

**Address of Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány to the Annual General Assembly  
of Heads of Diplomatic Missions held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 30  
July 2007**

Verbatim transcript slightly edited for clarity

Mr. Vice President, Your Excellencies, Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,

This is the start of a longer consultation process, so please allow me not to make just simple statements, but rather speaking from the crossroads of being a politician responsible for execution and an engaged intellectual, I would like to make a more or less courageous attempt to contribute to this consultation process.

I think that the past twelve months were quite successful for Hungarian foreign policy. I think it was successful because we have achieved the most important objectives. You have played a key role in that, and I would like to express my thanks for that.

Many, many years ago when I was not a politician I used to think that it was not particularly difficult to shape the foreign policy for a country like Hungary. The relationships have been established, we are basically followers and there are very few instances where we can undertake to actually shape global or regional power and political setups.

And then the more I have learned about this world, the more experience I have gathered over the past years, the more I think today that your profession is much more complicated and difficult than, let's say, that of the finance minister which is not subject to much envy either. I think the formulae are clearer there than they are here. Almost everything is very difficult to apply that we have thought in terms of foreign policy over the past 10-15 years. I do not want to make an itemised list because that would be the job for scientists. However, it is difficult not to notice that the only thing that has remained constant in international politics, diplomacy or security policy is the series of continual and substantial changes.

Let me bring a few examples just to make it clear for everyone why I believe that the challenges we are facing are larger than ever before. Even if I do not want to start from very far, here we have South-East Asia and the continuous and visibly unstoppable appreciation and revaluation of the role of China within South-East Asia. I think that Europe and the United States are currently in the situation when they have already understood that this is one of the most complicated global challenges on long term. It is very obvious that the considerations and convictions about European and then later American – and let me use quotation marks here – “supremacy” can no longer be applied.

Secondly. It has become clear from what we have thought and done in terms of international terrorism that it is not a temporary feature but rather a long term and very difficult to manage phenomenon. It is clearly a burden on international relations and a burden on our alliances. These are issues that are difficult to digest for NATO, the United Nations or the European Union. It is very difficult to use traditional solutions here, or if we do, we will hardly, hardly reach any solution.

In case of the interventions we have had; let's think about Iraq or Afghanistan where we hoped to be able to give a swift response to the challenges, well, it has turned out that we have to expect a long term presence; and of course we would like to end these successfully. Nevertheless, we can see that success is not in tangible proximity in any of these theatres.

Third. We should not deny that we have to face the issue of Russia. Russia has awoken to a more decided and clearer national self-consciousness over the past 3-4 years, it has become stronger and requires a new role in shaping the world. That expanding and deepening partnership that was so typical for the European Union and the United States with their relations to Russia in the nineties has obviously become something for the past; insecurity and sometimes even suspicion grows on both sides that either of the parties wants to use the events to their own benefit.

And the story does not end here: we can see what is happening in the European Union. I think we cannot deny on the one side that the enlargement has been a success; and there are completely new challenges on the other side. We face completely new challenges. We should not pretend not seeing that there has been an increasing level of scepticism about additional enlargement especially with the EU 15 in the last 1-3 years. This is not the scepticism of the political elite because I think that the political elite support the enlargement very correctly and in line with progressive European traditions. However, the political elite cannot resist the influence of sceptical people who enjoy very substantial public support. There is a very strong internal societal doubt in very many countries. We should not deny either that it has turned out that the characteristic historical and social development of newly exceeding countries and the responses to these developments do not remain simple national interests. Let's just remember the challenge we faced with the integration of the intentions and will of Poland into the constitutional process, and we are not even at the end of that. Of course, I believe that we can never say that Poland does not have the right or is not allowed to represent its own interests. On the contrary, I believe we all have the right to do so. The European Union is about trying to create a better framework for representing our own interests. However, where is the point when the former conviction that it is easier together can still be reconciled with the particular requirements of representing national interests.

