HUNGARY

PRINCIPAL ISSUES IN THE DETERIORATION OF RELATIONS WITH HUNGARY

Editorial Note

József Cardinal Mindszenty, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Esztergom and Prince-Primate of Hungary, was arrested in Budapest on December 27, 1948, by order of the Hungarian Ministry of the Interior. He was charged with attempting to overthrow the Hungarian state, treason, and various unlawful currency transactions.

At his press and radio news conference on December 29, 1948, Acting Secretary of State Robert A. Lovett was asked to comment on the arrest of Cardinal Mindszenty. The official account of his reply is as follows:

“Mr. Lovett said that this was a culmination of a long series of oppressive acts taken by the Hungarian Government against personal freedoms, human freedoms and now religious freedom. He said that this had been going on for some time and now had reached a climax in the arrest of the Cardinal and a number of others. He declared that it was rather a sickening sham to have that action taken on the basis of charges which were patently false and he said that he thought that it must affect the attitude of other countries to know that this sort of thing could go on. He declared that it had by extension, of course, another significance, in that what was going on in many of the countries of that belief and character was a type of behavior, a type of action which continued to interfere with reaching the goal of peace and made it still an aspiration rather than a reality. He said that he should think that this particular action would be all that was needed to complete the unhappy chain of events in that country and to indicate what the attitude of the government was toward the liberties which the rest of the world attaches the greatest importance to.” (News Division Files)

At his news conference on December 30, President Truman stated that he was in agreement with the Acting Secretary’s remarks about the Mindszenty arrest; see Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman, 1948 (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1964), page 968.

In a memorandum of February 1 for the Secretary of State, Walworth Barbour, Chief of the Division of Southern European Affairs, stated that the Department of State had received 11,000 letters, a number of which had requested that the United States Government protest formally to the Hungarian Government and take action in the United
Nations. The Department had replied by drawing attention to the Acting Secretary's statement on December 29 and giving assurances that it was prepared to take any steps in the matter that might appear appropriate (864.404/2-149).

The trial of Cardinal Mindszenty and six co-defendants was held in Budapest, February 3-5, 1949. The verdict was announced on February 8. The Cardinal was found guilty of the charges of conspiracy against the state, treason, and illegal currency transactions and was sentenced to life imprisonment. The other defendants were also found guilty and were sentenced to various terms in prison ranging from life to three years. For the official record of the trial, see The Trial of József Mindszenty (Budapest: The Hungarian State Publishing House, 1949).

864.404/12-3048: Telegram

The Minister in Hungary (Chapin) to the Acting Secretary of State

BUDAPEST, December 30, 1948—7 p. m.

1993. Personal for the Acting Secretary. Supplementing my tel 1992, December 30, it appears manifest that Mindszenty case has major significance in that it clearly designed prove to all concerned that religious bodies of whatever persuasion are powerless to defend their communicants or even their ministers from the new temporal and ideological Communist power. For if a prince of the church and his suite may be unceremoniously ill treated, browbeaten and broken in order obtain alleged incriminating evidence, what chance for justice has ordinary citizen who objects or criticizes unlimited state power on moral or spiritual grounds?

Although I am well aware of our traditional national policy to abstain from any action which might appear to affect religious issue, it nevertheless seems to me that the cynical arrest of Mindszenty and his probable ruthless liquidation culminates a long series of blows striking at basic human freedoms and transcends all sectarian considerations. In this issue we are faced with a direct assault on one of the most vital main streams of the western heritage. It seems to me therefore that if it becomes manifest that Communist officials who locally represent Soviet power may arbitrarily violate religious freedom and flout local opinion and conscience without arousing violent condemnation from free peoples and institutions, the declaration of

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2 Not printed; in it Minister Chapin reported having been informed by the French Minister in Budapest that the arrest of Cardinal Mindszenty appeared to have been thought up and dictated by Soviet authorities who wished to force a showdown on the general religious question in Eastern Europe (864.404/12-3048).
human rights of which we are a signatory will be regarded as a "scrap of paper", the moral leadership of the US will suffer severely, and the foundations of hope for the 100,000,000 or more newly condemned inhabitants behind the curtain will have been destroyed. It will be obvious, moreover, that the harmful effects of this assault on western spirituality by Marxist materialism may well dishearten other peoples wavering between conflicting ideologies.

Although we may find ourselves unprepared at this time effectively to intervene on behalf of Mindszenty, nevertheless we can and must, it seems to me, direct attention in terms that are compelling to men and women of religious conviction, to the enormity of the event with which we are faced, and we can, I am convinced, facilitate mobilization of spiritual forces for struggles which today more than ever before appear unavoidable.

Accordingly I venture to suggest that you may wish to bring to the attention of spiritual as well as political leaders this desperate menace to our civilization. Specifically I suggest that since this attack on Mindszenty is a logical sequence of the attack on Lutheran Bishop Ordass and other Protestant, Greek Orthodox and Jewish leaders here, the support of all American groups and sects devoted to religious freedom should be united in a campaign which might well become worldwide if taken up in already existing international bodies.

I submit finally that this case presents both a challenge and an opportunity.

CHAPIN

864.404/12-3148: Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Legation in Hungary

SECRET

WASHINGTON, December 31, 1948—7 p.m.

1231. From Hickerson. Concur your evaluation motivation arrest Mindszenty (urtel 1993 Dec 30 \(^2\)) and implications case in regard to effect peoples curtain area and elsewhere. You will have seen statement made press conference Dec 29.\(^3\)

At same time, impossible disregard realities Cardinal’s situation and consequent minimum likelihood effective intervention his behalf. Mobilization spiritual condemnation seems well advanced.

General line our thinking set forth separate tel to London rptd

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\(^1\) John D. Hickerson, Director, Office of European Affairs, Department of State.

\(^2\) Supra.

\(^3\) Regarding Acting Secretary Lovett’s press statement of December 29, see editorial note, p. 451.
Budapest.4 Believe maximum initiative on part Vatican desirable tending center focus religious aspect which particularly distinctive feature this further manifestation general Communist denial fundamental rights. [Hickerson.]

LOVETT

4 Telegram 4838, December 31, to London, repeated to Budapest as 1230 and to Vatican City as 32, not printed, explained that the United States was taking the line that the arrest of Cardinal Mindszenty was the culmination of Communist attacks aimed at the destruction of religious freedom in Hungary and a phase in the systematic campaign to deny the exercise by the Hungarian people of the fundamental human rights and liberties. The arrest and other repressive measures taken in Hungary were, in turn, the typical general situation throughout the Soviet orbit and formed part of a general pattern of the extinction of all freedom and opposition, whether religious or political (864.404/12-3148).

864.404/1-349: Telegram

The Acting Representative at Vatican City (Gowen3) to the Acting Secretary of State

VATICAN CITY, January 3, 1949—6 p.m.

1. Deptel 32, December 31, Mindszenty case.2 Today I called on Tardini,3 Vatican Acting Secretary State, to seek his reaction. He said:

“(1) Communist program and methods directed by Moscow were well known to Vatican quite sometime before other sources showed concern for grave Communist threat to fundamental human rights and democratic institutions;

“(2) Same ruthless methods are followed by Tito who is constantly persecuting and arresting Catholic priests because they will not yield to Communist pressure;

“(3) The reaction of free civilized world against Mindszenty’s arrest has been immediate widespread and beneficial;

“(4) Statement by President Truman on Mindszenty timely highly effective and very fair;

1 Franklin C. Gowen, Special Assistant to Myron C. Taylor, Personal Representative of President Truman to Pope Pius XII.
2 In his telegram 72, December 30, 1948, from Vatican City, not printed, Gowen transmitted the text of a note of December 30 from the Vatican Secretariat of State calling attention to the arrest of Cardinal Mindszenty (864.404/12-3049). Telegram 33, December 31, 1948, to Vatican City, not printed, authorized Gowen to acknowledge receipt of the note (864.404/12-3148). In a note of January 3 to the Vatican Secretariat of State, not printed, Gowen observed that the Vatican note had been noted “with sympathy and understanding” and invited attention to the statements made by Acting Secretary Lovett and President Truman (see the editorial note, p. 451). The texts of the exchange of notes of December 30 and January 3 were transmitted to the Department of State as enclosures to despatch 1, January 4, from Vatican City, not printed (864.404/1-1449).

Not printed, but see footnote 4 to telegram 1231, December 31, to Budapest, supra.
3 Msgr. Domenico Tardini, Secretary for Extraordinary Affairs in the Vatican Secretariat of State.
“(5) Not only Catholic clergy and associations but also many non-religious institutions, eminent personalities, and innumerable private individuals all parts free world have sent telegrams to Vatican and Hungarian Government deploiring Mindszenty’s arrest.

“While free press has unanimously deplored his arrest Communist led press is directing violent and cynical attacks against Vatican. Unità, Communist newspaper Rome, openly threatened Catholic Church but these shameful and iniquitous Communist utterances have only increased reaction of free people everywhere. Tardini considers line taken by US in this case very sound indeed and most gratifying. He has no suggestions to make as to press treatment reaction of free world having been most heartening: Department may wish repeat substance foregoing London, Budapest. Tardini expressed warm appreciation our sympathy and support it being understood conversation was secret and no public reference thereto would be made.”

GOWEN

864.404/1–2049 : Telegram

The Minister in Hungary (Chapin) to the Secretary of State

SECRET

BUDAPEST, January 20, 1949—noon.

87. I have now read over carefully twice the 96-page Hungarian Yellow Book issued yesterday in English, French and Hungarian entitled “Documents in the Mindszenty Case”, copies of which being airmailed from Vienna direct to Department. Summary and extract of principal passages relating to Legation being forwarded separately, but understand UP has given good coverage.

The distortions, misstatements, false inferences and outright lies concerning American personalities, this Legation and particularly myself are woven together cleverly to present picture in which I allegedly encouraged Mindszenty to conduct espionage for obtension intelligence both as respects Hungary and the Soviet forces of occupation, and conspired with him against the Hungarian state, specifically to restore Hapsburg monarchy. The product which is based upon certain documents alleged to have been found buried in Cardinal’s palace, and to certain confessions obtained from the Cardinal, his secretary and other followers, is typical of East European conspiratorial mentality. As was to be expected, allegations have been immediately taken up in Hungarian press which may be expected to become more violent in attacks on Legation.

I did, of course, call on Mindszenty upon my arrival in July of 1947 and again to extend New Year’s greetings in 1948, just as I called on other Hungarian high personalities, and these calls were returned. I likewise responded to Mindszenty’s appeal to see him last November.1

1 For Chapin’s report of his conversation with Cardinal Mindszenty on November 15, 1948, see telegram 1791, November 17, 1948, from Budapest, printed in Foreign Relations, 1948, vol. iv, p. 589.

452–526—77—30
The substance of conversations in each case were duly reported to the Department. At no time, needless to say did I ask for any "intelligence" from the Cardinal or encourage its procurement, nor did I at any time discuss with him possibility of change in regime, let alone a restoration of the monarchy.

So far as concerns Otto of Hapsburg, I recall that after attempting to dodge meeting him, I did agree to receive him in my office in the new State Department in May 1947. Our conversation extremely limited and he appealed to me principally to do what I could for the maintenance of religious toleration, specifically Catholic, in Hungary. I also recall that in my first conversation with Mindszenty, in response to question, I did say that Otto seemed to me a likeable and serious young man, but we did not discuss him further. Fact remains that these allegations are contained in an officially sponsored government publication, and that such allegations are far-reaching in character and set forth as definite accusations against me and other members of Legation. So far as I can recall, such an official and serious attack in peacetime on a duly-accredited envoy of a foreign power is without precedent.

Whether Hungarian Government will declare me persona non grata either immediately or following trial of Cardinal, which it announced will be public, I have no means of knowing. It would certainly seem the logical consequence of such grave and insulting allegations if normal intercourse between the two nations obtained. However, it may suit the Communist book even better not to request my withdrawal since it would thus leave me here as an officially discredited representative of country generally regarded as most powerful on earth and render my position and that of my staff ridiculous and contemptible, in Hungary and satellite eyes. I need hardly point out that my usefulness in any case would be all but lost, since no Hungarian of any kind will now dare be seen talking to me in a public or private place, and my official representations will be obviously less effective.

Certainly, Department will not wish to let these allegations go unanswered. However, I am doubtful of effectiveness or propriety of our stooping to detailed refutation of the allegations or to the publication of statements on my conversations with Otto of Hapsburg and the Cardinal. Likewise, while, on one hand, it might be advisable for Department to anticipate any request for my withdrawal by recalling me while simultaneously issuing a public statement; on the other, we will wish to avoid any step which might suggest a confession of guilt or weakness. It is difficult for me to offer concrete suggestions concerning the appropriate course of action to be taken by the Department when I am so deeply involved personally and particularly when I feel genuinely proud conduct of my office in Hungary. In the interest of American prestige here and elsewhere behind the curtain, I urge that
our government mark its condemnation of this latest insult to US by strong positive action.

