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BRITISH EMBASSY
BUDAPEST

29 January 1980

The Right Honourable
The Lord Carrington KCMG MC
etc etc etc



My Lord,

I have the honour to report that on Wednesday, the 23rd of January, I presented to the Vice President of the Presidential Council of the Hungarian People's Republic, Mr Reszó Trautmann, the Letter of Recall of my predecessor, Mr Richard Parsons, and my own Letter of Credence. President Losonczy is still convalescing after a major operation three months ago.

2. The presentation of my Letters took place only six days after my arrival in Hungary on 17 January; I understand that this may a local record. As I reported in my telegram no. 42, the Hungarians have evidently wished to emphasize, by arranging this ceremony and my other initial calls so promptly, their hope that Hungary's bilateral relations with the United Kingdom, and with other Western countries, can remain undisturbed by the sharp deterioration in the West's relations with the Soviet Union following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This hope and wish to

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continue bilateral business as usual has been a constant theme in the conversations which I have had so far with Hungarian Ministers and officials. I have been told by a Hungarian journalist that Mr Kádár's first reaction to the news of the Soviet Union's action in Afghanistan was to say that this would make the process of détente much harder, which meant that Hungary would have to work harder for it.

3. Some years ago the Hungarians sensibly simplified the ceremony for the presentation of credentials by newly arrived Ambassadors and it is now a relatively informal and relaxed affair. Accompanied by the Acting Chief of Protocol I drove to the Parliament building in a Russian "Chaika" saloon: protocol is the last pocket of such symbolic deference to the Occupying Power, Hungarian Ministers and senior officials having long ago abandoned Soviet imports in favour of Mercedes cars, varying in magnificence according to rank. On arrival there, accompanied by senior members of my staff, I was escorted to the Nándorfehérvár Hall, a room of great neo-Gothic splendour, where, when the British and Hungarian parties had arranged themselves, I made a short speech (of which I enclose the text) to Vice



President Trautmann before handing him my Letters. When I had introduced the Vice President to my staff, he invited me to join him for a short private talk, at which Deputy Foreign Minister János Nagy was present, in an adjoining room.

4. Mr Trautmann said that although it fell to him as Vice President to receive the credentials of many new Ambassadors and to say farewell to departing ones, he would like me to know that he had listened to none of the speeches made on such occasions with greater appreciation than he had to mine. (Since the content of my remarks had been so anodyne, I assume that Mr Trautmann must have been referring to the two sentences which I ventured in Hungarian; Hungarians would evidently rather see their language massacred than ignored.) Mr Trautmann went on to express the hope that during my mission in Budapest I would be able to build on the progress which had been made in recent years in developing bilateral relations between the United Kingdom and the Hungarian People's Republic. I had arrived in the middle of a cold winter and at a time when the international climate was also cool: it would not be long before Spring arrived in Budapest and one had to hope that the international situation would similarly improve. In the meantime, Mr Trautmann said, he trusted that the development of our bilateral



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relationship could continue. I told Mr Trautmann that Her Majesty's Government shared his hope that there would be no development which need affect adversely the United Kingdom's relations with Hungary, to which much greater substance had been given in recent years. For my own part, I saw no reason at present why they should not continue to develop and I looked forward to working with the Hungarian authorities and institutions to that end.

5. When I had taken my leave of the Vice President, the President's Private Secretary, Mr Szunyogh, invited me and my staff to view one of the more spectacular exhibits of the ornate and intricately decorated Parliament complex, namely the painting by the nineteenth century Hungarian artist Mihály Munkácsy which occupies the whole of one wall of the Presidential Council Chamber. It depicts the submission of Slav tribes to the conquering Hungarian invader, Árpád. Mr Szunyogh, who delivered his commentary on the picture with relish and a marked twinkle, explained that Munkácsy, who had lived in self-imposed exile in Paris because of his liberal convictions, had done his best to eliminate from the painting any suggestion of racial inequality. As I remarked, however, the artist had in this been notably unsuccessful.

