there was no one around. I could go up to the office of Mr. Rusk and leave without being noticed.

1965. December 24.

20.30

Secretary of State Rusk called me on December 24, at 20.30 and asked me to deliver the following message to Mr. Péter:

“How long the armistice lasts in South Vietnam is up to the [North] Vietnamese. They are willing to extend the pause of the bombing by a couple of days.”

I asked him whether he was talking about the 30 hour American armistice, and Mr. Rusk said yes.

Afterwards I repeated the message and promised to send it home immediately.

1965. December 27.

14.55

Secretary of State Mr. Rusk called me on December 27 and asked me if I received any messages from Budapest, from Foreign Minister Péter. I answered that I had not received anything.

Mr. Rusk then stressed that his phone call did not mean that the Americans would extend the pause in the bombing of North Vietnam. The situation is unchanged, the same as he explained in his phone call on December 24. He talked about a couple of days to find out the reaction of Hanoi to an extended pause in the bombing.

Mr. Rusk repeated, the purpose of his phone call today was to find out whether Mr. Péter had sent any answers or not. I told him I did not have any messages, and added that I will let comrade Péter know about his remarks this time, and about his phone call.

Mr. Rusk was thankful for this.

1965. December 27.

As soon as I received the message from comrade Péter at 17.30 I immediately called the office of Secretary of State Rusk at the State Department, to contact him. As they informed me, Mr. Rusk was in the middle of a background meeting, so he could not be reached right away. After this I talked to W. Bundy, who suggested that I should head for the State Department right away, since by the time I got there Mr. Rusk would be ready to talk with me.

When I arrived at the State Department the personal secretary of Mr. Rusk had already been waiting for me at the entrance. He escorted me to Mr. Rusk's office through a back elevator secretly.

At 18.15 Mr. Bundy escorted me to the office of Mr. Rusk and remained in the room during the meeting. Comrade Szluka accompanied me and took notes during the meeting.

I went to the point right away and told him that I was ordered by Mr. Péter to deliver a message to him. I told him the following:

“Foreign Minister Péter would like to know whether Mr. Rusk's message could be interpreted that the US is willing to start the negotiations with the National Liberation Front, too on the platform presented by Mr. Rusk.” [in English: “(‘Can your messages be interpreted that the US is ready (or willing) to enter into negotiations with the National Liberation Front too on the platform presented by you’).”] Mr. Bundy wrote down the message. Mr. Rusk noted that the question is a very complicated one and that he wanted to know what Mr. Péter meant by "platform". Was it the previously described 12 points? As a response I repeated the whole message word by word.

Mr. Rusk then quoted word by word President Johnson's July 28, 1965 press release, where the following question and answer was presented:

1. Question: Mr. President, would you be willing to permit direct negotiations with the Viet Cong forces?

Answer: We have said we would negotiate anywhere, at any time. The Viet Cong would not difficulty being represented and having their views represented if for a moment Hanoi decided she wanted to cease aggression. I don't think that would be an insurmountable problem. I think that could be worked out.

(The printed version of the press release was in front of Mr. Rusk on his desk, which he lifted and read aloud. He asked his secretary to type the text in question and then handed it over to me.) [English text included.]

2. Peace in Vietnam is up to Hanoi and it does not depend on the Viet Cong. The USA is at war with the Viet Cong since the DRV is sending troops and weapons to South Vietnam. If Hanoi did not send troops, etc. to the South, American troops would not be stationed in South Vietnam.

3. Each of the 12 points has been publicly stated. If the Viet Cong is interested in them they could express their interest through us, through private channels or officially through the Geneva leaders.

4. There is no technical difficulty in front of the bilateral contact with the Viet Cong. There are families in Saigon, some of whose members are either leaders of the South Vietnamese government or of the Viet Cong. The leader of the Viet Cong is an attorney, who has several friends in Saigon.

5. The USA cannot negotiate solely with the Viet Cong, since the Viet Cong is only one part of the population of South Vietnam. There are Buddhists, Catholics, Montagnards, sects, who all have their own leaders.

The local Viet Cong [in English: “(local Vietcong)”] are only one part of the 16 million population of the South. It is impossible to negotiate with them just because they are standing with weapons in front of the Americans.

After this question he noted that I probably did not agree with him on this issue, and I told him that he was right.

6. He was very interested in Mr. Péter's answer and whether he was able to find out the answer of the Viet Cong whether they were interested in the 12 point-platform or not.

After this he said that I could tell Mr. Péter secretly what he would deny in public, that “it seems there are slight differences between Hanoi and the Viet Cong, i.e. racial, ethnic and political differences, and that there are the same differences between Hanoi and Beijing, and between Beijing and Moscow. It is very difficult to find out whom to talk to under these circumstances.[’]” Then Mr. Rusk repeated that that is the reason why he asked for Mr. Péter's answer, whether the Viet Cong was interested in the 12 points or not and whether Mr. Péter could find the answer out from the Viet Cong.

The other part of the meeting turned into an informal conversation. Mr. Rusk offered us drinks, but the topic of the conversation remained Vietnam of course. Mr. Rusk mentioned the issue of the bombing of the DRV, but he emphasized he would not connect this issue to his current question for Mr. Péter. He pointed to the clock on the wall which showed 6.30 in the evening and noted that he would not be able to tell when the bombing of the DRV would start again. But anyway, the pause in the bombing showed the flexibility of the USA.

Here I noted as my personal opinion, that to start the bombings again would make it even more difficult to resolve the problem in Vietnam. Mr. Rusk just waived his hand and said most probably there would not be an escalation in the fighting at this time. He said that he would be very much interested if in the message he would receive from Mr. Péter, Mr. Péter would let him know whether he was in contact with the Hanoi and whether Hanoi was interested in his 12 point-platform. Then I asked whether he was interested in finding out the same information about the NLF, and he replied that he would be, the Viet Cong is very important, as well.

Mr. Rusk was referring back to his previous official statement to Mr. Péter and to the Soviets in which he said: “Give us some signs what the reaction of the other side would be for a stop in the bombing of the DRV.” Mr. Rusk then said that on the basis of his experience in the 1948 negotiations in Berlin, the war in Korea, and the crisis of the near past lead him to the conclusion that it is not enough to speculate on problematic issues but the viewpoint of the other side has to be found out either through official channels or through personal ones.

