

ABSTRACT

Diplomatic leaders of the first Hungarian government after the 1990 regime change saw the basis of foreign policy in reaching bilateral agreements. They had two goals with this. First of all, they wanted to guarantee Hungary's long-term security by creating a multi-layer "net". Another goal was the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the withdrawal of Soviet troops, by taking into account the rightful Soviet interests of security, helping the reform-minded Soviet leadership. The so called negative security warranties - no threat from Hungary's territory towards Moscow - were supported by Budapest and by that, they wanted to decrease the weight of the Soviet conservative forces inside and outside the Soviet Union. Namely, in the most conservative part of the Soviet military leadership, with the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the withdrawal of Soviet troops, the argument of "we are alone against Europe" strengthened together with the still strong imperial attitudes. In 1991, the process of the dissolution of the Soviet Union accelerated and the dissolution happened in a rhythm that was definitely not expected by the West. On the 19th of August 1991, an unsuccessful coup fastened the disintegration. Until September, twelve republics out of fifteen proclaimed their independence, i. e. intention of separating from the Soviet Union and it became obvious that the Soviet Union didn't exist anymore as the alliance of fifteen socialist republics. The personal relationship of Antall József with both Mihail Gorbachev and Boris Jeltsin made a positive impact on the Hungarian-Soviet and Hungarian-Russian relations.

Keywords: Diplomacy, József Antall, Mikhail Gorbachev, Boris Yeltsin, relations

ÖSSZEFOGLALÓ

A rendszerváltoztatás utáni magyar diplomácia új vezetői a kétoldalú megállapodások megkötésében látták a magyar külpolitika alapját. Ezzel több céljuk volt: egyrészt, többretegű „háló” létrehozásával garantálni akarták Magyarország biztonságát. További cél volt a Varsói Szerződés feloszlata, illetve a szovjet csapatok kivonása, a jogos szovjet biztonsági érdekek figyelembevételével. Az úgynevezett pozitív biztonsági garanciákkal – ne érezzen semmiféle katonai fenyegetést Moszkva – Budapest támogatta a reformszemléletű szovjet vezetést. Ezzel az Antall-kormány csökkentette a szovjet konzervatív erők súlyát a Szovjetunió belül és kívül egyaránt, mert a szovjet katonai vezetés legkonzervatívabb részében a Varsói Szerződés felbomlásával és a szovjet csapatok kivonásával az „Egyedül vagyunk Európával szemben” érvrendszere továbbra is erős maradt a birodalmi attitűdökkel együtt. 1991-ben felgyorsult a Szovjetunió felbomlásának folyamata, amire a Nyugat egyáltalán nem számított és nem volt felkészülve. Ehhez hozzájárult az 1991. augusztus 19-én kezdődő, Gorbacsov elleni sikertelen puccs, ami egyben tovább gyorsította a Szovjetunió bomlási folyamatát. 1991 szeptemberéig tizenöt köztársaságból tizenkettő kiáltotta ki függetlenségét, a Szovjetuniótól való elszakadási szándékát, és ezzel nyilvánvalóvá vált, hogy a Szovjetunió mint a szocialista köztársaságok szövetsége már nem létezik többé. A magyar–szovjet és a magyar–oroszléciókat pozitívan befolyásolta Antall József kormányfő személyes kapcsolata Mihail Gorbacsovval és Borisz Jelcinnel.

Kulcsszavak: diplomácia, Antall József, Mihail Gorbacsov, Borisz Jelcin, kapcsolatok



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MOSAICS FROM THE HUNGARIAN-SOVIET AND HUNGARIAN-RUSSIAN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN 1990 AND 1992

*Mozaikok a magyar-szovjet és a magyar-orosz
diplomáciai kapcsolatokból az 1990–1992 közötti
időszakban*

*Mozaici iz mađarsko-sovjetskih i mađarsko-ruskih
diplomatskih odnosa u periodu 1990–1992.*

Recommendation of József Antall for the termination of the Warsaw Pact

The most important foreign policy goal of the Antall-government was to restore sovereignty, after complete withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Hungary. Mikhail Gorbachev¹ announced at the 43rd session of the UN General Assembly on December 7, 1988 that - as a unilateral step - a significant number of troops will be withdrawn from Hungary, the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia within the next three years, and he would significantly reduce the armament and all ranks of the army located in Europe.² The first troops of the Soviet tank division stationed in Kiskunhalas set off to the Soviet Union on April 25, 1989 - the partial withdrawal of the soviet troops from Hungary has started. The commissioners of the Hungarian Government led by Miklós Németh³, Gyula Horn⁴ and Eduard Sevardnadze Soviet minister of foreign affairs⁵, signed the agreement about the withdrawal of Soviet troops on March 10, 1990, provisioning the full withdrawal of all personnel including civilian and military staff, combat and military equipment and material. The Németh-government entrusted Colonel General Antal Annus⁶ with the coordination of the withdrawal of the Soviet troops in Hungary. The József Antall-led government also claimed the work of Antal Annus and as a State Secretary he led the activities related to the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

