

Speeches at Reception after Signing Ceremony

In the evening of 27th May the Presidential Council and the Government gave a formal reception in the Parliament building in honour of the Soviet delegation. Those present included Dobi, Kadar, Maslennikov, Apro and Gromov, as well as the heads and military attaches of several diplomatic missions in Budapest. (MTI 27.5.57)

Speech by Imre Horvath

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23/5/57
(Agreement on legal status of Soviet troops in Hungary)

The first toast at the reception was proposed by the Hungarian Foreign Minister, Imre Horvath, who said: "Comrade Foreign Minister, Comrade Marshal, dear comrades, on behalf of the Revolutionary Worker-Peasant Government I greet you with ardent love on the conclusion of the agreement on the legal status of Soviet troops temporarily stationed on the territory of the Hungarian People's Republic.

(a) ["The Revolutionary Worker-Peasant Government of the Hungarian People's Republic and the Soviet Government noted in their joint declaration on the results of the Moscow talks last March that the present international situation makes the presence of Soviet troops in Hungary necessary to defend the countries of the socialist camp.

"The presence of Soviet army units on our country's territory has the object of common defence against a possible aggression by the North Atlantic bloc. Thirteen years ago Soviet troops entered our fatherland for the first time and brought our people freedom. Having smashed the fascist-German hordes and their allies, the armed forces of Hungarian capitalists and land-owners, which had been oppressing our country, Soviet troops enabled our people to win freedom and independence after vain struggles through the centuries. The comradeship in arms of the Soviet and Hungarian peoples was born and grew stronger in this struggle.

"The capitalist monopolists have been watching the development of socialist Hungary with fierce hatred. It is most likely that they would have attacked us had we not had a great friend like the Soviet people. Since the end of the second world war, military blocs have been set up in Europe to impede the peaceful creative labours of socialist countries and to try to restore capitalism in these countries including our country - by armed intervention - to restore the capitalist social order which is so hateful to the working people. The danger of a new world war has been growing.

"In these circumstances, the basic interests of our people demand a close alliance with other countries likewise threatened with an attack by the imperialists. The rallying of the countries of the socialist camp and their growing strength has prevented the militarists from carrying out their military adventures. Thanks to this the homes of the peoples, who wish for peace, were not destroyed by a new world war.

"Last autumn the imperialists, taking advantage of mistakes which were allowed to occur in the leadership of our Party and Government, unleashed a counter-revolutionary rebellion in our country with the help of their agents. Our country's capital again became a battlefield. The best sons of our people were subjected to persecution or killed. Our national economy suffered great losses. Probably not since the second world war have the peoples of the world been so close to the threshold of a new world war as they were then. In these difficult circumstances, the Soviet people again gave us their fraternal help and saved the peoples of Europe from a new catastrophe. Our people could once more see for themselves that in the Soviet people they had a friend ready for any sacrifice in case of need. Thanks to the Soviet people, our people can once more live freely, once more work to build their socialist country. We shall never forget this.

"We therefore regard the soldiers of the Soviet units stationed in Hungary as sons of a friendly people, rejoicing with us when we rejoice and if necessary fighting by our side. We are connected by ties of common interests and common ideas, which are the foundation of the agreement we have just signed.

"The agreement has been concluded in accordance with Lenin's principles on international relations. Our Governments have drawn up the provisions of this agreement in keeping with the principles of independence and national sovereignty, equality and non-interference in each other's domestic affairs. The signing of this agreement reflects our firm resolve to continue with all our strength to defend peace in Europe and throughout the world. In this struggle we stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the camp of socialist countries, whose leader and main force the Soviet Union is.

"We have therefore signed this agreement, which again expresses our peaceful intentions towards all countries, regardless of their social order. We can perform the great tasks now facing us in the building of socialism only in peaceful conditions. We are now working only to have our achievements destroyed in a senseless war. We know, however, that this is not up to us alone. Numerous portents and events last year have warned us that aggressive circles in the USA have not given up their aggressive intentions, and that we can be defended against them only if our people is united with all the peoples equally threatened by the danger of aggression. For this reason, we also support a system of collective security.