I think that these challenges will remain with us on long term. And if so, then I should tell you that it is necessary more than ever to establish a more complex relationship between the Hungarian government and the diplomatic corps, the official universe of foreign policy makers. What do I mean by that? I think that in the current situation we can rely on the previous model that the government tells you what you

have to represent, and you represent that in different capitals, well, this model can be applied to an ever decreasing degree. The reason is that we are unable to carry out the analyses necessary for the efficiency of Hungarian foreign policy without you. So first of all I would like to tell you that I think one of the most important task is that you also participate directly and actively and contribute among the representatives and makers of Hungarian foreign policy to analyses, planning and strategy making.

We need a more open partnership rather than the simple roles of clients and suppliers in this regard. We definitely cannot be successful without your capacities or without trying to understand together with you what are these processes and what happens in the depth. Most of the issues are not simply black and white, good or bad but let's admit: they are complicated. There can be many legitimate approaches to the issues. It would be very simple to say that the responsibility of Hungarian foreign policy is to promote the enforcement of national interests beyond the borders. However, if the world beyond the borders keeps on changing so quickly and to such depth, then it is extremely difficult to spell out the best way for representing Hungarian interests or even the key content elements of that. This is why I think it is correct to say that after 2004 we could mainly achieve the triple set of objectives of Hungarian foreign policy as they were defined in the nineties. You remember, these included our Euro-Atlantic integration, neighbourhood policy and the more efficient representation of the interests of Hungarian living beyond the borders. It is quite obvious that the dynamism has run out from these triple objectives mainly because they have been achieved to a large extent, even if not completely. So we should reformulate. Some major work has started last summer: to reformulate the foreign policy strategy of Hungary. This does not mean that there would be large changes in direction or criss-crossing, however, I think that we need to set new emphases within this framework that has already become clear.

Let me describe one pillar of that. I would like to make sure that Hungarian foreign policy is theoretically consequent on the one hand, but also practical on the other hand. Theoretically correct in the sense that it never questions the fact that we could define our position in the world. We have defined who are our friends and who are our allies. This could sound pathetic and I do not want to drift in that direction, however, let me point out that our membership in the community of democratisation European nations has fulfilled a century-old dream of Hungarian progression. And I believe that even if we might have thousands of debates with the European Union, which we have had and will always have; even if one or the other such debate is more complex while others can be easily solved, still there is something that we must never question: the position of Hungary within the European Union, and we must never, for a single moment jeopardise the functional unity of the European Union by which it is able to influence global processes. If it is true that our intention was to join a strong and operational European Union, than the maintenance of that operability remains our long term interest. We do not want a lame European Union that is in continuous struggle with itself and divided. But it is also clear that this will be much more difficult now than ever. I will bring some examples for that later.

Secondly. There is no question that Hungary has a priority relationship with the United States. I think Hungary could learn that in difficult and critical moments of its national and also European history there has always been a secure point, I mean the United States – a nation and a country (and let's also add the European Union here) with which we could have the same ideals about the most important issues of politics and about fundamental values. I should admit to a problem, too. This concerns the European Union and the United States alike. When the world is this complex, and when there are no clear-cut yeses and no's but the answers are more nuanced, then how can you safeguard and strengthen your alliances and partnerships on the one hand, and how can you not waive the autonomous answers of Hungary to major global issues. And let's also not forget about something that I shall consider soon: namely that we should find practical responses to a number of issues.

This is more complicated, much more complicated than we have ever assumed. It is difficult to find the point how far partnership and allied faith goes, and where is the point when enforcing autonomous national interests happens to the detriment of joint policies. I don't think that there would be simple answers to that in any of the books on your bookshelves. For this we need to understand precisely how far we can go with what where. Let me repeat that we will not understand this without your work.

