



The American Hungarian Federation

Celebrating 100 Years of Service - Fidelissimus ad Mortem

June 30, 2009

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to you to ask that you decline to extend an invitation to Hungarian Prime Minister Gordon Bajnai for an official visit to Washington, as requested by Hungarian Foreign Minister Balazs during his recent meeting with Secretary Hillary Clinton. We make this request on behalf of the American Hungarian Federation, one of the oldest organizations in the US representing a cross section of Americans who trace their heritage to Central Europe.

From its founding in 1906, the Federation has been an avid promoter of close, mutually beneficial relations between the two countries as well as an advocate of democracy and minority rights in Central and Eastern Europe. In pursuit of these goals, we naturally support official bilateral visits at the highest levels, and we hope you will find time to visit Hungary during one of your upcoming trips to Europe. However, the Federation believes that an invitation to Mr. Bajnai at this time would be ill-advised and would not serve the best interests of either country – as would such a visit scheduled at a more appropriate time.

Hungary's next parliamentary elections are due next spring, but there are indications they might be moved up to later this year in view of the ruling Hungarian Socialist Party's dismal showing (about 17 % vs. 56.36 % for the opposition Fidesz-KDNP) at the recent European parliamentary elections. An invitation to the incumbent caretaker prime minister so close to the Hungarian elections would thus be widely interpreted as a show of US support for the ruling Socialist Party and an interference in Hungarian internal affairs.

Such a visit would also be in sharp contrast to the US position taken in 2002, when President Bush declined to invite then-Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban (even though he was in the US to receive an award) so as to eschew the appearance of bias. Against this backdrop, an invitation could reinforce the perception that the US favors the Socialists (legal successors to the Communists) over the democratic opposition.

In conclusion, the Federation favors extending an invitation to Hungary's prime minister, but believes that the most auspicious time for such a visit would be after the installation of a new Hungary government following the next elections.

Sincerely,

Attila Micheller
National President

Akos Nagy
National Chairman

Zoltan Bagdy
Co-President

Gyula Balogh
Co-President

Bryan Dawson
Chairman, Executive Committee

Frank Koszorus
Co-President and Chair,
International Affairs Committee

Andras Ludanyi
Co-Founder,
Hungarian Americans for Obama