
**Minutes of the HSWP Political Committee Meeting Held on
May 16, 1989
(Excerpt)**

[...]

Károly Grósz: Your attention, please, comrades, we have now come to the questions related to the Warsaw Treaty. Do you have anything further to add before we start?

Gyula Horn: Well, I find myself in a somewhat awkward situation here, Comrade Grósz, in view of the fact that the concept of this material, let's put it this way, is different from our present concept. Then there are the latest developments to consider. Now I would not wish to tax the Political Committee's attention any further after a full day's session, but there are a couple of points which would be essential from our position's point of view. One of them is that I do not agree with the suggestion that we should expand the topics to be discussed in the Warsaw Treaty, quite the contrary. Only two fundamental issues should be discussed in the Warsaw Treaty: one is the question of the joint and the national defenses, and the other concerns a couple of fundamental international issues, mostly relating to our multilateral maneuvering. Let's not go down the same road that the Romanian have proposed to take, namely that we should add to the agenda the questions of socialist construction, i.e. the experiences of building socialism at home, along with the questions of economic cooperation within the framework of the Warsaw Treaty; I'm sorry to say that several Warsaw Treaty countries have embraced the proposal. On our part, and I apologize for this, we are opposed to what has been written down, and we do not endorse it under any circumstances. Still related to this is my suggestion that we remove from the agenda the proposal about the establishment of a special committee dealing with human rights; nothing has been accomplished after a full year, and I see no point in continuing, with the gap being so wide between the practice and the principles in the Warsaw Treaty, and I must say this: we do not have support for this within the Warsaw Treaty, that is, in a multilateral framework; nevertheless, everything having to do with human rights and stuff, we can accomplish in cooperation with the Soviets, the Poles and others as well; we can take concerted action, on the 18th, here is the human rights issue in preparation for Paris, but we must not take this to the Warsaw Treaty. This was one of the things I wanted to emphasize; so my suggestion is that we take this out of the draft proposal altogether. I must add to this that the Romanian leadership, Ceausescu personally, clearly puts the Soviet leadership under great pressure in order to have a very tough negotiation at the first-secretary level already at the Political Consultative Committee's meeting, in case the meeting they proposed for June should not take place, again about socialist construction and the modernization of the Warsaw Treaty. The Soviets are now making a concession. My recommendation is that, regarding the future of the Warsaw Treaty, we agree only on those things, which the Soviets also agree upon. In other words, the emphasis is on the idea that the smaller the number and the range of topics that we take there the better. As to the other element, I recommend that we send a reply note signed by Comrade Grósz to the Romanian proposals by the end of May. We cannot put it off any longer. We are still not late, we are simultaneously in consultation with the Soviets, they will send their own letter by the end of May or beginning of June, along with the Poles, and we know nothing about the others. We must declare our position here in connection with the Romanian proposals, so as I have already mentioned and regarding the entire future direction of the Warsaw Treaty; the establishment of the military and defense

committee is now essentially nothing more than the continuation of the committee of defense ministers, only its scope is narrower, and we recommend this only if the realization of the foreign policy aspects is guaranteed, because otherwise it would be impossible. The other issue on which we must also declare our position is the impracticality of the Warsaw Treaty's enlargement, i.e. the admission of Yugoslavia, not to mention the point that Yugoslavia would not go along with it, anyway. I wouldn't go into the military aspects. And finally the third element: at the June 7 and June 8 meetings of the Political Consultative Committee everything that I have put forward earlier, in harmony with these, in other words we must propose an agenda that does not involve a joint obligation in the guaranteeing of national minority rights and other things. In other words, we must not play a part in this, which is not backed up by our partners. And this is what I propose to the honorable Political Committee.

Károly Grósz: Comrade Kárpáti.