CHAPIN

864.404/1-2349: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Legation in Hungary

SECRET

WASHINGTON, January 25, 1949—3 p.m.

59. Appreciate appraisal situation and views outlined ur 87 Jan 20 ¹ and 99 Jan 23.² Though believe advisable determination any formal Dept reaction await receipt full text Hung Yellow Book, meanwhile, reply press inquiries re matter will be made informally along line US Govt categorically rejects imputations by official Hung publication of improper activities on part US Min in whom US Govt has full confidence.

While agree action Hung authorities constitutes new low and have no illusions re their intention make situation you and ur staff as difficult as possible and perhaps ultimately demand ur recall, feel effect development at least partially diminished by severe restrictions which already obtain. Dept believes, moreover, that any Amer Rep in Hung is certain become target Communist lies and abuse and that, in circumstances, US prestige among Hung people is best served, as you point out, by taking no voluntary step which might be construed as confession guilt or weakness.

In light foregoing, believe most advantageous course for present, in terms political and propaganda considerations, is to stand ground and refuse be pressured into any premature or self-penalizing action.

ACHESON

¹ Supra.

² Not printed; in it Minister Chapin reported that well-informed opinion, both Hungarian and foreign, was appalled by the effrontery of the publication in the Hungarian Yellow Book of the accusations made against the American Government, himself personally, and members of his staff (864.404/1-2349).

701.6411/1-3149

Memorandum By the Director of the Office of European Affairs (Hickerson) to the Counselor of the Department of State (Bohlen)

CONFIDENTIAL


Subject: Proposal to declare Mr. John G. Florian, First Secretary of the Hungarian Legation, persona non grata.

¹ This memorandum appears originally to have been addressed to the Secretary of State (or Under Secretary of State). The responsible officers in the Department of State subsequently agreed that while the matter under consideration need not be considered at that level, it would be appropriate for formal action to be taken at least at the Counselor’s level. The source text is initialed by Hickerson.
Background:

The Hungarian Government, in a note handed the American Minister in Budapest on January 29, 1949 (Attachment A*), demanded that Mr. Stephen Koczak, Second Secretary of Legation and Vice Consul, leave Hungary within 48 hours. This request is based on the pretext that he is “conclusively suspected of carrying out intelligence work in Hungary.” In reply to a query by Minister Chapin, the Acting Hungarian Foreign Minister stated that the request had nothing to do with allegations against Koczak in the recently-published “Yellow Book” on the Mindszenty case and that he could not specify the “charges”, though they were “extremely grave and serious.” Mr. Koczak was to proceed yesterday (January 30) to Vienna.

Having in mind our retaliation in declaring two Rumanians here personas non gratae following a similar Rumanian expulsion of our Counselor and Military Attaché from Bucharest, which we described to the press as a “pure coincidence”, Minister Chapin has suggested that the Department might wish to discover a like “coincidence” in this instance and expel a corresponding Hungarian officer.

We believe that political and prestige considerations, arising from the obvious timing of this action of the Hungarian Government to coincide with the heightened official propaganda against the US in connection with the Mindszenty case, as well as from the brusqueness of the Hungarian demand and the fact that it is based on groundless charges vaguely stated, make advisable reciprocal action by this Government against a member of the Hungarian Legation staff here. In this connection, EUR suggests that the Department demand the withdrawal of John G. Florian, First Secretary of the Hungarian Legation. It has come to the Department’s attention from reliable sources that Florian has attempted to intimidate several former members of the staff of the Hungarian Legation who opposed the present Communist-dominated regime in Hungary and resigned their posts to remain in the US as political refugees. It has also been reported, though this is difficult of confirmation, that he is a representative here of the Hungarian secret police. A biographical note on Florian is attached (Attachment B*).

In declaring Florian persona non grata, we believe we should, if asked, publicly deny any connection between his expulsion and that of Koczak. While the Hungarians will be under no illusion as to our motivation, we should avoid official adherence to the reciprocity principle which the Hungarians could extend to our disadvantage.

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*Attachment A, telegram 135, January 29, from Budapest, not printed (123 Koczak, Stephen).
*Not printed.
Recommendation:

It is recommended that:

(1) we inform the Hungarian Legation here, by the attached note, prepared in S/S–PR (Attachment C 4), that the presence of Mr. John G. Florian, First Secretary of the Hungarian Legation, is no longer agreeable to the US Government and that the US Government accordingly requests the Legation of Hungary to take appropriate measures to effect his departure from the US at the earliest possible moment;

(2) we do not issue a press release giving the text of the US and Hungarian notes but, in confirming, if asked by the press, that the Hungarian Government requested Mr. Koczak’s withdrawal and that we have requested the withdrawal of Mr. Florian, decline to comment as to any connection between the two cases. 5

4 Not printed.
5 In a memorandum of February 2 to Walworth Barbour, Chief of the Division of Southeast European Affairs, not printed, Hickerson commented as follows on the action proposed here:

“Thompson [Llewellyn E. Thompson, Deputy Director of the Office of European Affairs] thinks that we should be more leisurely about this and take this action say in a couple of weeks. He points out the Hungarians have only three and that we may run out of raw material shortly when they will be down to one and our alternative will be to submit to their picking off our people one by one or breaking relations with them. On balance, I am disposed to waiting a few days and going ahead with this one.” (701.6411/1-3149)

Appropriate approval was subsequently obtained for the action recommended here, and on February 9 the Hungarian Legation was informed that Florian was no longer agreeable to the United States Government.

864.404/2-849

Memorandum by Mr. Marshall S. Carter, Special Assistant to the Secretary of State 1

CONFIDENTIAL

[WASHINGTON,] February 8, 1949.

Clark Clifford 2 called the Secretary this morning at ten o’clock. He thought the Russians had given us an excellent opportunity in the Cardinal Mindszenty case. 3 From the letters and publicity Clifford had seen it looked to him as though the Russians had walked into a hornet’s nest. He believes that the Russians have made a colossal blunder and wondered if there was not some way the President could utilize this. He has no concrete suggestions but thought we might effectively gain by issuing a statement at an appropriate time. He said there may be something against it but felt it was well worth looking into. Clifford said that it was apparent the last three days that this

1 Carlisle H. Humelsine, Director, Executive Secretariat, Office of the Secretary of State, referred this memorandum to Director of the Office of European Affairs Hickerson for action.

2 Special Counsel to President Truman.

3 Regarding the arrest and trial of Cardinal Mindszenty, see the editorial note, p. 451.
was not wholly a Catholic reaction but prominent Protestants had also joined, indicating that it was no longer a religious matter in its entirety, but was in effect "freedom vs. tyranny". If there is sufficient reason without establishing a bad precedent it might provide an opportunity to dramatize the basic difference between our two philosophies.

The Secretary agreed that in his opinion the Soviets had made a bad mistake and he would go right to work with the appropriate Department officials as to whether or not a Presidential statement would serve a useful purpose.

Please take appropriate urgent action accordingly (the Secretary indicated that I should discuss this matter with Hickerson). I have not done so but shall await the Department's reaction based on this memo.

M[ARSHALL] S. C[ARTER]

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for President Truman

WASHINGTON, February 8, 1949.

Subject: Proposed Statement Concerning the Case of Cardinal Mindszenty of Hungary

With reference to Mr. Clifford's telephone call this morning,¹ I enclose a statement² in connection with the conviction of Cardinal Mindszenty which we had contemplated issuing immediately to the press through the State Department press office.

Both the defense and the prosecutor have appealed the decision in the Cardinal's case. While the possibility now seems remote, it appears conceivable that a statement at this time directly by the President or Secretary of State could still react to the Cardinal's detriment.

Accordingly on balance I recommend that, pending the outcome of the appeal and determination of such further action as may seem desirable at that time, this Government's views be expressed through this Departmental release rather than by a direct personal statement.³

DEAN ACHESON

¹ See Special Assistant Carter's memorandum, February 8, supra.
² For the text of the statement under reference, subsequently issued to the press by the Secretary of State of February 9, see infra.
³ The source text bears the following marginal notation in the President's handwriting: "I think the Secretary of State should issue this statement. I'll back him up tomorrow. H.S.T."
Statement to the Press by the Secretary of State

No. 77  [WASHINGTON,] February 9, 1949.

The trial of Jozsef Cardinal Mindszenty, upon whom the Hungarian Government has now imposed a sentence of life imprisonment, confirms the Government and people of the United States in the views expressed by the Acting Secretary of State on December 29, 1948.2 By this conscienceless attack upon religious and personal freedom, as well as by the persecution of Lutheran Bishop Lajos Ordass and other respected Church leaders, the Soviet controlled Hungarian authorities seek to discredit and coerce religious leadership in Hungary in order to remove this source of moral resistance to Communism.

In their conduct of the case of Cardinal Mindszenty, the Hungarian authorities do not appear to have omitted any of the usual methods practiced by a police state. Such proceedings constitute not the administration of justice but wanton persecution. They have evoked universal condemnation, and the Hungarian Government must bear full responsibility for its action.

The cases of Cardinal Mindszenty and other Hungarian church leaders are not isolated developments. During the past two years, with governmental power entirely in the hands of the minority Communist party, the people of Hungary have been increasingly denied the exercise of fundamental human rights and freedoms. Parliamentary opposition, an element indispensable to the democratic process, has been ruthlessly eliminated, the totalitarian controls of State and Party have been laid like a deadening hand upon every phase of daily personal existence, and the Hungarian people have been divested of any real independence.

The people of the United States, and, without question, peoples of other freedom loving nations, are sickened and horrified by these developments and fully comprehend the threat they constitute to free institutions everywhere.

1 The Secretary of State read this statement at his press and radio news conference of February 9. During the press conference, the Secretary acknowledged that the United States was considering bringing the Mindszenty case and other developments in Hungary before the United Nations for action. The Secretary also took official cognizance of the accusations made against Minister Chapin during the Mindszenty trial, and he rejected them as "totally false, baseless, and outrageous".

2 Regarding the statement under reference here, see editorial note, p. 451.
The Secretary of State to the Minister of Ireland (Nunan)\textsuperscript{1}

WASHINGTON, February 9, 1949.

Sr: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the message from the Irish Minister for External Affairs contained in your note of February 2, 1949,\textsuperscript{2} and to express my appreciation of Mr. MacBride’s courtesy in conveying his suggestion that the President intervene in behalf of Cardinal Mindszenty.

Most careful consideration has been given to that proposal. However, while such intervention might have had a favorable effect, it is believed that a more likely result might have been to crystallize the attitude of the Hungarian Government against the Cardinal and to increase the probability of his execution. In that connection, it was recalled that in the case of the Bulgarian opposition leader Nikola Petkov, the Communist Bulgarian Prime Minister, whose reaction might be expected to be typical of the thinking of Communist-dominated satellite authority, stated that the execution of Petkov was “necessitated” by the intervention of the Western Powers.\textsuperscript{3} In the circumstances, it was concluded that the President’s intervention for Cardinal Mindszenty would be inadvisable.

You will no doubt have noted that the President’s views with regard to the prosecution of Cardinal Mindszenty were publicly expressed at his press conference on December 30, 1949 when he endorsed the comments made by the Acting Secretary of State on December 29 condemning the action of the Hungarian authorities.\textsuperscript{4}

Accept [etc.]

For the Secretary of State:

CHARLES E. BOHLEN\textsuperscript{5}

\textsuperscript{1}This note was prepared in accordance with a memorandum of February 2 from the Secretary of State to President Truman which the President approved on February 4 (864.104/2-249).

\textsuperscript{2}Not printed; in his message External Affairs Minister Sean MacBride referred to the efforts he had made with the Hungarian Government to obtain permission for an Irish representative to visit Cardinal Mindszenty, and he stated that it had occurred to him that President Truman might intervene personally with the Hungarian Government on behalf of the Cardinal (864.104/2-249).

\textsuperscript{3}Regarding Petkov, see footnote 3 to telegram 642, August 1, from Sofia, p. 340.

\textsuperscript{4}Regarding the statements under reference in this paragraph, see editorial note, p. 451.

\textsuperscript{5}Counselor of the Department of State.

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Editorial Note

On February 9 the House of Representatives unanimously agreed to a resolution condemning the arrest and sentencing of Alojzije Stepinac, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Zagreb (in October 1946), and József Cardinal Mindszenty, Roman Catholic Primate of Hungary, and expressing the “sense of Congress” that these cases be raised
by the United States in the United Nations or by such other means as might be most appropriate. For the text of the resolution, see Department of State Bulletin, February 20, 1949, page 231. The United States Senate adopted a similar resolution on April 11; for the text of that resolution, see A Decade of American Foreign Policy: Basic Documents, 1941-49, page 1194.

