

**Message by László Sólyom on the occasion of releasing the book "India and the 1956 Hungarian Revolution" on 24 October, 2006**

I welcome with joy the release of the book "India and the 1956 Hungarian Revolution". This event fits in as an integral part of the series of commemorations of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. I cannot be with you personally now because of my responsibilities related to these celebrations, but I would like to use this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to India, to the Government of India and to the Indian Embassy in Budapest for everything they did in those tragic times for the Hungarian revolutionaries.

October, 1956 bears a universal message to all people committed to freedom. 50 years ago there was a moment in world history when Hungary could set an example to those who were beginning to accept that the political division of Europe and the world was going to last forever. The 1956 Revolution proved that even small nations could take their fate into their own hands, and that the wish for freedom could not be eradicated even from people suffering under dictatorships. The world was awed by the courage and sacrifice of our hero-freedom fighters who set out against the tremendous superiority of the Soviets in numbers.

In spite of the defeat, the innumerable victims and suffering, the Revolution was not in vain. Though the superior powers won in November, 1956, but the ties of the empire were loosened and could never again be restored.

In those baleful times, India exhibited a beautiful example of solidarity in action. Some of the participants of the resistance hoped not without grounds that India, with her special relationship with the Soviet Union, would intervene, if even only to reduce the extent of retaliation. They attempted to send a Memorandum to outside the country via the recently established Indian Embassy. Chargé de Affairs Mohhammad Ataur Rahman put a lot of effort into making the Indian Government and President Jawaharlal Nehru use their influence for the sake of Hungarians. The words spoken by President Nehru in the Lok Sabha on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of November marked an important position: "right from the very beginning we made it perfectly clear that in regard to Hungary or Egypt or anywhere else, any kind of suppression by violent elements of the freedom of the people was an outrage on liberty." "...the people of Hungary should be allowed to determine their future and foreign troops must be withdrawn from Hungary." But Indian leadership did even more than that to reduce the extent of retaliation, and saved the lives of a number of Hungarian defendants, some of whom had been condemned to death, through the personal intervention of the Prime Minister with Soviet leaders.

The secret or hazy background of **such** relatively well known facts are being clarified and made accessible by **this** collection of documents published from the Archives of the Indian Ministry of **External** Affairs.

I am grateful to the Government of **India** and to the Embassy that they timed the release of this book for our celebrations. Also on this occasion I hope that the friendly relations between **India** and **Hungary** develop even further.

Dated in Budapest, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October, 2006

László Sólyom,  
President of the Republic of Hungary