Ferenc Kárpáti: I would like to add a few ideas, if I may. On page 6 we read this: "No more military documents of foreign policy consequences should be produced without prior consultation" and vice versa. I can tell you that this is exactly how it's been done lately. This was not the practice earlier on, but quite understandably, these international negotiations in connection with disarmament have made it both justified and necessary, and now it is established and I believe it all takes place in quite a good atmosphere. Not just here, it was the same everywhere else, actually, I must say. Incidentally, I personally think it is extremely important that the atmosphere should be good, especially in matters that are related to disarmament. We are heading in the right direction. The other point: the material raises the question whether it is really necessary to have the representatives of Unified Armed Forces' Commander in Chief posted permanently to the armies of the member states. I raised this issue personally, and I see justification for it, because it has a long-established tradition. I must say, so far this has not been raised in other countries in this form. Well, perhaps excepting the Romanians, but not the others. I should also point out that there are several armies that even have advisors posted to them, but this is not the same. They are the representatives and the colleagues of the Commander in Chief; we have quite a few of them with us, too, but they do not interfere much with our work. They act as liaison officers: they are well informed about everything and they inform the central command and so forth. On the other hand, the staff generals and officers sent to work with the central command by the national armies of the various member states are highly qualified soldiers: twenty-one people altogether, two of them generals, the others high ranking officers. I have raised the point on several occasions that they are not really involved in the work. They are not involved actively and substantially. Although their status would require that they should be involved in the development of ideas and tasks, and so forth. I raised this point several times. They showed sympathy, therefore they understand the problem, yet no progress has been made in this area. Therefore, in my view the emphasis should be on making progress here. I can also tell you that precisely in connection with studying this material, the Polish side, including the Polish minister who was also here, said that he had proposed to confer the rank of deputy commander on the appointed representatives of the various countries at the staff. This was suggested after the material had been completed. So I think that it is only correct that if such a proposal emerged, then it would be a wise thing to support it. I mean that there should be an arrangement along these lines at the staff; I made the point at the security meeting that in the present situation I was of the opinion that this was what we should represent, without being too forward about the elimination of these problems, but we should seek ways to make sure that such changes do take place. I think we should have a flexible approach. I feel that we would encounter a rigid opposition, if tried to suggest it now. I consider these two paragraphs on page 7 to be extremely important. The reason I am saying this is that I think not everyone is familiar with these things, but it is my

duty to know this thoroughly. "The Peacetime and the Wartime Resolution of the Unified Armed Forces." Each of these documents is such that it states in a complex manner the obligations and the tasks of every country and so forth, and these were laid down a long time ago and therefore they do not reflect the new thinking and the new concept. In last year the Commander in Chief proposed certain modifications in the Wartime Resolution. He was here and we had a discussion about it. These proposed changes were not quite in the same direction that we are considering now, quite the contrary, and this was why we could not agree to them. And so this was taken off the agenda, or was hushed up, I am not sure which one was the case, nevertheless there is no mention of it now. So this is a new proposal on our part, well, sort of, as we already brought it up last year. Both documents should be reviewed in the light of the present concept and thinking. There is one point, which is especially critical. Namely, to put it briefly for the sake of clarity: the "Brezhnev doctrine," in other words, if any one of the countries gets into trouble, then the others within the alliance can rush to its rescue. Although it is not worded as plainly as that, this is what it boils down to. For this reason, I propose that it be included. It won't be easy, I think. The next point is on page 9: this was brought up at the security meeting and it concerns the appointed head of the Hungarian delegation at the Political Consultative Committee. I lay this issue before the Political Committee for consideration. How would it look if Hungary stuck out like a sore finger at the meeting of the allied countries, I ask you. In my view, the crucial point of this entire material is that we should increase the political weight of both this council and the Warsaw Treaty. And the first secretary is left out of it! Well, I can't understand the reason and that is why I make this proposal. Actually, it was raised differently at this security meeting. And finally, on page 9 it says that "the Ministry of Defense should be more active in planning the development of relations between the Warsaw Treaty and NATO," and so forth. I think we have made substantial progress here. For a start, in May the first NATO defense minister ever to visit Hungary will come here as head of the Dutch delegation. The British Secretary of Defense will be the next in September; this is the first such visit in the history of the relations between the Warsaw Treaty and NATO, or even longer than that. There will be talks in this direction, I think, and they will express something along those lines. There is a marked interest on the part of several other countries, also. The West-German secretary of state has just been here on a visit. Admittedly, it was not an invitation by the NDM or some other parliamentary channels, but several countries were involved. I think this should be continued. What I have in mind is some kind of a gradual process. This is especially so when it is based on the concept, which is in the making here; I think something will be added here to the effect that in line with the further reductions we should seize the initiative in relation to Austria and Yugoslavia, that they should support us in the deal that we reduce our armed forces but at the same time we demand that they reduce the concentration of armed forces in Northern Italy. I would attach great significance to this; it is a Hungarian initiative, which could, in the context of other issues, make a positive contribution to the present détente. Thank you.

Károly Grósz: Thank you very much. Any questions, comrades? No questions. Who wants to make any comments? Comrade Szurös, please.