**Editorial Note**

At his news conference on February 10, President Truman stated that Secretary of State Acheson’s statement regarding the trial of Cardinal Mindszenty (page 461) had his entire approval. The President characterized the court that tried the Cardinal a “kangaroo court”. He observed that a police state existed in Hungary, and the Hungarian people were not responsible for the actions of their government. He also said that the possibility that the trial had been a violation of the Hungarian Peace Treaty was being studied. For text of the news conference, see Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman, 1949 (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1964) pages 130–133.

123 Chapin, Selden

**Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State for United Nations Affairs (Rusk)**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

[WASHINGTON,] February 10, 1949.

Participants:  
Mr. Sik, The Hungarian Minister  
Mr. Rusk, Assistant Secretary of State  
Mr. Thompson, Deputy Director for European Affairs

The Minister said he was calling under instructions from his Government to inquire urgently what our intentions were with respect to Minister Chapin in view of the fact that the trial of Cardinal Mindszenty had shown that Minister Chapin was involved. The Minister stressed that an urgent reply was requested.

I pointed out to the Minister that we considered the charges against Minister Chapin to be without foundation, and that as he knew the Government and people of the United States had been shocked and revolted at the conduct of this trial.

Mr. Thompson pointed out that the Minister had reported that despite the implications against him the Hungarian Government had not acceded to his request that a representative of the Embassy be allowed to be present at the trial. He said the Minister had also reported that he had requested the Hungarian Government to furnish a transcript of the trial and the use of any recordings that had been
made. He inquired whether the Minister could state whether or not these had been furnished to Minister Chapin.

The Minister replied that an official transcript of the trial was not made by the court and that the Hungarian Government used the reports provided by the Hungarian press agency. The Minister did not give a clear reply to my question as to whether or not the Hungarian Government accepted this press agency report as official but said his Government considered that the finding of the court, which had been published, clearly involved Minister Chapin. In reply to my question, he said he did not have a copy of the finding of the court nor could he say whether or not a copy had been furnished to the Legation.

I said I would refer his inquiry to the Secretary. The Minister pressed me to fix a time when I would give him a reply, but I confined myself to stating that I would let him know whenever I was in a position to give him a reply.¹

DEAN RUSK

¹ In a memorandum of February 11 to Assistant Secretary Rusk, John D. Hickerson, Director of the Office of European Affairs, suggested the following response to Minister Sik:

“We have no reason to question the conduct of our Minister to Hungary, in whom we have full confidence. We have no intention therefore of taking any action with respect to the vague allegations which have been published in the Hungarian press as a result of the trial of Cardinal Mindszenty. You might also point out that this Government fails to understand the action of the Hungarian Government in refusing to allow Minister Chapin to have a representative from the Legation present at the trial in accordance with his formal request. The views of this Government with respect to the trial itself have already been expressed by the Secretary of State.”

Hickerson’s memorandum bears the following handwritten comment by Secretary of State Acheson:

“I agree. In the light of what I said at the last press conference, you can be even more vigorous. I think I said that the charges were false and outrageous. DA” (123 Chapin, Selden)

On February 11 Minister Sik delivered a note to the Department of State stating that Minister Chapin was no longer agreeable to the Hungarian Government and requesting his recall. On February 12 the Department informed Sik that Chapin would be ordered to Washington for consultation, but that the United States reserved its position in the matter.

123 Chapin, Selden: Telegram

_The Minister to Hungary (Chapin) to the Secretary of State_

PLAIN

PARIS, February 18, 1949.

700. From Chapin.¹ On my arrival last night orally was requested and agreed to meet press at Embassy. At press conference today made following comments:

¹ Minister Chapin, whose recall had been demanded by the Hungarian Government on February 11 (see the previous footnote), left Budapest on February 17. His resignation as Minister was accepted by President Truman on May 25. On September 20, Chapin was named by the President to be Ambassador to the Netherlands.

This telegram was transmitted through the facilities of the Embassy in Paris.
"I should like to say first—and you may quote me on this—that it is a wonderful feeling to be able to breathe the fresh air on the free soil of France which—like my own country—always stood firm against oppression of any kind and defended the freedom of the individual.

As you know, my Government ordered me home for consultation. I am sure you understand that under these conditions it would be inappropriate for me to discuss at this time, the circumstances surrounding my consultation order.

As far as conditions in the country are concerned which I left yesterday, I would like to say this much: That no one today, except the blind and the twisted can fail to see that the Hungarian people is under the complete, total domination of a group of Moscow-trained Communists whose sole allegiance is to the Kremlin. I can say—and you may quote me on this—that unless a person has actually lived in Hungary (or any of the curtain countries) and learned from personal observation the facts of life, he or she cannot possibly conceive what life is like. I cannot tell you because the truth is beyond imagination and defies description.

Regarding the Mindszenty trial: You all have seen President Truman's full endorsement of Secretary Acheson’s statement. I only can add that in the light of my own knowledge of the facts and of the background and circumstances surrounding the trial, I consider that the Secretary’s characterization of this trial was stated in measured and restrained terms.

As to the various charges and accusations levelled by the so-called Hungarian Government and the Communist-controlled Hungarian press against me and members of my staff—these are deliberate and fabricated lies, beneath contempt.”

[CHAPIN]

*Anfe, p. 461.

121.5464/3-2349: Telegram

The Chargé in Hungary (Cochran) 1 to the Secretary of State

CONFIDENTIAL BUDAPEST, March 23, 1949—4 p. m.

459. Advertising Legtel 452, March 22, 2 Legation does not assess Hungarian expulsion Colonels Kopsak and Merrill as direct retali-

1 William P. Cochran, Counselor of Legation at Budapest, assumed charge of the Legation upon Minister Chapin’s departure for Washington for consultation on February 17.

2 Not printed; it reported receipt of a Hungarian Foreign Ministry note of March 21 demanding the departure from Hungary within 48 hours of Assistant Military Attachés Peter J. Kopsak and John P. Merrill (121.5464/3-2249). For the text of the note, see Information Department, Hungarian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Documents on the Hostile Activity of the United States Government Against the Hungarian People’s Republic (Budapest: Hungarian State Publishing House, 1951), p. 102 (hereafter cited as Hungarian Foreign Ministry, Documents).
tion for US refusal grant visas five Hungarian representatives to Cultural and Scientific Conference New York, but analyzes developments as follows: desire Hungarian Government have two officers depart fully apparent for six weeks or so, since first Hungarian note. Reluctance make formal demand this sense equally clear. Consider latter linked with declaration that Minister Chapin persona non grata, and that fact we had not reacted thereto left Hungarians uncertain as to just how far we might go and hesitant take any further step worsen situation until our position clear. Once we had refused five visas and announced this our reprisal for treatment Minister Chapin way cleared for positive Hungarian action re Kopcsak Merrill. If this analysis correct, latter decision, which long pending, taken because Hungarians felt could now safely be done, rather than as direct retaliation for refusal five visas, leaving latter consideration as perhaps minor motivation.

In this connection, Legation unable avoid feeling of indignation at long series Hungarian affronts and insults, beginning with earlier Kopcsak-Thielen incident,\(^3\) Hegyshalom provocation, arrest and treatment Rudedmann and Bannantine,\(^4\) discourtesies and threats to Steussy while escorting latter two from Hungary, rudeness of 48 and 24-hour periods fixed for departures Koczak\(^5\) and Steussy,\(^6\) demand for recall Minister Chapin on specious and wholly unsubstantiated charges, and now expulsion Kopcsak and Merrill again with insolent imposition 48-hour time limit. Legation wonders how much of this disrespect and defiance, far exceeding Hungary’s Soviet master’s example, US, which also sovereign state, must put up with from Hungary, which has obviously long abandoned not only all respect for international law, truth, decency and comity, but also seems have lost all sense proportion. Without advocating descent to Hungarian level

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\(^3\) On January 14, 1948, Lt. Col. Bernard Thielen, Military Attaché at Budapest, and Lieutenant Colonel Kopcsak, while on a routine trip of official nature, were arrested by Soviet troops in Hungary and abducted across the Hungarian frontier to Vienna where intervention by American authorities effected their release. For material on the subsequent exchange of diplomatic communications on the incident, see Foreign Relations, 1948, vol. iv, pp. 279 ff.

\(^4\) Paul Rudedmann and George Bannantine, American citizens and officials of Standard Oil Company of New Jersey and of that company’s subsidiary firm in Hungary, Magyar Amerikai Olajipari Reszvenyvartarsasag (MAORT), were arrested by Hungarian authorities in September 1948 but were soon released after the intervention of the United States Government. Materials on the incident are included in the documentation cited in the previous footnote.

\(^5\) Regarding the expulsion of Legation Second Secretary Koczak, see the memorandum of January 31 from Hickerson to Bohlen, p. 457.

\(^6\) In a note of February 9, not printed, the Hungarian Government accused Legation Third Secretary Robin M. Steussy of alleged espionage and of complicity in the flight from Hungary of anti-Communist political leaders. Steussy’s departure from Hungary within 24 hours was demanded.
in language or precipitate action, and in full realization Department's
decision may be influenced by over-all considerations of which Lega-
tion not fully cognizant, has not time come bring Hungarians sharply
to senses as for example by telling the sick ⁷ to fold his tent and
depart like the poetic Arabs?

Legation aware past press criticism game badminton with Hun-
garian and American diplomats and presumes further comments this
nature could confidently be expected if foregoing action taken. On
other hand, failure react to this latest act in series calculate provoca-
tions seems leave US in position of highly undignified supineness in-
consistent with its world position and prestige; and it appears equal
or greater volume criticism could more justifiably be directed at De-
partment should it fail react at all.

Doubt Hungarians would pursue matter further to point rupture
diplomatic relations. However, other reprisal quite possible. Legation
views refusals visas American citizens visit Budapest Fair (Bern tel
403, March 22, to Department ⁸ and oral reports from Vienna) with
happy equanimity as just another example Hungarians cutting off own
noses, since net result only to deprive them of foreign exchange which
badly want. Legation does envisage other snubs such as refusal visas
officer and clerical replacements, further restrictions movements con-
tacts Legation personnel, et cetera, and feel Dept would wish weigh
these factors in light possible effect on value this Mission as listening
post in connection rumored increased pressure and possibly even mili-
tary action against Yugoslavia.

COCHRAN

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¹ Presumably the text here is as intended by Cochran and was meant to be a
play on Hungarian Minister Sik's name.
² Not printed.

121.5464/3–2849

Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Southeast European
Affairs (Barbour) to the Director of the Office of European Affairs
(Hickerson)

CONFIDENTIAL

[WASHINGTON,] March 28, 1949.

Subject: Expulsion of American military officers from Hungary

The action of the Hungarian Government on March 22 in expelling
Lt. Cols. Peter J. Kopcsak and John P. Merrill ³ from Hungary on
48 hours' notice (reported in Budapest's telegram No. 452 of
March 22 ⁴) raises the question of the advisability of the US taking

³ Both were Assistant Military Attachés at the Legation in Budapest.
⁴ Not printed.
reciprocal action against one or more members of the Hungarian Legation staff here.

Preceding developments in this case may be summarized, for background purposes, as follows:

Hungarian police authorities on February 10 attempted unsuccessfully to detain Kopcsak and Merrill, who were on a field trip to Szeged, on the grounds that they had approached the Hungarian-Yugoslav frontier and had taken photographs there without permission.\(^3\) Legation Budapest, in a note of February 11, protested the treatment by the Hungarian authorities of these American officers as discourteous and unwarranted and requested assurances that the Hungarian Government would adopt measures to prevent such occurrences in the future.\(^4\) In reply, on February 12, the Hungarian Foreign Office charged that the US officers had not only entered a restricted zone but had threatened and assaulted a Hungarian official and otherwise misconducted themselves in Szeged. The Foreign Office note concluded by inquiring whether the US should not remove Kopcsak and Merrill before the Hungarian Government found it necessary to request the US to do so.\(^5\) In subsequent notes of March 2 and 11, the Hungarian Government renewed its accusations and inquired concerning US "intentions" in the matter.\(^6\) The Legation, on instructions from the Department, reiterated its protest in notes of February 15 and March 14, and made clear that it had no intention of voluntarily withdrawing the two officers.\(^7\) On March 22, an official of the Foreign Office handed to our Chargé a note requesting the departure of Kopcsak and Merrill from Hungary within 48 hours. Our Chargé stated orally in reply that he considered this demand contrary

\(^3\) Detailed sworn statements by Kopcsak and Merrill on the incident were transmitted to the Department of State as enclosures to despatch 120, February 17, from Budapest, none printed (121.5464/2-1749).

\(^4\) The text of the Legation's note of February 11 was transmitted in telegram 243, February 11, from Budapest, not printed (121.5464/2-1149).

\(^5\) The text of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry note of February 12, which Minister Chapin described as "unbelievable diplomatic Billingsgate", was transmitted in telegram 254, February 12, from Budapest (121.5464/2-1249). In his telegram 256, February 13, from Budapest, not printed, Chapin commented that the Foreign Ministry note was "the most insulting pseudo-diplomatic communication have ever seen" and the charges against Kopcsak and Merrill were obvious calumny (121.5464/2-1349). For the text of the Hungarian note, see Hungarian Foreign Ministry Documents, pp. 100-101.