In relation to the 12 point-platform he noted that if Hanoi, Beijing or the Viet Cong are suspicious about whether the platform is reliable [in English: “(reliable)”] the USA is willing to meet with Hanoi or Beijing in Geneva. He would wait for the representatives of Hanoi and Beijing in Geneva. The 12 points are more than propaganda. If Hanoi is willing to leave South Vietnam alone, the USA would also take her troops out and that they should just test them on this. But if Hanoi wants to get South Vietnam by force, which the USA would never allow, that could mean only one thing: war.

Mr. Rusk then expressed again, even if the bombing continued, he was still interested in finding out what would be the answer of Mr. Péter if the bombings stopped. The bombing itself – added Mr. Rusk – would not close the door in front of any negotiations.

The pause in the bombing during Christmas did not go without incidents. During the 12 hour Viet Cong pause the Viet Cong had 20 incidents, and during the 30-hour American pause, there were 60 Viet Cong incidents. After the Christmas pause, the bombing in the South will continue as usual. The 1-2 day extension in the North was brought up as a possibility on the basis of the Christmas pause, which positively influenced the Americans, and showed their willingness.

At the end of the meeting Mr. Rusk apologized for the article published in the Evening Star on December 27, 1965. Mr. Rusk said as a self-defense, that the journalists are intelligent people who can calculate the different situations. Mr. Rusk then turned to Mr. Bundy if they could clear out the circumstances of how the information was given to the press. Mr. Bundy had a negative response. Mr. Rusk then assured me that our future meetings will be strictly confidential.

Before saying goodbye, Mr. Rusk asked me whether the Viet Cong had an office in Budapest and I answered they did.

Mr. Rusk was thankful for Mr. Péter for his willingness to help and his interest in the issue and he hoped that this did not disturb his Christmas holiday.

Mr. Rusk asked Mr. Bundy whether the journalist[s] saw us walking up to his office or not. Since he said no, Mr. Rusk told his personal secretary to escort me out of the building through the back elevator and the garage. On our way out his secretary assured me that next time they would make sure the same entrance was available for us, so that we would not meet the press.

The meeting lasted for about 45 minutes, and was conducted in a correct manner.

1965. December 28.

10.45

I received a phone call at 10.45 this morning from William Bundy, who told me that Mr. Rusk wishes to see me urgently. I told him, if necessary I can go there right away and that I can go up to Mr. Rusk's office through the garage. I was at the door when a telegram from Mr. Péter arrived: (I received your questions, all your suggestions will be considered and I will inform you about my answer soon.)

I took the message with me, but decided for tactical reasons, I would listen to what Mr. Rusk has to say and only then would I deliver Mr. Péter's message.

A security guide was already waiting for us at the garage entrance of the State Department and I could go up to Mr. Rusk's office through the back elevator without meeting any journalists. I was waiting in his hall for a couple of minutes when the door opened and Ambassador Thompson left Mr. Rusk's office. Comrade Kerekes and myself entered the office.

Mr. Rusk told us the following: (see translated sheet)

He also gave us a written version of the text on plain paper, and added that we should not consider that as a memo but just a verbal message. I promised him that we would not. He also asked me if I met the press I should deny that he gave me any written note since this would stir them and the public up enormously especially if they found out that he had met me four times during the last couple of days.

I promised this and added that he can trust us on that. Then I delivered Mr. Péter's message, which was the following:

("I have got your message*.see translated paragraph) [in English:] "(I have got your newer message, your pressing (urging [sic]) questions. I am carefully studying all your proposals. I will give [a] concrete answer soon)."

Mr. Rusk wrote down the message word by word as usual, and was thankful for it.

After arriving back home I read Mr. Péter's message again, which was finalized by then. In the original version there were a couple of mistakes, but since I did not want to lose time I did not wait for the final version. The difference was the following:

"I am carefully studying all your proposals." – first draft, [and] "Every one of your proposals is under careful examination." – final version.

Then I called Mr. Bundy to let him know that I got back to the office, did not meet any journalists and told him the final version of the message from Mr. Péter. He appreciated my thoroughness and promised that he would pass the information on to Mr. Rusk right away.

1965. December 28.

17.00

I received the following information from Comrade Dobrynin:

Today at noon, Ambassador Thompson asked Dobrynin to visit him and after discussing some minor bilateral issues he told Dobrynin the same “secret government statement” that Mr. Rusk gave me.

Dobrynin asked Thompson the reason why he was telling him this statement, even though Thompson knew the standpoint of the Soviet Union very well. According to that standpoint if the United States had anything to tell about the Vietnamese question they should do that directly. Dobrynin made this comment for formal reasons, and in essence wanted to make clear their long known standpoint. Thompson did not react to this comment, but said that they felt it was necessary to tell this to him, and that now they would tell the same to the Hungarian official, as well.

This time Dobrynin did not comment.

Comment:

According to Dobrynin's personal opinion the Americans want to use both the Soviet and the Hungarian channels to have this important message delivered.

1965. December 28.

18.00 h

William Bundy called me and asked me to deliver the following message to Budapest:

“Ambassador Harriman is going to Europe tonight. Most probably he will go to Warsaw, but he is available to go to Budapest if the Hungarian government wanted to meet him.”

The Ambassador – Bundy said – can be reached through him, so if it is necessary we should call him.

1965. December 29.

9.30 h

On December 29 at 07.15 Eastern Time, I received a telegram from Mr. Péter and I delivered the message over to Mr. Rusk through William Bundy at 9.30 in the morning. This is what I said:

(See translated paragraph)

[in English:] (“Mr. Péter gave me the instruction to forward to Mr. Rusk the following message: I received your message (Rusk) handed over the 28th – concerning the bombing lull of the North – thank you. I have informed my Government about it. Concret[e] answer is in activ[e] preparation”).

Mr. Bundy promised to give the message to Mr. Rusk right away, and asked if we had any news about the Harriman issue. Harriman is already in Warsaw, so both him and Mr. Bundy wanted to know what our response was. Harriman had several meetings today with Polish leaders.

1965. December 30.

On December 30 a few minutes after 9am I called William Bundy and told him that I had an urgent message to deliver to Mr. Rusk. He promised that he would pass my request to Mr. Rusk and will call me back immediately.

And so he did a few minutes later, and told me that Mr. Rusk is ready to see me at the SD immediately.

