

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 23, 2009

**Statement by the Press Secretary on the 53rd anniversary of
the Hungarian uprising of 1956**

We commemorate today the 53rd anniversary of the Hungarian uprising of 1956.

On October 23, 1956, the Hungarian people stood up against tyranny in the name of freedom, bravely rising up to oppose the Communist regime which had been imposed upon them by the Soviet Union. During this uprising, many Hungarians died to defend and advance their country's freedom and independence.

Although the uprising itself was brutally put down by more than 200,000 Soviet troops, the hopes and democratic yearnings of the Hungarian nation were not defeated, and served as an example for the world. For 53 years, the Hungarian peoples' struggle against authoritarianism and for freedom and democracy has inspired people around the world. Their struggle was an inspiration to the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe, who in 1989 threw off the shackles of communism and chose freedom and democracy. It is no coincidence that the "Iron Curtain" was breached in the summer of 1989 by Hungarians seeking freedom. Today, Hungary is anchored in the West as a member of NATO and the European Union, and its former place behind the Iron Curtain is a relic of history. Hungary is part of a peaceful, united and free Europe, and has taken its place as a close ally that partners with us around the world to respond to our common challenges.

We honor those brave Hungarian patriots of 1956, just as we honor all those who show the courage to promote change.

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