The new leaders of the Hungarian diplomacy saw the base of the foreign policy in making new types of bilateral agreements. With all this, they had a dual purpose. On the one hand, in the long run, they wanted to guarantee Hungary's security by creating a multi-layered „net”. An important element of the „net” was good neighbourly relations based on bilateral agreements, and to help the reform-spirited Soviet leadership considering the Soviet security interests in line with the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and with the withdrawal of the Soviet troops.

During the „perestroika” years, the production fell back, the unfolding of the economy was hampered by the more and more serious shortage of products which was unbearable for the population of the Soviet Union. The influence and mass base of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) was apace decreasing, and it was more and more unable to play a role of a power factor in internal political processes. The state power’s most organized force was the army, but its internal conditions reached a critical point in some aspects. The Afghanistan defeat, the military withdrawal from Central and Eastern Europe, and the disarmament agreements have significantly reduced the trust of the officials towards the Moscow leadership, and have caused serious existential problems within the army.

The position of the Soviet Union was weakened mostly by the ethnic riots that turned acute, especially the secession efforts in the Baltic. Gorbachev did unmatched steps towards the independency efforts of the Baltic states which narrowed the social basis of the central leadership and reduced the foreign policy scope of the Moscow leadership and its international prestige. By the early to the mid-1990s it became obvious that the federal system of the Soviet Socialist Republics would not be sustainable in the long run, and that the dissolution-process might result civil war conditions.

It seems, that in the imagination of the Moscow leadership, the Warsaw Pact played a „symmetry-factor” until the transition of the NATO and WP, and even more until the establishment of the new European security policy system. The Warsaw Pact reached a stage in 1990, that it could be said that Hungary did not want to be a member of the alliance, and the long-term plan of the NATO-membership highlighted the change of direction. Among the Warsaw Pact member states, there were even efforts that wished to reorganize the system.

The session of the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee was between June 6-8, 1990 where the role of the WP PCC– according to the rotation principle – was filled by József Antall, Hungarian Prime Minister, who on the 7th of June suggested the dissolution of the Military Organization of the Warsaw Pact. Mikhail Gorbachev believed that several elements coincided or met with the Soviet ideas. The Soviet leadership considered it important that the dismantling of the federal system should not be a spontaneous process but should happen in a controlled framework. (Sáringer, 2015)⁷ At the session in Moscow, the member states of the Warsaw Pact accepted that the next WP PCC negotiation would be in Budapest. (Sáringer, 2015)⁸ On July 3, 1990 the Hungarian parliament decided that, “The Parliament requests the Hungarian Republic Government to start negotiations for Hungary about its exit from the Warsaw Pact, based on Article 62 of the Vienna Convention, referring to the changes in the circumstances of making agreements. It is desired to reach an agreement with all Member States about Hungary not to be a member of the Warsaw Pact anymore.” (Sáringer, 2015)⁹

During the visit to Moscow, the Hungarian Prime Minister held further negotiations with Mikhail Gorbachev and with Nyikolaj Tyihonov¹⁰ as well. The Soviet leaders used the

meeting to mutual acquainting and to express their intention towards the Hungarian-Soviet relations and further cooperation. At that time, the Soviet leadership did not want anything more from the Hungarian party. At the meeting, Mikhail Gorbachev accepted the regime change resulted by the Hungarian elections, which he considered internal affairs. He affirmed that the Soviet Union still wanted to have a good neighbourly and friendly relation with Hungary and that he was ready to cooperate with the new Hungarian leadership constructively without maintenance. He did not overlook the fact that the changes in Hungary happened in a peaceful way. He expressed his hope that due to the changes, the Hungarian-Soviet relations would not deteriorate and the relations and cooperation of the two countries would not get dismantled.¹¹

In the early 1990s, some of the content developers of the Soviet policy concerning the Warsaw Pact Member States were associates at the Bogomolov Institute¹², whose thesis was that it was expedient to develop a differentiated policy for all countries, taking in consideration their particularities, placed on a pragmatic basis. The traditional Soviet assertion of interests' mechanics – ideological identity and the presence of the Soviet troops – were replaced by new mechanisms observing the states' sovereignty in the region, their economic, commercial, cultural cooperation and processes based on a multilateral framework. (Póti, 1999)