\(^6\) The text of the Foreign Ministry note of March 2 was transmitted to the Department in telegram 346, March 3, from Budapest, not printed (121.5464/3-349) and telegram 396, March 11, from Budapest, not printed, commented upon the note of that date (121.5464/3-4149).

\(^7\) The instructions under reference were transmitted in telegrams 137, February 14 and 138, March 9, to Budapest, neither printed (121.5464/2-1249 and 3-349).
to diplomatic comity and precedent and pointed out that the Hungarian Government had not yet responded to the substantive portions of US protests. He also cited, as an example of the misstatements contained in previous Hungarian notes on the incident, that the Foreign Office had implied refusal by the officers to pay their garage bill in Szeged, whereas the Legation had the receipted bill and was prepared to produce it upon request.

The Legation has informed the Department that Kopcsak and Merrill would depart within the time limit.

SE believes that the Department should take no measures at this time in retaliation for this action of the Hungarian Government. The Hungarian Legation here has no military personnel assigned to it and no civilian personnel, other than Minister Sik,8 of a rank equivalent to or higher than that of Colonels Kopcsak and Merrill. SE has no knowledge that any of the present members of the Hungarian Legation staff have engaged in objectionable activities. It is the further view of SE in this regard that this Government should decline, wherever possible without placing itself at a serious disadvantage, to resort to the same tactics used by the Hungarian Communist regime. Moreover, in view of the action which we are planning to take within the next few days in charging the Hungarian Government with violating the human rights clauses of the Peace Treaty,9 SE feels that there is little likelihood that a decision not to retaliate in the present case will cause the general public or the Hungarian Government to regard US policy in Hungarian matters as passive.

Consistent with its recommendation that no retaliatory action be taken in the Kopcsak-Merrill case, SE believes that we should not issue a press release or stimulate publicity on the matter but that, as regards possible press inquiries, we be prepared to confirm the facts of the case along the lines of the background information summarized above. A draft telegram informing Legation Budapest of the Department's views in the foregoing sense is attached for your approval.10

Walworth Barbour

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8 On August 11 the Hungarian Legation informed the Department of State that Minister Endre Sik was being permanently recalled to Hungary. No explanation was provided. Sik departed on August 13, and on August 18 the Hungarian Government requested an aperçu for Imre Horvath as the new Minister in Washington.

9 For documentation on the efforts of the United States to assure fulfillment of the human rights articles of the Treaties of Peace with Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania, see pp. 223 ff.

10 For the telegram, which was duly approved, see infra.
CONFIDENTIAL

WASHINGTON, March 30, 1949—noon.

266. After consideration Hung expulsion Kopcsak and Merrill (ur 452. Mar 22\textsuperscript{1}), and taking into account analysis contained ur 459 Mar 23,\textsuperscript{2} believe inadvisable take retaliatory action at this time against members Hung Leg staff here. Action against Sik not now contemplated since his replacement wld probably be more aggressive and objectionable and such action by US might appear inconsistent US position that Min Chapin called back on consultation rather than in compliance Hung demand.\textsuperscript{3} Other Hung personnel here are of minor rank and thus far do not appear engaged objectionable activities. Consider US action to be taken soonest in charging Hung with violation human rights clauses Peace Treaty will effectively preclude any misapprehension here or in Hung lack firmess US policy Hung matters. Also feel advisable in general avoid resort methods used by Communist Govts but, shld occasion later arise which strongly warrants, US wld be strong position act against Hung personnel by reason having shown restraint and balance in face repeated provocation this regard.

In view foregoing, not issuing press release or stimulating publicity but, in event inquiries, will confirm facts re case for background info press.

\textbf{Acheson}

\textsuperscript{1} Not printed.
\textsuperscript{2} \textit{Anie}, p. 405.
\textsuperscript{3} Regarding Minister Chapin's recall, see the memorandum of conversation of February 10, by Rusk, p. 463.

\textbf{Editorial Note}

In a statement issued to the press on May 18, the Department of State commented upon the Hungarian parliamentary election of May 15, 1949. The Department observed that the freedom of political opinion, one of the fundamental freedoms specified in the Hungarian Peace Treaty, had not been protected by the Hungarian Government either in the electoral campaign or in the election itself. The Department further observed that the Hungarian Communist leadership had again drawn the world's attention to the totalitarian character of their regime and their flagrant violations of Hungary's obligation under the peace treaty to secure to the Hungarian people the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. For the text of the statement, see Department of State Bulletin, May 29, 1949, pages 697–698.
The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

SECRET

Moscow, September 26, 1949.

A-985. Viewed from Moscow, spectacular trial of Rajk,\(^1\) and his "accomplices", which is reminiscent of 1937 purge trials here, represents current focal point in Kremlin's efforts to cope with growing problem of Titoism, i.e. nationalist deviations on part of satellite and other foreign communist stooges abroad.

Despite wild, exaggerated accusations against Budapest defendants and their "confessions", it is presumed that they were in reality no more guilty or involved with "western imperialists" than other recent satellite waverers, such as Gomulka,\(^2\) Kostov,\(^3\) etc. Likewise tremendous staging and publicity given Rajk trial contrasts strongly with Albanian purges of last winter,\(^4\) though basic issue—i.e. failure to blindly and unconditionally accept Moscow's leadership—is presumably the same. It also seems obvious that Rajk trial not just aimed at Tito, i.e. merely part of campaign to liquidate present Yugo leaders, but belongs in wider context.

Thus Rajk trial appears as Kremlin's most determined and serious public effort since emergence of Titoism to deal with this cancer of the body-politic of the Soviet-communist world, reflecting Moscow's serious and growing concern over this disruptive force which shows signs of undermining one of most basic principles of "proletarian internationalism", (i.e. Soviet imperialism)—absolute control of satellites and all communists, both at home and abroad. Just as the 1937 purges were carried out in order to ruthlessly eliminate all Soviet opposition to Stalin, the Rajk purge is now directed at the mortal sin

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\(^1\) László Rajk, Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs (formerly Minister of Interior, 1946-1948) and member of the Politburo of the Hungarian Workers' Party was removed from the government, excluded from the party, and placed under arrest in June 1949. He and six alleged accomplices (including the former Counselor of the Yugoslav Legation in Budapest) were tried in Budapest, September 16-22, 1949, on various charges of anti-Communist and anti-state activity culminating in a Yugoslav-inspired plot to overthrow the Hungarian Government. During the trial Rajk and the other accused confessed at length to their purported criminal activity which included conspiratorial contacts with various American representatives in Hungary. All were found guilty, and Rajk and several others were subsequently executed. The Legation in Hungary transmitted detailed materials to the Department of State on the Rajk trial (Department of State files 864.00 and 814.45701/19) which was held in public and was reported upon in the world press. The official Hungarian Government texts of the indictment and trial transactions were printed in László Rajk and His Acquaintances Before the People's Court (Budapest, 1949).

\(^2\) Władysław Gomulka was removed from his position as Secretary General of the Polish Workers' Party in August 1948 and from his position as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Regained Territories in January 1949.

\(^3\) Regarding the trial and execution of Traicho Kostov, former Bulgarian Deputy Prime Minister and Bulgarian Communist Party Politburo member, in December 1949, see pp. 363 ff.

\(^4\) Koci Xoxe, former Albanian Minister of Interior and Albanian Communist Party Politburo member, was secretly tried in May 1949 for alleged pro-Yugoslav conspiratorial activities, and he was executed in June.
of nationalism, specifically in Hungary but with worldwide implications, which threatens Kremlin’s rule and authority.

Of some interest is fact that charges of Trotzkism are now being hurled at Rajk, Tito and their ilk. While Trotsky was originally branded as a “left” deviationist, and “nationalism” has generally been regarded by Bolshevik dogma as a “rightist” sin, Trotzkism gradually developed into a general epithet applicable to all former disciples of Leninism–Stalinism who broke with or opposed authority and views of Stalin, thus now adaptable to modern postwar heretics such as Tito.

It will be interesting to observe whether Rajk trial in Hungary is followed by similar spectacular trials in other satellites, and/or purges in other national communist parties abroad (such as the French). Moscow may feel that purpose of trial will have been adequately served by mere declarations of approval and support from communist parties elsewhere, together with unpunished purges, but nature of Stalinist communism is such that Budapest show may be repeated in other countries, in connection with desire of individual satellite governments to out-do each other in proving devotion to Moscow.

Though communist China will obviously be the great test, Embassy suggests that development of Cominform–Tito split to its present proportions, together with character of current Rajk trial, may be source of considerable satisfaction to western democracies, showing as they do that Stalin’s postwar “Empire” has already so clearly revealed basic weaknesses. While communism undoubtedly remains a force of great attractive power to the masses, Soviets have obviously shown serious defects and shortcomings in their “management of empire” from viewpoint of practical ability to organize and hold together other states not now included in the Soviet Union (compare Embassy’s A–517 dated May 20, 1949 ⁸). It is hoped that these “internal” seeds of dissension will continue to develop and plague the Moscow planners.

Kirk

⁸ Post, p. 890.

711.64/11-149

Department of State Policy Statement

SECRET

[WASHINGTON,] November 1, 1949.

HUNGARY

A. OBJECTIVES

The long-range objectives of US policy toward Hungary are (1) the revival of an independent Hungarian state having freedom of asso-

¹ For a definition of Department of State Policy Statements, see footnote 1 to the Policy Statement on Romania, January 14, 1949, p. 521.
ciation in its relations with other states; (2) the assurance to the Hungarian people of an opportunity to choose their own government, develop democratic institutions, and enjoy freely the fundamental human rights and liberties; (3) the eventual admission of an independent and democratic Hungary to membership in the United Nations, its inclusion in any organization for European economic cooperation, and its participation in any steps toward European political union; (4) the encouragement of friendly relations between Hungary and its Danubian neighbors and (5) the establishment of economic relations with Hungary on a basis which will insure non-discriminatory treatment and equal opportunity for US interests and those of other peace-loving states, promote active trade in accordance with ITO Charter principles, contribute to the development of a balanced and expanding Hungarian economy, and enable Hungary to participate effectively in the restoration of a peaceful, stable and prosperous European community.

As these objectives cannot be attained until a major shift in international relationships is brought about, US policy toward Hungary has also more immediate, limited goals under present conditions in eastern Europe. These objectives are: (1) the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary through the earliest possible conclusion of an Austrian settlement; (2) the maintenance of US prestige; (3) the protection of American interests in Hungary and, where effective protection cannot be provided, the preparation of adequate legal grounds for ultimate redress; (4) the implementation of the provisions of the Peace Treaty with Hungary, particularly those relating to human rights and freedoms; (5) the encouragement of the Hungarian people's democratic aspirations and their faith in the values of western civilization; (6) the stimulation of widespread passive resistance to Communist ideology and to the consolidation of totalitarian rule; (7) the development of trade between Hungary and the western European countries along lines which will assist the latter to obtain products needed for their economic recovery and preserve economic ties between Hungary and the west but will not aid in building up Hungary's war potential and thus indirectly Soviet military power.

B. POLICIES

The problem of Hungary is part of the larger problems of Europe, the USSR, and eastern Europe. Hungary's present relationships within this complex are influenced less by historical and geographic factors than by the circumstance that it has been divorced from its natural ties with the west and forced into the Soviet orbit, that it is

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*For the text of the Treaty of Peace with Hungary, signed at Paris, February 10, 1947, see Department of State, Treaties and Other International Acts Series (TIAS) No. 1651.*
still under virtual occupation by Soviet troops, and that the instruments of governmental power are firmly held by a Communist minority subservient to the USSR. US policy toward Hungary is therefore generally determined by US policy toward these areas. In carrying out our policies toward Hungary, we expect to continue to consult with the UK in all matters of common concern.

Our present efforts are designed (1) to keep open those channels whereby the US can most effectively influence the situation of the Hungarian people and the internal and external policies of the Hungarian Government; (2) to develop such economic relations with Hungary as we can adequately control in the interest of the European Recovery Program and the preservation of economic ties between Hungary and the west, without at the same time contributing substantially to the military potentials of Hungary and the USSR; (3) to oppose firmly by all available means further encroachments by the USSR and the Hungarian Communists upon US interests in Hungary and upon the rights, liberties, and resources of the Hungarian people; (4) to counteract anti-democratic propaganda, present a balanced view of American life and accurate news and interpretation of world developments, and make clear the contrast between the positive character of US objectives concerning the future of the Hungarian people within a reconstructed European community and the nature of the objectives of the Hungarian Communists and the USSR; and (5) to demonstrate to the USSR and the Hungarian Communists, by steady pressure and the general development of US policy in countering Soviet imperialism, that their domination of Hungary must ultimately be relaxed.