I went to the State Department right away, where Secretary of State Rusk welcomed me together with Mr. Bundy. The meeting started at 9.20 and lasted for 30 minutes.

I told Mr. Rusk the message and he wrote it down word by word, as usual.

“Harriman contacted us through the American representative in Budapest when Harriman stayed in Warsaw. After careful examination of the issue, we found that a visit by Harriman right now would harm the discretion required for the success of the issue we agreed on December 23. We strongly believe that discretion has to be kept to the last minute. We gave

the same answer to Ambassador Harriman, but obviously we could not explain the reasons to him this way.”

Mr. Rusk said that he understood Mr. Péter's viewpoint and that they did not want to rush us with the visit of Harriman to Budapest, but they thought maybe Mr. Péter wanted to discuss the issue further with a competent person. They also thought this might not be necessary and left the decision for Mr. Péter's judgment. He also added that he was not at all surprised by Mr. Péter's decision and his viewpoint about the situation.

Mr. Rusk turned the rest of the meeting into a friendly conversation, had some coffee served and said that our efforts might result in something successful at the end. He mentioned that he had no information about comrade Shelepin's visit to North Vietnam, and also mentioned that they informed Moscow about the lull in the bombing of North Vietnam.

He asked me how the New Year is celebrated in Hungary. I informed him that office hour ends at early afternoon on the last day of the year. At night there are celebrations everywhere, but the first day of the New Year is a holiday. I added that the holiday would not hinder the flow of events in such important issues as the present one. Mr. Rusk replied that he hoped that there would be a momentum, a change and that in 1966 they could turn their attention to such important questions as the development of the “great society” within the USA, or the solution for the problem of world provisioning, etc.

He asked me how many diplomats were presently working at the Legation. I told him there were 12 of them, including the officials working at the military and commerce office of the Legation. Mr. Rusk noted that most probably all of my colleagues were paying close attention to the telegrams. I assured him that I am handling the issue with strict confidentiality even within the Legation. Other than myself, only Comrade Szluka has any knowledge of the telegrams.

Then I mentioned that other Embassies were also interested in the issue, e.g. the French one, whose counselor visited me and asked me about it openly. But I did not tell him anything. I also mentioned that the press is still guessing about the possible visit of Harriman to Hungary,

especially since he took Squire with him. Mr. Rusk told me that the most important was that the press did not know that we had already met five times. [.]¹⁴

Mr. Rusk said that they sent their short statement about the pause in the bombing of North Vietnam directly to Hanoi, as well. They know Hanoi received it. Mr. Rusk also said that previously the Vietnamese returned the American messages by sliding it under the door of the American Embassy in Moscow, and sent it back to the British Embassy, but it did not happen this time.

Before departing he said that he did not wish me Happy New Year yet, since he hoped he would see me before that.

Comment:

Mr. Rusk seemed to be in good spirits and was optimist during the meeting. I was accompanied by comrade Szluka. To get into and out of the meeting was conducted in the now usual secret way.

1966. January 4.

1966. January 4 –A few minutes after 19.30 I called Secretary of State Rusk through the operator of the White House and told him I had an urgent message to deliver and that I was ready to meet him any time. He said that he is ready to meet me right now, and so we agreed that I would head to the State Department right away and meet him at 20.00pm.

The meeting took place according to the usual routine. After welcoming me Mr. Rusk noted that that he had not seen me for several days, and then he concluded it with an OK, then asked me what the message was.

I told it to him slowly and correctly, carefully paying attention to his reaction and making sure that he understood everything clearly, and so that his secretary could write it down word by word: (see translated message)

¹⁴ Translator's note: The text is not readable below this sentence, but apparently another comment about the press.

[in English:] “In order to be able to answer the message of Mr. Rusk, it is necessary for us to know the following:

Is it possible to interpret what you said to Mr. Péter during the discussion between Mr. Péter and Mr. Rusk in New York, last October, and the publicity [sic—publicly] stated present proposals that the US government would like to get in direct contact with the representative of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, with the purpose of negotiation.

We suppose that the answer is: Yes.

If that is the situation than [sic—then] we can inform you, Mr. Rusk[,] our conviction is that [the] possibility can be found for direct negotiation between the representatives of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam and that of the USA, to explain their viewpoints directly to each other.

Naturally, it would be a matter of mutual agreement whether to publish or to keep secret the fact of the negotiation as well as the contents [sic—contents] of the negotiation.”

[resumes in Hungarian:]

[[sentence missing?]]

After I finished, Mr. Rusk asked me to go through the text that his secretary wrote down for confirmation. Then he said he would summarize his comments in points:

1. He was thankful for Mr. Péter's message.
2. They have not had problems with establishing contact with the DRV for a long time. There are several contact channels between Hanoi and the USA.

But, regardless of that, Mr. Péter could have been able to establish a relationship with Hanoi that might be more appropriate for Hanoi. He wanted to know whether Mr. Péter had knowledge about such relationship.

3. Mr. Péter should know that the USA is in direct contact with Hanoi, e.g. in Rangoon. Mr. Rusk then asked me whether he mentioned Rangoon previously or not. I said he did not, and he said their Ambassador there gave their statement about this current pause in bombing to the North Vietnamese consul general. They know the consul general in Rangoon received the message and he passed it on to whom it concerned, unlike in May, when they did not receive the American message. But so far they have not received any answer to their message from the consul general.

They have other contacts with Hanoi, about which he cannot talk now. Their problem is that Hanoi does not react to their messages.

4. He did not want to preclude the possibility of Mr. Péter establishing a relationship that might be more productive than the one they have now.

Mr. Rusk had no other comments about the message. Then I mentioned: [[words missing??]]

[in English:] “Mr. Secretary. I would like to mention to you that Mr. Péter strongly disapproves the propaganda campaign around the US proposals, which is weakening the trust, concerning the sincerity of the US proposals”.

[resuming in Hungarian:]

Mr. Rusk reacted angrily and sharply for the comment, and said that he had to reject that 100%. He stated that the US is willing to [agree to] and genuinely interested [in English: “(genuinely interested)”] in peace. If Hanoi stops sending troops and weapons to South Vietnam, peace can be established right away. He is saying this “very seriously.”

Mr. Rusk emphasized again that he asked Mr. Péter not to misunderstand the intentions of the US.