Mátyás Szurös: This is indeed something that requires careful consideration. We should be groping for answers in the direction indicated by Comrade Horn. For a start, I would omit the very first paragraph completely, because things like "the Soviet Union has massive deterrent and retaliating capabilities that cannot be deflected" should not be mentioned even in an introduction; instead, we could start by saying that up till now the Warsaw Treaty has mostly etc., etc. This first political assessment is not only unnecessary but can also lead to misunderstanding and it also contains inaccuracies. Coming to the next problem, it very

appropriately mentions how the cooperation between parliaments should be handled, in other words there is still no need for a permanent organization, but ...

(Károly Grósz: This is the Polish proposal.)

Mátyás Szurös: This is indeed the Polish proposal. In Strasbourg we were together with Malinowsky, the Sejm marshal, and he never mentioned it. He never mentioned it.

Károly Grósz: They don't know what to do with it.

Mátyás Szurös: We must look for other areas of cooperation. And on a bilateral basis this is plausible. The same couldn't be said about the goings-on there, which aren't plausible at all and would only limit our maneuvering space. As to the human rights committee, I think the document says that it should be a permanent organization, the establishment of a permanent organization, and the majority is, indeed, reluctant to support us in this; nevertheless, it should not be taken off the agenda, because (Károly Grósz: This is there at the bottom of page 5.)

Mátyás Szurös: It is at the bottom of page 7, actually. Page 7, permanent organization. (Grósz: Yes.) We have already proposed this once. I think we should not force it. We should keep quiet about it, but we shouldn't take it off the agenda, because that, too could be misleading, if we took it off, if we backed off, as if we were no longer dedicated to human rights issues, humanitarian problems, the national minorities' situation and so on. Therefore, I suggest that we keep it on the agenda. I agree with Comrade Kárpáti on the point that right now, in this situation, when the majority is on our side, because the Soviet Union and Poland together constitute a majority (not numerically of course, but in reality), so in such a period when we are exposed to certain criticism and attacks, we should have a flexible approach. I agree with this, because right now, we, permanent representatives of the Warsaw Treaty, are not particularly worried about this; this is of course different from the viewpoint of the Soviet Army's leadership, who are Soviet generals and officers at a time when disarmament is considered, but we are not particularly worried; we should keep this on the agenda, as Comrade Kárpáti has said it, but in light of the fact that nobody seems to like it, we should not force it; nevertheless, we should keep it on the agenda, because it is an anomaly. I think it is extremely important that we remove this "Brezhnev doctrine" from the Wartime Resolution; this is essential, because we know what it's like, and the Hungarian leadership was opposed to it, as I witnessed it myself; Comrade Kárpáti knows it from way back, and I think we were quite unsupported on this issue then, that this wartime resolution should not be wrapped in Cold War rhetoric, but this is what we ended up with, anyway. We must address this problem in an appropriate way, we must come back to this later, because it must be revised and I think that the Polish proposal is fundamentally sound; it somewhat upstages our proposal by demanding more substantial representation at the staff and in Moscow and a gradual phasing out of the representation in the various member states and so on. So I think we are moving in the right direction and if we take into consideration all that the two minister comrades have said and finally it will be our representation at the Political Consultative Committee. As long as Hungary de jure has a one-party system, it is acceptable that the first secretary of the party leads the delegation. Once the multi-party system is introduced, things will look a little different. Perhaps not fundamentally different, but it would still not be appropriate, if several first secretaries were in the delegation, but ...

Károly Grósz: It's possible, but they will not talk to us. We can go.

Mátyás Szurös: That's it. So this situation will arise at some point, but after all this is typically a government task, a state duty. This is how the structure will change, and this, too, requires flexible handling; as to the rest, we shall see what the future will hold for us. Thank you very much.

Károly Grósz: Please go ahead, Comrade Nyers.

Rezso Nyers: Essentially, I agree with the entire document; we must firmly demand the withdrawal of the Brezhnev doctrine. This is one of the comments I wanted to make. Therefore, I am all for the proposal, but I want to cap it with the demand that we stay firm on this. The other thing: I think the First Secretary must be included among the leaders of the delegation; this is what our constitution demands at the moment, and this is how it must be. A practical solution must be found, like accompanying the prime minister. There was a time when this was the case; Khrushchev and Bulganin traveled together. Now this is ...

Károly Grósz: This is still the way. It has been the way so far.

Szurös: First secretary, prime minister, foreign minister, defense minister.

Rezso Nyers: Yes, yes, but Comrade Kádár has always been the leader.

Szurös: Oh, you mean the leader, yes, I suppose that's true.

