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The Honorable Rex Tillerson  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20520

We write to you in support of strengthening the bilateral relationship between the United States and its ally, Hungary. This relationship should be about furthering our joint strategic interests. In most areas our Countries' interests and philosophy are closely aligned. We are of the opinion that the State Department should, therefore, focus on working with Hungary to pursue our common objectives in the fields of defense, security, antiterrorism, foreign policy and immigration.

Hungary, along with the other "Visegrad 4 Countries" (V4), is a natural ally of the United States. With respect to many of the substantive areas mentioned above, the views of Hungary and the V4 reflect U.S. positions more faithfully than much of the rest of the European Union. With Hungary currently serving its term as President of the V4, this parity, in interests and approach, presents an excellent opportunity to fortify our two countries' relationship as we pursue our common objectives.

Unfortunately, recent State Department actions, with respect to Hungary, demonstrate a continued adherence to misguided Obama era policies. Instead of collaborating with our ally, the State Department's actions still seem to focus on influencing the domestic social and public policy choices of Hungary, creating an impression (and perhaps even the reality) of undue interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign allied country.

Following U.S. Charge d'Affaires David Kostelancik's recent public criticism of perceived Hungarian government-friendly media predominance at the regional level, the State Department issued the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) entitled "Supporting Objective Media in Hungary." Through this funding opportunity, the Department plans to spend \$700,000 influencing regional media in Hungary to enhance "objective reporting" on projects that should "aim to have impact that leads to democratic reforms." Given the proximity of elections in Hungary, we are concerned that this NOFO will be seen as inappropriate meddling in the domestic affairs of a close ally on the part of the United States, especially in light of the suggestion that Hungary is in some way not a fully functioning democracy.

These interventions could seriously damage the public and political image of the U.S., not only in Hungary, but also more widely in the region, particularly among the V4 nations. Therefore, we believe these types of actions are inconsistent with U.S. foreign policy goals.

As such, we respectfully ask that you use your authority to see to it that the NOFO's implementation is suspended immediately. We believe that Department funds allocated for promoting democracy could and should be directed elsewhere, where they are truly needed, not to a trusted democratic ally.

Further, we suggest that a new path be charted to strengthen the strategic cooperation between the United States and Hungary, a path that focuses on the advancement of our vital joint interests. With the appointment of Assistant Secretary A. Wess Mitchell, a pragmatist, who knows the region and understands the common threats well, we feel the first step has already been taken.

In order to jumpstart the process of maximizing cooperation between our nations we would also suggest several additional actions by the State Department. First, the Department should organize appropriate high-level meetings between the leaders of our two countries in order to build mutual trust, reassure our ally of our support, and harmonize our approaches to our mutual goals. Second, we urge you to promptly install a new U.S. Ambassador to Budapest, who understands the importance of strategic cooperation between the U.S. and Hungary.

We are convinced that Hungary stands ready to continue fulfilling its obligations and work shoulder-to-shoulder with us in pursuit of our joint strategic interests, as it has done consistently since the end of the Cold War.

Sincerely,



Andy Harris, M.D.  
Member of Congress



Steve Russell  
Member of Congress



Steve King  
Member of Congress



Robert Aderholt  
Member of Congress



Paul Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



Dennis A. Ross  
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Dana Rohrabacher  
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