It we want to understand only from Budapest what happens in Austria, what happens in the United States, what changes there are in mainstream politics in France under the new president, or why is the new German chancellor more dynamic in European policies than her predecessor – we will not understand this from Hungary alone. For this you are necessary in your missions; so that beyond being very good colleagues of ours whenever we visit, and I always have a bad conscious that you have to spend the bulk of your effort on technical organisational matters – I would like to make sure that the proportions change in this regard. Frankly speaking I think that taxi services are quite good in London. I should never complain. It is wasteful to use diplomats to chauffeur heads of department between airports and ministries abroad. I think you should send taxi vouchers, and if someone feels hurt than you should tell them that it was a public request by the prime minister to stop this practice of trying to compete with London cabs. We should not. You are there to help us understand the policies. You should be able to read, you should be able to negotiate on all different levels, attend conferences and entertain a wide range of relationships for our interest. You already have us, you don't need to talk to us too much in cars. If you can spend the bulk of this energy to other things than, believe me, you do a much better service to Hungary; and please feel empowered from now on not to comply with any such requests. I can tell you that your professional advancement and the assessment of your work will not depend on that but rather on the opposite. Have courage, colleagues, it is not the heads of department who decide on policies.

Let's speak about pragmatism. I think there is one real border to pragmatism or being practical. This is approximately that when we speak about representing our interests, then these interests should not be represented against our partners or in opposition to our allies but rather to our own benefit. This means that the direction of representing

our interests should always remain clear. Whenever there is a conflict between alliances or partnerships (and I consciously want to avoid the term faith) and Hungarian interests, then we need the most to perform clever analysis of why, what, when. Sometimes you must undertake a conflict, and sometimes you must not. Sometimes we should make it clear that we have to take a step back, and sometimes we have to say that we should fight a battle with our friends because we are right. Because it would be wrong to step back.

Frankly speaking I could see only one such issue over the past period and that was energy policy. I still believe that we are right in that matter. I still believe so. I can see an increasing level of mistrust between Russia, Europe and the United States. Talking to all of the parties I can see and hear that this mistrust seems to be exaggerated sometimes. Let me tell you that this remark does not apply to only one or the other side. These are old fears that have awoken. I think that everything from the past many decades teaches us that no world of security can be built from isolation and fear. We should negotiate, negotiate, negotiate and understand each other.

Russia will not be a temporary player in this new world. Maybe nobody will take it as an impolite remark if I add that the world is sometimes less complicated than we believe. We went to Iraq with our active support as a response to international terrorism. The former status quo in the Middle-East has disappear. Oil has become a global strategic issue much more than ever before. The 25 dollar barrel costs 77 barrel today. Russia has grown strong at these energy prices in the course of four years. They have so much reserves that it is perhaps the only country in the world that can survive for two years without even a penny of public revenues. What do you think about the self-confidence of such a country? And there we stand, we are not ready in Iraq while we have a new, strong Russia that has grown up partly on the sides of this battle. The president has a support rate of more than 70 percent. I could see with my very eyes two weeks ago, and I really think that it was not an organised incident, when women were begging the president not to do this to them and to stay in power.

And in the meantime there is a fight going on about who will define politics in the Trans-Caspian, Trans-Caucasian region – which of the large global players can be dominant there. Also, these are countries of a very peculiar development. And we see an emerging Kazakhstan of a growth rate of much more than 10 percent. They have such a strong influence that they are perhaps the only country in the region that can act as a real partner rather than a state paying single-sided attention to Moscow. This is a more complicated situation than we thought. It will also turn out that Russia and Iraq have a different relationship than we thought they would have a few years ago.

Well, of course my main task here is not to give a lengthy analysis of this relationship; all I want to say is that the European Union does have a responsibility in this matter. My friend, Mr. Vice President Franco Frattini will not take it as an insult if I say that the European Union is not him or the Commission but it is rather us. It is we Hungarians as well. I mean if we say that the European Union should actively participate in this global issues than this means that we will most probably not do so

alone but rather as a member of the European Union. However, in order to participate as a member of the European Union we should understand what is going on. We definitely will not deal the cards in a number of issues, and I would also not recommend that. But we should deal cards and we are dealt cards in shaping joint European policies. But this needs us to understand the world.

In terms of the European Union I think the challenges is bigger than we sometimes think. I think you will have one or two more days to discuss this... You definitely have one more day.

