

Responses to Events in the USSR Reported

Prime Minister Interviewed

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[Studio interview with Prime Minister Jozsef Antall by unidentified reporter: from the "Newsreel" program—live or recorded]

[Text] [Announcer] Our studio guest is Prime Minister Jozsef Antall. Good evening. Thank you for coming. Obviously, people are very interested in your opinion and in the government's stance. First, perhaps we can speak about the kind of foreign political consultations that have taken place since this morning. We know from MTI that you have spoken to Chancellor Kohl on the phone.

[Antall] Well, since this morning—obviously, besides the installation of officials and other events—the government is primarily dealing with this issue. The National Security Cabinet also convened this morning, and we examined the current situation. In the course of discussions, we have gotten in touch with neighboring countries, and we are in touch with certain neighboring countries; while on the other hand, I personally talked to Chancellor Kohl on the phone, who informed me about his talk with President Bush, British Prime Minister Major, and President Mitterrand, and effectively informed me about the joint Western stance that is evolving on these issues. Naturally, all those anxieties in the current situation, that are observable from every side, have been voiced.

The Hungarian stance cannot be other than the stance of the European or North American states, or that of all the democracies of the world: that all political transformation can take place by constitutional, democratic means and that, naturally, whatever will happen, Gorbachev's life work—and President Gorbachev's role was an outstanding one in the central and East European transformation—and this must also be expressed in these difficult hours too.

I think Hungary, in accordance with its size, as a country with a mutual border, is able to carry out a responsible foreign policy, and must carry out this responsible foreign policy on the basis of all those principles that—based on the Paris Charter—are obligatory to all countries. I think it is good to recall that Hungary, as a sovereign republic, is no longer a member of the Warsaw Pact, nor CEMA, and that the Soviet troops have left Hungary. I think it is extraordinarily important—and the thing about which at the time I was not necessarily happy about—that it was not President Gorbachev who signed the document about the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, but Vice President Yanayev. I note that now with frank joy because it means that it is Yanayev's signature that is on the document dissolving the Warsaw Pact. Thus, he cannot think differently about this document than Gorbachev or we might have.

[Reporter] So you had the opportunity to meet Yanayev as well, just as you had met Gorbachev on several occasions.

Looking at the economic aspects of the events, what effects could they have on our economy?

[Antall] It is certain that they cannot have good effects. We know what they meant at the stock markets of the world, what these can mean economically. The financial world is extremely sensitive. It reacts immediately to any crisis.

In this region, stability is extremely important; it is very important that any problems in the region should not appear alarming. So, naturally, we must not forget the events in Yugoslavia, even now—and I would like to stress that the question of Yugoslavia and the internal crisis in Yugoslavia cannot be neglected even now, when a crisis has developed in a larger country. This crisis we had, until now, regarded to some extent as a model, and we felt it important earlier that the world should examine this problem as a model. Now the events have occurred in a larger country, events that can endanger the stability of the region and give grounds for concern.

From the economic point of view, it is important that Hungary should, if possible, continue economic relations with the Soviet Union under any circumstances. There are close links between economics and politics, but for economic cooperation it is not always necessary to have political, and even less so, ideological or moral agreements. So we take the position that we wish to maintain economic links, but we have some serious concerns over what kind of economic partner a destabilized Soviet Union can be, burdened with manifestations of civil war, demonstrations, and other conflicts.

[Reporter] And finally, regarding internal political consultations, you not long ago met the heads of the legislative parties. Were you successful in bringing about the national unity that would be so necessary at such times, in such situations?

[Antall] I believe that the leaders of the six legislative parties, who have just met, and whom I invited to the Assembly building, were in full unity regarding an analysis of the situation. They took a completely identical position regarding the principled basis from which we should approach what has happened, and we were in full agreement regarding all of this. Obviously, we were also fully agreed that there are issues concerning constitutional rights, human rights, minority rights, that must be judged the same in all of the Hungarian legislative parties because, if we were not to judge these issues identically, we would find ourselves at variance with Hungarian constitutionality. So we must profess this, and we do profess this, and the legislative parties were in agreement regarding this.

Regarding foreign policy agreement, obviously there might be differences of emphasis between the individual parties, but regarding the issue of how we view the

situation that has developed in the Soviet Union, how we view the sources of danger, and what we would view with greater pleasure, I believe our positions are identical or very close to one another. I trust that in Hungarian foreign policy, in spite of all the debates and differences of view, there cannot be divergent positions on basic issues, since foreign policy is a vital issue, it is a vital issue of the nation, and there must also be agreement on what constitutes the country's place in Europe and in this security system.

I think that now and in the coming days we must be in contact with one another, and we must take a joint stance, if necessary.

[Reporter] Thank you very much for this conversation.