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# Clinton Presidential Records Mandatory Declassification Review

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Documents from this Mandatory Declassification Review were released in part.

Those documents released with redactions have been restricted under Sections 1.4 (c), 1.4 (d), and 3.5(c) of E.O. 13526.

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**Michal KOVAC**  
(Phonetic: KOHvahch)

**SLOVAKIA**

*President (since February 1993)*

*Addressed as: Mr. President*

As independent Slovakia's first elected president, Michal Kovac is actively trying to institute democracy and steer his country toward a free market economy. US Embassy officials say he sees his role as helping to preserve political stability, and, in our view, since the fall of 1993 he has used his limited constitutional powers to do so: for instance, in November 1993 Kovac, who has the power to accept or reject ministers, refused to accept former Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar's nominee for privatization minister [redacted]

1.4c, 1.4d

[redacted] Exercising his prerogative to submit legislation to the parliament, in early December 1993 he proposed an amendment to a law that would allow southern towns with large Hungarian minorities to use both Slovak and Hungarian in the names of their towns to ease tensions. In February 1994 Kovac refused the resignation of Meciar's rival and then Foreign Minister Jozef Moravcik, maintaining that Meciar had to find an acceptable replacement for the Foreign Minister first. [redacted]

EO 13526 1.4c, 1.4d

**Career Data**

As a loyal apparatchik, Kovac was successful in the old Communist system. He graduated from the Bratislava School of Economics in 1954 and worked there as an assistant for a year. From 1956 until 1971 he was assigned to the regional institute of the Czechoslovak State Bank. He lectured at Cuba's central banking school from 1964 until 1965, and he was deputy director of a Czechoslovak bank in London during 1967-69. Kovac, who was a strong supporter of then head of the Communist Party Alexander Dubcek during the late 1960s, disapproved of the 1968 Soviet invasion of

EO 13526 1.4c, 3.5c



**The Presidential Couple**

*Kovac and his wife, Emilia, a professor at the Bratislava Economics University, are highly popular in Slovakia. Public opinion polls rate Kovac as the most trustworthy politician in the country, and he gets high marks for his willingness to meet with delegates from various districts to hear their concerns and discuss political developments.*

EO 13526 1.4c, 1.4d

[redacted] Emilia Kovac is frequently seen shopping at the K-Mart in Bratislava. Although she does not appear to get involved in politics, she takes a strong interest in her husband's career. [redacted]

EO 13526 1.4c, 1.4d

3.5c

Czechoslovakia and rebelled against the subsequent normalization campaign; he was then demoted to a lesser post in the Bratislava city office. [redacted] 3.5c

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In December 1989 Kovac was named Minister of Finance in the first postrevolutionary Slovak Government. He was elected deputy to the Federal Assembly in June 1990 as a candidate from the Public Against Violence (VPN) movement. After the VPN split, he joined the HZDS—led by then Slovak Republic Prime Minister Meciar—in April 1991. In May Kovac resigned from the Finance Ministry to protest Meciar's removal from the republic prime-ministership. Kovac was named HZDS deputy chairman in June. He was reelected in the June 1992 federal elections and became parliamentary speaker; he held this post until 31 December 1992, when the federal parliament ceased to exist. Kovac represented his country in the United States in May of 1993 for the opening of the Holocaust museum. 3.5c

**Personal Notes**

Kovac was born on 5 August 1930 in Lubisa, east Slovakia. He does not speak English. He and his wife have two grown sons, and their older son is studying for an MBA at the London Business School. 3.5c

28 March 1994

EO 13526 1.4c, 1.4d, 3.5c

**Arpad GONCZ**  
(Phonetic: goontz)

**HUNGARY**

**President (since 1990)**  
**Addressed as: Mr. President**

Arpad Goncz, a former playwright, has been affectionately referred to in the Hungarian press as the grandfather of his country, and he consistently places at or near the top of public preference polls. To his countrymen, this former political prisoner, (1957-63) is a symbol of those Hungarians who suffered for their participation in the uprising against Communist rule in 1956.

EO 13526 1.4c

As President, Goncz has employed his moral authority to weigh in on public policy matters that he deems essential or injurious to Hungary's continuing democratization. For instance, he has strongly criticized the government's efforts to control the state owned media as unhealthy. Goncz will oversee a national election in May 1994 occasioned by the death of Prime Minister Jozsef Antall in December 1993. He has told the press that, in a maturing democracy, the second election is usually more important than the first.

A founding member of the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ), Goncz was nominated for the presidency by the late Antall as part of an intricate deal engineered to forge a better working relationship between the ruling Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) and the SZDSZ.

