

THE VISIT OF THE PRESIDENT OF  
HUNGARY TO THE UNITED  
STATES—TOASTS AT THE STATE  
DINNER

**HON. TOM LANTOS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 17, 1999*

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, just a few days ago, the President of Hungary, His Excellency Arpad Goncz, paid an official visit to the United States.

President Goncz stands with Vaclav Havel, President of the Czech Republic, as one of the pivotal leaders of post-Communist Central Europe—a man of integrity, a man of character who has provided a moral anchor as Hungary has sought to find its way in establishing a democratic society and a free market economy.

Arpad Goncz graduated with a Doctor of Law degree in 1944. After the liberation of Hungary, he was active in non-Communist political groups. When the Communist Party came to power in Hungary, he was forced to earn his living as a welder and pipe fitter and later as an agricultural engineer. He supported the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, and in 1957 he was tried and sentenced to life imprisonment for his efforts in the attempt to overthrow the communist regime. His time in prison was well-spent, because that is where he learned English.

After serving 6 years in prison, Arpad Goncz was released under terms of a general amnesty. He then began a career as a literary translator and free-lance writer. He translated the works of more than a hundred writers, mostly American and English authors including James Baldwin, E.L. Doctorow, William Faulkner, William Golding, Ernest Hemingway, William Styron, Susan Sontag, John Updike, Edith Wharton, President Goncz is also a playwright and novelist in his own right.

When Hungary moved from a communist to a democratic government, Arpad Goncz was elected a member of the democratically elected parliament in the spring of 1990. He was chosen Speaker of Parliament on May 2, 1990, and in this position served as Interim President of the Republic of Hungary. On August 3, 1993, Arpad Goncz was elected President of the Republic of Hungary, and on June 19, 1995, he was reelected to a five-year term as President.

Mr. Speaker, as a moral influence and a voice of integrity, President Arpad Goncz has been a pivotal figure in the democratic transformation of Hungary. It is most appropriate that he was highly honored during his recent visit to the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I submit the speech at the State Dinner honoring President Goncz by President Clinton and the response of President Goncz to be placed in the RECORD.

TOAST OF PRESIDENT CLINTON

The President of the United States: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the White House. And a special welcome to President and Mrs. Goncz and members of the Hungarian delegation.

Exactly 150 years ago, in 1849, a young congressman from Illinois, serving his first and only term in the U.S. House of Representatives, offered a resolution supporting the Hungarian people's struggle for independ-

ence and democracy. At that time, the leader of the Hungarian freedom movement, of course, was Lajos Kossuth. The congressman was Abraham Lincoln. The bonds between our citizens, based not only on the large number of distinguished Hungarian Americans in our country, but also on our shared aspirations for freedom and democracy, have very deep roots.

I would like to say a special word of thanks to Congressman Tom and Annette Lantos, and others who have helped them, because they are responsible for the fact that a bust of Kossuth now stands in the Rotunda of our Capitol.

Ralph Waldo Emerson called him "the angel of freedom." He was only the second non-American—Lafayette being the first—to address both Houses of Congress. Crowds greeted him wherever he went. He was a true American hero.

Mr. President, like Kossuth, you taught yourself English while you were in prison—at a time when you had just escaped a death sentence and faced a life term, because you stood for liberty. Later, you translated the works of many great writers: Edith Wharton, Thomas Wolfe, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, Arthur Miller, James Baldwin, John Updike, Alice Walker. And at least two I think are here tonight—William Styron and Susan Sontag. These translations offered Hungarians a window on the West and earned you many admirers at home. This work is just one part, but it is a vital part, of your contribution to ending the division of Europe.

I even noted in preparing for this evening that you translated into Hungarian President Bush's 1988 campaign biography, "Looking Forward." Now by the time Al Gore and I published our book, "Putting People First," in 1992, you were already President of Hungary and, unfortunately, too busy to translate this profoundly important work. At least I choose to believe that is the reason you did not choose to translate it.

In this decade your own works have been translated and published in English, your plays performed in the United States. They are a brave set of explorations of political conflict and war, freedom and betrayal, the struggle for daily survival and dignity in the face of adversity. Americans have absorbed these works as we have watched you lead your nation, deepening freedom there, and promoting human rights and ethnic tolerance around the world, and especially in your own region.

The only Hungarian head of state to make an official visit to Romania in this century, you told the joint session of Parliament there that ethnic minorities enrich their nations and "form a valuable connective link in strengthening relations" between nations.

Your vision of people living together and nations living together, resolving differences peacefully, drawing strength from their diversity, treating all people with equal dignity—this will form the basis of a better future for Europe and the world. It is at the heart of what we have been trying to do in our efforts to reverse ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, and to build a Southeastern Europe in which all people can live together in dignity and freedom.

Now, Mr. President, normally when I propose a toast to a visiting head of state, I say something like, "cheers." I have been advised by the State Department that the Hungarian word for "cheers" is—and I want to quote from the memo I got—"practically impossible to pronounce correctly." I have accepted their considered judgment. So, instead, I would like to salute you and Mrs. Goncz with the words that greeted Kossuth on streamers all across New York City on the day he arrived in America—Isten Hozta. "Welcome."