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6. Following the ceremony in the Parliament building, I laid, as is customary, a wreath on the national monument in Heroes' Square, which is dedicated to all Hungary's fallen heroes since the birth of their nation in the ninth century.

7. The presentation of my Letters had been preceded on the two previous days by my initial calls on the Head of the Department in the Foreign Ministry which looks after our affairs, on Deputy Foreign Minister János Nagy and, on 22 January, on the Hungarian Foreign Minister, Mr Puja. All three conversations took place in a notably cordial atmosphere and only Mr Puja went out of his way to be controversial. My call on him, which was intended to be of a purely courtesy nature, developed into a lively discussion lasting for 1½ hours about the international situation and, in particular, about events in Afghanistan and NATO's decision to modernize its theatre nuclear forces in Europe. Mr Puja, affecting to take, on the strength of his 26 years of direct experience of international affairs, an Olympian view of recent developments, argued that the current worsening of the international climate resulted from a concerted attempt by the United States and her allies over the past two years to achieve a position of global

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superiority over the Soviet Union. The West was now using the action which the Soviet Union, at the invitation of the collective leadership of Afghanistan, had taken in that country as a pretext to justify the policy of power-seeking and encirclement on which NATO had already embarked. I rejected Mr Puja's thesis by advancing the Western (and non-aligned) assessment of Soviet actions in Afghanistan, rehearsing the background of NATO's decision to modernize TNFs and denying the existence of any credible connection between the two developments. I reminded Mr Puja that successive British governments, and our Western allies, had been arguing for years that détente could not succeed if the Soviet Union persisted in regarding certain aspects of its external policy, whatever label they were given, as exempt from détente's rules of behaviour. These warnings had been ignored and, precisely in the long-term interests of genuine détente, the West had been obliged by the Soviet invasion of a non-aligned country to reinforce its words with actions.

7. Despite some plain speaking on both sides, Mr Puja abstained from the snide sarcasm of which we know him to be capable and spoke with considerable emphasis when he expressed the hope that our bilateral relations

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need not suffer from difficulties elsewhere. He did not wince when I looked forward to further discussions of equal frankness, and I believe that a mutual commitment to the health of the bilateral relationship has established a sound basis for these. Fuller records of my initial calls are being sent to the Department separately. 8. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassadors at Belgrade, Bucharest, East Berlin, Moscow, Prague, Sofia, Warsaw, Washington, UKDEL NATO and UKREP Brussels.

I am My Lord
Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read 'Bryan Cartledge'. The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

(Bryan Cartledge)

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COPY OF SPEECH DELIVERED BY MR BRYAN CARTLEDGE ON PRESENTATION
OF HIS CREDENTIALS TO THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL
COUNCIL OF THE HUNGARIAN PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC

Your Excellency,

My appointment as British Ambassador to Hungary was an honour, and one which gives me great personal pleasure. Hungary has a long and illustrious history, rich in tradition. Hungarian culture, so influential in the development of the European mind, is known and admired far beyond your country's borders.

The links between Britain and Hungary are long-lasting and strong. It is my hope and wish that the many contacts between our two countries will be developed still further during my stay here as Ambassador. My wife and I greatly look forward to living in Budapest - a city to which, since my first visit in 1975, I have always longed to return. We also look forward to sharing the life of the Hungarian people and to enjoying the beauties of their country.

Minden tőlem telhető el fogok követni, hogy megismerkedjem a magyar nyelvvel és nagyszerű irodalmával. Egy szépasszonyt nem könnyű meghódítani, de a bátraké a szerencse.

[I shall do everything in my power to acquaint myself with the Hungarian language and its great literature. A beautiful woman is not easily conquered, but fortune favours the brave.]

Your Excellency, I have great pleasure in handing over to you the Letters announcing the recall of my predecessor and accrediting me as Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador to Hungary.