I asked at the beginning of the meeting, as I was ordered to, what suggestions Mr. Rusk had for Mr. Péter:

[in English:] “Mr. Secretary. In connection with the first part of the message: I would like to know that do you have any suggestions who, where, in which circumstances would like to

meet the representatives of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam and the representatives of the Democratic National Liberation Front[?]" [sic] [resuming in Hungarian:] Rusk answered in two parts:

a. As for the first part of the message – who, where, in which circumstances would like to meet the representatives of Vietnam – “Hanoi knows the answer better,” and they have direct connections for this matter. The answer depends on Hanoi, added Rusk. They wanted to get an answer through Mr. Péter from Hanoi. Then he noted that they were interested in the suggestions of Hanoi and that as Mr. Péter should know the US had relations with Hanoi but never received any answers from them.

b. In relation to South Vietnam, he can just repeat their viewpoint, which is unchanged.

Then Mr. Rusk with his hands gestured that his comments were over, but kept on talking. He said that he wanted to stress for Mr. Péter how important it is not to consider these requests as tactics. It is a fundamental issue, if Hanoi and Beijing pushed down to the South, then there were only two choices for the US. One was to withdraw, the other was to fight. Peace can be reached within 24 hours, if Hanoi and Beijing did not send troops and weapons to the South. “The question is that easy.”

It is a tragedy – said Mr. Rusk – that we could have peace within 24 hours had Hanoi not want to conquer Laos, Cambodia, South Vietnam and Thailand.

I told him that I could only deliver his messages, which I will do immediately.

He added at the door [in a] friendly [manner], that probably Mr. Péter was very busy during the holiday, and that “he was also very busy.”

Comment:

The meeting lasted for 20 minutes. Mr. Streater, Mr. Rusk's first secretary, was also present, and I was accompanied by comrade Szluka. After the meeting, Streater read his notes that I confirmed them.

Mr. Rusk was very tense during the meeting. He became very angry when we talked about the propaganda issue. But the meeting was conducted – regardless of the tension – in a correct manner.

1966. January 5.

11.30 h

I called Mr. Bundy that I had a message for Mr. Rusk. He told me to let Mr. Rusk know about it right away and will call me back.

So he did within minutes, and told me that Mr. Rusk was ready to see me at the State Department.

The meeting took place according the usual routine with William Bundy and Comrade Szluka being present as note takers.

Mr. Rusk asked me if anyone saw me coming into the building. I told him no one saw me, but as far as I knew some journalists had access to the garage entrance, and it could be dangerous that some of them might spot me entering the building. Mr. Rusk said that it was certainly possible but that they were doing their best to make sure such an incident would not happen.

I told him Mr. Péter's message: (see translated paragraph)

[in English:] (“I received your message, I thank you for that, I have informed my Government. The answer of Mr. Rusk makes the impression that he misunderstood the first part of our message.

We did not speak about those types of meetings which was characterized by the example of Rangoon. We are speaking about that type of meeting where the representatives of the two governments negotiate directly and an exchange of views take[s] place between them about their conceptions (ideas).

We are asking you whether the government of the United States is ready to take part in such type of meeting. On the basis of careful examination we are on the opinion that the possibility of that type of meeting exists.”)

[resumes in Hungarian:]

Mr. Rusk listened to the message and said, "I understand" when I mentioned the Rangoon example.

He thanked Mr. Péter for the answer, and after a short time noted that he had not had a chance to talk yesterday's message over with his colleagues.

Then, as a comment to the example of Rangoon, he wanted to stress that in Rangoon the American Ambassador in Rangoon met with the consul general of the DRV, and that they recognized each other's diplomatic status. The meeting was official in that respect. After listening to his comment I reassured him that I delivered his message yesterday to Mr. Péter.

Mr. Rusk then paused and said that he wanted to go back to the important issue. He paused to think and then said:

“He had to further examine the message, and had to discuss that with his colleagues. He would get back to me through Mr. Bundy later.”

I promised I would deliver his message immediately. I asked if he had any additional questions for Mr. Péter, which could make it easier for him to interpret the message. Mr. Rusk then added, he mentioned Rangoon, because he wondered whether the type of meeting we were talking about would be different from the ones they already had established. But he said that it was not a question for Mr. Péter, but an issue for them to examine. I repeated Mr. Péter's message once more at this point. Mr. Rusk asked for some time to give his answer.

Comment:

The meeting lasted for 15 minutes; both Mr. Rusk and Mr. Bundy were in a positive and optimistic mood.

1965 [sic: 1966]. January 5.

19.45 h

1966. January 5 – At 7.00pm W. Bundy called me at my home and told me that he can tell me their answer. We agreed that we would meet at the State Department office to which I would get to by the usual way. I asked whether he found it necessary to take comrade Szluka with me, he answered that they would record the verbal message in a way that I would not need anyone to take notes.

The meeting took place at the SD at 19.45 pm. W. Bundy told me the following:

[In Hungarian and then, in parentheses, in English:] (“We have examined your latest message carefully. Our response is that our Ambassador in Rangoon is available for any kind of discussion you have in mind with appropriate representatives of the DRV. If Mr. Péter has other suggestions about another location for such discussions, we would be prepared to consider them. We would appreciate a prompt reply since there is some urgency in this matter.”)

Afterwards, Mr. Bundy handed me a typed text on a plain paper, which contained the verbal message word by word. After reading the whole text Mr. Bundy asked me whether the message was clear for me or not. I said it was, and added that as I understand their message, it is a positive answer to Mr. Péter's questions. Mr. Bundy confirmed it and then added he hoped they would receive a quick response. I assured him that I would deliver the message immediately. With this, the 5-minute friendly meeting ended.

1966. January 8.

13.00 h

On January 8, at 13.00 Secretary of State Rusk called me and rushed the answer. He said that he had not heard from me for a long time, i.e. from "your people in Budapest" referring to the Hungarian government. “You can reach me on Saturday or Sunday any time through the operator of the White House.”

I told Secretary of State Mr. Rusk that so far I had not received any messages from the headquarters. He answered that he understood that, and knew we would deliver the messages immediately. That is why he asked me to inform Budapest about his short phone call and his interest in when he would receive an answer. I promised him that I would do that.

Mr. Rusk used a very polite but strict tone during the conversation.

