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Toast  
by  
Mr. GYÖRGY LÁZAR  
Chairman of the Council of  
Ministers

September 19, 1983.

*Dear Mr. Vice President,*

*Dear Mrs. Bush,*

*Dear Guests,*

I welcome you all on behalf of our Government, that of my wife and myself. I am glad that you have accepted our invitation and wish you a pleasant stay in the Hungarian People's Republic.

Your visit, Mr. Vice President, is an important landmark in the development of our relations with the United States of America. The mere fact of our talks exemplifies in itself the necessity and viability of a dialogue between countries with different social systems, between small and big states, even in an international situation fraught with tensions. Personal contacts are meaningful and worthy if we strive not for making conflicts more acute but for a better understanding of each other, if we concentrate our attention on what is mutually advantageous for our peoples and countries and what is for the benefit of all mankind.

Nowadays the relationship between the Hungarian People's Republic and the United States of America is normalized, our bilateral relations are not burdened with pending problems. We consider this fact a result of mutual efforts made by the two Governments, which merits appreciation.

We wish to continue to maintain balanced and correct relations with the United States. The social systems and many other characteristics of our countries differ. We belong to different alliance systems, we hold divergent views on several important issues, our actions are governed by different aspirations. It is our conviction that even so, even in such circumstances, our interests meet or are reconcilable in several areas and if mutual good intentions and the will are there, we can considerably develop and expand cooperation between our two countries.

Our people is aware that the United States has given a home for hundreds of thousands of Hungarians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is also remembered that the predominant majority has acquired, as law abiding citizens, recognition through their work. Please do not take it as immodesty when I make special mention of those of our compatriots, outstanding experts and other personalities who, by their expertise have contributed to the enrichment of the economy and cultural values of the United States, who, with their talent, have proven themselves worthy of the highest scientific and other decorations.

*Mr. Vice President,*

During our talks today, when we have taken note with satisfaction of the achievements in the development of our relations, we have also examined the possibilities of further development which have not yet been satisfactorily utilized.

I think you will agree with me that we should do more first of all to develop our economic cooperation, because there is a lot to make up for in this field. The level of our trade, our cooperation in joint ventures lag behind possibilities. We, on our part, are ready to make further efforts to enliven our economic and financial relations which hold out the promise of mutual advantages for our countries.

We consider the development of relations and their elevation to a higher level useful and justified in other areas, too. We believe that the extension of scientific and cultural cooperation as well as of human contacts is for the benefit of both nations and it contributes to the all too necessary improvement of the international atmosphere and understanding.

*Mr. Vice President,*

Speaking of the international situation I must frankly say that the growing danger of confrontation and the intensification of the arms race fill us with anxiety. It is our view that the unchecked increase of armaments, while tying down enormous resources and placing great burdens on all countries, does not increase, but on the contrary, gravely threatens the security of peoples and the peaceful future of mankind. We consider it an elementary interest to halt, through joint efforts, the processes threatening with unforeseeable consequences. We do not believe that there is a single responsible government in the world which would want to trigger a thermonuclear catastrophe. Starting from this we hold that all disputed questions and conflicts, even grave and

longstanding ones, can and must be settled by peaceful means, through negotiations.

We, Hungarians live in Europe. During the nearly four decades since the Second World War the expertise and diligent work of our people has overcome centuries old backwardness inherited from the past and has fundamentally transformed the socio-economic profile of our country. Every honest citizen enjoys equal rights in Hungary, their security of existence is ensured, creative work can unfold unrestrained, the values of knowledge and culture have become public treasure. Our people values and appreciates our achievements and wishes to continue to pursue the path it has chosen. At the same time they are aware that there is one indispensable precondition for the continuation of our work to build the country, and that is: peace. Thus, we are particularly strongly affected by the developments of the European situation and by all events which influence the present and the future of our continent.

It is on our continent that the two mightiest armed forces of the world face each other, where a new round of the arms race threatens with the gravest consequences. Our Government, in accordance with the desires of our people, takes a stand for stopping the arms race and aspires to see that no nuclear weapons be deployed in countries where there are no such weapons yet and that the quantities be not increased where they are present already.

We sincerely wish to see the Soviet-American negotiations in Geneva produce results. In the framework of the Warsaw Treaty the Hungarian People's Republic is a co-author of the well-known proposals which envisage to maintain the

military balance at the lowest possible level of armaments. These are standing proposals, it is our conviction that they are fair and are certainly suitable to serve as grounds for substantive negotiations.

We attach great importance to and welcome the results of the Madrid Meeting. We have accepted and fully stand by the contents of the Concluding Document. It is our conviction that the agreements, particularly the convening of the conference on confidence-and security-building measures and disarmament in Europe will facilitate the furtherance of the Helsinki process. We hold that there is no other reasonable possibility than to continue in the spirit of Helsinki. We do hope that East-West relations will return to this path.

I can assure you, Mr. Vice President, that the Hungarian Government-within its modest possibilities-is led by the sincere desire to widen international cooperation. The Hungarian People's Republic has been and will be a credible and predictable member of the community of nations and a reliable partner in interstate relations. It is our fundamental national interest to fulfil completely our obligations voluntarily undertaken in our alliance and to preserve our openness towards the world; to cherish and nurture the bonds which even today tie us to many countries, the United States among them.

Mr. Vice President.

While I thank you once again for having accepted our invitation, I wish to express my hope that you will recall your days in Hungary as a pleasant experience.

It is in the spirit of these thoughts that I raise my glass to your health, that of your charming wife, your colleagues and all our esteemed guests, to the development of Hungarian-American relations and to peace.

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