Look, what happened around the Constitutional Treaty totally clearly reflects that there are at least two standpoints existing within the European Union. It is increasingly difficult to conceal this fact. I can see that there are some for whom the integration and partnership as it is today is already too much. And it is too little for some others. I can see that there are some countries which are already satisfied with the current level of partnership and they are rather looking for ways to renationalise certain community policies. So there is a certain kind of alibi discussion going on about the Union. It is done at length mostly with the purpose of not doing anything any more. This happens, we know and we can see it. And there are countries – and I can see Hungary among them – I am an enthusiastic pro-European, which say that this is too little. This will not be enough; maybe one or the other country can fight their economic battles, which is partly true. It is partly true: some of the most competitive countries of the world are members of the European Union. However, there is a multitude of major global issues, and let me name two very different areas. There is scientific research and development, where not any of the European countries can have sufficient resources to stand the competition alone. We don't have that, so we should progress here much more rapidly.

Secondly, let me name a middle one. These are the energy issues, and I will speak more about that later.

Third: Foreign and security policy, home and justice affairs, co-operation with various regions of the world, migration and other issues. We must go further in these fields, we simply must. We should unite our national sovereignties. I am happy to see my friend, minister Albert Takács sitting with us because I would like to see Hungary turning from a careful state into a more active country that wants to expand co-operation. There has been or rather there was a slight difference in the opinions of politics and the administration in Hungary. I would like to see a more defined and clearer mandate. We should support the deepening and expansion of co-operation in home and justice affairs. We should be in the forefront of this field.

We said a few years ago that we did not want to see a multi-speed Europe. Ladies and gentlemen I think that this issue has been decided. We shall have a multi-speed Europe. It is partly there already, and it will be there to an increasing level. Namely, we have two choices. Sooner or later those colleagues of mine will be right (and I would never dare say this, but I cannot deny this either), some of the prime ministers of the old 15 influential European states said during our heated debates this spring

that, well, sooner or later one or the other country should face the question that you can not only get onto the train of Europe with your ticket, but you can also get off the same train. You can also get off this train.

Well, such a sentence would have been seen as blasphemy a few years ago – I think in the euphoric atmosphere or at least strong support of the enlargement in Europe. Today influential prime ministers can speak about this in Europe, and this is absolutely not a criticism but rather just a diagnosis of the situation; and they may even speak about this without adding that „prime minister, Feri, please don't quote me on this". You don't even need to be that cautious about this any more. Well, we either face this risk or the fact that there will be a more structured internal co-operation. A colourful network of reinforced co-operations will characterise the situation.

From that point on Hungary has a single task. We should not fight against something that I think is not worth or reasonable fighting against, but we should rather try to switch to the highest gear and belong to the deeper partnerships and reinforced co-operations that... [text missing].

Let's stay at the constitutional matters for a little longer because I think it is worth at least one more sentence.

We should thank Germany for what they did in the last six months.

Many would never have bet that we would get this far a year ago. You know this as well as I do. We can also see that we have not yet reached the end. Hardly did we leave Brussels when there were already some who reinterpreted the agreement. It shows that the Portuguese presidency will have no easy task.

The agreement will bring about some temporary peace and quiet. We do need that temporary peace, so that we can close at least the institutional matters. This is not too much, but it is not too little either.

Frankly, I think it is an impossible situation that we have been concerned with ourselves for so many years. While wishing to have a more active role in the world, the European Union has been discussing for years that if they wanted to decide something then what weighing of votes should be used. It is not talking about what should be decided. This is simply impossible. We often spend more effort on sustaining the system than on reaching the objective for which the system was set up: namely to shape the Union into a powerful player in response to major global challenges. So there will be no big celebrations in any of the capitals if we can come to an agreement during the Portuguese presidency, but the lack of the agreement will cause long term paralysis. And then we can just stand by and watch what happens in China and South-East Asia.

Hungary will do everything it can to have an agreement, and we shall support this cause.

