

**July 24, 1989**

**Memorandum of Conversation between President Mikhail Gorbachev, President Rezső Nyers, and General Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP), Károly Grósz, Moscow**

**Citation:**

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**Summary:**

Memorandum of conversation between President Mikhail Gorbachev, President Rezső Nyers, and General Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP), Károly Grósz, Moscow regarding the publicized withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary and the commemoration of Hungarians who died on the Soviet Front or in POW camps in WWII

**Original Language:**

Hungarian

**Contents:**

Translation - English

(EXCERPT)

Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party  
TOP SECRET!  
Central Committee  
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REPORT  
to the Political Executive Committee

Invited by the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, Comrades Rezső Nyers and Károly Grósz visited the Soviet Union on 24 and 25 July 1989. They took part in a two-hour negotiation with Comrade Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party. The Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party invited the delegates for dinner, with the participation of several Soviet leaders. Comrades Nyers and Grósz negotiated with leaders of the Soviet-Hungarian Friendship Society. Comrade Nyers met Soviet social scientists; Comrade Grósz met leading officials of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party.

I.

Comrade Nyers described the situation of Hungary and the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. He said that the party is preparing for a working congress. 20 Decisions have not yet been made on every issue but is quite definite that internal issues of the Party will be on the agenda. The set task of the congress is to achieve the unity of the Party. Comrade Nyers pointed out that the Party is already getting spirited, [and] new platforms are being formed. The basic concept of the congress is democratic socialism, self- government, parliamentary democracy, and economic democracy. Comrade Nyers emphasized that property reform was considered the primary element of reform. We wish to democratize public property, indeed making it available for the public. We are considering a new system that utilizes the available capital more efficiently. We are planning to increase the ratio of private capital in the economy, and the introduction of foreign capital.

Comrade Nyers mentioned the experiences of parliamentary by-elections. 21 He emphasized that one should not jump to immediate conclusions from the results. We consider the elections neither a success nor a complete failure. The present state of paralysis within the Party, however, has become apparent. He referred to the fact that in one constituency the opposition united their forces in the campaign against the HSWP, but this is not expected to be a general trend when it comes to the general elections. Comrade Nyers stressed that there are three factors that can defeat the Party. First: the past, if we let ourselves be smeared with it. Secondly: the disintegration of the Party. The third factor that can defeat us is the paralysis of the Party rank-and-file.

Talking about Hungary, Comrade Gorbachev said that the Hungarian events were being followed with much interest in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Communist Party leadership refers to our policy with understanding. In the course of the negotiations, they understood our intention to find our way on the road to democratic socialism. At the same time, Comrade Gorbachev posed several questions with regard to the situation in Hungary and the policy of the HSWP. Among other things, he inquired about our orientation in foreign policy, the role of private property and foreign capital, the experiences with by-elections, the goals of the Party Congress, and the unity of the Party. Comrade Gorbachev put special emphasis on the fact that the Soviet leaders interpreted the mass sympathy towards the HSWP evident at the 14 July 1989 funeral of János Kádár 22 as an important political resource to rely on.

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#### IV.

In the course of the visit, several issues concerning the bilateral relationship were discussed. Negotiators mutually agreed that we should widen the scope of relations between the HSWP and the CPSU, and increase the exchange of experiences. In this way the recently aggravated laxity that has been hindering the co-operation of Soviet and Hungarian party organizations can be effectively eradicated. Hungarian negotiators suggested that the CPSU and other Soviet social organizations develop collaborative relationships with Hungarian democratic organizations and newly-forming parties as well. 23

The negotiations proved that it is our mutual intention to maintain the friendship of the Hungarian and Soviet nations, to create a new basis for reinforcing the friendship movement, winning over the best professionals and the youth for the friendship between the two nations.

In the course of negotiations, Hungarian and Soviet leaders examined the most urgent issues regarding the stationing of Soviet troops in Hungary. Comrade Nyers reminded the negotiators that at their March meeting in Moscow, 24 comrades Grósz and Gorbachev had agreed in principle that troops would continue to be withdrawn. At that time the Soviet negotiators had asked that this agreement should not be publicized. This time comrade Nyers suggested that the March agreement should be confirmed, the question of withdrawing Soviet troops further considered and publicized in one way or another. Speaking for the Soviet leadership, comrade Gorbachev agreed with the idea. His suggestion was that, when dealing with the issue, one should start from what the Soviet press release says about the subject: "In the course of negotiations, the issue of Soviet troops stationed in Hungary came up, and the parties decided that steps will be made to reduce further the number of Soviet troops in accordance with the European disarmament process and with the progress of the Vienna talks." Comrades Nyers and Grósz agreed with the suggestion.

In the course of negotiations we reaffirmed our mutual political intent to seek out opportunities for establishing a new basis for Hungarian-Soviet economic cooperation. Comrade Nyers indicated that the Hungarian government was presently working on a new fiscal system, and it was possible that the proposals would be submitted [as early as] this autumn.

The HSWP leader emphasized that the situation of the Hungarian minority in the Sub-Carpathian region 25 was improving, which was of great importance for us in terms of both domestic and foreign affairs. Comrade Gorbachev indicated that they [the Soviet government] were determined to head in this direction.

Another subject raised [in the discussion] were the many Hungarian soldiers who died in action on the Soviet front or in POW 26 camps in World War II. Hungarian public opinion was exerting pressure for the memory of these victims to be preserved in due fashion. Comrade Gorbachev emphasized that the Soviet Union was ready to cooperate in this field as well. [He] said that it was virtually impossible to find mass graves on battlefields now. However, they [the Soviets] were ready to specify those cemeteries where Hungarian prisoners of war were buried. They would preserve the tombs; memorial monuments could be installed, and Hungarian citizens could visit these sites. The same practice was working well with the Federal Republic of Germany.

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