In return for SZDSZ concessions, which facilitated the coalition's ability to pass important legislation, Antall gave the SZDSZ a say in some government appointments and a role in restructuring the Hungarian media. Goncz had not been prominent in party affairs before he was nominated for the presidency. He has since relinquished his SZDSZ membership in what was widely seen in the press as a gesture to underline his determination to remain above party politics. Nevertheless, Goncz

EO 13526 1.4c, 3.5c

has occasionally made press statements that have been attacked by the governing coalition parties as blatantly partisan.

**Determining the President's Place**

press reports indicate that Goncz chafes at constitutional ambiguities restricting his position and that he had been frustrated by Antall's effort to limit presidential authority. His training as a lawyer has made him a staunch advocate of constitutional democracy; he has often said publicly that he is a "constitutional" president and feels it his duty to be the conscience of the government. The Budapest press chronicled in detail Goncz's battles with Antall over the President's legal role in overseeing the military; appointing and dismissing government officials; and, in general, maintaining the presidency as part of a democratic system of checks and balances.

a 1991 Constitutional Court ruling dealing with the scope of presidential and prime-ministerial powers was theoretical and vague enough to allow both adversaries to feel vindicated, but it widened the rift between the two men that persisted until Goncz's rapprochement with Antall on his deathbed, in which he presented his old friend with Hungary's highest honor.

3.5c

**Foreign Policy Priorities**

Goncz has told the press that Hungary's top foreign policy priority is winning full EU membership and gaining access to West European markets, achievements he views as crucial to the rebuilding of his country's economy. He supports his country's eventual admission to NATO.

EO 13526 1.4c, 1.4d  
He has also

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EO 13526 1.4c, 3.5c

emphasized his conviction that the key to lasting peace is resolution of the treatment of ethnic minorities, saying, "If Europe can solve this problem, then it can solve any problem in the future." For his part, Goncz has reached out to Hungarian Jewish and Gypsy minorities in his tenure as President.

EO 13526 1.4c, 1.4d, 3.5c

**Early Life and Career**

Goncz, who was born in Budapest on 10 February 1922, earned a doctorate of laws in 1944. He later fought in Hungary's anti-Nazi resistance and, following the Communist takeover in 1948, became a laborer. During his imprisonment Goncz mastered English by translating Winston Churchill's wartime memoirs for his Communist captors. He was released in 1963 and found work as a translator. He has translated "an entire bookcase" of American literature, including former President Bush's autobiography, *Looking Forward*.

Goncz and his wife own an elegant cottage on the northern shore of Lake Balaton, an idyllic spot where they are most at home. Goncz is characterized as speaking fluent, if grammatically imperfect, English. He and his wife, Maria Zsuzsanna, have four children.

28 April 1994

EO 13526 1.4c, 3.5c

**Michal KOVAC**  
(Phonetic: KOHvahch)

**SLOVAKIA**

*President (since February 1993)*

*Addressed as: Mr. President*

As independent Slovakia's first elected president, Michal Kovac has used his limited constitutional powers to try to preserve political stability and steer his country toward greater democracy, in our judgment. In November 1993 Kovac, who has the power to ratify ministerial appointments, refused to accept then Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar's nominee for privatization minister, [redacted]

[redacted] 1.4c, 1.4d

[redacted] The following month, exercising his prerogative to submit legislation to parliament, Kovac proposed an amendment to a law to allow southern towns with large Hungarian minorities to use both Slovak and Hungarian in the names of their towns; the amendment was intended to ease tensions.

[redacted] 1.4c, 1.4d

[redacted] In February 1994 Kovac refused Meciar's demand that he accept the resignation of then Foreign Minister Jozef Moravcik, publicly maintaining that Meciar had to find an acceptable replacement for the Foreign Minister first. [redacted]

[redacted] EO 13526 1.4c, 1.4d

**Career Data**

Kovac was apparently successful in the old Communist system during his early career. He graduated from the Bratislava School of Economics in 1954 and worked there as an assistant for a year. From 1956 until 1971 he was assigned to the regional institute of the Czechoslovak State Bank. He lectured at Cuba's central banking school from 1964 until 1965, and he was deputy director of a Czechoslovak bank in London during 1967-69.