1966. January 20.

15.10 h

The secretary of W. Bundy called the Legation on January 20 at noon, and wanted to talk to me, but since at that time I had not arrived back from New York yet, I could not talk with him.

After arriving to the Legation at 13.30, I called Mr. Bundy back, who by that time already left his office, so we could talk only at 15.20 in the afternoon.

Mr. Bundy asked me whether I received any news from Mr. Péter. I told him I had not. Then he asked me if I received anything from my Foreign Minister, or from anyone else about the issue I should let him know about immediately. I promised him that I would do that, and assured him, just as I always did in the past, I would pass immediately on any message I received to him. He politely thanked me for it.

The phone call lasted for 2-3 minutes, and was conducted in a formal manner.

20.00 h

Before the annual diplomatic dinner of Secretary of State Mr. and Mrs. Rusk, Mr. Ball deputy undersecretary started a conversation with me. He asked me whether I had received any news about the Vietnamese issue from my Foreign Minister from Budapest. I told him I had not. Mr. Ball emphasized how important that message was right now, since that message could highly influence future events. He added that he knew we Hungarians could only pass on information to them if we received some beforehand.

He stressed how much they appreciate all the efforts of the Hungarian government in helping with the issue. But he also thought that if we could use our influence now, and give them a quick answer that would be very helpful for the resolving of the complicated Vietnamese issue.

In my answer I summarized what he said and asked him whether he wanted me to pass all he said on to my Foreign Minister. Mr. Ball said smiling that that was the reason why he told it to me.

Then I promised him I would let Mr. Péter know about his message immediately.

At arriving to and leaving the dinner, I had short conversations with Mr. Rusk, who asked me general questions (e.g. about my daughter) and did not mention the Vietnamese issue at all.

I also met Mr. and Mrs. Bundy, who were extremely polite and friendly, with Foster and Thompson and with the other State Department executive officials, but other than general topics, we did not discuss the Vietnam issue or the relations between the two countries.

In my opinion this all shows that Mr. Ball was asked to deliver the above message.

[Source: USA-relations, 1966, Foreign Ministry records, 15.doboz, IV-135-001131/1966, XIX-J-1-j, MOL, Budapest; obtained by Csaba Békés and translated by Aliz ágoston.]

DOCUMENT 3

Hungarian Foreign Minister János Péter, Report on a meeting with North Vietnamese Ambassador Hoang Luong, Budapest, 15 January 1966

Péter János
1/Pe-1965

TOP SECRET

Comrade Mod

“ Bojti

“ Erdelyi

“ Szarka

“ Szilagyi

“ Pataki

“ Hazi

“ Zador

“ Komives

“Tok

self – Comrade Szucs (Mrs.)

Minutes

Subject: Visit of the Vietnamese Ambassador
Hoang-Luong

Today, at his request, I met with the Vietnamese Ambassador in Budapest (on the 11th he indicated that he would like to come by during the course of the week, on a non-urgent matter, and in advance specified which days and times he is engaged until Friday, otherwise he is available at any time. On Thursday the 13th I advised him that I would be available to meet him at 4 o'clock on Thursday or at 9 o'clock on Saturday. He chose the Saturday time slot.)

On behalf of his foreign minister he gave me a briefing regarding the North and South Vietnamese situation. The essence of his briefing is that the United States with its attacks to date, did not achieve its aim neither in the North nor in the South, [and that] both in the North and the South the Vietnamese comrades are prepared to repel much larger assaults.

After the situational briefing he moved to the subject of Comrade Fock with Comrade Le Thanh Nghi, and the message sent from the American Secretary of State Rusk via comrade Radványi. He mentioned that in the discussion a point was raised: it is unknown how much misinformation is contained in the American initiatives and to what degree do they reflect the forceful influence of the American losses. Their Central Committee dealt with the matter, their opinion is the following: without a doubt, heavy losses were experienced by the United States, but these are only initial losses and the United States intends to continue and step up its military activities. The following facts prove this: deployment of new units, continuation of South Vietnamese military actions, preparations for new attacks. Therefore, the so-called peace initiatives of the United States aim to mislead. The same is showing in their official communiques. Their official position is that North Vietnam is still the aggressor. Dean Rusk stated in an interview that they will withdraw their troops from South Vietnam at the time when their goals in South Vietnam will be achieved. Even though in their fourteen point proposal they discuss the elimination of their forward attack positions, and the acknowledgement of neutrality, however at the same time the SEATO programs are discussed as well. They discuss adherence to the Geneva Convention, but at the same time they do not want to accept the third point of the DRV's four points, even though it proposes a neutral coalition government. Therefore their true intent is the escalation of military activity. They would be prepared for negotiations, but with the intent that they will maintain South Vietnam under the influence of the USA.

The Ministry of External Affairs of the DRV intends to publish a memorandum on this matter. The government of the DRV is requesting from the Hungarian government its continued support of the four points of the DRV and the five points of the NLF, [and] the condemnation of the US initiatives as untrue proposals, and [as] a sequence of diplomatic steps meant to disguise true intention. They should demand that the break in the bombardment of the DRV continue without any conditions and provisions.

The ambassador expressed his appreciation to the Hungarian press and other news services for their good work and support, saying that they dealt sufficiently and well with the issue. He requested that they continue the same. He also asked that the Hungarian leadership continue supporting the Vietnamese issue in their speeches appropriately.

Finally, he noted that according to his information the [DRV's] deputy minister of External Affairs met with our representative in Hanoi, and our representative promised that we will deliver the answer intended for the USA. He asked whether this has transpired yet. I advised that we have not responded yet to the USA, we are still studying the question. Naturally, the opinion of our Vietnamese comrades is a decisive factor in the formation of our response.

I advised him that a government delegation is travelling to five African and Asian countries under the leadership of comrade Kállai. Obviously, the South/East situation is on the agenda everywhere, if they have any advice or suggestion, we will gladly accept it.

Budapest, 15 January 1966

[Source: Foreign Ministry documents, Top Secret, IV-146-1/Pe/1965, 107.doboz, XIX-J-1-j, MOL, Budapest; obtained by Csaba Békés and translated by Susan Weinberger.]