Rezso Nyers: Now, we must do it with Károly Grósz and Miklós Németh as leaders. In this way we shall have a spring board for the future, and then God knows what will happen.

Károly Grósz: It will be simpler next year. Go ahead.

Rezso Nyers: It's far from certain that it would be simpler. God knows. (Interjection: If our party wins the elections, then it won't be simpler.) If our party wins the elections, then it won't.

Károly Grósz: Well now, this is what we should endorse then. If I understand it correctly, Comrade Horn's position differs on the point of the committee on page 7. I think that the formula put forward by Comrade Szurös would be more flexible; in other words, we neither force it nor withdraw it. Well, I think this is a civilized way of beating a slow retreat (Horn: This is exactly what I meant.) As to the resolution, this is a serious matter and it is not the first time that this has been on the agenda; it's been on the agenda for some time now and we'll see how it'll go down there. We'll also see about this representation, I mean the representative of the Commander in Chief; we have already discussed this and we know the situation on that score. The rest is OK, I think. For us the big issue is not this, but the question of having separate negotiations. People from Moscow have just inquired whether it was true that we did not want to go. For the second time. Just this morning. Therefore, somebody either uses a separate channel of communication, because that possibility cannot be excluded. (Interjection: Or it's a case of disinformation.) Or something is deliberately built in, disinformation, I don't know. So we must attend under all circumstances except one: if the Romanians do indeed want to discuss the Hungarian issue. But we have not received any... (Nyers: We should go there even then, only if they bring up the matter, we'll stand up. We stand up and leave.) Yes, yes, but if they give it in writing, then we won't even have to go, because there is nothing about it in the original document. So if they give it writing, we won't have to go. But if they bring up the matter there, then we'll

have to stand up and ... (Unintelligible interjection) it is quite clear that no one will accept the sort of practice, which Romanians want to introduce. After having said that, I am not quite sure about the "no one" bit, as I have just heard that the East German protests were less than vigorous. Precisely in the name of the Brezhnev doctrine. That's where the problem is rooted. (Németh: The word is that if the others do not accept the Romanian initiative, then the Romanians will resign from the alliance.) This is how they blackmail the Soviet Union. (Németh: Comrade Gorbachev's reaction to this - mind you this is local news, it must be verified - was that in that case they should go ahead and resign.) This is accurate, because Comrade Gorbachev told me personally. This information is entirely accurate. Sorry?
(Interjection: He said it at lunch.)

Károly Grósz: He said at lunch. At lunch he said that they had sent a reply suggesting that the Romanians could resign without a problem. So I don't believe that it would ever come to this. There is another question that we shall have to address at one point: if we come out and ask for it, then a face-to-face meeting might take place, I mean a bilateral meeting between the Hungarian leadership and the Soviet leadership, on the other subjects, i.e. the troops stationed in Hungary and so forth; I personally think we should initiate it, but we'll have to have further consultation about this. (Horn: I am not sure I understand this correctly.)
(Interjection: Warsaw Treaty?) Yes. Separately. A separate bilateral agreement. (Interjection: Is it a good idea?) It is a good idea. We would also need it to increase our popularity at home. (Interjection: Why is it a good idea? What's it all about?) (Németh: Not just with the Soviets. We would have to do it with others, too.)

Nyers: This gives the impression that there is a critical situation here, and then the Soviets... Of course, now we have Gorbachev, all right, but it is still a delicate and slippery situation both internationally and of course at home. To have separate military negotiations.

Károly Grósz: Not military.

Nyers: Then what?

Károly Grósz: Separate political negotiations.

Nyers: Yes, but this would take place at a meeting of the Warsaw Treaty's Political Consultative Committee, and it would be difficult to dissociate the two. I suggest that we reconsider it.

Károly Grósz: OK, then we shall sleep on it.

Nyers: It's a different matter altogether, if it's unofficial.

Németh: It's not public.

Nyers: If it's not public, then that's different; in that case it has my full support, but if it's public, then a new factor may come in again, giving the impression that some people are destabilizing the Hungarian situation. (Kárpáti: May I add something to this?) Yes.