Meeting of József Antall and Mihail Gorbachev in Paris

Another important stage of the newly elected Hungarian government's eastern policy, in terms of Hungarian-Soviet relations, was the meeting in Paris between József Antall and Mikhail Gorbachev on November 21, 1990, which took place after five months of the Moscow negotiations. All this also shows the activity and dynamics of Hungarian diplomacy. The negotiations of the two leaders happened two days after the opening of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, at the Embassy of the Soviet Union in Paris. Currently, there are two resources available about the negotiation, and from them we can reconstruct the events. Gorbachev started the discussion stating that there had been too many words about the problems. The question is if the issues can be solved in a democratic manner in the Soviet Union. The Soviet people want order, and the announced program is available in Kremlin to the stabilization of the country. There is a power struggle going on, that should be kept in a democratic way. József Antall stated that it was important to organize the bilateral agreements. He understands the Soviet Union's problems, but the transition is not going fast. He congratulated Gorbachev for his Peace Nobel Prize, then he got to the questions of the Warsaw Pact. He suggested that the best solution would be if the Soviet Union initiated the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and its placement on a new basis. He suggested that bilateral agreements should be made because Hungary would be happy to make a bilateral agreement with the Soviet Union.

In connection with the member republics, József Antall stated that regular inquiries arrive to Budapest and the Baltic states have a special position in them. Hungary does not encourage the Baltic States, but the Hungarian government acknowledge the freedom of people for self-determination. The Hungarian Prime Minister informed the Soviet leader that Ukraine wanted to open a diplomatic and consular representation in Hungary, and the Baltic States wanted an advocacy office. The Soviet leader found it ideal for Ukraine to represent itself in Budapest in the framework of the Soviet Embassy, and it was among the plans to transform the Soviet Consulate General in Debrecen into a Ukrainian representation.

In connection with the Baltic States' advocacy offices, the standpoint of Mikhail Gorbachev was that it was necessary to involve the Soviet Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs and that the opening of the representatives should not happen too fast. Budapest respected the demand of the Soviet leader, and the Hungarian Republic did not step in diplomatic relations with the three Baltic States during 1990.¹³

For the new Hungarian government it was an important gesture that the Moscow leadership apologized for the Soviet intervention in 1956. At the meeting in Paris, Antall told Gorbachev that Hungary would like the Soviet Union to condemn the Soviet military intervention in 1956 against Hungary, like they condemned the intervention in Prague in 1968.

According to Gorbachev, the cooperation with the Eastern European countries should be thought through, there was a need for a legal reform that reflected on the new processes, but Moscow did not find it appropriate that there were some who turned completely to the West and completely rejected the Eastern relations. Earlier, the relations were deformed but comprehensive. Gorbachev declared that the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact should be reconsidered and prepared. The Hungarian Prime Minister asked if the Ministers of Foreign Affairs could start the negotiations related to this. Gorbachev said yes immediately, then added that it should be announced, as all the actions should be matched with the idea of the strategy of Moscow. However, it should not be a unilateral process but a mutual initiative. The Warsaw Pact's nature must be chosen firmly, until the new European security structure was established.

József Antall said that there was a conceptual difference between the NATO and the Warsaw Pact. One of them is the community of sovereign states, but the other one is not a community of sovereign states. Gorbachev added that there was a state belonging to the Soviet bloc that defends more the NATO than Hungary but the establishment of a collective security system should be promoted. Antall added that the Hungarian government is devoted to the Atlantic ideas but not only inside the NATO because the United States has an important role in the new situation. He declared that the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Hungary was progressing well but there was a need for further negotiations. Gorbachev, reacting to this, added that the Germans would pay 30–40 billion and that the

questions of joint ventures should be examined. The two leaders touched energetic and economic questions as well, and at the end of the negotiation Gorbachev highlighted that “we did not become estranged. Everyone should think it through and decide in a sovereign way.” And József Antall expressed: „They think the same about us. Western relations mean a balance, it is far from neglect. Our Eastern relations touch the whole industry, a huge mass of workers, logically it is not thinkable of us that we do not want good relations with our neighbours.” (Sáringer, 2015)¹⁴

After the negotiations of the Hungarian Prime Minister and the Soviet leader in Paris, from the end of November negotiations started between the Hungarian and Soviet Ministries of Foreign Affairs to elaborate on the Hungarian-Soviet Basic Treaty. The specific areas and departments of the Hungarian and Soviet Ministries of Foreign Affairs prepared the schedule to the relations of the first quarter of 1991. However, by the beginning of January, the Soviet party stepped back from the further turns, and even from the roundtable discussion planned to the beginning of February. The initiatives taken by the Hungarian part at level of ministers, deputy secretaries of State and heads of Departments, stayed without answer. The power struggle in the Soviet Union was in the background of this.¹⁵

The disintegration process of the Soviet Union accelerates

The reform-processes, initiated by Gorbachev, with the aim to save the Soviet regime and to recover from recession, lost wind by the mid-1990s. The state socialist, economic, and federal system got into a recession which came to the surface by 1990/1991. The powers that were under surface until that time won back their strength, and Gorbachev did not have any other choice but to keep the balance between the independency efforts of the conservatives, radical-democrats, nationalists, and member republics.