I ask all of you to join me in a toast to President and Mrs. Goncz, and to the people of Hungary. Thank you very much.

TOAST OF PRESIDENT GONCZ

The President of Hungary: Mr. President, Mrs. Clinton, dear friends. Back home in my own country I have the privilege of speaking in my own native language. It would be becoming to speak English here, but there is one thing I learned when I was a writer—that lesson I learned, that if you cannot express yourself in an adequate way in that language, then you'd rather not deliver speeches in that language.

I do apologize for not speaking English, because eventually I might end up as Kossuth did when he was here. As it was mentioned, he learned English also in prison, as I did. And he had excellent rhetoric abilities. And after one of the enlightening speeches he made here in America, two listeners started to whisper between each other, "I never thought that English was so close to Hungarian."

Now, this time, I would like to spare you that experience. My friend speaks better English than I do.

Mr. President mentioned something about my past as a translator. I learned English in the prison through the works of Kennedy. First, I translated the speeches of Kennedy. This was something like lawful—translated for the higher authorities in the party. It was strictly confidential. I am terribly sorry that President Kennedy never had the chance to see himself how authentic the Hungarian translation was.

But I'd like to come back on the events of today. Officially, I was in the White House in an official capacity in April 1993. At that time I met the President, and there were some other heads of state also here. And then when I looked around, I had the wind of youthfulness, optimism, and an air of determination. Today, I experienced the same: a determined leadership that decides the fate of the world; responsibility and profound humanity.

We have had long discussions today. It is a God-given gift that my visit that had been prepared for months was realized today—all of these days going to be decisive. This is a crucial day when the Kosovo crisis is raising its beak and it's going to come to completion.

We have had a long discussion with Mr. President, not only the two of us. But if I were to characterize the meeting, I would say that it was not negotiations, diplomatic negotiations, but thinking together. And this was the first time I really felt, genuinely, that the two countries are allies, and a real alliance is characterized by identical values and also that you approach the problems to be solved from the same angle.

Even during the air campaign we tried to find the man, a human being in that. And we fully agreed that the peace of Europe is unthinkable without the peace in the Balkans. And without the understanding and the cooperation of the people in the Balkans, it is inconceivable to have peace in that region.

The discussions we have had today will have a very significant imprint not only because of the political implications, but also because I made a great acquaintance of a genuine, real man.

During my presidency we have met about four or five times, but we never had a chance before to think together about the course of the world. We did that today. And we also found that it is the human being that is the common denominator: the man in Kosovo, the Serbian man; let me tell you, also the Hungarian man, who has got responsibility for the Serbs, as well, after having lived together with them for hundreds and hundreds of years.

And if one day the Democratic leadership in Serbia is created, we Hungarians are ready to share our experience in building democracy with the Serbian people, with the Serbian leadership. And we are prepared to do what we have done with other neighboring countries already. We are going to tell them not only what we have done correctly and well, what we are going to tell them where we made a mistake, where we made an error, because it's a matter of course that sometimes one makes mistakes. But if through good advice you can avoid at least one mistake, then it was worth it.

We are prepared to extend a helping hand to a democratic Serbian government, to the Serbian people, because we know what bombing means from our own experience. We know what has to be restored—bridges, oil refineries, infrastructure, but primarily and foremost, the belief of the people in the future—the faith in humanity, belief in the willingness of the people to help each other.

And if we manage to help all the wounds that were acquired during the war since 1992, and we manage to resolve all the hatred, which may take even two generations, then we have to give them help and assistance to make the first first.

It was a gratifying and a good feeling to me to have understanding between the two sides. Because you can feed in information about the amount of bombs you want to drop; you can feed in costs; but there is one thing you cannot feed in, in a computer—the past of a nation, the mentality of the people, the moral feelings, eventual solidarity or hostility. I can see that the American leadership is ready to consider that, as well, after the success of the air campaign and, perhaps, even more so, afterwards.

The serious negotiations we have had here in Washington, D.C., I will take that home with me as one of the greatest experiences in my life. First, because I was really convinced that it is possible for a big country and a small country to become real allies on the basis of equality. And I do hope, Mr. President, you're not going to misunderstand me if I say, I am taking with me the experience of a new friendship, as well, with me.

Perhaps I cannot say anymore than that. If you want, I can tell you all the political slogans that you know by heart here, but I suppose these few things are a lot more worthy. For the Hungarians, for the Serbs, for the Kosovars, for the whole of Central Europe, I do hope, out of the bottom of my heart, that all the generals of NATO—and perhaps it will all help us to understand the events and developments of our days.

Once again, I apologize for speaking in Hungarian, but I suppose it was better to tell that in Hungarian than mumbling it in English. Thank you for listening to me.

#### HONORING THE SPECIAL GRADUATES OF THE JOHN D. WELLS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

### HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 17, 1999*

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I ask you and my colleagues to join me in congratulating special graduates of the 12th Congressional District of New York. I am certain that this day marks the culmination of much effort and hard work which has led and will lead them to continued success. In these times of uncertainty, limited resources, and random violence in our commu-

nities and schools, it is encouraging to know that they have overcome these obstacles and succeeded.

