

@CHAPTER = HUNGARY

Reforms in Hungary proceeded at a rapid pace during 1989, marked by the introduction of a multiparty system and the removal of virtually all obstacles to freedom of expression, association and travel. The Bush administration, eager to emphasize the positive changes underway in Eastern Europe, has given Hungary prominent attention, highlighted by the July 1989 visit to Hungary by President Bush -- the first U.S. president to visit that country. The administration has praised developments in Hungary, focusing on economic and political reforms, but it has not given prominence to the need to secure these reforms in law. In the coming year, the administration should be cautious that its enthusiasm for the reforms not outpace efforts to institutionalize those reforms.

President Bush's visit to Hungary and Poland in July was meant as a demonstration of U.S. support. In a speech he made in Budapest on July 12, President Bush noted some of the recent changes in Hungarian society, particularly relating to freedom of expression:

@QUOTENOIND = Voices long stilled are being heard again. An independent daily newspaper is now sold on the streets. Commercial radio and television stations will broadcast everything from the news to the music of Stevie Wonder. And Radio Free Europe is opening its first Eastern European bureau right here in Budapest.

@NOIND = The President also praised the Hungarian government's decision to open its border with Austria, as an example of how Hungary is "leading the way" toward reform in Eastern Europe.

Neither President Bush's statements in Hungary nor later administration pronouncements have adequately addressed an important concern in Hungary, namely, the legal institutionalization of human rights progress. As Hungary drafts a new constitution and new legislation to govern the country, special attention must be paid to bringing these laws into compliance with international human rights norms.

In the case of one new gesture toward Hungary, the Bush administration has shown appropriate concern for such legal developments. After Hungary passed a new emigration law, President Bush promised that it would be the first country to be released from all restrictions under the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the 1974 Trade Act, which links the preferential tariff policies of Most Favored Nation status to the emigration practices of the recipient country. This practice of rewarding Hungary only after liberalized laws have been enacted should be continued.

The Bush administration has also given more general economic support to Hungary's efforts at reform and democratization. For fiscal years 1990 to 1992 the U.S. has authorized \$60 million in enterprise funds for Hungary, in addition to \$69 million for Hungary and Poland. While this support for reform in Hungary is welcome, the administration should make clear that further trade and economic benefits will depend on concrete progress in institutionalizing respect for human rights.