In the second half of 1990, the central government was strongly attacked by the conservative post-communist elite in urge of restoration: “the majority of the middle and high level party bureaucracy relates more and more repulsively, even belligerently to the perestroika. The opposition of the conservative nomenclature has become clear.” (Gorbacsov, 2013. 379) The radical-democratic opposition pressed radical changes and steps forward. According to the critics of the radical democrats led by Boris Yeltsin, Gorbachev and the central power did nothing towards parliamentary democracy, instead their goal was modernization.¹⁶ The result of the power struggle in the Soviet Union was that Eduard Sevardnadze resigned on December 18, 1990, which was viewed as a huge defeat according to Budapest and Washington.¹⁷ The engrossment of the Soviet internal policy crisis limited the international margin of the Soviet diplomacy. The Soviet diplomacy became the main target of military circles, conservatives, KGB, and the strengthened Russian nationalists. They accused openly Sevardnadze for German unification, Central and Eastern European changes, the disarmament, the withdrawal of troops, the unequal Soviet-American part-

ner relations, the unfavourable effects of the Gulf-crisis, the reduction of Soviet influence in the developing world, the deterioration of the big power status of the Soviet Union.

At the turn of 1990/1991, wars over laws, sovereignty, and budget also escalated. On January 24, 1991, the Supreme Council of the Russian Federation accepted a law about the priority of the Federation's laws, and impose punishment for those who implement the laws that are not ratified by the Federation. By the turn of 1990 and 1991, the other cause and consequence of the Soviet-socialist social, political, and economic crisis, was the Soviet economy. The system consumed all reserves, this resulted in non-functioning and accelerated deterioration.

The events in the Baltics at the beginning of 1990 affected the internal and foreign political situation of Gorbachev, and the processes happening in Europe and on a global level. Units of the Soviet home affairs troops occupied public facilities in Vilnius and Riga on January 2-3. Civilians tried to defend the buildings by forming a live wall, the consequences of this were 15 dead, 160 injured and 64 lost people. One week later, the parachute and shield formations of the Soviet army occupied public facilities in Vilnius and other Lithuanian cities, while clashed with the demonstrators. Again, at the price of many dead and injured.

In Tallin, Boris Yeltsin signed many documents with representatives of the three Baltic republics and addressed an appeal to the UN Secretary-General encouraging the convocation of an international conference related to the Baltic question. In a mutual declaration they condemned the implementation of violence and declared that only elected Baltic legislators would be acknowledged as legitimate. Yeltsin was devoted to the establishment of a new federal system led by Russia and raised the establishment of an independent military power of Russia. This clearly meant that at the middle of January, a process started that would lead to the separation of Russia and the three Baltic republics. All this depended on the relations between the triangle of Gorbachev, Yeltsin and the military.

On February 25, 1991 a meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact member states was held in Budapest at the level of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence. The participants (Hungary, Bulgaria, the Czech and Slovak Republics, Poland, Romania, Soviet Union) published a collective Announcement and Declaration about the liquidation of the military organs and structures of the Warsaw Pact until March 31, 1991. They have signed a protocol in Prague about the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact that was established on May 14, 1955 and kept in force by the document made on April 26, 1985. The Hungarian Parliament ratified the Prague protocol on a session on June 11, 1991.

Meanwhile, by the spring of 1991, in the Soviet Foreign Policy thinking, military approach and unmitigated security policy became a priority again. This meant a return to the Brezhnev era's Western-enemy ideas and to the psychosis of threat. Accordingly, under the surface, the mistrust increased towards the European Communities and the United

States of America, while at the surface, Moscow stressed the bi- and multilateral agreements with the states of Europe and North America. The reasons of Moscow's psychosis, in the first place, were mainly the Central and Eastern European changes, which led to the disappearance of the impact zone that was formerly considered as a Soviet manoeuvre area, therefore the concept of the Soviet Western defence system had to be supervised. The intention of Central and Eastern European countries to join the European integration meant a danger of a military alliance in terms of political, economic, cultural and humanitarian fields to the Soviet military and political leadership which was unacceptable for the Soviet Union. This psychosis served as an argument in the Kremlin and the Soviet Communist Party for the subsistence of the Soviet Union.¹⁸

In accordance with the Hungarian-Soviet agreement, on June 19, the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary ended. Viktor Silov, Lieutenant-General, Commander of the withdrawing Southern Army group, received a farewell visit from President Árpád Göncz, Prime Minister József Antall, and Minister of Defence Lajos Für. The financial settlement of the remaining Soviet military and civil objects and the acreages used by the Soviets, hadn't been fulfilled at that time. Nine days after the departure of the last Soviet soldier, on June 28, the Comecon held its last, 46th session in Budapest. The participants signed a protocol about the final dissolution of the Comecon that was established in 1949. József Antall attended the session and welcomed the delegates.