There is not too much to say about the Schengen issue. Hungary is ready for the accession. We want to access and we will this year. It will happen by the end of this

year, and early next year in airports. I agree that co-operation should be intensified to make sure that security is not breached between the member states. However, I think it is only right that no measures can be sustained after Schengen that could limit the enforcement of Schengen rights. There are no two speeds to Schengen in this regard, but there is only one. I don't think there is a problem with this. I can see some technical matters, but we are not paranoid and we don't think that creating the necessary conditions in one or the other country would pose a problem because of certain political reservations that they wish to conceal by technical issues. The Hungarian government does not follow such a course. We believe that these problems and issues can be tackled, and as member of the Schengen zone Hungary wants to secure the freedom of movement to all of its citizens.

A few sentences about enlargement.

If someone perceives as a sensible person what it means to be a member of the European Union in Hungary – I honestly must admit that I think the balance is very clear. There cannot be several aspects and assessment to this. The accession is unambiguously a success for Hungary. It is very clear. But if we know this about ourselves, then we frankly do not really have a choice other than being pro-enlargement. We cannot count euro cents that if X or Y joins than we have to redistribute the budget. We also should not do this because even if the support we receive from the European Union is extremely important – and I hope that you or Hungarian citizens will not misunderstand me –, it is still not the most important thing about the European Union. We must fight for every single cent, but it is not the most important about the European Union.

So at the end of the day if this is what we think, then we cannot deny the same from those who comply with the requirements. We cannot change the fundamental principle of open door policy.

I think the issue of the Balkans is very clear in this regard. It is simple because there is only one thing we can do and that is to support the accession of the Balkan countries. We should develop a roadmap as soon as possible. This will be much more difficult than we would think. I can see this in the accession process of Croatia if no other example.

We have commissioners, members of the Commission sitting with us today. Let me tell you something that we, Hungarians have always felt and understood. We have not spoken much about this – and we still don't speak much about this –, we always keep telling that the accession is really the matter of someone meeting the conditions or not. But it should be very clear that the decision taken on the accession of us ten was a political decision. Politics was more generous where necessary and perhaps a little less generous where it was needed to allow one or the other to catch up. The accession is a political issue and not of international legal nature. So while we of course should say that, this being a political and economic community and there are certain common norms to it, these norms should be complied with and the preparation process should move on; however, it is clear that we mostly need political will for

this process. The biggest challenge around the accession of the Balkan countries today is not whether or not these countries can meet the requirements sooner or later. Sooner or later they will. Some can be faster, some need more time, some do it more easily, some less easily. The real question is whether there will be political will.

But because we cannot afford saying that there is no political will, so non-existent or weak political will is concealed by the rhetoric that our dear friends are still not prepared. Okay, but this causes confusion in the matter. Because we say this also when they are really not prepared, and we also say this when we could really admit to them being prepared if we wanted to. Then comes a point when we stop understanding each other. Certainly, two completely different levels of motivations use the same arguments. This is why I would like Hungary to make its standpoint very clear, so that you cannot announce this country of not being understandable because we use the same language and we speak in unison with the European Union. We are with those who are strongly and politically committed to the accession of the Balkan countries.

We should tell our European friends that just as our accession brought up a number of questions, the accession of the Balkan countries will also pose many questions. The reason is that there is a number of societal ailments that we have been carrying with ourselves, which are typical for us, for Hungarians, for Polish – let me bring you an example. The sentiment of historical hurtings will become one of the problems of the Union. Nevertheless I can tell that this will be easier to manage within the European Union. We can also give support to the nations to overcome the problem sooner or later. It is completely natural that Hungary and some other countries like Hungary have long standing traditions as a state: we think about us as a state of more than a thousand years, while there are other countries in the region that are less than two decades old.

Well, I think it is not easy to understand from Great Britain. How does a country struggle with itself if it has such a very complicated national development history?

But we are either serious about this, or not at all. I think the issue of Turkey is much more difficult than that.

Turkey is more difficult. My opinion about Turkey and the Turkish accession that, lacking a better option, we do not dare talk about this among ourselves. This is not a traditional legal or political issue. This is a much more complex problem. The question is how two societies based on markedly different cultural traditions can co-exist. That is the real question. Then the next issue is who wants to solve this and who does not want to face the challenge. I think that Hungary should represent the standpoint that we should take efforts to bring down the walls that separate these cultures today. We should also look closely at the experiences of this co-existence – because it has traditions of several decades in Europe from Germany to France. These experiences are complicated and controversial. We know exactly well that this is in the background of the Turkish accession. However, this issue will not solve itself.

