



The American Hungarian Federation

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FINAL COMMUNIQUE OF THE AMERICAN HUNGARIAN FEDERATION -- HON. EDWARD F. FEIGHAN (Extension of Remarks - November 21, 1989)

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HON. EDWARD F. FEIGHAN
in the House of Representatives

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1989

- Mr. FEIGHAN. Mr. Speaker, the American Hungarian Federation is an organization that is well-known to many of my colleagues for its good works. The federation was founded in my home city--Cleveland, OH--in 1906 and has been defending freedom in the United States and Hungary since that time.
- The federation has just held its biennial national convention in Ohio this past week. The convention adopted a final communique which I would like to share with my colleagues for its analysis of events in Eastern Europe, as well as its recommendations for U.S. policy.

The American Hungarian Federation, an 82-year-old umbrella organization of American Hungarian churches and cultural and fraternal associations, held its National Convention on November 18, 1989, in Akron, Ohio. Attended by delegates from eleven states, the Convention passed the following final communique:

The American Hungarian Federation welcomes the reforms and the process of democratization in Hungary. It notes with satisfaction that the Republic was restored, the Red Star is being removed from the Parliament and other official buildings, that the Workers' Militia is being dissolved and free elections are supposed to be held in June 1990. It is of the opinion that only a government which is freely elected by the Hungarian people may decide, with moral and political right, questions concerning the Hungarian people. The American Federation hopes that yet-unfulfilled national aspirations, such as the proclamation of neutrality, the withdrawal of Soviet military forces, and the renegotiation of Soviet-Hungarian and Hungarian-CMEA relations, will be accomplished during the next few years.

The American Hungarian Federation greets the new political parties and groups who are the bulwark of the new Hungarian democracy. We greet in the first place the Hungarian Democratic Forum which was created and is being led by the best of the Hungarian intellectuals. We hope that the coalition of the HDF and other political parties will be able to implement successful economic reforms and the stabilization of the social and political order.

However, we note with regret that despite many well-meaning initiatives, the oppression and situation of the more than four million Hungarians living apart from Hungary in the Carpathian Basin has not become the key problem as far as the parties and the government are concerned. Even the resolution of the HDF at its national meeting contains only an enumeration of individual and cultural rights violations at a time when Hungarians living in the historically Hungarian territory of Transylvania are facing ethnic genocide. The long-term solution of the Transylvanian question may only be solved by the implementation of the national self-determination right of the Hungarians in Transylvania. We would like to see the theoretical view the temporary President of Hungary, Matyas Szuros, expounded on January 28, 1988, i.e., that all Hungarians living outside the borders of

Hungary are members of the Hungarian body politic and that Hungarian government is responsible for their fate, become the principal tenet and motive of Hungarian foreign policy.

Hungarian foreign policy has a vital role in the survival and development of all Hungarians. The American Hungarian Federation is aware that Hungary must orient itself primarily toward the European Community because this will determine its political and economic future. For after a hiatus of 45 years, the Hungarian people must solve the problem of rejoining Europe as a part of the West.

However, it would be a shortsighted policy not to seek closer relations with the United States, for Washington will play an important role in the development of private enterprises in Hungary, in the success or failure of the Hungarian-IMF talks, and in the development of a democratic order in Hungary. Finally, it will play an even more decisive role in preventing a potential attempt to eradicate Hungarian democracy either by internal or external forces.

The changes in Hungary are not regarded as an isolated event either by us or the American government. The events of the last few weeks in East Germany and Bulgaria serve as evidence that East Central Europe is on the threshold of fateful changes which are being encouraged, or at least tolerated, by the Soviet leadership which is hoping for substantial Western economic aid. The next years will see a European reorganization and during this period, Hungary should not forget the fate of more than four million Hungarians living under foreign rule in the Carpathian Basin, especially of the Transylvanian Hungarians whose national existence is being threatened.

The American Hungarian Federation is hopeful that in the near future, the Stalinist dictatorship of Ceausescu will end and will be replaced by a new Romanian government which can become a meaningful negotiating partner. But come what may, the American Hungarian Federation, just as in the past 25 years, will fight without compromise for the human, cultural, and national self-determination rights of the Transylvanian Hungarians. In this matter, it calls upon all political parties and groupings to focus their activities in accordance with this goal to achieve the rights of the Transylvanian Hungarians.

We, like the leaders of Hungary, have been given a great responsibility. The moment seems to have arrived about which the poet, Endre Ady, wrote. The banquet of the transitory men has ended and the poet talks about us when he says:

Only we will come to create great things,

Things which are greater, human and Hungarian.

It has been the primary task of the American Hungarian Federation to inform our Administration and Congress about American-Hungarian relations and to propose solutions to them.

In this regard, we consider extremely important the widening of economic relations between Hungary and the United States. We would like to thank Congress for the recently voted private enterprise funds and other technical and environmental assistance and for the inclusion of Hungary among the states receiving OPIC investment guarantees. We also thank our Administration for the permanent extension of MFN and the granting of GSP status to Hungary.

At the same time, we cannot leave without commenting that American assistance is of symbolic importance only, given the economic crisis in Hungary. If, however, the voting of larger amounts of assistance to Hungary is now impossible (though it would be of paramount importance), we ask the Administration and Congress to take the following direct and indirect measures:

(1) Our Administration should exert its influence to make sure that the present negotiations between the IMF and Hungary will come to fruition and the conditions attached by the IMF should be bearable for the Hungarian people. We know that after 40 years of Communist mismanagement, the Hungarian people will have to swallow bitter medicine in order to attain a free economic system and restore economic self-sufficiency. Yet the austerity program and the price increases cannot be of such magnitude as to threaten substantially the Hungarian social and political order.

(2) At the present, the introduction of American capital into Hungary constitutes the best assistance and hope for economic well-being. In this regard, we welcome the several attempts of President Bush in Budapest and before the Governors' Conference to encourage American investment in Hungary and hope that he will repeat such efforts in the future.

(3) The most important element remains psychological motivation. Last year Hungary and Poland played the leading role in reforms in East Central Europe. Now East Germany is taking over this role. It cannot be permitted that American interest should turn from Hungary in the midst of accelerating events in the region, for in the medium run, we are talking about a European reorganization which will bring to the surface many regional problems as well.

(4) For us the most important problem remains the oppression of the Transylvanian Hungarians, which approximates ethnic genocide. We know that as long as President Ceausescu remains in power, American influence can at best lessen the catastrophe, but in view of the events in East Germany and Bulgaria, we do not believe that the conductor will last long. We appeal to our Administration not to forget, in case of regional changes, that the long-range peaceful solution of the Transylvanian question is possible only by implementing the human, cultural, and national self-determination rights of the Hungarians of Transylvania.

(5) As this Final Communique is being released before the summit meeting of President Bush and President Gorbachev, we appeal to our President to remember the interests of Hungary and the aspirations of the Hungarian people to neutrality.