The idea of the Basic Treaty involving the Hungarian-Soviet security partnership was a Hungarian "invention". It arose in connection with two concepts related to each other. On the one hand, one part of the security net around Hungary would be made up by the agreements with the neighbours, on the other hand, they intended to make the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact easier for the Soviet political leadership which was also part of the Hungarian security policy concept. The idea of the agreement was raised by József Antall in November 1990 and in November the Hungarian party submitted the theses including the content of the agreement. However, the Soviet party did not react to the Hungarian suggestion until February, the reason for that could be the opposed powers. Namely, the "centripetal" force wanted to save the Soviet Union, on the other hand, the "centrifugal" powers wished to strengthen the member states' intentions for independence. The representatives of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs finally announced that they wished to conclude a Basic Treaty with Hungary first. For a Hungarian initiative, in a short period of time, two negotiations happened in February¹⁹ in Budapest and in Moscow. During the two negotiations, they agreed on twenty out of the twenty-four articles. The two parties could not agree about security guarantees, standpoints of Budapest and Moscow showed significant differences on these four articles. The Soviet Union insisted on the security clause, according to which neither of the parties can join a military organization against each other. This was called by the Soviet diplomacy „Kvicinszkij clausula”. However, seeing the strong Hungarian position, the Soviet party tried to force the Hungarian part to give up their standing point by competing them with others. Moscow didn't suc-

ceed therefore the Soviet Union made the agreement with Romania based on the conditions that were rejected by the Hungarian party. The agreement with the Romanians was initialled on March 22.

Coup d'état against Gorbachev and the steps made by the Antall government

On August 19, 1991, some members of the Soviet government, the army and the leaders of the KGB attempted a coup against Mikhail Gorbachev. Boris Yeltsin and the Russian parliament named the partial takeover of power as unconstitutional. They demanded the soldiers not to turn against the people and the people to a general protest. After József Antall consulted with George Bush on telephone, the Hungarian government published a declaration about the evolved situation. Budapest supported the Russian reform processes and condemned the coup.

In these days, József Antall contentiously kept in touch with François Mitterand, Helmut Kohl, Václav Havel and Lech Wałęsa. Géza Jeszenszky consulted with Henning Wegener, NATO's Deputy Secretary General for Political Affairs, about the evolved situation in the Soviet Union. "On the early afternoon of 21 August, Prime Minister József Antall called Boris Yeltsin on telephone. In his introduction, he wished good luck to Mister Yeltsin and his colleagues. He ensured the Russian Head of State that the Hungarian government supports Yeltsin's effort similarly to a lot of other governments in the world. He highlighted, that the Hungarian government supported the constitutional methods of the crisis solution, including the efforts of the Russian leadership directed to the reconstruction of constitutional order. He expressed his hope that in the current situation the reform powers could get mastery over the crisis in the Soviet Union. The Hungarian Prime Minister referred to the validity of the invitation sent to President Yeltsin for an official visit to Hungary (written on July 4). Boris Yeltsin, in his answer, thanked the moral-support-giving words and stated that he accepted the invitation and hoped that it can be realized at the end of the year, in November or in December. Currently, obviously, there is no way for that because the dramatic situation in the Soviet Union is critical. [...] The discussion, initiated on August 21 at 11:00, happened at 15:10 and lasted for 20 minutes."²⁰ Yeltsin did not forget that József Antall was among the first ones to call him. The meeting of József Antall and Boris Yeltsin happened on December 6, 1991 in Moscow and resulted a breakthrough in the financial liquidation of the withdrawal of Soviet troops. Yeltsin agreed on the so-called "break-even" solution that means that the buildings, established by the Soviet army and remaining in Hungary, compensate for the damages caused in the environment. Moreover, József Antall and Boris Yeltsin signed the basis treaty with the title of Friendly Relations and Cooperation between the Republic of Hungary and the Russian Federal Socialist Soviet Republic. (Marinovich, 2002)