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Kovac, who during the late 1960s was a strong public supporter of then Communist Party head Alexander Dubcek, disapproved of the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and rebelled against the subsequent normalization campaign; he was subsequently demoted to a lesser post in the Bratislava city office. [redacted] 3.5c

In December 1989 Kovac was named Minister of Finance in the first postrevolutionary Slovak Government. He was elected to the Federal Assembly in June 1990 as a candidate from the Public Against Violence (VPN) movement. After the VPN split, he joined the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS)—led by then Slovak Republic Prime Minister Meciar—in April 1991. The following month Kovac resigned from the Finance Ministry to protest Meciar's removal from the republic prime-ministership. Kovac was named HZDS deputy chairman in June 1991. He was reelected to the Federal Assembly in June 1992 and became Speaker; he held this post until 31 December 1992, when the federal parliament ceased to exist. Kovac represented his country at the opening of the Holocaust Museum in Washington in 1993. [redacted] 3.5c

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EO 13526 1.4c, 3.5c

***The Presidential Couple***

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EO 13526 1.4c, 1.4d

*Although Kovac's wife does not appear to get involved in politics, she takes a strong interest in her husband's career.*

EO 13526 1.4c, 1.4d

3.5c

**Personal Notes**

Kovac was born on 5 August 1930 in Lubisa, East Slovakia. He does not speak English. He and his wife have two grown sons; their older son is studying for an M.B.A. at the London Business School.

3.5c

16 June 1994

EO 13526 1.4c, 3.5c

**Arpad GONCZ**  
(Phonetic: goontz)

**HUNGARY**

*President (since 1990)*

*Addressed as: Mr. President*

Former playwright Arpad Goncz has been affectionately referred to in the Hungarian press as the grandfather of his country, and he consistently places at or near the top of public preference polls. To his countrymen, this former political prisoner (1957-63) is a symbol of those Hungarians who suffered for their participation in the uprising against Communist rule in 1956.



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EO 13526 1.4c

As President, Goncz has employed his moral authority to weigh in on public policy matters that he deems essential—or injurious—to Hungary’s continuing democratization. For instance, he strongly criticized the former government’s efforts to control the state-owned media, calling such action “unhealthy.” Goncz recently oversaw the national election in May, which saw the reemergence of the left into power.

A founding member of the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ), Goncz was nominated for the presidency by the late Prime Minister Jozsef Antall as part of an intricate deal engineered to forge a better working relationship between the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) and the SZDSZ,

In return for SZDSZ concessions, which facilitated the coalition’s ability to pass important legislation, Antall gave the SZDSZ a say in some government appointments and a role in restructuring the Hungarian media. Goncz had not been prominent in party affairs before he was nominated for the presidency. He has since relinquished his SZDSZ membership—which was widely seen in the press as a gesture to underline his determination to remain above party politics. Nevertheless, Goncz has occasionally made press statements that have been attacked by the governing coalition parties as blatantly partisan.

**Determining the President’s Place**

press reports indicate that Goncz chafes at constitutional ambiguities restricting his position and that he had been frustrated by Antall’s effort to limit presidential authority.

his training as a lawyer has made him a staunch advocate of constitutional democracy; he has often said publicly that he is a “constitutional” president and feels it his duty to be the conscience of the government. The Budapest press chronicled in detail Goncz’s battles with Antall over the president’s legal role in overseeing the military; appointing and dismissing government officials; and, in general, maintaining the presidency as part of a democratic system of checks and balances.

a 1991 Constitutional Court ruling on the scope of presidential and prime-ministerial powers was theoretical and vague enough to allow both adversaries to feel vindicated; however, it widened the rift between the two men that lasted until Goncz’s reconciliation with Antall on his deathbed. At that meeting Goncz presented his old friend with Hungary’s highest honor.

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EO 13526 1.4c, 3.5c

**Foreign Policy Priorities**

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EO 13526 1.4c, 1.4d

He has also emphasized his conviction that the key to lasting peace is resolution of the treatment of ethnic minorities: "If Europe can solve this problem, then it can solve any problem in the future." For his part, Goncz has reached out to Hungarian Jewish and Gypsy minorities during his tenure as President. [redacted]

EO 13526 1.4c, 1.4d, 3.5c

EO 13526 1.4c, 1.4d, 3.5c

**Early Life and Career**

Goncz was born in Budapest on 10 February 1922. He earned a doctorate of laws in 1944. Goncz later fought in Hungary's anti-Nazi resistance and, following the Communist takeover in 1948, became a laborer. During his imprisonment, Goncz mastered English by translating Winston Churchill's wartime memoirs for his Communist captors. He was released in 1963 and found work as a translator [redacted] 1.4c, 1.4d [redacted] he has translated "an entire bookcase" of American literature, including former President Bush's autobiography, *Looking Forward*.

3.5c

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16 June 1994

EO 13526 1.4c, 3.5c