"The material resources we are setting aside for the development of our defence we would more gladly devote to raising our people's standard of living. But at a time when we are surrounded by military blocs, our duty to our people impels us to take every possible measure to strengthen the security of our people and our defence potential as much as possible and to contribute to raising the defensive strength of the socialist camp.

"The agreement signed today thus contributes to a considerable extent to the preservation of peace between the peoples throughout the world and the defence of the Hungarian people's independence and freedom. It also creates conditions in which we may continue to build socialism in our country with fresh impetus, to strengthen the power of the Hungarian working class and peasantry, and to ensure their final victory.

"The friendly atmosphere prevailing during the talks which have just ended and the conclusion of this agreement again prove that there is complete agreement between our Governments, as there is between our peoples."

Horvath raised his glass to Gromyko, to the USSR's Leninist foreign policy, to Zhukov, to the Central Committee of the CPSU, the Government of the Soviet Union and the unbreakable friendship between the Hungarian and the Soviet peoples. (Tass in Russian 06.10, 25.5.57)

Gromyko on Disarmament Prospects

The next speaker was Gromyko, the Soviet Foreign Minister. He said that the negotiations leading to the conclusion of the agreement had taken place in a spirit of true friendship, and added: "The outcome of the negotiations is further shining evidence of the firm and indissoluble fraternal friendship between our countries and peoples. The counter-revolutionary events in Hungary have again shown that Western imperialist circles are making considerable efforts to weaken the socialist camp. To achieve this aim, they do not even recoil from organising diversionary acts and military provocations. This means that to protect their security and the peaceful constructive work of their peoples, the countries of the socialist camp must be in readiness from a military point of view. The temporary stationing of Soviet military units on the territory of some States belonging to the Warsaw Treaty serves only this end."

Discussing Soviet efforts to ease international tension and end the arms race, Gromyko spoke of the great significance of the Warsaw Treaty and said that while the socialist countries were doing their utmost to bring the arms race to a close, the Western Powers were doing all they could to prevent an agreement on the problem. He said: "People from the West often tell us Soviet representatives: 'You are making propaganda by insisting on the immediate banning of nuclear weapons and on your other proposals'. But if a reduction of inflated national armed forces and efforts to spare men the dangers of atomic war are propaganda, it is propaganda for which we have stood all along."

Gromyko recalled that at a time when the Soviet Union made its disarmament proposals at the League of Nations, many people in the West had called it propaganda and preferred countless commissions and committees, in which all workable disarmament proposals were thrown overboard, as a sound approach to the problem. "Everybody knows what all that added up to", Gromyko said. "We are reminded of it by the hundreds of cities in Europe which are still in ruins, not to speak of incalculable human casualties caused by the second world war."

"The socialist countries, including the Hungarian People's Republic and the Soviet Union", Gromyko said, "are united in their determination to facilitate the reduction of international tension, the ending of the arms race and the establishment of an effective collective security system in Europe through the combined efforts of all European nations, regardless of their political and social systems. These are the objectives of their peaceful foreign policies. These are the aims that are furthered by the relations of co-operation and fraternal friendship between the countries of the socialist camp, which are growing closer and closer."

"It would be difficult to forecast today", Gromyko went on, "how the disarmament talks now taking place in London will end. But we must bear it in mind that in Western countries and on the other side of the Atlantic especially, there is still more talk about armament than about disarmament." But the USSR would continue to adhere strictly to the principles of ending the arms race, and banning atomic and hydrogen bombs. He added: "We would like to hope that the Governments of the Western Powers will take a more sober attitude as regards disarmament and will abandon the policy of obstruction they have pursued for so many years at the disarmament talks." (Budapest 06.00, 28.5.57 and Tass in English 22.25, 27.5.57)

Revesz: Imperialist Attack on Warsaw Treaty

Gromyko was followed by Lt.Gen. Geza Revesz, the Minister of Defence, who said: "Dear Comrade Gromyko, dear Comrade Zhukov, Comrades, on behalf of the soldiers, officers and generals of the armed forces of the Hungarian People's Republic I most ardently welcome you in the capital of our fatherland. The talks which ended today, and which were held in accordance with the joint declaration made on 28th March by the Governments of the Hungarian People's Republic and the USSR, as well as the agreement now signed, are of utmost importance from the point of view of friendly relations between our countries, the security of our peoples and European peace."