These students have learned that education is priceless. They understand that education is the tool to new opportunities and greater endeavors. Their success is not only a tribute to their strength but also to the support they have received from their parents and loved ones.

In closing, I encourage all my colleagues to support the education of the youth of America. With a solid education, today's youth will be tomorrow's leaders. And as we approach the new millennium, it is our responsibility to pave the road for this great Nation's future. Members of the U.S. House of Representatives I ask you to join me in congratulating the following Academic Achievement Award Recipients: Lizandro Gonzalez and Aris Rodriguez.

#### WOMEN IN CONSERVATIVE POLITICS

### HON. SUE W. KELLY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 17, 1999*

Mrs. KELLY. Mrs. Speaker, I insert the attached speech for the RECORD. This speech was given by Fanny Palli-Petralia, a member of Greece's Parliament at a conference that was held in Washington, D.C., in March of this year, hosted by the International Women's Democratic Union. I found it to be quite insightful and would recommend it to my colleagues.

[At the Conference of IWDU, Washington, Mar. 3-5, 1999]

ADDRESS BY THE HONORABLE FANNY PALLI-PETRALIA

First, I would like to express my deep appreciation to the organizers of the conference for the invitation to participate and address this gathering. I consider it a privilege and a unique opportunity to share with leaders from all over the world my perspectives on the role of women contemporary politics and the problems they face in Europe and especially my own country. I am referring of course, to women belonging to the conservative, or as I prefer to state, Center and Center-Right ideological spectrum.

However, before I discuss specific problems I believe it is necessary for us to define or re-define certain concepts and to reflect on the following question: what defines conservative politics in our time. I believe a new definition of conservatism is essential, given the fact that the central criterion used to distinguish between Right and Left ideology i.e.—i.e. economic philosophy—is no longer valid. As we all know, belief in a free market economy, espoused by conservative thinkers has been coopted with unrestrained enthusiasm by old and new liberals. Whether we are talking about Great Britain, Germany or the United States, we see Social Democrats, Liberals and their American equivalent, the Democratic Party, endorsing and applying Milton Freedman's doctrine of free markets with the zeal usually displayed by late converts to a cause. No wonder that we now see big business, traditionally viewed as allies of conservative parties, moving to the socialist corner of the political arena. I have only one explanation for this phenomenon: either big business cannot see the difference between the two philosophies, which I doubt, or the dividing lines between ideological camps

have been blurred beyond recognition. In either case, now that our economic philosophy has caused global mass conversion among the liberal ranks, there is a need to differentiate our agenda by other criteria.

Now that liberal and the left-wing politicians have embraced free market over socialist planning, we have to ask what is next in our philosophical agenda in an era that often seems as being in a moral drift? The answer, in my opinion, is obvious: though the economic philosophy of conservatism has triumphed, a cultural war is under way globally and whether we want it or not, we must be concerned and respond. Far too many of the core values that served as the glue to keep society in harmony have been trashed and a climate of moral relativism permeates the industrial world. We are witnesses to a troubling trend since the collapsed of the Communist bloc: traditions, family, history, religion, culture are under assault by "feel good crowd." These are the values that have and ought to distinguish the Center-Right political parties: we cherish them while the Liberal left makes them optional.

The question is what is the role of women in the field of culture? At the risk of sounding immodest, let me state at the outset that women have always been in the forefront of cultural battles and helped shape the core values of free societies. More precisely, women have been persistent defenders of human rights and effectively linked rights, values, economics and politics and in the process, redefined the latter for the better. However it is also true that, by and large, the contributions of women in the political life of nations and the affirmation of social and political values have been achieved through men. The old cliché "next to a great man stands a greater woman," still rings true. But our concern today is not what Aspasia or Theodora, Eleanor Roosevelt, or Hillary Clinton have done behind the scenes. The question is what happens in the public domain—and here is where a convergence of view emerges among women of all political persuasions.

#### II

It is obvious that inequalities between men and women persist and opportunities for women are limited by artificial barriers in all societies, including the United States where the struggle for equality started, at end of the 19th century.

As conservative women and political leaders in our own right, we can not ignore gender disparities in public life; neither can we ignore the fact that traditions and values, prevalent for generations, do play a role in defining our place in contemporary society. Because women have played a central role in defining core values, they must now assume a similar role in defining a political system that assures the promotion of the most central of all values—equality without qualifications.

I am cognizant of the fact that social trends take time to be set in motion and even more time to be reversed. We cannot ignore the role of history and special conditions that have played a role in determining a woman's place in society. In Southern Europe, for example, cultural factors, religion and social attitudes made change a slow and arduous process when compared to northern European societies. For example, the right to vote in my country, Greece, was granted to women in 1952 and full equality in all walks of life was constitutionally guaranteed in 1974.

#### III

The equal rights movement in Europe, in which women from all political persuasions participated, was fought not only to secure basic political and individual rights but also