Ferenc Kárpáti: The way I see it is that we should send some signal to the Soviet leadership, and personally to Comrade Gorbachev: we should at least inform him about how things are in Hungary today and how

people look on the presence of Soviet troops here. I have no doubt whatsoever that within a very short time this would become one of the key issues of the opposition's program, as there are very serious indications already. For this reason I would definitely inform the Soviet leadership about the situation, about the prospect that this could shortly become a critical issue here in Hungary. Personally, I don't think that the Soviet troops would flee from here in panic within a short period (Interjection: they shouldn't!), but if there are negotiations about it with the Soviet leadership, then we'll have to consider our options for such an eventuality, instead of waiting until our party and government will be forced to act under external pressure. Provided they put the correct complexion on the thing, I give it a good chance that they accept the situation; but I can see Comrade Nyers's point about making the negotiations public. Not by the year 2000 but before that, whether such negotiations are taking place at all, and we take the wind out of the opposition's radical demands. On my part, I propose that we find a way to do this, either at the Political Consultative Committee's meeting or at a different occasion, this of course should be discussed, but this should take place at some point.

Károly Grósz: But the message went off last week. And the reply came today, saying that if we require it and propose it at the meeting, then it will be possible to start negotiations at the highest level on this subject.

Nyers: You mean the presence of Soviet troops in Hungary?

Kroly Grósz: Yes, yes. Exactly.

Gyula Horn: Comrade Grósz, I would like to make two comments; one is that after the consultation on Friday, the consultation with the Soviets that is, there was utter chaos both in Moscow and in Vienna. Now we are trying to put things in order jointly. What happened was that the Soviets made no changes at all, regardless of the fact that they should have put down on the table in Vienna the schedule and the scale of the envisaged withdrawal of Soviet troops stationed abroad. So there was a verbal agreement with Shevardnadze about exchanging views on the subject at the human rights conference in Vienna or Paris on the 30th. My suggestion is that we wait until we learn their positions, because there is a chasm here between the party line and the government line, etc. The other thing that bothers them just as it bothers us, and the entire debate revolves around this, is that there hadn't been a consensual agreement on which the presence of Soviet troops could be justified. There is no such treaty. There isn't one within the framework of the Warsaw Treaty, as the latter makes no reference to troops stationed abroad; their term of occupation expired in 1955, after the signature of the Austrian peace treaty that is; the agreement signed in 1957 only addresses the legal, financial and other aspects of their presence, without mentioning the legal grounds of their being stationed here. The word is that Comrade Pacsek has once been shown a Russian document signed by Géza Révész back at the time, but whether it is authentic or something ... and this irritates the Soviets, too, and their top leadership is looking into the problem.

Károly Grósz: I asked the legal experts to study the resolution of the Presidium and it turns out that there are two possible interpretations. Therefore, if we choose to follow this path and try to establish whether or not there was a legal foundation for it, then we shall probably never live to see the resolution of the problem. My view is that we can get out of this on political grounds, by declaring that our political interests demand it.

Károly Grósz: Please, go ahead.

Ferenc Kárpáti: Comrades, allow me to clarify a few points, since recently I have had to dedicate a considerable amount of my time to studying this issue.

Károly Grósz: All right, but there are different...

Ferenc Kárpáti: In 1957 there was an agreement between the two governments. About the stationing of Soviet troops in Hungary. This document between the two governments was signed not only by the foreign minister [correctly: minister of defense] Géza Révész, but by others as well. In Spring 1958 it was laid down precisely what type of Soviet troops could be stationed here, in what numbers and at which garrisons. We did not have a copy of this document.

Rezso Nyers: Was this an inter-governmental agreement? (Németh: Presidium.)

Ferenc Kárpáti: The government instructed the defense ministers (Rezso Nyers: this is the defense minister, Révész.), therefore, it was a government agreement in 1957, Comrade Nyers, and in 1958 the defense ministers, on government instruction, specified precisely the strength, the type, the garrison ... we could not find this document, but we have acquired one now, and so it's in our possession. Well now, these are very serious documents, but the changes, which have taken place since, have not yet been negotiated. Now, when part of the troops were withdrawn, I was instructed by Comrade Németh to sign, on the government's behalf, the document about the type of the troops leaving. Believe me I had no difficulty signing that. The part of the troops that remained was considerably rearranged within the country; about 22 divisions were moved to different parts and garrisons of the country. On the basis of the agreement with Comrade Németh, I asked the Soviet ministry of defense to notify the Hungarian government, according to the terms of the 1957 agreement, about the planned troop movements. This means that now we shall get an accurate picture of what is where in our country, and the Hungarian government's consent will be required before these troop movements can take place; also, we can make comments and modifications, and the rest. I thought it extremely important to report you this, because this is the actual situation. Therefore, there are legal grounds. This was all very familiar to me, because I have been studying these agreements quite a lot recently. Only they have been relegated to oblivion since then and have not been clarified. The circumstances that I have outlined here could also be linked to the present rearrangements, and I believe now is the time to do that.