Having said that Hungary believes that its standpoint as represented previously with regard to the Turkish accession needs no change. It does not need to be changed, and we are for the enlargement, but this needs a lot of investment. This will not happen by itself. The whole issue can be procrastinated into eternity unless there is a very strong political will even for the process of learning the peaceful co-existence of cultures and becoming an active participant of that. We can also do that, if someone believes that policy means pretending doing something and allowing [Turkey] to drift away into a future where we have less influence.

There is another very difficult issue, but it is no longer the issue of the enlargement towards the Balkans or something typical for the Balkans only, something that has an indirect link to the enlargement process. This is the issue of Kosovo.

We can confirm once again that quite a number of signs let us conclude that the conditions for a Security Council resolution are not improving but rather deteriorating. Maybe this is the first time when I speak about this before the wider public, but my official reports already say that my discussions with president Putin last week or 10 days ago made it very clear that Russia stands for rejection. This is not an issue of drafting. This is not that if we could not have the fourth draft accepted than there would be a fifth.

Quite honestly if I am right in my understanding about president Putin then there will be no agreement. If I understand him well. Having said that I think it is absolutely right if everybody keeps on with their efforts; the 120-day negotiation period is still open, and it will close towards the end of September if I am right. We should do everything we can for an agreement – that is the first point. And the second point is, well, what happens if we cannot come to an agreement.

For that case my concept is that we should do everything we can to avoid unilateral, single-sided recognitions. The process of Kosovo towards independence cannot be stopped any more. It cannot be stopped irrespective of any consequences, whatever we do.

If Albanians in Kosovo lose their hope for such independence in foreseeable future, then we will face incredible security challenges in the matter of one week. Frankly, within one week. This is why we need to have an answer to the scenario if there is no agreement; and I don't think that there is any other alternative than the joint action of the EU and NATO if we want to avoid any kind of unilateral recognition. This will not be easy. This will not be easy. What the independence process of Kosovo means in this region, in Central-East or South-East Europe in the wider sense means a lot of different things to many people. I think we should support those in this matter who are not ambiguous with their formulations. The right way of saying it would be: "Dear friends, if you want to be active in global politics, then you should be successful at least in your own backyard." It is just impossible that the European Union and NATO are unable to solve a matter of fundamental European security exposure. We will have very little left to do in other parts of the world unless we can solve this issue.

This is also the issue where we have to tell everyone that we understand certain national sensitivities. We should provide certain political guarantees on the other side if necessary. Anyhow, this matter cannot fall victim to – and I want to avoid any wrong formulation – well, it should not fall victim to any current faintheartedness attributable to national historical trauma.

For example this is one issue where I think we should clearly march together with the United States. We should go along with them, as we have no other choice. It is true even if we, Hungarians are not in a very easy situation because of Voivodina. Honestly, I don't think that there can be any other policy here.

Dear Friends.

Finally, it is very easy to talk about major global issues. It is very easy to have good relations with distant countries, although I could learn recently that even that can be a challenge sometimes. However, the real achievement is to have a good relationship and to co-operate with our neighbours. It is particularly true in this region. It is more difficult a task.