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 became a member of the Soviet supported Kádár government. From 1957 until 1971 he was a deputy in the Council of Ministers. From 1961 he led the government commission on foreign affairs, and was the permanent delegate to the Comecon. He became president of the Hungarian parliament in 1971, and he held this position until 1984. He went into retirement at the end of 1984.¹⁵

BÍRÓ, József (1921-) technician, welder, economist. He became head of the London Trade Office (1957-1960), and deputy minister (1962-1963). From 1963 until 1979 he was minister for foreign trade.¹⁶

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

¹⁵ Apró Antal, Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága
<https://www.neb.hu>

¹⁶ Bíró József; Ki kicsoda? in: Bencsik Péter (ed.): Az államszocializmus kora Magyarországon és Kelet-Közép-Európában
<http://allamszocializmus.lapunk.hu/?modul=oldal&tartalom=718655>

party organs in Budapest. In 1951 he was demoted from his position, due to family issues. He remained active in the party organization and in 1956 he joined Kádár and started to reorganize the party apparatus in Budapest. He became a central figure in the new regime, and was named interior minister (1957-1961) and played a central role in the retaliation. He became a Member of Parliament, and remained a member until 1985. In 1961 he was made vice president of the Ministerial Committee (1961-1962), and in 1962 he was named a member of the Secretariat of the Central Committee (1962-1978). He had an important role in party organizational work. Because of the economic reform plans, he distanced himself from Kádár and became opposed to him. He was relieved from his duties as secretary of the Central Committee in 1978 and was sent into retirement, in 1980 he was removed from the Politburo, and in 1985 from the Central Committee proper. Until 1989 he held a position in the Central Council of the Hungarian Trade Unions. He was tried for his activities in 1956 and its aftermath in 2014-2015, receiving a short prison sentence.¹⁷

CZINEGE, Lajos (1924-1998) was born into a peasant family. After finishing six classes of primary school, he became a blacksmith's apprentice, later worked as a blacksmith and as a seasonal farm worker. In 1944 he became a member of the 25. SS (Hungarian) Division Hunyadi. In 1945 he joined the Hungarian Communist Party, and he was a founding member of the city chapters of the youth organization of the communist party. He worked as an independent political worker in 1947, and later became a leading member in a city party chapter, later promoted to a deputy county leadership position. Because of an incident in 1950, he was demoted, and worked at a farm equipment repair station. He was promoted to deputy director a short time later at the same station. In 1951 he joined the armed forces, and became a member of the Main Directorate for Political Affairs with the rank of a captain. He later became a political officer at the Artillery Command of the Hungarian Peoples' Army, in 1952 he was promoted to Lt. Colonel. From 1954 on he worked at the central party organ responsible for the armed forces as a deputy leader, in 1955 he became the leader of it. In 1956 he was a member of the Military Committee of the Central Leadership of the Hungarian Workers' Party. After the Soviet intervention of 4. November, he joined the government of János Kádár and was appointed as the responsible leader for the reorganization of the internal armed forces. In 1957 he was entrusted with the organization of the Workers' Militia. Between 1958 and 1967 he was a member of the parliament, and the president of the

¹⁷ Biszku Béla Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága
<https://www.neb.hu/asset/phpc7CWuX.pdf>

parliamentary committee of the armed forces from 1960 on. In May 1960 he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-General and was named as defense minister. In 1961 he became a member of the Political Committee. In April 1962 he was promoted to general. In 1963 he enrolled in the Voroshilov Military Academy as a corresponding student. He regularly took part on the defense ministerial meetings of the Warsaw Pact. His membership in the Political Committee ended in 1970 after a reform of the membership. In November 1978 he was promoted to the rank General of the Army. In 1984 he became deputy president in the Council of Ministers (he was defense minister for 24 years). In 1987 he retired. In 1988 he lost his seat in the Central Committee. In 1989, due to a scandal he gave up his rank of General of the Army.¹⁸

DOBI, István (1898-1968) was born into a poor peasant family. After finishing six primary school classes, he became a soldier in 1916 and fought in World War I. In 1919 as a red soldier, he was captured by the Romanians. He returned from captivity in 1920, where he was immediately recruited into the national army, leaving armed service at the end 1920. As a veteran, he received a small parcel of land, and besides its cultivation he worked as an unskilled worker by the Hungarian State Railway Company, later held various unskilled jobs. He joined a landholder association in 1920, and in 1930 he founded a local chapter of the Social Democratic Party in Szőny. In 1936 he switched over to the Independent Smallholder Party, where he rose in the ranks quickly. Thanks to his party affiliation he took higher paid jobs. In 1939 he ran as a candidate for parliament, but was defeated. He was an active organizer, and he saw as his mission to protect the Hungarian peasantry. He came into contact with the illegal communist organization in 1942, and he shared their views sometimes during his work. In 1944 he was mobilized for military service and was captured. He returned in 1945. He became a member of the Communist Party, but he kept his membership of the Independent Smallholders Party, where he became a leader of the left wing. He held high posts at the Independent Smallholders Party. He became a member of the transitory legislature, and was named minister. After the forced departure of Ferenc Nagy, the leader of the Independent Smallholders Party, he was chosen to be the new party leader. During his leadership, he was instrumental in upending the party structures in cooperation with the communists. He also helped the build-up of the communist system. He was Prime Minister between December 1948 and August 1952, but held no real power. In 1952 he became the leader of the collective state leadership (he was the leader of this organ until 1967, and stayed

¹⁸ <https://www.neb.hu/asset/phpCkpYug.pdf>

a member until his death). During the uprising of 1956 he stayed in his office, and helped the Kádár government. In 1959 he joined the HSWP, and he was chosen to be a member of the Central Committee of the HSWP. He was a proponent of collectivization, but his views were increasingly disregarded. He held various positions in Hungarian agricultural organizations.¹⁹

ERDÉLYI, Károly (1928-1971) diplomat. He earned a teacher's degree in the Soviet Union. He worked in the Foreign Ministry from 1953, he was a consular of embassy, in Moscow. He arrived back home on the 28. October, and after 4. November he worked at the government secretariat, later he was the referent of Kádár in the party apparatus (1958-1962). He was deputy foreign minister (1962-1970), leader of the Foreign Policy Department of the HSWP (1970-1971), member of the Central Committee of the HSWP (1966-1971). According to some, he committed suicide, other believe, he was murdered.²⁰

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

¹⁹ Dobi István, Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága,
<https://www.neb.hu/asset/phpnFm602.pdf>