During 1991, the dissolution process of the Soviet Union got faster and it disintegrated in a rhythm that was not expected by the West. The Soviet Union's disintegration process was accelerated by the unsuccessful coup on August 19. Until September, out of fifteen republics twelve announced its devotion to independence, and secession from the Soviet Union. It became obvious that the Soviet Union stopped to exist as the alliance of fifteen republics. By this time, the secession of the republics that had declared their independence from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had become a completed fact. The leaders of the Hungarian foreign policy and diplomacy recognized the opportunity, whereby, in the first place, they renewed diplomatic relations or made relations with the new states. In the second stage, they ensured about the establishment of foreign representation. Hungary renewed the diplomatic relations with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in September 1991. Belorussia accepted its independence declaration on August 25, 1991. Russia acknowledged the former Soviet republics' right for independence and to make independent foreign relations. Hungary and the ambassadors of the Russian Federation made diplomatic relations on December 6, as well. Ukraine announced its independence on August 24, 1991. Diplomatic relations were established in December when József Antall paid an official visit to Ukraine invited by the Head of State, Leonyid Kravcsuk. The Heads of States of Belorussia, Russia and Ukraine decided in Brest on December 8 that they would establish a loose state-alliance with the name Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and also announced the Soviet Union as terminated. Two weeks later, on December 25, Mikhail Gorbachev resigned from his federal president position because of the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and at the same time, Jevgenyj Saposnyikov also resigned from his position as the General in Chief of the Soviet army and transferred the rights of controlling the atomic weapons to the General in Chief of the CIS. On the same day, the Soviet sickle-hammer-red flag was hoisted in Kremlin and replaced by the Russian tricolour flag. The next day, the upper house of the Soviet federal parliament, the Council of the Republic announced the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was replaced by Russia in the UN Security Council. With this, the Soviet Union, the Eurasian Empire officially stopped existing. The process, started by Gorbachev, outgrew Gorbachev himself, who was unable to keep together the empire that was bleeding and collapsing. The Hungarian government, on December 26 made a declaration about its standing points on the Commonwealth of Independent States.²¹

One year after the establishment of the Antall-government, the first goals of the new Hungarian foreign policy were accomplished. With the departure of the last Soviet soldier on March 19, 1944, Hungary became a sovereign country according to the international law. The goal of the October Revolution and War for Independence of 1956 was achieved, our country not just withdrew from the Warsaw Pact, but also the Warsaw Pact itself stopped existing. The Comecon, that was viewed as the economic base of the Soviet federal system, did not live up to the expectations, the appropriate economic and financial relations did not come true between the Soviet Union and its satellite states because of the crisis and the collapse of the so-called „Eastern Bloc” was caused precisely by the system

named as “socialist economy”. József Antall and his government achieved one of the goals of the foreign policy, set in May 1990. We have to add, of course, that with this, we do not want to attenuate the first steps of the government led by Miklós Németh in connection with the final withdrawal of Soviet troops.

Agreements between József Antall and Boris Yeltsin in Budapest

It's doubtless that one of the most important and most successful achievement of the Hungarian diplomacy in 1992, was the official visit of Boris Yeltsin to Hungary between November 10-11. Although Antall and Yeltsin verbally agreed on the “break-even” solution of the withdrawal of Soviet troops, Moscow's interim charge d'affaires Joseph Birnbauer, had already reported in February 1992 that Pavel Grachev, Colonel General, first vice-Lieutenant-General of the CIS armed forces, said neither positive, nor negative opinion about the property-financial and environment protection affairs, raised after the withdrawal of Soviet troops.²² In a letter, Antal Annus, Secretary of State in the Ministry of Defence, drew Grachev's attention to the fact that in Moscow, Boris Yeltsin and József Antall agreed on the „break-even” solution.²³ In 1992, a response-letter arrived for Antal Annus, in which Grachev questioned the agreement reached on the topmost level, and suggested negotiations for compromising solutions.²⁴ This was also confirmed by Mihail Kokejev, vice-leader of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' International Scientific and Technical Cooperation Department, to a colleague in the Moscow Hungarian Embassy.²⁵

In June, an expert delegation travelled to Moscow led by Deputy Secretary of State Iván Bába. Iván Bába explained to Deputy Foreign Minister Vitaly Churkin that the agreement reached at the Antall-Yeltsin meeting in December 1991, in connection with the financial-liquidation questions after the withdrawal of Soviet troops, had significance for the Hungarian party. Based on mutual resignation from the demands, it must be closed.²⁶

József Antall sent a letter to Boris Yeltsin²⁷, who wrote a response-letter in October: “With you, we have reached a well-known political decision. I honestly must confess that it was not easy for us because of the difficulties of the soldiers deducted to Russian territories, and, last but not least, because of the sensibility of the country's public opinion against these problems. In connection with these, it became necessary – on a free of charge basis – Hungary's participation in construction of apartments for the Russian soldiers and their family members. An agreement like this should be included in a separate document.”²⁸

