Summary of István Dobozi's op-ed in the May 13, 2017 edition of the Hungarian daily Magyar Nemzet: „Amerikai kapcsolat"

In his polemic piece "Amerikai kapcsolat" (American connection), published in the May 13 issue of the Hungarian daily *Magyar Nemzet*, Coalition member István Dobozi takes issue with several proposals presented in the op-ed "How the United States can stop Hungary's descent into auhoritarianism" by Dalibor Rohac and Máté Hajba. The op-ed appeared in the online edition of *The Washington Post* on May 3.

Under one of the authors' proposals, President Trump should appoint an experienced career diplomat as ambassador to Budapest to successfully counter Russia's steadily growing influence in Hungary. Mr. Dobozi considers this suggestion naïve, not least because it assigns a de facto proconsul role to the American ambassador. Moreover, the U.S. embassy is currently headed by a *charge de affairs* (David Kostelancik) who is a recognized Russia expert.

Another suggestion aims to downgrade military cooperation between the two countries. Mr. Dobozi considers this a non-starter because, along with economic relations, military cooperation is valued both by Budapest and Washington as a bright spot within overall relations. How much is the political leverage for Washington in ratcheting down military cooperation? None - states Mr. Dobozi, let alone pushing Hungary even closer to Russia.

Finally, the authors suggest to carry on with President Obama's policy of treating Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán as a de facto *persona non grata* at the level of bilateral interstate relations. Mr. Dobozi considers this suggestion destructive. In this context, he notes that regarding Mr. Orbán's informal invitation to the White House by President Trump last November, the Hungarian authorities have read too much into it, prematurely exaggerating both the importance and possibility of an early official visit to Washington by the Hungarian leader. Mr. Orbán cannot jump the queue of higher importance world leaders awaiting invitation to the White House. Mr. Orbán has not helped himself by unnecessarily and politically inexpediently provoking a major political crisis involving the legal status of the Budapest-based Central European University in which the United States has a considerable direct stake.