Károly Grósz: Thank you. Comrade Szurös wanted to add something.

Mátyás Szurös: I try to make it very short, but my view is that, given the Soviet side's readiness to engage in a political dialogue with us, and in Bucharest of all places, this is a historical moment and we must seize it. Even the political complexion of it is right; that was what we wanted: we wanted that the Soviets firmly come down on our side, and if they are willing to engage in high level political dialogue with the Hungarian leadership, well, that alone has utmost significance, not to mention the subject: the stationing of the Soviet troops, along with many other political issues, details about which we are kept relatively in the dark. Back then we firmly stated that there were no nuclear weapons in Hungary, right? Back then, I told my old mate Comrade Oláh, I said, Pista, come clean on this, we can come out and say this, because it emerged at the level of politics. And now the Soviet Union announces that it will remove its nuclear weapons from the territory of the socialist countries. Now we shall learn, as Comrade Kárpáti has mentioned it, where these weapons are, if it ever gets published, that is; and now it will become a subject of negotiations. This is the other point. My third point. We met the Peace Council yesterday; it will propose that the storage of nuclear

weapons be outlawed in Hungary by the constitution. No one knows the wording, but this will grow into a constitutional issue in Hungary. And this is our Peace Council that makes this demand, so you can imagine the vehemence with which others will rush to bolster this demand. So we have a process here, about which we can exchange views with the Soviets, and it would be very important to know the line they consider to take. There will be no rapid changes here and, as Comrade Kárpáti has said it, they will not be hasty about the withdrawal; I think it is necessary for us to know how they are thinking.

Comrade Grósz: Please go ahead.

Comrade Nyers: Yes, it is very interesting what you have said, Comrade Szurös; nevertheless, I find the thought somewhat disconcerting that the session will be held in Bucharest and the world press will spread the news about what the Romanians as hosts are proposing, namely a discussion on the proposition that socialism is under threat in Hungary, to put it briefly. Besides, even if the discussion will come to nothing, the news will spread, and then will follow this Soviet-Hungarian meeting; my worry is that it forecasts a repetition of the Ágcsernyo [Cierna nad Tisou] business. I am all for the negotiations with the Soviets, I only question the timing and the location. But perhaps I exaggerate the danger.

Gyula Horn: Allow me to clarify a few points, Comrade Grósz. One is that the Romanians do not want to discuss it within the framework of the Political Consultative Committee. That means that instead of the scheduled 7th (Grósz: Yes.) and 8th, an unscheduled date (Interjection: incomprehensible), this is one of them. July 7th.

But they want to have the unscheduled meeting one day earlier.

Gyula Horn: But this is against the fact that the Soviets already have their schedule fixed and this is not included in it. Therefore, it is more or less settled within the Warsaw Treaty and the subject cannot be included. The other thing is that unfortunately there is still debate about this, and my proposed approach to the question makes no reference to the documents, this is obvious; but we should also know that in disclosing the documents we cannot bypass the fact that the agreement of 1957, instead of providing a legal foundation of the Soviet troops' presence here, was about the legal and other rules regulating their stay here. It concerned the leasing of garrisons and stuff. We are not the ones who raise this issue, they do it. We consulted with everybody, from military advisors to legal experts. So I can tell you here that in 1958 Khrushchev initiated the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary. Comrade Kádár declined the offer, claiming that although the domestic situation had been consolidated, the external environment had become more hostile. This came up at the Central Committee's meeting, where Comrade Kádár briefed us about his talks in Moscow. We do not wish to leak this out, but as the documents keep emerging, they will be known to an increasing number of people. (Grósz: Yes, I am familiar with this.) So we cannot bypass this, obviously; my view is that we must seize the opportunity and go ahead with the negotiations with the Soviets.

Károly Grósz: Very well; now that we have approved the material with this modification, I ask you to endorse an internal resolution empowering us to write back and ask for an official, non-public meeting at the political level. Because this is the essential point, that on behalf of this body we ask an official, non-political, non-public meeting in this matter. Agreed?

Gyula Horn: So can we go ahead with drafting the letter?

Károly Grósz: Yes, naturally, it should be sent to the Romanians, this is most important.

Gyula Horn: And it makes no difference if they want us to back down on the human rights, the important thing is that we do not propose the resolution and that we do not press on with it.

Károly Grósz: Of course, we do not press on with it, that's it, we do not beat a retreat, but we do not press on with it, either.

Gyula Horn: No, obviously not.

[Translation by Ervin Dunay]