1. Political

The Soviet occupation forces have repeatedly intervened directly and indirectly in support of the Communist Party in Hungary. The Party and its collaborators, with this foreign support, have been enabled to impose totalitarian rule by subverting the government freely chosen by the majority, suppressing all open political opposition, and abridging human rights and freedoms in violation of the provisions of the Peace Treaty. The Hungarian Communist regime has sought to eliminate western, and particularly US, influence from Hungary. Officially, as well as through the controlled press and radio, it has vilified and falsified US motives and actions with respect to Hungary. It has systematically persecuted pro-western elements and impeded in every possible way the development of normal relations with the US and other western democracies.

At the same time, the regime has betrayed Hungarian independence and sovereignty by subjecting the country to Soviet interference and exploitation and has bound Hungary formally to the USSR and its
other satellites by mutual aid and other treaties and by active participation in the Cominform. This artificial orientation of Hungary, though still not complete in its economic and social phases, is a significant feature of Hungary’s subjection to Soviet-Communist rule and may represent a preliminary step toward the ultimate incorporation of the Hungarian Republic in the USSR.

The US on appropriate occasions condemns those acts and policies of the Hungarian Communist regime or the Soviet authorities which violate international commitments, infringe Hungarian independence, impair the fundamental rights and freedoms of the Hungarian people, or undermine friendly relations between the peoples of Hungary and the US. While we realize that US statements and representations in this regard will not of themselves serve materially to improve conditions in Hungary, such expressions are of importance in recording and interpreting Soviet-Communist actions, alerting world opinion to the basic issues involved, and reassuring the Hungarian people of US interest in their welfare. Continued action along this line is also important as a foundation for more decisive measures which the US and other nations may at a later date wish to adopt in concert or through the UN.

The US continues to oppose the admission of Hungary to membership in the UN in the absence of satisfactory evidence that the Hungarian government is able and willing to fulfill the obligations set forth in the Charter of the UN. Its record of Peace Treaty violations indicates that it does not now meet the criteria for admission.²

Although we maintain diplomatic relations with the present Government of Hungary, we will periodically review the advisability of this relationship, keeping in mind the diminishing effectiveness of US representation in Budapest due to hostility and obstruction on the part of the Communist regime and the gradual drying up of sources of intelligence. For the present, however, we find it advantageous to continue diplomatic relations in order to avoid formalizing the arbitrary separation of eastern from western Europe, to obtain information on conditions in Hungary, to manifest our interest in the welfare of the Hungarian people, to take every practicable step to protect American interests there, and to exert every possible effort toward achieving our short-term objectives in Hungary.

In general, the Hungarian Government has shown no disposition to fulfill its obligations under the Treaty of Peace. While not anticipating that the attitude of the Hungarian Communist regime will improve in this regard, the US will continue, in concert with the UK, to press for the implementation of treaty provisions and to establish clearly

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²For documentation on the attitude of the United States toward the application for membership in the United Nations by Hungary and other Communist-dominated Balkan states, see vol. II, pp. 291 ff.
for the record and for its propaganda value any violation or disregard by the Hungarian Government of its obligations. In this connection, the US, together with the UK and several of the Dominions, has formally charged the Hungarian Government with violating the human rights provisions of the Peace Treaty. We are, and intend to continue, pressing this case under the disputes procedures stipulated in the Treaty until responsibility for these violations is fixed upon the Hungarian regime or the effectiveness of the Treaty procedures in this regard is exhausted. The General Assembly of the UN, acting in support of the steps taken by the US and UK under the Peace Treaty, has expressed increased concern at the accusation against Hungary and the latter’s refusal to cooperate in any examination of the charges and has requested an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on certain points of fact and law relating to the dispute. It has also retained on its agenda the question of the observance of human rights and freedoms in Hungary. If the Peace Treaty procedures do not yield satisfactory results, we may carry our case to the General Assembly for substantive discussion and appropriate action.⁴

The importance of the Voice of America broadcasts to Hungary and of other phases of the information program has steadily increased in direct proportion to the growing control exercised by the Communist regime over the dissemination of ideas and information within Hungary and to the barriers placed by the government in the way of direct contact between the Hungarian people and the western world. At present, our broadcasts and the distribution by the Legation of the Radio Bulletin are the most effective instruments at hand for informing and influencing the Hungarian people and sustaining their democratic aspirations and their faith in the traditional values of western civilization.

We are not now in a position to anticipate the role of democratic Hungarian political exiles in any future establishment of an independent and democratic Hungary. However, we regard with interest and sympathy activities of these exiles, taken on their own initiative, which unite them on the basis of common devotion to the principles of democracy and freedom for such purposes as unofficial intelligence, mutual welfare, and encouragement of the Hungarian people in their passive resistance to Communism. On the other hand, we would not in existing circumstances view with favor any emigré activity directed toward the formation of a “government-in-exile.”

2. Economic

The condition and prospects of the Hungarian economy and the character of economic policies under the present Communist regime

⁴ For documentation on the efforts of the United States to assure fulfillment of the terms of the Treaties of Peace with Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania, particularly the human rights provisions, see pp. 223 ff.
are now largely determined by the interests of the USSR. Hungarian economic activity has increasingly followed a discriminatory pattern in favor of eastern Europe, especially the USSR, and has become more and more restrictive where US and other western interests are concerned. This discrimination is particularly evident in the commercial agreements concluded by Hungary with the USSR and the eastern satellite states and in the arrangements respecting the formation and operation of the Hungarian-Soviet joint companies whereby special privileges have been granted to the USSR in such matters as taxation, transfer of profits, guarantees against loss, and extraterritorial privileges. American property interests in Hungary have not only been subjected to discriminatory treatment as compared with Soviet interests but have also suffered from the increasing control imposed by the Hungarian Government over all phases of industrial and business management and operation. In addition many American-owned properties and interests have been lost to their owners without compensation through outright expropriation pursuant to nationalization and land reform measures, transfer to the USSR as "German" assets, sudden imposition of excessive taxes intended to induce bankruptcy, false charges of "economic sabotage", or through simple seizure of premises.

In the case of discrimination and illegal transfers to the USSR, we have attempted and will continue to attempt whenever feasible to use the terms of the Treaty of Peace to protect the American interests involved. We will also continue to publicize the imperialistic methods and aims of the USSR as evidenced in the Soviet penetration and exploitation of the Hungarian economy. In cases of loss to American owners of property through expropriation, the payment of prompt, adequate and effective compensation has been and will continue to be demanded. However, if the Hungarian Government continues to be dilatory in meeting American claims, there is little possibility of our exerting effective pressure. With respect to interference with the rights of American owners and resultant financial loss through the imposition of controls over management, we have found it impossible to invoke the terms of the Treaty of Peace. These controls have taken the form of price fixing, production quotas, wage controls, allocation of raw materials and products, manipulation of taxes, and forced placement of governmental personnel in managerial positions. We expect to formulate any protests to the Hungarian Government against its interference with the management rights of American owners on a basis which will leave the American owner with a supportable claim to title and will enable him to hold the Hungarian Government responsible for all losses or injuries to the property occurring during the period of its control. In the matter of American claims under the Peace Treaty for damages arising from
the war, the Hungarian Government has shown no disposition to institute appropriate measures for the settlement of such cases. However, we should overlook no appropriate opportunity to press for action in this regard.

Despite Hungary's position as a Soviet satellite and non-participant in ERP, we wish to encourage the expansion of regular commercial relations between Hungary and the western European countries in the interest of the rapid economic recovery of western Europe. Negotiations are currently under way, however, to secure agreement of OEEC countries to withhold from export to Hungary certain specified strategic goods. Trade between the US and Hungary has never been of major importance from the US point of view, and strict control is being exercised to insure that the goods exported to Hungary shall not jeopardize US security objectives with regard to eastern Europe. The application of such controls is technically inconsistent with most-favored nation treatment stipulated in the 1925 Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation between the US and Hungary; however, security reasons require our regulating the export of goods to Hungary as long as that country permits its economy to be dominated and its policies toward other states determined by the USSR. To the extent that these controls apply to goods in short supply they are also required by the US obligation to give priority to the needs of ERP participants.

Since the Communist political coup of May–June 1947, US Government credits have not been available to Hungary. The Department cannot formally object to the extension of private loans to Hungary by American lenders but, if consulted, would seek to discourage such loans indirectly by pointing out the captive character of the Hungarian economy and other factors which might prejudice the soundness of such transactions from the viewpoint of the lenders. The US is continuing to hold, under the terms of Article 29 of the Treaty of Peace, Hungarian funds and assets which were blocked or vested here during the war. It is the intention of the US to continue to maintain the present status of these assets until there is further clarification of the outlook for the settlement of US claims against Hungary.

General restitution to Hungary from the US Zone of Germany, which has been suspended since April 1948, will shortly be completed in fulfillment of Article 30 of the Treaty of Peace. All pending claims have now been carefully screened for strict conformance to standards.

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8 For additional documentation regarding United States policy on trade with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, see pp. 61 ff.
7 For documentation on the policy of the United States with respect to reparations and restitution from Germany, see ibid., 1948, vol. ii, pp. 703 ff.
of eligibility as defined in the provisions of Article 30, and restitution will not be made of those goods for which the US does not grant export permits to countries under Soviet domination. Restitution will also not be made of captured enemy material or of property which is claimed independently by refugee nationals or non-nationals of Hungary.

On two occasions, first in 1946 upon its own initiative and again in 1948 at the request of the Hungarian Government, the US entered into discussions with the Hungarian Government with a view to the conclusion of a civil air agreement. The outcome in both instances was completely unsuccessful and reflected Hungary's conformity to Soviet policy, which aims at the exclusion of US aircraft from eastern Europe, but at the same time seeks the right for the USSR or its satellites to operate in the air space of other countries. The US will seek, in cooperation with other western countries, to restrict the civil air operations of the USSR and its satellites, including Hungary, to their own orbit, except for occasional flights to western Europe when the *quid pro quo* involves advantages to the western European states concerned.⁶

C. RELATIONS WITH OTHER STATES

Hungary's foreign relations and policy are determined in all important respects by the aims and policy of the USSR, and its relations with the other Soviet satellite states are along the lines of the close collaboration dictated by the USSR. This collaboration has been directed consistently toward the objectives of hastening the communization of eastern Europe and of establishing, by means of a network of "mutual aid" pacts, discriminatory economic agreements, and cultural pacts and the Cominform, a European Communist bloc through which the USSR can broaden and intensify its cold war against the US and the democracies of western Europe. There is every reason to assume that the USSR will continue to dominate that country in the furtherance of Soviet interests and will seek to preserve the usurpation of power by the Communist minority, which has demonstrated its complete subservience to the USSR.

The conclusion of an Austrian settlement,⁷ providing for the withdrawal from Austria of Soviet occupation forces and the full restoration of Austrian independence and sovereignty, would directly affect the situation of Hungary and place the US and other western Powers in a more favorable position as regards Hungary. At present, the USSR is in military occupation of eastern Austria, thereby sealing off Hungary from direct access to western Europe. It is also exercising

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⁶For additional documentation regarding United States civil aviation policy toward the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, see pp. 184 ff.
⁷For documentation on the negotiations carried on during 1949 for an Austrian State Treaty, see vol. III, pp. 1066.
the right granted it under the Treaty of Peace with Hungary to keep armed forces in Hungarian territory for the maintenance of the "lines of communication" of the Soviet Army with the Soviet zone in Austria. Withdrawal of these forces accordingly depends upon the conclusion of an Austrian treaty. An Austrian settlement, by opening a door to Hungary from the west and bringing about the withdrawal of the Soviet troops in Hungary, would probably have a definitely favorable psychological effect on the Hungarian people. From the point of view of our Hungarian policy, this probability would warrant continued efforts by the US to bring an early Austrian settlement. At the same time, it should be recognized as equally probable that the conclusion of an Austrian settlement would fail to effect any immediate substantial change in Hungary's relationship to the USSR. The state and party apparatus of internal Communist rule would remain. There would remain also the threat of Soviet armed intervention in support of the Communist minority, for despite the withdrawal from Hungary, Soviet troops would stand on the Hungarian frontier and could conveniently re-enter the country on "invitation" by the puppet government, perhaps under the terms of the Treaty of Mutual Aid and Assistance between Hungary and the Soviet Union.¹⁰

The most significant current aspect of Hungary's participation in the Cominform is the steadily widening rift which has developed between the Hungarian Government and Communist Party on the one hand and the Yugoslav Government and Communist Party on the other over the heresy of Marshal Tito. We should observe closely all evidences that this schism between national Communist bodies may, in the case of Hungary as well as of the other eastern European satellites, also extend across national boundaries and manifest itself within the national party organization. Such manifestations of disunity, which have also appeared recently within the Communist hierarchy in Hungary, are likely to be symptomatic of serious strains and weaknesses in the Soviet-Communist front which we may wish to aggravate and exploit.