After these, Boris Yeltsin and his delegation arrived to Budapest, during the night of November 11. On the following day, negotiations began, full of expectations and excitement, in many ways. (Marinovich 2018. 135–144.)²⁹ At the niche negotiation of József Antall³⁰ and Boris Yeltsin, the existing questions were decided, just like the case of the “break-even”. Finally, they agreed on the “break-even”, the parties mutually forged from the demands against each other in connection with the financial settlement in terms of

the withdrawal of troops. Hungary has pledged to provide humanitarian help for the Russian Federation's army by transferring ten-million-dollars worth medicine for the Russian Federation's army. (Report between the Russian Federation Government and the Government of the Republic of Hungary about the examination of the humanitarian help for the Soviet troops withdrawn from the territory of the Republic of Hungary.) It had a value of gesture that the Hungarian government offered solution for the housing problems of the Soviet troops withdrawn from Hungarian territory. (Report between the Russian Federation Government and the Hungarian Republic Government about the examination of the humanitarian help for the Soviet troops withdrawn from the territory of the Republic of Hungary.)

Boris Yeltsin wreathed the graves of Imre Nagy and his martyr fellows, proving that the democratic Russia has nothing to do with the Soviet Union treading down the 1956 Revolution. The Russian President made a speech in the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament where he made amends to the Hungarian people for the 1956 tragedy. The speech, made in Russian, was simultaneously interpreted but the translation machines did not work due to "technical reasons". (Marinovich, 2018. 135–144.)

The visible approach of Budapest and Moscow had a huge significance not just because of the bilateral relations but also internationally. Boris Yeltsin's visit, the negotiations and the documents signed have closed the era of Hungarian-Russian historical grievance and arguable questions. The results of the Budapest negotiations were valued favourably in Moscow as well. Yeltsin announced to his colleagues that Hungary was the proof that the transition's massive political-economic problems could be addressed.³¹

Summary

One year after the establishment of the Antall-government, the first goals of the new Hungarian foreign policy were achieved. Hungary became a sovereign country from the aspect of international law, as the last Soviet soldier departed on March 19, 1944. The goal of the October Revolution and War for Independence in 1956 was accomplished, our country withdrew from the Warsaw Pact, moreover, the Warsaw Pact itself stopped existing. The Comecon, that was viewed as the economic basis of the Soviet federal system, did not live up to the expectations, there were no appropriate economic and financial relations between the Soviet Union and its satellite states because of the crisis and the collapse of the so-called „Eastern Bloc” was caused precisely by the system called “socialist economy”. József Antall and his government achieved one goal of foreign policy, undertaken in May 1990. Part of other foreign policy goals, transforming since 1940, were achieved by 1992. The Warsaw Pact and the Comecon ended, and the last Soviet soldier left our country. By 1991, the basis of market economy and parliamentary democracy were put down by the Antall-government. Personal relationship of Antall József and both Mihail Gorbachev and Boris Jeltsin made a positive impact on the Hungarian-Soviet and Hungarian-Russian relations. The relation between Budapest and Moscow became balanced compared to the previous subordinate relationship. The government led by József Antall found the Hungarians’ place in Europe and in the world and showed a way to Hungarians by the end of the 20th century.

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¹Mikhail Gorbachev (1931–) Secretary General of the Soviet Union Communist Party (March 11, 1985 – March 15, 1990), and the president of the Soviet Union between March 15, 1990 and December 25, 1991

²Six tank divisions, five thousand tanks and fifty thousand soldiers.

³Miklós Németh (1948–) entered the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party in 1976 (further: MSZMP), he was the Head of the party centre's economic-political department from 1986. Starting from 1988, he was the member of the Political Commission until the end of MSZMP in October 1989. The government led by Miklós Németh lasted from November 28, 1988 till May 23, 1990, the Minister of Foreign Affairs was Péter Várkonyi from November 24, 1988 till May 10, 1989, then Gyula Horn between May 10, 1989 and May 23, 1990.

⁴Gyula Horn (1932–2013) entered the MSZMP in November 1956, then from 1959 on, he was working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Between 1963 and 1969, he was in service in Belgrade, then he was the vice-head of the MSZMP Central Commission's Foreign Affairs Department, then the Head of Department. From 1958, he was the Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, then from May 10, 1989, he was the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the government led by Miklós Németh. He opened the borders for the Eastern-German tourists due to the suggestion made by Miklós Németh and announced the collapse of the Iron Curtain.

⁵Eduard Sevardnadze (1928–2014) the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Soviet Union between 1985 and 1990.

⁶Antal Annus (1941–1996), after the military college (1960–1964) he graduated from the Zrínyi Miklós Military Academy (1970–1973), then from the Staff Academy (1982–1984). He was in the Hungarian army between 1964 and 1990 in Szabadszállás, Kiskunfélegyháza and Tata. From March 1990, the vice-chief of the Staff, from the same time, he governed Hungary's tasks about the withdrawal of Soviet troops as a government-delegate of the Hungarian Republic until March 1993. Between June 5, 1990 and March 31, 1993, he was the State Secretary in the Ministry of Defence.