²⁰ Erdélyi Károly; Ki kicsoda? in: Bencsik Péter (ed.): Az államszocializmus kora Magyarországon és Kelet-Közép-Európában
<http://allamszocializmus.lapunk.hu/?modul=oldal&tartalom=718660>

into retirement in 1975, but remained a member of the Politburo until 1980 and a member of the Central Committee until 1989.²¹

HÁZI, Vencel (1925-2007) he studied at the University of Technology in Budapest, was a member of youth organizations. In 1948 he was enrolled in a military course as education officer, and later was sent to a one year military school in Leningrad. In 1949 he became an officer of Hungarian military intelligence service MNVK 2 (Magyar Néphadsereg Vezérkar 2. Csoportfőnökség – Hungarian People’s Army General Staff 2nd Directorate), and later was sent to the Hungarian legion in London (1951-1953). After his return he worked at MNVK 2. In 1957 he was employed by the Foreign Ministry, and was sent to Stockholm (1957-1958). He became the ambassador to Iraq in 1958. From 1961 he was minister to Greece. In 1965 he returned to Hungary, where he worked in the Foreign Ministry (1964-1968). He was deputy foreign minister between 1968 and 1970. In 1970 he became ambassador to Great Britain (1970-1976). After his return he became deputy foreign minister again (1976-1983), after that, he became Hungary’s ambassador to Washington (1983-1989). He retired in 1989.²²

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

²¹ Fock Jenő, Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága
<https://www.neb.hu/asset/php4wGGVm.pdf>

²² Baráth Magdolna, Gecsényi Lajos (ed.): Főkonzulok, követek és nagykövetek, 1945-1990, MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2016, p. 186.

middle education, becoming minister in 1961 until his death. He was also named a member of the Central Committee in 1958, and was named reserve member of the Politburo until 1970.²³

KÁDÁR, János (1912-1989) born out of wedlock 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 couldn't find a permanent workplace. He joined the youth group of the illegally functioning communist party in 1931, was arrested multiple times before the war. In 1937 he joined the Social Democratic Party, and worked in the party apparatus. In 1940 he joined the illegal communist movement, and later became a Central Committee member. He disbanded and reorganized the communist party as the Peace Party, for which he was reprimanded after the war. He had important party functions from 1945, becoming deputy secretary general in 1946 (he held the position until 1951). He was named interior minister in 1948, and played a role in the organization of show trials. He was arrested in 1951 with other officials, but was rehabilitated in 1954. In 1956 he was chosen by the Soviets to head the new government. He was named a member of the Central Committee and Politburo, and first secretary (with also being the prime minister between 1957 and 1958, and also between 1958 and 1961) and held various other positions as well. He consolidated the communist system in Hungary. Kádár also took an interest in the improvement of living standards and initiated reforms in 1968, but had to backtrack. In foreign policy, from the 1970s he acted increasingly independently, but with Soviet interests in mind. Due to economic problems in Hungary, he relied on Western partners to keep living standards at a relatively high level through loans. In 1985 he was named general secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. In the 1980s the economic crisis deepened, and he denied the seriousness of the problems. In 1988 he was sidelined with some of his closest associates due to the popular pressure. Combined with his declining health, he was removed from all his positions and died shortly thereafter.²⁴

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

²³ Ilku Pál, Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága
<https://www.neb.hu/asset/phplZBtIN.pdf>

²⁴ Kádár János, Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága
<https://www.neb.hu/asset/phpuoKyAw.pdf>

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).²⁵

KOMÓCSIN, Zoltán (1932-1974) He had humble family origins, learned to become a trader. He joined the youth organization of the Social Democratic Party in 1938, he joined the trade union in 1939. After Soviet troops occupied Hungary, he joined the communist youth organization, a short time later also the party. He held various party position, until 1950, when he was elected as a member of parliament (1950-1974). He was sent to study to the Soviet Union, and after he came back, held high state and party positions. He was a member of the Provisional Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and helped to reorganize the party. He led the youth organization (1957-1961), was named editor in chief of the Hungarian daily Népszabadság (1961-1965). He was named regular member of the Politburo (1962-1974) and became the secretary of the foreign relations of the Central Committee (1965-1974). He was opposed to the economic reform plans in 1968, and started to form opposition against Kádár inside the HSWP. He fell ill in 1973 and died a short time later.²⁶

MARTIN Ferenc (1912-2001): he was born into a worker family. After finishing six primary school classes, he started working as an iron-founder apprentice, but after finishing the apprenticeship, he couldn't find work. After a short period he found work as an unskilled worker. Only in 1936 was he able to find work as an iron-founder. He joined a trade union and took part in strikes for higher wages. During his mandatory military service he served as a driver and took part in the operation of the occupation of Slovakian territory. In 1941 he served on the Eastern Front, but was wounded and dismissed from military service. In 1943 he joined the Social Democratic Party. In 1945 he joined the Hungarian communist party, he became party secretary at the plant he worked at. In 1947 he became a worker at the Heavy

²⁵ Kállai Gyula; Ki kicsoda? in: Bencsik Péter (ed.): Az államszocializmus kora Magyarországon és Kelet-Közép-Európában

<http://allamszocializmus.lapunk.hu/?modul=oldal&tartalom=718668>

²⁶ Komócsin Zoltán Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága
<https://www.neb.hu/asset/phpR7ev2n.pdf>

Industry Centre, from 1949 he worked in the Ministry of Heavy Industry as a department leader. He became a secretary of the National Committee of Trade Unions in 1951. From 1953 he was the leader of the Trade Union for Metallurgy Workers. In 1956 he was dismissed from his positions, the Kádár government brought him back, and served again as the trade union leader for metallurgy workers. In 1959 he was chosen to be a reserve member of the Central Committee, from 1960 he was a regular member until 1966. In 1960 he joined the Foreign Ministry, from 1960 until 1963 he was ambassador to China, from November 1963 until February 1968 he was ambassador to Poland, from December 1969 until October 1974 he was ambassador to Romania. Between 1953 and 1963 he was a two term member of parliament.²⁷

