

October 31, 1988

**Report on Prime Minister Károly Grósz's official visit
to Iran between 25 and 27 October 1988**

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Summary:

This report by the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs describes Prime Minister Károly Grósz's visit to Iran in 1988, during which Iranian officials expressed their distrust of the Soviet Union and sought to reinforce positive relations with Hungary.

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Information On Comrade Károly Grósz's official visit to the Iranian Islamic Republic

At the invitation of Prime Minister Mir Hossein Musavi Comrade Károly Grósz, in his position of Prime Minister, paid an official visit to the Iranian Islamic Republic between 25 and 27 October 1988. His visit was made in return to his Iranian partner's visit to Budapest in 1986.

Comrade Grósz was accompanied by Minister of Industry, Frigyes Berecz, the co-chairman of the Hungarian-Iranian Joint Economic Committee, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gábor Nagy, Deputy Minister of Commerce, Tibor Melega, co-chairman of the Industrial Sub-Committee of the Joint Committee, Government Spokesman, György Marosán, Jr., Imre Székács, General Director of TESCO, and Zsigmond Kázmér, our ambassador accredited to Tehran. Comrade Grósz was accompanied by many directors of interested Hungarian companies.

Comrade Károly Grósz was received by President of the Republic Seied Ali Hamenei and the President of the Legislative Body (Medzhlis), Hasemi Rafsandzhani.

Comrade Grósz had talks with the Iranian prime minister in the frame of a plenary session, private talks and a closing session.

He received the heads of such ministries that have an interest in bilateral relations: Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ali Akbar Velajati, Defense Minister Mohammed Dsalali, Minister of Agriculture and Regional Development, Issa Kalantari, the Iranian co-chairman of the Economic Joint Committee and Minister of Industry, Golanreza Safei.

Members of the entourage, the experts and company directors conducted comprehensive talks on concrete issues concerning bilateral cooperation with their Iranian counterparts.

[Károly Grósz talked about Hungary's position concerning international politics.]

In order to guarantee the cease-fire, we participate in the activity of the UN

supervisory forces. He informed his counterparts of our country's position concerning the Persian Gulf, the conflict in the Middle East and Afghanistan.

Mir Hossein Mussavi thanked our country for our attitude towards Iran during the years of war and for our position supporting Security Council Resolution No. 598 and for our condemnation of the use of chemical weapons. He declared the Mid-East a sensitive clashing point for the great powers, where, besides the acute crisis situations in Lebanon and Israel, there have been further long-term problems, such as the Pakistani-Indian crisis and Afghanistan. The position of the Turkish government is ambiguous, as it tries to represent the interest of its people while it works simultaneously as an arm of NATO.

This was the environment for the Iranian Revolution that was declared being against its interests by the United States, due to the West's dependency on oil. The roots of the Iraq-Iran war go back to there. The importance of the Persian Gulf is reflected in the fact, that -- apart from the Soviet Union --, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iran have the largest oil reserves, and after 1990, the West's dependency on the region's oil will further increase. Mussavi noted

that they did not have much expectation about the Middle East Peace Conference, as the Palestine people had been able to achieve any results by force only so far and the Israeli regime's aggression was still going on.

Foreign Minister Velajati informed Comrade Grósz that Iran was ready to continue the talks with Iraq at the request of the members of the Security Council to execute Resolution No. 598 in full extent, however, it refuses every Iraqi attempts that would result in the revision of the Agreement of Algiers in 1975 declaring the border between Iran and Iraq in writing.

All three Iranian leaders, Rafsandjani being the most precise, explained the Iranian position in connection with Soviet-Iranian relations. They stressed that following the victory of the Islamic revolution huge opportunities opened up for the rapprochement and cooperation between the countries of the Eastern Bloc and Iran, in spite of ideological differences. Iran decided to improve the relations with them, launched an anti-imperialist policy and removed the American tapping stations [sic] set along the 2500 km-long Soviet-Iranian border. Due to this act, the USA did not ratify SALT-II Treaty as being unable to check the motion of Soviet missiles. Thus, due to the Islamic revolution an important loop in the imperialist chain encircling the Eastern Bloc was broken.

However, Iran's expectations with the countries of the Eastern Bloc - except for Hungary -- were not met. The Soviet leadership did not appreciate Iran's anti-imperialist policy and efforts to improve relations, instead they gave Iraq large scale support during the war, including the most sophisticated weapon systems.

The Soviets' decision on Afghanistan had an unfavorable effect on the bilateral relations as well. At the beginning of the Afghan crisis, Iran recommended finding a joint solution, but the Soviet Union did not show readiness for talks. Even today Iran is seriously affected by the existence of the problems caused by the 800 km-long border and the 2 Million Afghan refugees staying on its territories. These can result in

Iran's involvement in the Afghan crisis, against its will. They could agree with the existence of a neutral and non-aligned Afghanistan,

but they are pessimistic, because this goal, proposed originally cannot be fulfilled now, due to Afghan tribal and internal war.

The relationship became worse by the Soviet Union's mistrust towards Iran. The Soviet leaders did not support Iran's proposals for improving Soviet-Iranian political-economic relations, there was no continuity of the positive statements in everyday life.

The war and the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan is coming to an end and leaders of the Iranian Islamic Republic would like positive changes to take place in Soviet-Iranian relations simultaneously with the positive developments originating in Gorbachev's policy. The Soviet Union and the countries of the Eastern Bloc should appreciate Iran's anti-imperialist policy, its rejection of the Western proposals and its conduct of an independent policy, seriously influencing the geopolitical relations in the Persian Gulf. The Iranian leadership is prepared for a general settlement of the relations, for forming friendly and equal relations with the Soviet Union. The creation of mutual trust is the key to a long-term Soviet-Iranian relationship and currently it is in the hands of the Soviet Union.

Comrade Grósz thanked for the Iranian leaders for their trust. He stressed that for him it seems that the Soviet-Iranian dialogue had not been developed that could have cleared the misunderstandings in their relationship. The answer can be found at the currently ongoing restructuring in the Soviet Union that have forced the most pressing questions be reviewed, arresting the Soviet leaders' time and energy. The Soviet Union, similarly to other socialist countries, is in the state of seeking a way out and those who treat this situation with patience, will proceed properly.

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Comrade Grósz's visit happened at a time, --although not on purpose -- when Iran has become more active towards the outside world, endeavors to strengthen its positions and has started to work out its plans for reconstruction and development. The capitalist and socialist countries' attention towards Iran has become lively, too. All these factors justified the Prime Minister's visit and have created good political and economic conditions for it.

The visit was effective and useful. It has strengthened our positions in the Iranian Islamic Republic under conditions of increasing competition and has increased the Iranian interest in building long-term and many-sided- especially economic- relations. Politically, the visit provided an occasion for getting to know each other better for both parties, what was useful as presently neither of us have sufficient and reliable knowledge of the other side. The visit has strengthened the Iranian leaders' motivation for cooperation. Especially after the meeting with Haemi Rafsandjani, the most influential Iranian leader, the Iranian party's more favorable attitude towards the strengthening of our relations became more perceptible.

[...]

Budapest, 31 October 1988