"As it was pointed out in the joint declaration of our Governments, the current international situation is such that the presence of Soviet armed forces is necessary in the Hungarian People's Republic as well as in some other European socialist countries, in the interests of the security of the working people who are building socialism. This is particularly clearly proved by the Hungarian counter-revolutionary events and the events which followed them in international life. American imperialism is not only continuing but increasing its war preparations. Aggressive West German armed forces are being set up, and there is already open talk about arming them with nuclear weapons."

"The imperialist countries, and the USA in particular, want to liquidate the easing of international tension which became apparent in recent years as a result of the peoples' struggle for peace and the socialist countries' consistent efforts in this direction. The USA tried to make use of the Hungarian counter-revolutionary events to disturb the unity of the socialist camp, to exacerbate relations between the socialist countries and the capitalist world and to organise a boycott of Hungary."

"It is quite natural that in such an international situation friendly ties must be strengthened and the unity of the countries of the socialist camp consolidated. One of these ties of friendship is the Warsaw Treaty, the defence agreement of the European countries of socialism. Every objective observer must admit the strictly defensive nature of the Warsaw Treaty. Whereas the Atlantic pact, created in 1949, is an association which admits countries into its ranks on a strict ideological basis - i.e. only capitalist countries - the Warsaw Treaty, signed in 1955, is open to all

countries which recognise its basic principles and wish to join it, irrespective of their social order. Whereas the Atlantic Pact is an aggressive military pact, signed for an indefinite period, the Warsaw Treaty will cease to be in force the moment the Atlantic pact ceases to exist and a system of collective security in Europe is created - a system reliably protecting the peace of the European peoples.

"Thus the Warsaw Treaty was made necessary by the need to protect the security of the countries building socialism. At the same time, this treaty is a guarantee of peace to all European countries, for the united armed forces of its member countries, basing themselves on the presence of the armed forces of the Soviet Union, will prevent all imperialist military provocations.

"The counter-revolution launched a concentrated attack against the Warsaw Treaty and managed to make the Government of László Nagy violate it unlawfully. It is quite clear that the fascist counter-revolutionaries attacked the Warsaw Treaty so furiously because they knew that for us building socialism and membership of the Warsaw Treaty were inseparable. Deprived of protection under the Warsaw Treaty and detached from the socialist camp, Hungary would not have been able to build socialism.

"Considerable US armed forces are stationed in the European capitalist countries which are members of the Atlantic Pact. The imperialists, who are preparing for war, want to use their armed forces against the Soviet Union and the people's democracies. In these circumstances, Soviet armed forces must stay in Hungary to defend our country, our people and their peaceful creative labour, and also as a safeguard against a possible attack on Hungary.

"Soviet troops are present solely for this purpose and for no other. This is amply demonstrated by the agreement which has just been signed and which, in a spirit of national sovereignty and equality, defines the legal status of Soviet troops stationed in Hungary. The working people of Hungary are clearly aware of the need for the presence of Soviet units, for they see that their own interests demand it.

"We of the Hungarian People's Army are convinced that the signing of this agreement will further strengthen friendship between our peoples and armies. For this friendship, like our friendship with the armies of other people's democracies, and like the Warsaw Treaty, guarantees the sovereignty and independence of our fatherland and is an important condition of the preservation of peace and building socialism in our country.