D. POLICY EVALUATION

The USSR, by the forcible establishment of a tightly-controlled bloc of eastern European states, has extended its military and political frontiers virtually to the borders of western Europe. While the features of Communist rule under Soviet direction vary somewhat from state to state within this orbit, the over-all pattern is one of great uniformity in such major characteristics as the tested subservience of the ruling Communist clique to the USSR, ideological conformity, the coordination of military and police organizations with those of the

¹⁰ The treaty was signed in Moscow on February 18, 1948.
USSR, revolutionary economic changes and Soviet economic penetration, and the repression of human rights and freedoms.

It is this basic physical fact of the expansion of Soviet military and political power over a vast area of Europe and the uniform conditions which the USSR has imposed therein which places our Hungarian policy in a derivative relationship to our European and Soviet policies. It follows, accordingly, that the success of our Hungarian policy is linked with, and, so far as our long-range objectives are concerned, dependent upon, the effective implementation of those major policies which bear directly on such fundamental issues as the withdrawal of Soviet armies from Europe, the Atlantic Pact and the Military Assistance Program, the ERP, western European economic and political union, an Austrian settlement, the future of Germany, the conflict of democratic and Communist ideologies, and the unbalance of power on the European continent. The peripheral location of Hungary with respect to eastern and central Europe may, nevertheless, afford opportunities for promoting the instability of the Communist regime, retarding the process of communitization, and undermining Soviet influence.

Several other problems must be reckoned with in the development of US policy toward Hungary:

There is a growing, if not overtly demonstrated, revival of anti-Semitic feeling in Hungary. The upsurge of this feeling, while attributed partially to the remaining influence of Nazi doctrines, is also ascribed to the fact that many Hungarian Jews have aligned themselves with the Communists and accepted positions in the political police. Moreover, it is a fact that the Communist Party leadership is itself largely Jewish. On the other hand, the Party, through its policy of absorbing former rank and file members of the Hungarian Arrow Cross (Nazi) Party, harbors a considerable anti-Semitic element. This problem could have tragic results for Hungary and the cause of democracy if, upon Hungary's liberation from the Soviet yoke, the Jewish community as a whole were forced again into the role of scapegoat.

The new order imposed on Hungary has resulted in the virtual destruction of the social structure of the country and consequently is without any organic equilibrium. The Communist regime has reduced the bourgeoisie, never very strong, to subservience, has ruthlessly liquidated the remnants of the landed ruling class, and has purged the peasantry of all its leaders who were unwilling to abandon their fundamental principles and traditions. The fear generated throughout Hungary by Communist methods, to the extent that it is not dispelled by outside democratic influence, tends to stimulate the population to right or left extremism. It may well lead to the danger of a violent and repressive rightist counter-revolution if the Com-
munist grip is broken. Any such development would not only involve the continued political and economic subjection of the peasant masses, in whose character lies the real hope of Hungarian democracy, but would also greatly complicate the problem of democratic and peaceful development in the entire Danubian area.

A further problem is that of eventual union or federation of the states of eastern Europe. Such a union or federation can serve constructive purposes and prevent renewed nationalist rivalries and conflicts only if it is based on truly democratic principles and enlists the support of the peasant populations. Real unity cannot be imposed by Soviet-Communist pressure from outside and above. The possibility of eastern European federation under conditions calculated to make it an effective instrument of Soviet policy, as well as the possibility of the ultimate incorporation of the satellite states into the USSR, must, however, be reckoned with.

Finally, there is the problem of qualified leadership. The longer Soviet and Communist rule endures in Hungary, the greater this problem will become. Hungary has successively passed through a period of authoritarian rule between World Wars I and II, the sweeping Nazi purges of 1944, and the even more drastic purges carried out by the Communists. This process, and especially its present phase, has taken heavy toll of democratic leadership in Hungary. In these circumstances, US policy may increasingly be concerned to find ways of assisting the preservation and development of this important human resource against the day of Hungary’s liberation.

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**Editorial Note**

Robert A. Vogeler, an American citizen and Assistant Vice President of the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation, was secretly arrested in Hungary on November 18 while on a trip from Budapest to Vienna by officers of the Hungarian State Security Office (AVH—Államvédelmi Hatóság). Vogeler was also Assistant Vice President of International Standard Electric Corporation, the firm which supervised the foreign manufacturing subsidiaries of IT&T, and was serving as that firm’s special representative in Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. Throughout 1949 Vogeler had visited Hungary frequently in connection with negotiations with the Hungarian Government on the terms of operation of IT&T’s subsidiary in Hungary, the Standard Electric Company of Budapest. The nature of Vogeler’s activities, his negotiations with the Hungarian Government, and the circumstances of his arrest and subsequent police interrogation are described in Robert A. Vogeler (with Leigh White), *I Was Stalin’s Prisoner* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company,
1951, 1952). The Minister in Hungary, Nathaniel P. Davis, first inquired of Hungarian Foreign Minister Gyula Kállai on November 19 regarding the disappearance of Vogeler. Kállai at that time denied any knowledge of Vogeler's whereabouts. The documents that follow are concerned with efforts to deal with the situation caused by the detention incommunicado of Vogeler.

Vienna Legation Files: 233 Vogeler, Robert: Telegram

The Minister in Hungary (Davis) to the Secretary of State

SECRET URGENT

BUDAPEST, November 22, 1949—6 p.m.

1305. Re Legation telegram 1303² Mokma³ and I saw Foreign Minister by appointment 3 pm (throughout interview Minister appeared very nervous whether this indicates anything specific I do not know). I read left with him strongly worded aide-mémoire (copy Department) making following points:

1. All known facts point conclusively detention Vogeler by Hungarian police
2. Police statement to Foreign Minister denying knowledge must be as unsatisfactory to Foreign Minister as to me
3. Detention and refusal to divulge charges must be considered serious matter for both
4. I request opportunity be informed nature of charges and for Mission Consular Officer visit Vogeler to satisfy us his welfare that he has opportunity reply charges and engage counsel satisfactory him.

Foreign Minister replied he now able tell me Vogeler arrested last Friday by security police. Does not know where arrest occurred. Police have evidence including alleged Vogeler confession he engaged sabotage and espionage and involved Geiger escape attempt. Stated Geiger had implicated Vogeler. Also British subject Sanders (who detained last night and who Foreign Minister admitted to me is also detained).⁴

¹This message is missing from the Central Files of the Department of State. The classified portion of the Budapest Legation files for 1949 was accidentally destroyed in 1964.
²Not printed; it reported that Hungarian Foreign Minister Kállai had admitted to Minister Davis that Vogeler was under arrest and was charged with espionage and sabotage against the economy and safety of the Hungarian state. Vogeler was also being charged with implication in the attempted illegal departure from Hungary of Imre Geiger, the General Manager of the Standard Electric Corporation of Budapest (364.1121 Vogeler, Robert A.).
³Gerald A. Mokma, Counselor of Legation in Budapest.
⁴On November 22 the Hungarian Ministry of Interior issued a statement to the press announcing the arrest of Vogeler, Geiger, and Edgar Sanders, a British citizen and a representative in Hungary of the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation. It subsequently became known that other Hungarian citizens, including some government officials involved in the negotiations with Vogeler, had also been arrested.
I replied without seeing alleged evidence and opportunity talk with Vogeler unable pass judgement on nature evidence but fully confident Vogeler not guilty sabotage or espionage. Rather that former whole purpose visit Hungary was conclude arrangements making local factory more productive more profitable. Had told me of his negotiations this regard and I have no knowledge any espionage activity and completely disbelieve allegation.

As to Geiger case Vogeler had told me when former disappeared two weeks ago feared Geiger attempt escape and he would be suspected but stated he had nothing to do with matter.

I said case giving great concern our Government and refusal police furnish information sooner deeply disappointing me personally in view my recent arrival with sincere desire foster friendly relations and assurances all Hungarian officials. I had met their desire cooperate this end. To my remark this case and others in Hungary and other people's democracies make one suppose those countries always assume foreigners are spies he chided me this not happy approach suggested we stick to case in point. I replied very glad stick to case in point. I hoped immediate opportunity Consular Officer see Vogeler. Minister said Hungarian law permitted visit and engage counsel only after completion police investigation. I urged on respective law and regulations Government must always have right exercise mercy and simply humanity demands earliest visit Consular Officer. Minister replied not in his province but would take up with competent authorities secure earliest permission Consular visit inform me soonest. Also disclaimed authority but promised consideration proper quarters my suggestion possibly best way prevent this case develop into serious dispute both Governments expel Vogeler and prohibit his return.

Efforts see Rakosi still fruitless.

Urgent sent Department 1305 repeated Vienna 133.

Davies

On May 13 President Truman accepted the resignation of Selden Chapin as Minister to Hungary and nominated Nathaniel Davis as his successor. Davis was confirmed by the Senate on August 31 and presented his credentials on October 21.

* Minister Davis for some days sought unsuccessfully an interview with Mátyás Rákosi, Hungarian Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary General of the Hungarian Workers’ Party (the Communist Party in Hungary).

364.1121 Vogeler, Robert A.: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Legation in Hungary

SECRET PRIORITY  WASHINGTON, December 2, 1949—8 p.m.

696. Concur opinion ur 1315 Nov 27 (rptd Vienna) in reply Dept 689 Nov 26 (rptd Vienna) that formal note on Vogeler case shld not
be sent Hung FonOff at this time. However, in view lack progress toward obtaining his release (ur 1321 Nov 29 and 1327 Nov 30 sent Vienna). Dept proposes unless you perceive objection, that you call on FonMin or UnSecy Berei soonest and make oral representations along lines paras 1, 2, 3, 4, and, in ur discretion, 5 below:

Begin 1. US Govt deeply concerned and dissatisfied at attitude Hung Govt in Vogeler case. Continued inaction in face of ur rptd requests for explanation charges and for opportunity visit Vogeler can only serve confirm public impression, already widespread, that Hung auths have acted irresponsibly and with callous disregard of established principles humanity and equity.

2. US Govt finds no reason to believe charges against Vogeler anything but completely false, and evasiveness Hung officials necessarily corroborates that view and appears indicative of ulterior motives.

3. State of affairs exemplified by this case raises serious question in mind US Govt whether US cits can any longer transact normal business or visit in Hung without suffering intolerable molestation from Hung police auths ranging from surveillance and petty acts of persecution to arbitrary arrest and indefinite detention incomunicado. US Govt is accordingly giving urgent consideration to prohibition all travel by private US cits Hung and to such other steps as may be appropriate in circumstances if Vogeler case is not satisfactorily resolved in near future.

4. Absence prompt resolution Vogeler case must inevitably affect other aspects US-Hung relations.

5. In connection pt 3 above you may express view that, obviously, if situation shld continue wherein US consular officers are prevented from exercising rightful protective functions in cases involving US cits, US Govt wld probably also wish reconsider utility and justification existing arrangements under which Hung has been permitted maintain separate consular establishments in US. End.

For ur info only, if foregoing representations unproductive within reasonable period, Dept contemplating delivery and publication formal protest denouncing conduct Hung Govt and notifying prohibition

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1 In telegram 689, November 26, to Budapest, not printed, the Department of State suggested that the Legation in Budapest continue to press the Hungarian Foreign Ministry for a full explanation of the charges against Vogeler and for immediate opportunity for Legation representatives to interview him. The Department was meanwhile considering the advisability of the Legation addressing a formal note to the Foreign Ministry protesting the Hungarian evasions to date and demanding prompt steps for Vogeler's release (364.1121 Vogeler, Robert A.). In his telegram 1315, November 27, Minister Davis expressed the belief that a note such as was suggested by the Department should be used only as a last resort. Davis continued to hope for a successful informal handling of the matter, Davis did suggest the utility of countermeasures against Hungary including the closure of Hungarian Consulates in the United States (364.1121 Vogeler, Robert A.).

2 Neither printed; they reported the continued lack of progress despite the daily pressure on the Foreign Ministry. Both Minister Davis and British Minister in Hungary Geoffrey A. Wallinger had lengthy interviews with Hungarian Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Andor Berei. Berei would only promise to ask the police authorities again when Vogeler (and Sanders) could be visited by Legation representatives (364.1121/Vogeler, Robert A.).
travel US cits Hung until further notice. This step wld of course be informally supplemented by Leg inaction, for such period as might be useful, on Hung requests in matters such as entry into US Zone Ger of Hung restitution official or of Swab ex-prisoners war who wish to join families there. Dept meanwhile wld also give further consideration advisability closing Hung consulates Cleveland and NY.

Dept believes chances favorable outcome case through Vogeler's release greater if some of these pts are put before Hung Govt prior ur meeting with Rakosi mentioned ur 1328 Dec 1 (rptd Vienna). Any [pts?] not covered in ur interview with FonMin or Berei cld be used if necessary in talk with Rakosi.

Sent Budapest rptd Vienna, Frankfort.

ACHESON

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864.00/12-1149: Telegram

*Not printed; it reported that the Legation had been informed that Rákosi would see Minister Davis during the coming week (364.1121 Vogeler, Robert A.). The interview in fact never took place.*

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SECRET NIAOT

BUDAPEST, December 11, 1949—noon.

