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FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1004

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Mrs. Donald Blinken  
United States Embassy  
Budapest  
Hungary

Dear Vera:

It gives me great pleasure to salute you, Director Gearan and all the Hungarian officials and Peace Corps Volunteers associated with today's ceremonies marking the end of the Peace Corps mission in Hungary.

Although in one sense this might be perceived as a sad occasion, it is also one of those rare opportunities in life -- and especially in government -- to witness a program fully meet its goals and reach a successful conclusion.

Of the many highlights of my tenure as Director of the Peace Corps, I am proudest of having helped to bring the Peace Corps to the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe, a process which began in Hungary with President Bush's historic speech in 1989 at the former Karl Marx University. There had initially been some skepticism over this initiative, given that the Peace Corps had traditionally operated only in the developing world. But I felt strongly that the pursuit of peace should know no boundaries, territorial, philosophical or otherwise, and that the United States had an obligation to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the people of Hungary as they embarked on the difficult path to democracy and economic reform.

The more than 300 Peace Corps Volunteers who served in Hungary over the past seven years have truly been ambassadors of good will on behalf of the United States. But they have also been active contributors to Hungary's renaissance in the fields of education, the environment and business development. I always felt strongly that our initial focus on English language instruction would help speed Hungary's integration into the global economy, as well as deepen relations between our two peoples. And I am especially pleased that so many of the innovative programs launched by the Peace Corps will be continued by the Government of Hungary. I can think of no better definition of success.

Again, I wish to thank and to congratulate all who have been responsible for this remarkable achievement -- the Hungarian Ministries, agencies and officials, and the Peace Corps team and volunteers themselves. You can take enormous pride in having played a major role in the making of history, and in the making of a better world.

And to you, Vera, let me add a special word of praise for the indispensable role you personally played in this great mission from its inception to its conclusion today.

Please be assured that in my current capacity as United States Senator, I continue to hold a special place in my heart for the Peace Corps and for the friendship linking Hungary and the United States.

Sincerely,



Paul D. Coverdell