"I can assure you, dear comrades, that the newly-created Hungarian armed forces will be reliable comrades-in-arms of the heroic Soviet Army in the defence of the peace of our peoples and of all of mankind. Long live the eternal friendship of the peoples of the Soviet Union and the Hungarian People's Republic. Long live the combatant friendship of the Soviet and Hungarian armies!" (Tass in Russian for Abroad 06.10, 28.5.57)

Zhukov: Western Bases Made Obsolete by Missiles

Replying, Marshal Zhukov said: "Dear Comrade Dobi, dear Comrade Kadar, Comrades and friends, allow me to convey to you and to the Hungarian people the fraternal greetings and very best wishes of the Soviet people, your sincere and trustworthy friends. I also wish cordially to thank you for the friendly words that have been said about the Soviet people and their armed forces.

"The Soviet army, like the Soviet people, are selfless and devoted friends of the Hungarian working people. They have proved this when the Hungarian working class, the working peasantry and all Hungarian workers were faced with the direct threat of the restoration of capitalism, the threat of the liquidation of all socialist conquests - the liquidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

"In those dark days for the workers of Hungary, at the request of the Hungarian Revolutionary Worker-Peasant Government, Soviet troops swiftly and decisively liquidated the previously organised armed action of counter-revolutionary elements. They did so out of loyalty to their international duty and to the undertakings in the Warsaw Treaty, and in fraternal unity with Hungarian patriots.

"In that struggle, Soviet troops as well as true Hungarian patriots shed their blood. Some lost their lives. These sacrifices were extremely undesirable for all of us but there was no other way at that time. The question then was who would prevail. The Soviet people and the Soviet troops clearly realise that the blood shed in the struggle against the counter-revolution was not shed in vain.

"Hungarian workers, led by the Revolutionary Worker-Peasant Government and the Socialist Workers' Party, can now confidently build their life and count upon the fraternal solidarity and support of the peoples of the whole socialist camp. We sincerely rejoice at the successes of the Hungarian people in the task of restoring normal life in the country and at the labour achievements thanks to which the wounds inflicted on the country by the counter-revolutionary elements are being rapidly healed. We wish the Hungarian people further successes in the building of socialism.

"As known, the troops belonging to the unified forces created under the Warsaw Treaty have the task of ensuring the defence of the socialist camp against any action by reactionary forces. The unified armed forces fully realise the importance of this task and are always ready to do their duty. As regards the Soviet armed forces, they will not allow anyone to cause offence to their friends. They will never leave their friends in the lurch. They will always be faithful to their fraternal international duty.

"It would be naive to suppose that following the failure of the armed invasion of Egypt by Britain, France and Israel and the liquidation of the counter-revolutionary rebellion in Hungary, the imperialists will renounce their aggressive schemes. The latest events in Jordan, where reactionary forces are repressing progressively-minded patriots with the utmost cruelty, as well as the ceaseless counter-revolutionary intrigues of imperialist circles, demand from the peoples of all the countries of the socialist camp constant vigilance, and the readiness to give a resolute rebuff to any attempt to disturb peace and the friendship of the peoples - to any attempt on our socialist conquests, on the dictatorship of the proletariat.

"The Soviet Government is firmly and consistently pursuing a policy of peaceful co-existence, a policy of friendship, and with security for, all the peoples. The Soviet people are struggling tirelessly against the menace of atomic warfare, which in present conditions may be dangerous for all mankind, but particularly for those who, ignoring the interests of the peoples, are brandishing atomic weapons and refuse to listen to the voices of the workers demanding the cessation of tests and the liquidation of atomic weapons and those who obligingly lend the territories of their countries for atomic bases.

"As regards the military bases located around the Soviet Union and the countries of people's democracy and in which the political and military leaders of the capitalist camp place such great hopes - since the appearance of ballistic and other high-powered, high-speed and high-precision missiles, these bases have lost their former importance.

"The Soviet Union is doing everything in its power to come to an agreement on the prohibition of tests and the liquidation of atomic weapons. However, the Soviet Government's efforts in this direction are being frustrated by the ruling circles of the USA, Britain and France and their partners in Bonn, who regard these weapons as means by which they hope to dictate their own political conditions to the Soviet Union and the whole socialist camp. We consider that the peoples of America, Britain, France and West Germany will realise that the policy pursued by their reactionary governing circles is essentially anti-popular, and they will force their Governments to take the interests of the working people into account.