1348. Will phone Llewellyn Thompson 41 11 a. m. Washington time December 12 to say for benefit kibitzers Rakosi interview 2 still not set though promised for week now past; therefore, time come for counteraction but will plead 48 hours delay. Or if Rakosi appointment fixed will so report asking in view thereof Department delay retaliatory action pending my report of interview.

Suggest Thompson in his reply agree reluctantly further delay closing Hungarian Consulates and hint blockade Hungarian West German trade imminent if Vogeler not released. Might say in view long delay we no longer demand merely right Consul see him but must now insist his release and departure from Hungary.

Suggest Department summon Hungarian Minister, read him riot act. British Foreign Office doing this Monday. British Minister here seeing Foreign Minister Monday. 3 I will know result before phoning.

DAVIS

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1 Llewellyn E. Thompson, from July 1949 Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs.
2 Regarding the projected interview with Hungarian Deputy Prime Minister Rákosi, see footnote 3 to telegram 696, December 2, from Budapest, supra.
3 In his telegram 1350, December 12, from Budapest, not printed, Minister Davis reported that British Minister Wallinger had used the strongest terms in his December 12 interview with Hungarian Foreign Minister Kállai, but he had received no slightest satisfaction. Kállai remained uncommunicative and indicated only that the Hungarian Government considered the charges of espionage against Sanders to be very serious (364.1121/12-1249).
864.00/12–1149: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Legation in Hungary

SECRET PRIORITY Washington, December 11, 1949—6 p. m.

706. Ur 1348 Dec. 11. Thompson or Perkins will stand by for call 11 a.m. Dec. 12 though we seriously doubt that device which may have contributed release Ruedemann and Bannantine will prove effective again present case.

Concur ur outline proposed conversation except all references possible US retaliatory action shld be confined gen term “countermeasures” without mentioning any type of specific measures. We consider it unwise to go as far on specific pts in phone conversation as urt suggests.

We believe discussion with Hung Min here wld weaken rather than reinforce ur representations and accordingly do not propose call him in at this time.

If meeting with Rakosi does not take place on or before Dec 13, you shld take up matter with FonMin or Berei along lines Dept 696 Dec 2 making forceful demands in terms immed release and departure Vogeler.

ACHESON

1 Supra.
2 George W. Perkins, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs.
3 Regarding the Ruedemann–Bannantine case, see footnote 4 to telegram 459, March 23, from Budapest, p. 466.
4 No record of the telephone conversation under reference here has been found, but telegram 1350, December 12, from Budapest, not printed, appears to confirm that it took place as scheduled (364.1121/12–1249).
5 Ante, p. 484.

Vienna Legation Files : 233 Vogeler, Robert

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Minister in Hungary (Davis) CONFIDENTIAL Budapest, December 14, 1949.

Participants: Foreign Minister Kallai
Mr. Florian (interpreter)
American Minister
Mr. Gerald A. Mokma

Omitting preliminary pleasantries, I opened the interview by expressing regret that it was necessary to see the Minister a third time

1 A brief summary of this conversation was transmitted to the Department of State in telegram 1356, December 14, from Budapest, not printed (364.1121 Vogeler, Robert A.).
2 In his despatch 1127, December 21, from Budapest, not printed, Minister Davis commented upon the tone of this meeting as follows:
   "I omitted all pleasantries and spoke more forcefully and acidly than on any other occasion I can now recall in my entire career. I might as well have saved my breath. When I left we were exactly where we had been on the day Mr. Vogeler's arrest first became known." (Vienna Legation Files: 233 Vogeler, Robert)
on the Vogeler case. I had hoped to be able to reach a satisfactory conclusion by an informal discussion with the competent authorities. For that purpose I had long been seeking an appointment with Mr. Rakosi. Two weeks ago the Ministry of Foreign Affairs promised such an appointment for some day during the week just passed. That week had passed and the interview had not taken place. On Monday afternoon, the day before yesterday, the Foreign Office had informed me that the reason that interview had not taken place was that Mr. Rakosi had gone on a vacation at the end of last week and would be gone two or three weeks. The newspapers have said a month. In view of this clear evidence of evasion on the part of the Hungarian authorities, I was now in the Minister's office under instructions from my government to make the following statement (which I had written out in advance and which was translated sentence by sentence as I read it).

"1) My government is deeply concerned about the Vogeler case and entirely dissatisfied with the position taken by the Hungarian Government. Despite daily inquiries, the Ministry has so far given no explanation whatever of the charges; neither has it given any answer to my request for permission to consult with him in the customary manner. This denial of all cooperation will be looked upon as proof that the Hungarian Government, as already widely believed by the public, is proceeding in an irresponsible manner contrary to all recognized principles of humanity and equity.

2) My government has no basis for believing the charges against Vogeler as laconically published in the press. On the contrary, we are convinced that they are completely false. In this connection it may be remarked that the evasive attitude of the Hungarian Government can only strengthen this view as well and give the appearance of ulterior motives.

3) The condition of the affair to date raises for the American Government a serious question, whether American citizens can peacefully attend to their normal business within Hungary without risk of intolerable molestation by the police authorities, be this minor shadowing of detectives or be it even to the point of detention by the police for an indeterminate time incommunicado. If this question is not soon answered and in a satisfactory way we must take under urgent consideration the necessity of forbidding Americans to travel to Hungary as well as such other steps as would follow therefrom.

4) The absence of a prompt settlement of this case must inevitably affect Hungarian-American relations in all their aspects. The Hungarian Government has refused for so long—already nearly four weeks—to allow Mr. Vogeler his basic right to the protection of his government against irresponsible police detention and secret proceedings that my government cannot be expected to be satisfied, at this late date, with less than his release and departure from Hungary. The authorities have had more than sufficient time to satisfy themselves of his innocence."

At the end of paragraph 3 of the written statement I interpolated that expressing my own opinion and speaking now on my own re-
sponsibility and not under specific instructions, it was my view as to such further steps that since our consul is being prevented by the authorities here from performing his basic duties to his fellow citizen my government would be compelled as a first step to reconsider the justification for as well as the utility of the Hungarian consulates in the United States.

After reading the foregoing statement, I said that concluded what I was instructed to say to him. I earnestly begged him to realize that my government meant what it said. It had been very patient but its patience was not inexhaustible. It intends to uphold its rights and to obtain just treatment of its citizens.

The Minister replied as to the Rakosi appointment, I would know that Mr. Rakosi had been very busy what with the meeting of Parliament and other matters, and it was regrettable that he had not had time to see me before departing on his vacation. As to a consular visit, that could not be permitted before the investigation is completed. As to the guilt or innocence of Mr. Vogeler, it was not safe to proceed on assumptions since it had happened before that innocence had been insisted on by interested parties only to have it develop later that the prisoner was in fact guilty. I replied that so far as the Rakosi visit was concerned the Minister's explanation would be satisfactory if taken by itself, but it was unacceptable in view of the fact that I had asked for the interview three weeks ago and had been promised by his own Ministry that it would be arranged during the week just past. As to the continued refusal of the authorities to permit a consular visit, this was a continued evasion of the basic point that in all civilized countries a person detained by the authorities has a right of access to his consul. As to the question of guilt or innocence, my government was completely satisfied that Mr. Vogeler was innocent. He has been charged with espionage; that could only mean on behalf of his own government, and my government had not employed him for any such purpose. The Minister replied that this was a question of fact and I should not overlook the fact that the press announcement had stated that Vogeler had confessed. I replied that neither my government nor I was at all impressed by this statement. I had had some personal experience of detention by police authorities who acted very much like the Hungarians are acting and I know the value of such alleged confessions. At this point Mr. Mokma interjected that it was commonly said by people here in Hungary who know that they are being followed by police agents that in the event of arrest they would confess to anything to avoid having the confession extracted. The Minister replied that reactionary circles spread all kinds of rumors of this sort; for example, they had spread the rumor that the Forint was to be devalued but that had been disproved and other rumors might
also be disproved. He went on to say that he did not consider it a very happy approach to link the case of one individual under investigation on serious charges with the question of Hungarian consulates in the United States. I replied sharply that I was not linking the case of one individual with the Hungarian consulates but rather that of our consulate here being prevented by the Hungarian authorities from performing its duties which made me wonder why Hungarian consulates should be permitted to perform theirs. I added that we were not discussing reactionary rumors, but the concrete fact that for nearly four weeks Mr. Vogeler had been held incommunicado and the authorities continued to prevent our doing anything for him. As for his reference to an unhappy approach, it was the view of my government that the entire approach of the Hungarian Government to this whole case had been most unhappy.

The Minister replied that he could not give me any official answer as to when we might see Vogeler, but he would make inquiries to the competent authorities and let me know. I replied that this was not satisfactory; while I appreciated the Minister’s assurances that he would look into the matter, he had been giving me this for three weeks and that’s all I had had. I then said that in order that there might be no misunderstanding later on as to what had been said at this interview, I should like his answers to certain specific questions.

(1) Does the Hungarian Government still refuse to permit a consular visit to Mr. Vogeler? The Minister replied, “For the moment, yes”.

(2) Does the Minister decline to entertain my request that Mr. Vogeler be immediately put at liberty and permitted to leave Hungary? The Minister replied, “I cannot reply to that now”. I then said there seemed to be no purpose in prolonging this interview. I would report it to my government and await developments. I stood up and took my departure.

While saying goodbye to Mr. Florian in the outer office, I told him of Mr. Mokma’s recent promotion to the rank of Counselor. Mr. Florian congratulated him and said that that was a nice Christmas present. I said I wished the Hungarian Government would give me a Christmas present. Florian replied, “You know that does not depend on me”. I said I knew that, and I was sure that if Mr. Florian were running the Hungarian Government I would have had that Christmas present, adding I was sure of another thing—that if I had been permitted as promised to see Mr. Rakosi, the latter would have given me a Christmas present since I believed that Mr. Rakosi would view this matter in its broad aspects and not from the point of view of a little policeman holding a man in jail—at least such was Mr. Rakosi’s reputation.

NATHANIEL P. DAVIS
LONDON, December 16, 1949—6 p. m.

5009. Rumbold ¹ raised with us earlier today matter of Vogeler (US) and Sanders (Britain) arrested and held incommunicado by Hungarian authorities. He had been informed by British Legation Budapest that US was considering retaliation shutting down Hungarian consulates in US if Hungarian authorities continued refusal to release Vogeler and that Davis was recommending joint Anglo-American action. Rumbold said that proposed action not open to British in any event as there are no Hungarian consulates in UK, and that protest by timed [precisely timed] joint Anglo-American action of any sort appeared too complicated to effect. He added however that Britain would wish to take "parallel" action and would wish to exchange information regarding proposed individual actions so as to "keep in line".²

Accordingly he asked Department be informed that Foreign Office was considering and if it had sole voice would suspend current negotiations with Hungarian representatives in London on three union [minor] trade agreements (one involves certain debt payments, another is over question of Hungarian purchase certain British shareholdings) so long as Hungarian authorities refused British Consul access to Sanders. He pointed out that Treasury and Food Minister would have voice in decision to suspend any such negotiations and that question had been put up to these departments who had expressed some opposition but had not yet given final answer. He said that in fact, pending decision among interested governmental elements, no meetings were being held with Hungary on these agreements though Hungary had not been given reason therefor.

Rumbold said Britain did not intend in any event to ask flatly for Sanders' release but proposed to press demand for right of Consul to see Sanders and obtain full report from him. Rumbold explained that while Foreign Office was convinced Sanders had not engaged in espionage activities he might have been otherwise sufficiently injudicious to give grain of validity to Hungarian charges. Rumbold referred

¹ Sir Horace Anthony Rumbold, Head of the Southern Department, British Foreign Office.
² In his telegram 1341, December 8, from Budapest, not printed, Minister Davis reported that British Minister Wallinger had suggested that the American and British Governments coordinate any eventual public statements made in connection with the Vogeler-Sanders matter or any retaliatory steps taken against the Hungarian Government (364.1121 Vogeler, Robert A.). Telegram 712, December 14, to Budapest, repeated as telegram 4510, December 17, to London, not printed, stated that the Department had no objection to coordinated action in the Vogeler and Sanders cases but believed it would be desirable to avoid identifying the two cases (364.1121 Vogeler, Robert A.).
in passing to an earlier instance concerning British subject where such
proved to be case.

Later Rumbold called to say Hungarians had just told Foreign
Office that they themselves were suspending trade talks. Hungarian
representative gave no reason but referred vaguely to hope talks would
be resumed some time next year. Foreign Office now at a loss as to
what to do in Sanders’ case.  

Sent Department 5009, repeated Budapest 34.

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*Telegram 5042, December 19, from London, not printed, reported that
Hungarian authorities had informed the British Board of Trade orally of
a willingness to continue the trade negotiations. The British Foreign Office was
able to take the action originally contemplated. The Hungarian Legation in
London was informed that all trade and financial negotiations would be sus-
pended until the British Consul in Budapest was given access to Sanders in
conditions of privacy and until the British were convinced that Sanders was
being treated decently (364.1121 Vogeler, Robert A.).