I represent the standpoint that despite all residual historical problems, Hungary has a single possibility only. We should actively and positively turn to Slovakia, the Ukraine, Rumania, Serbia, Croatia, anyone and I could go on. We don't have an alternative. We should admit that our thousand year old sovereignty has advantages and disadvantages too; these nations still carry the historical experience in their genes that we were the very obstacle to their independent national existence and sovereignty for a long time. We cannot erase this fact from the memory of these countries for quite sometime. This is why we have to be active in such way that we respect this sensitivity, and we restrain ourselves. Whether we want it or not, many will hear into every single decided or strong sentence that Hungarians still believe the Carpathian basin to be about them only. We should understand this. We should also understand that one or the other remark will be perceived nationalistic if it comes from a Hungarian, even if it really is not. There are historical reasons for this. Honestly, understanding each other's sensitivity is also a part of partnership. We can understand their sensibility. This, however, does not mean that we should respond by surrendering our interests. We do have interests in the region and this is only natural. These interests are colourful and not directed against others. These interests are primarily directed towards co-operation. They are directed towards making sure that this part of Europe remains a region of prosperity and peace. We want to make sure that all the achievements that we believe are achievements of the Hungarian nation can be ours, recognised and used. These can be cultural or economic or any other achievements. However, I would never assume that our friends in Slovakia or in Slovenia do not want the same thing. And of course, there is competition in this story. Of course, there is: competition and co-operation at the same time. I think that the chances of the Hungarian national minority beyond the borders are also improving if we can sustain good relations. Let me add that that is not always sufficient. Good neighbourhood relations constitute the precondition for being able to help Hungarians beyond the borders, but often that is not enough. Let me venture into domestic policy

for a second: the right answer is not to say “well, well, it does not pay to have relations with them because the situation of Hungarians has not improved”. Why? Is it not valuable by itself if we have active scientific, economic and intellectual relations irrespective of anything else? And isn't it a certain condition for one to improve the other? I think it is completely excluded that we could easily improve the situation of national minorities if we have issues and quarrels with any of the neighbouring countries. We definitely cannot do that. Our neighbourhood relations cannot be sacrificed to the single-sided considerations around the Hungarian national minority issue. The relations are much more dynamic. It is a different story that sometimes I have to recognise with great disappointment when promises remain just promises. Let's consider for example the expectations around the Tariceanu government a few years ago, about the acts that would be passed in Rumania; and we can see with some disappointment that these bills have not passed.

Let me tell you something about the period ahead.

I am extremely happy that we could meet with Slovakia. It was disheartening and inexplicable that there were no official bilateral meetings between Hungary and Slovakia after 2003. We cannot go this way, we cannot. We must meet. We must meet even if it turns out that Hedvig Malina was right. And we must meet even if other things turn out. We must always meet, we must negotiate and we must talk to each other directly. It is impossible that the Hungarian prime minister would meet his British or Italian colleagues more often than the Slovakian prime minister. It cannot be.

This does not mean that there would be no discussion here or there. Of course, there are discussions. I do not want to be profound, but our everyday lives are full of debates. Of course, there are debates between countries. However, the only solution to that can be if we say that today we can at least see three issues where we can cooperate. There are five where we cannot. Four of those will not even be laid on the table because we would only quarrel about them. And we can easily tell the press that we did not discuss these because we could only quarrel, and we do not want to do that. We talk about those three issues that we can talk about – full stop.

I think it is very positive and I am full of good feelings in this regard that we could break the silence of many years.

We have a very dense agenda ahead us. The chancellor of Germany and the president of France will visit Budapest soon. We expect the prime minister of Bosnia-Herzegovina and hopefully also the prime minister of Serbia to visit in the coming weeks. We open the Hungarian season in China, in Beijing and Shanghai early September; a visit to Norway and a roundtrip in the Baltic countries, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are also in the pipeline. We will continue with the practice of joint government meetings: the joint meeting of the Slovenian and Hungarian governments will be an important event of this autumn. It is also important because, and this is partly coincidental and partly not, we know that Slovenia will be the next president of

the EU. This is very important for us for the great amount of experience. And there will be the informal summit and the usual EU agenda.

Next year we visit India and the Arab countries, but let's not rush ahead.

Let me finish where I started.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We greatly need you. Not only the government; of course the government need you. But it is the country that needs you. I have tried to share also our dilemmas, and I would like to request you to help us with deeper and more precise analyses so that Hungary can give a more efficient response and conduct an active, proactive policy. For a country that has the ambition to renew itself, it is absolutely necessary to have the related ambition to continually revamp its relevant foreign policy, foreign and security policy.

This is where I expect your support and co-operation.

Thank you for your attention.