⁷Oc. 7. document with the title of Summary of the meeting of the Hungarian delegation and Mikhail Gorbachev at the Moscow session of the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee. Date: June 8, 1990.

⁸Oc. 18. document with the title of Survey of István Monor, the Head of the Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the negotiation of Géza Jeszenszky and Eduard Sevardnadze. oz. Date: November 2, 1990.

⁹Oc. 11. document with the title of The declaration of the Hungarian Republic Parliament about the Hungarian Republic to start the negotiations about the withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact. Date: July 3, 1990.

¹⁰Nyikolaj Ivanovics Tyihonov (1929–) Prime Minister of the Soviet Union between September 27, 1985 and January 14, 1991.

¹¹Cf. Cipher telegram from Moscow with the title of The expected declarations of the Soviet leaders during the negotiation with József Antall. Date: June 3, 1990. ANAH XIX-J-1-j 1990, 72. b.

¹² Oleg Tyimofejevics Bogomolov (1944-) the name of the economist's academic institute the Institute for International Economic and Political Studies (Институт Международных Экономических и Политических Исследований РАН). The Institute was governed by Bogomolov between 1960 and 1998, who is currently the honorary chief.

¹³ The Hungarian Republic made diplomatic relations with the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Republic on September 2, 1991.

¹⁴ Oc. 21. document with the title of Negotiation reminder about the negotiation between Mikhail Gorbachev and József Antall. Date: November 21, 1990.

¹⁵ The situation of the Hungarian-Soviet relations and what we need to do. Date: 29. January 1991. ANAH XIX-J-1-j 1991. 61. b.

¹⁶ Cipher telegram from Moscow. Date: 9. January 1991. ANAH XIX-J-1-j 1991. 62. b.

¹⁷ Bollobás Enikő's letter to Géza Jeszenszky from the Washington Embassy. Date: 21. December 1990. ANAH XIX-A-150-j 1990. 78. b

¹⁸ The spoken cf. The paper of the British ambassador about the Soviet foreign policy. Date: 12. May 1991. ANAH XIX-J-1-j 1991. 58. b.

¹⁹ February 9 and 14–15, 1991.

²⁰ Árpád Székely's report about the telephone conversation on August 21, 1991 between József Antall Prime Minister and Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin Russian president. Date: August 21, 1991. ANAH XIX-J-1-j 1991. 61. b.

²¹ The spoken cf. Suggestion to the forming of the relations with the successor states of the Soviet Union. Date: 17. September 1991. ANAH XIX-J-1-j 1991. 61. b.

²² The report of József Birnbauer, Moscow temporary ambassador's deputy, about Szergej Glazje's negotiation with the first vice-president of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Trade Commission.. 25. February. 1992. ANAH XIX-J-1-j 1992. 60. b.

²³ The letter of Antal Annus, secretary of Ministry of Defence, to Pavel Grachev, the first vice-president of the Russian Minister of Defence, related to the financial settlement of the withdrawal of Soviet troops. April 1992. ANAH XIX-J-1-j 1992. 60. b.

²⁴ The report of Monori István, the head of Ministry of Foreign Affairs Third Department, about the financial settlement of the withdrawal of Soviet troops. 26. May 1992. ANAH XIX-J-1-j 1992. 60. b.

²⁵ Cipher telegram from Moscow. The opinion of Mihail Kokejev, vice-leader of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' International Scientific and Technical Cooperation Department, about the „break-even” solution. 23. June 1992. ANAH XIX-J-1-j 1992. 60. b.

²⁶ The report of Iván Bába and Ernő Keskeny about the negotiations of Iván Bába, the vice-secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow. 9. July 1992. ANAH XIX-J-1-j 1992. 57. b.

²⁷ Cipher telegram from Moscow. The handover of József Antall's letter to Boris Yeltsin at his secretariat. 16. July 1992. ANAH XIX-J-1-j 1992. 60. b.

²⁸ The letter of Boris Yeltsin to József Antall. 30. October 1992. ANAH XIX-J-1-j 1992. 60. b.

²⁹ Endre Marinovich, the head of the prime minister's cabinet witnessed the negotiations personally.

³⁰ Endre Marinovich, Gyula Kodolányi and Dimitrij Rjurikov counselor to the president were present at the negotiations.

³¹ Cipher telegram from The Hague. The Russian ambassador in The Hague said, referring to the orientation got from its centre, that they extremely appreciated Boris Yeltsin's visit to Budapest. 14. November 1992. ANAH XIX-J-1-j 1992. 57. b.