NEMES, Dezső (1908-1985): historian. He was a leader of a main department in the Ministry for Peoples' Education (1950-1953), he was the director of the Szikra Press (1953-1956), later he became the leader of the Party Academy (1956). He didn't have any role in the uprising of 1956. He was chief editor of the daily Népszabadság (1957-1961 and 1977-1980), was a member of the Central Committee of the HSWP (1957-1985), was secretary for foreign affairs (1961-1965), and a member of the Political Committee (1959-1980). He was the main director of the Institute for Party History (1965-1966), director (1980-1983), rector of the Political College (1966-1977). He was a member of the pro-Kádár faction in the 70s, and he was also a member of the faction.²⁸

NYERS, Rezső (1923-2018) after finishing four primary school classes, he worked as a delivery boy for four years, and in 1938 he became an apprentice at a printing-house. He became a member of the youth organization of the Social Democratic Party in 1939, became a member of the Party in 1940, and joined the trade union in 1942. After finishing his apprenticeship, he worked in various printing-houses. In 1944 he was called up for military service, and after the German occupation he deserted his unit and went into hiding until the arrival of Soviet troops. In 1945 he served for a short time as a policeman, and after that he became active in the Social Democratic Party. In 1946 he joined the printing-house of the daily Népszava, in 1947 he became a county official of the Party. He took part in the process

²⁷ Martin Ferenc, Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága
<https://www.neb.hu/asset/php8goser.pdf>

²⁸ Nemes Dezső; Ki kicsoda? in: Bencsik Péter (ed.): Az államszocializmus kora Magyarországon és Kelet-Közép-Európában
<http://allamszocializmus.lapunk.hu/?modul=oldal&tartalom=718655>

of fusion with the Communist Party. In 1948 he became a member of parliament and he remained a member until 1998 with the exception of one term between 1953 and 1958. In 1948 he became an accessory member of the Central Leadership of the Hungarian Workers' Party (the communist party). He went to a party school and worked as a political worker in the field of agriculture. He enrolled as a student at the Karl Marx Economics University in Budapest, and finished his studies in 1956. From 1952 he worked in the Ministry of Domestic Commerce, becoming a deputy minister in the Ministry of Domestic and International Trade in 1954. He was named Minister of Agriculture in 1956. He held this position shortly after the uprising of 1956 and was one of the first members of the newly constituted HSWP. He joined the Kádár government, and acted as a government commissioner for the supply of the public. He was chosen to be a member of the Central Committee, and he remained a member up until 1989. He was named minister of finance in 1960. He was named as a reserve member of the Political Committee of the HSWP and leader of the Secretariat of the Central Committee in 1962. He was responsible for economic issues, as well as some political organizations of a few counties. In 1966 he became a regular member of the Political Committee. He was one of the architects of the so called new economic mechanism, which intended to mix elements of the planned economic system with elements of capitalism. Because of international events the program was abandoned. He was relieved as leader of the Secretariat of the Central Committee in 1974, and he was left out of the Political Committee in 1975. From 1974 he was the director of the Department of Economics at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, from 1981 until 1988 he was a scientific adviser for the institute. Due to the economic problems of the 1980s he returned to public life, and helped some economic reforms. In 1989 he was chosen as the party secretary of the HSWP and after the election defeat he didn't nominate himself again. He withdrew from public life in 1998.²⁹

PEHR, Imre (1914-1977) He was 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

²⁹ Nyers Rezső, Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága, <https://www.neb.hu/hu/nyers-rezso>

Italy, becoming ambassador in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (1965-1970) also accredited to Laos. After 1970 he worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.³⁰

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 1986.³¹

PÉTER, János (1910-1999) A Calvinistic minister, he started working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1945. He became a bishop of the Calvinistic Church (1949-1956). After the revolution of 1956 he held positions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was a member of the Council of Ministers. He became deputy foreign minister (1958-1961), and joined the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party in 1961, becoming a member of Central Committee in 1968 and remained a member until 1980. He became foreign minister in 1961 and held the position until 1973. From 1973 he was deputy speaker for the Hungarian parliament.³²

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

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

³¹ Baráth Magdolna, Gecsényi Lajos (ed.): Főkonzulok, követek és nagykövetek, 1945-1990, MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2016, pp. 242-243

³² Péter János; Ki kicsoda? in: Bencsik Péter (ed.): Az államszocializmus kora Magyarországon és Kelet-Közép-Európában
<http://allamszocializmus.lapunk.hu/?modul=oldal&tartalom=1203950>

State University and taught history of diplomacy. He was founding member of the Center for International and Security Studies.³³

SZILÁGYI, Béla (1908-1995) he finished the Textile Industrial College in Brno. Between 1934 and 1945 he worked in the textile industry at different plants. Between 1945 and 1946 he was the secretary of the Hungarian communist in the county Vas, and was a member of the transitory legislature in 1945. He was acting director of Hungarian coal mines (1946-1948), and later the director of the Textile Industrial Directorate. Between 1949 and 1950 he was the director of the Institute of Industrial Quality Inspectorate. His diplomatic career began with a posting to India (1950-1952), and later became a head of department at the Ministry for International Commerce (1952-1958). He became a member of the Central Committee of the HSWP (1958-1965). He was minister to London (1959-1963). He worked at the Foreign Ministry between 1963 and 1970. His last post as ambassador was to Greece, from 1970 to 1975. He retired in 1975.³⁴

SZTANKÓ, Pál (1928-1989): he started his career as an unskilled worker at a bank. He was later employed by a chicken processing plant (1942-1948). He was an educator in a technical school (1948-1949). From there he went to the Foreign Ministry's Academy, and he became an employee of the Foreign Ministry in 1951. He became a diplomat at the consulate in Bratislava (1952-1953), and after a short stint at the ministry, he became the consul in Bratislava (1957-1960). After his return he was a deputy head of department at the ministry (1960-1966). In 1966 he became consul-general in Bratislava. He became temporary head of the embassy in Albania (1973-1978). After that he worked at the Foreign Ministry, until 1985, when he became consul-general at the Hungarian consulate in Leningrad. He retired in 1988.³⁵

³³ Baráth Magdolna, Gecsényi Lajos (ed.): Főkonzulok, követek és nagykövetek, 1945-1990, MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2016, p. 243

³⁴ Baráth Magdolna, Gecsényi Lajos (ed.): Főkonzulok, követek és nagykövetek, 1945-1990, MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2016, pp. 270-271

³⁵ Baráth Magdolna, Gecsényi Lajos (ed.): Főkonzulok, követek és nagykövetek, 1945-1990, MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2016, p. 275

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