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711.64/12-2049

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Under Secretary of State
(Webb)

CONFIDENTIAL

[WASHINGTON,] December 20, 1949.

Participants: Mr. Webb, Under Secretary of State
Mr. Imre Horvath, Hungarian Minister
Mr. Yost, Director, Office of Eastern European Affairs

I informed the Hungarian Minister that I had asked him to call in
order to present him with a copy of a note on the case of Robert
Vogeler which our Minister in Budapest is today presenting to the
Hungarian Foreign Office. I pointed out that Mr. Vogeler, who is an
important official of an American corporation, has been held incommu-
nicado for over a month in spite of repeated representations by our
Legation in Budapest. I emphasized that the US Government regards
the failure of the Hungarian Government to respond to our repres-
sentations in this case with deepest concern and that it is expressing
this concern through this note, a copy of which I handed him and
which I emphasized is couched in strong terms. At the same time I
added that the US Government is today, in view of the unwillingness
of the Hungarian Government to afford adequate protection to US
citizens traveling in Hungary, announcing that such travel will no
longer be permitted.

I concluded by pointing out that, if the Hungarian Government did

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1 Horvath, the newly appointed Hungarian Minister, presented his credentials
to President Truman on October 17.

2 Regarding the note under reference, see editorial note, infra.
not respond to our request for the prompt release of Mr. Vogeler, we would be obliged to consider further measures. Since the Hungarian Government is making it impossible, by denying to our consular officers access to Mr. Vogeler, for them to perform their normal consular functions, we would have to give consideration to whether or not we should longer permit Hungarian consular officers to perform similar functions in this country.⁹

The Hungarian Minister replied very briefly to the effect that he would immediately transmit to his government the remarks which I had made.

James E. Webb

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⁹ Telegram 715, December 19, to Budapest, not printed, stated that if the Hungarian response to the demand for the release of Vogeler proved negative, the Department envisaged further steps within a week or ten days to close the Hungarian Consulates in Cleveland and New York. Minister Davis was authorized to indicate orally to Foreign Minister Kállai the probability of such action (364.1121 Vogeler, Robert A.).

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Editorial Note

Acting under instructions contained in telegrams 715 and 716, December 19, to Budapest, neither printed, Minister Davis delivered to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry on December 20 a note denouncing the arrest and detention incommunado of Robert Vogeler as a flagrant outrage against international law and comity and an “arbitrary, inhumane, and clear denial of justice”. The charges of espionage and sabotage against Vogeler were dismissed as “wholly false” and brought about by ulterior motives on the part of the Hungarian Government. The note accused the Hungarian Government of “inaction, evasions, and bad faith” in connection with the efforts of the Legation to gain knowledge of and access to Vogeler, and it warned that the absence of a satisfactory settlement of the matter would inevitably affect other aspects of United States-Hungarian relations. The note concluded by stating that the United States Government was taking steps to prohibit travel by private citizens in Hungary until further notice in view of the evidence that Americans were no longer free to travel or transact business “without suffering surveillance, arbitrary arrest, and other intolerable molestations at the hands of Hungarian authorities and other infringements of their rights”. For the text of the note, see Department of State Bulletin, January 2, 1950, pages 21–22, or Hungarian Foreign Ministry, Documents, pages 157–161. For the text of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry’s note of reply of December 24, see ibid., pages 162–163, or Department of State Bulletin, January 16, 1950, page 96.
Secretary of State Acheson called upon President Truman on December 20 and reviewed a number of foreign policy matters requiring the attention of the President. The Secretary described recent developments in relations with Bulgaria and Hungary. The President approved the course being followed and directed the Secretary to continue along those lines. (Memorandum by the Secretary of State, December 20, 1949: 711.74/12-2049)

SECRET
WASHINGTON, December 27, 1949—7 p. m.

738. Fol is summary JDC views re Jacobson case as stated by Leavitt in meeting with Dept officers (ur 1366 Dec 20 rptd Vienna 165 and Dept 727 Dec 22 rptd Vienna 1757) on Dec 28:

1. While expressing grave concern Jacobson’s situation, Leavitt clearly indicated JDC has no intention in present circumstances suspending program Hung. He considers humane and morale obligations JDC to thousands of Jews in Hung now dependent on JDC to sustain life must take precedence over those to Jacobson, even though this may involve sacrifice latter. Also expressed doubt that suspension of operations wld, in any event, benefit Jacobson.

2. Leavitt pointed out that high percentage Jewish community Hung consists aged and women and that, if JDC shld suspend activity even for brief period, many of these people wld die or suffer greatly since Hung Govt wld not provide for them.

1Israel G. Jacobson, the Director in Hungary of the American Joint Distribution Committee (an organization seeking to provide assistance to Jews in Eastern Europe), was arrested by Hungarian police on December 15 while on an automobile trip from Vienna to Budapest. Despite the repeated protests of the Legation in Budapest, Jacobson was held incommunicado until his release on December 28. On December 23 the Hungarian Government announced that Jacobson was being held under arrest on suspicion of espionage.

2Telegram 1366, December 20, from Budapest, not printed, reported that the Legation, in pursuance of Department instructions, had delivered an aide-mémoire to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry regarding the arrest of Jacobson. For their part Hungarian authorities continued neither to confirm nor deny the fact that Jacobson was under arrest (364.1121 Jacobson, Israel G.). Telegram 727, December 22, to Budapest, not printed, urged the Legation to continue daily oral representations regarding Jacobson. It also stated that the Department had scheduled a meeting with Moses A. Leavitt, the Executive Vice Chairman of the Joint Distribution Committee, for December 23 in order to determine the Committee’s views regarding the suspension of its operations in Hungary (364.1121 Jacobson, Israel G.).
3. According to Leavitt, Hung program is largest of current JDC operations and will involve expenditure two and one-half million dollars first six months 1950. However, he does not rule out possibility that during next year Hung Govt, like certain other Eastern Eur Govts, may request JDC terminate its program.

4. When asked whether JDC wld continue adhere present views shld Hung Govt also take action against Berkowitz, Leavitt replied that any such step wld create extremely difficult situation but that JDC wld probably seek send in new rep rather than abandon assistance Jewish community Hung.

5. Although Dept emphasized issues principle and prestige at stake Vogeler and Jacobson cases and called att'n possible effectiveness suspension JDC operations in bringing about satis settlement Jacobson affair, Leavitt showed no inclination consider such step. Dept concludes from foregoing that only direct interference JDC relief operations by Hung auths wld change present JDC attitude in matter.

Sent Budapest, rptd Vienna.«

ACHESON

«Aaron Berkowitz, Jacobson's principal assistant in Hungary.

«Repeated to Vienna as telegram 1776.

364.1121 Vogeler, Robert A.: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Legation in Austria

CONFIDENTIAL

WASHINGTON, December 27, 1949—7 p.m.

1777. Legation Vienna requested acknowledge Mrs. Vogeler's telegram Dec 14 but appealing to President personally and her telegram Dec 23 to Secretary expressing disappointment ineffectiveness US action to date and urging adoption economic measures reported your 1757 Dec 21. Suggest Legation inform Mrs. Vogeler that officials US government comprehend fully and with the deepest sympathy her anxiety and feelings re plight her husband and that Department together with Legation Budapest is doing utmost bring about his release. You should add that Department is of course giving urgent consideration all possible steps which may contribute that end.

Sent Vienna 1777 repeated Budapest 784.

ACHESON

1 Not printed.

2 Not printed; the measures suggested included the suspension of exports to Hungary and, if necessary, the imposition of a complete economic embargo (364.1121 Vogeler, Robert A.).
SECRET  PRIORITY  

VIENNA, December 28, 1949—10 p. m.

1782. Jacobson released at Schwechat 1 3:30 p. m. to US authorities. Was confined at Andrassy Utca prison 2 in office, not in cell, under constant guard. All personal papers removed otherwise effects carefully listed and now returned with minor exceptions. Did not see Vogeler. Request to contact Legation and his office refused. Clothing examined and returned except possible suicide instruments. Interrogation began immediately and continued for five days with interruptions for sleep on couch in office only about one hour each day in early morning hours. Constantly faced light and forced sit rigidly during interrogation, nearly collapsed from exhaustion repeatedly. After five days this treatment, was permitted to bathe, food improved, previously threatening and abusive attitude became somewhat solicitous and Commander of Police Gabor 3 said would try to obtain release. 3:30 p. m. December 27 was informed could leave in own car for border in one hour. Police escorted to Hungarian border but despite their assurances to contrary Soviet sentries half mile farther refused permit entry Austria.

In interrogation Jacobson never beaten but alternately accused then requested confess his own and JDC’s espionage activities. Was confronted with young male former employee, obviously terrified and believed beaten, who confirmed guilt all charges. JDC distribution system described as widespread spy network throughout Hungary under US official guidance. Trobe 4 and Silver, his predecessor with JDC Vienna, accused assisting US intelligence. Although Jacobson denied ever knowing Vogeler they insisted latter’s confession confirmed evidence both linked in espionage activities. Greatest interest shown in contacts with Legation particularly Atchés Muentert, Hoyne, 5 Kopcsak 6 Was required to explain in writing every appointment in his desk calendar and subjects discussed. Threats of confinement in

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1 Schwechat was the control point on the border between the Soviet zone of occupation of Austria and the city of Vienna. Telegram 1780, December 28, from Vienna, not printed, earlier reported that Jacobson had been released by Hungarian authorities and allowed to leave Hungary but had been detained by Soviet occupation authorities because his travel papers were allegedly not in order. An understanding between American and Soviet authorities on the release of Jacobson was subsequently worked out (384.1121 Jacobson, Israel G.).
2 The headquarters of the Hungarian secret police. Robert Vogeler was being held prisoner in the same prison.
3 Presumably the reference here is to Gen. Péter Gábor, the Chief of the Hungarian State Security Office.
4 Representative in Vienna for the Joint Distribution Committee.
5 Col. Hilbert F. Muentert, Air Attaché in Budapest.
cellar and more unpleasant treatment made repeatedly. Jacobson, naturally frightened, was badly unnerved by revelation that Hungarians aware he went to Yugoslavia in 1945 ostensibly with Jewish mission to aid children, actually for Joint, as secretary to two men later executed in connection Rajk trial. He believes this basis for his arrest. He signed great number of statements and confessions implicating self, JDC, Legation, Vogeler, probably others, in espionage and other offenses. Was often suggested that while JDC would be stopped in Hungary, his confession might permit American staff to leave unmolested. Unable to judge whether this earnest or interrogation trick.

He may have further comment tomorrow when rested. Expects depart for Paris this week.

ERHARDT

364.1121 Vogeler, Robert A.: Telegram

The Minister in Hungary (Davis) to the Secretary of State

SECRET

BUDAPEST, December 30, 1949—6 p. m.

1407. Fifty minute interview Berei noon December 30 unproductive progress Vogeler case. Conversation revolved around following points from which he unshaken:

1) Vogeler suffering no ill treatment.
2) Minister Interior would not have issued December 25 communiqué without ample evidence and this does not mean investigation completed. Such public statements may be made at various stages investigation.
3) Speedy release Jacobson proves no anti-foreign bias, each case being treated on merits.
4) Juridical examination Consular Treaty discloses no right American citizen see Consul during investigation.
5) Foreigners enjoy same rights as Hungarians who may be held incommunicado during investigation.
6) Demand for constant visit to Vogeler amounts to demand for preferential treatment to which not entitled by Treaty or otherwise.
7) US Govt demanding release and asserting damages reverse of helpful “even if Hungarian authorities had had it in mind to release Vogeler such threatening note could only delay action.”

After further talk in which neither conceded anything I proposed to take advantage new year to wipe slate clean by expelling Vogeler, desist further note writing or counter measures, forget matter with view peaceful consideration many questions pending between US and Hungary. Emphasized this my personal proposal without Department

1The communiqué under reference announced that Hungarian investigative authorities were convinced that Vogeler had committed acts of espionage against Hungary.
2Regarding the release of Jacobson, see telegram 1782, December 28, from Vienna, supra.
knowledge. Berei replied would lay it before government but expressed opinion Hungarians would find it difficult accept view over “threatening” note and would give no indication when I could expect reply.

Mokma and I both gained strong impression Berei’s words and manner trial determined on and Hungarians expect guilty verdict. For example he commented trial Hungarian accused would be difficult with Vogeler absent implying he is to be chief culprit or at least star witness.

Though recognizing slender hope my suggestion will be adopted recommend Department give me discretion as to timing delivery its reply to Hungarian note of December 24 8 (which I understand Department will telegraph me). I would of course advise Department well in advance (by phone if necessary) of date hour delivery.

Sent Department 1407 repeated Vienna 178 Prague 90.

Davis

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8 Regarding the Hungarian Foreign Ministry note of December 24, see editorial note, p. 498.