

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Dear Guests!

Today, we are commemorating the 68th anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and fight for independence. We salute the heroic young men and women who gave their lives for this intangible thing they valued above all else - freedom. But they took a sacrifice not for their own personal freedom, but for the freedom of their nation, their country. It was their passionate love of their homeland that led them in their struggle to try and succeed against one of the most destructive ideologies of the 20th century, communism.

The 12-days hopeless struggle against the oppressive machinery of the communist dictatorship and the Soviet tanks could only end in one way. But, as so many times in Hungarian history, the heroic stand and fall of the armed struggle and the subsequent retaliation became such a defining experience in the consciousness of the entire Hungarian nation, that barely thirty years later, it definitively led to the restoration of our freedom and national independence.

Dear Guests!

Today we are also surrounded by destructive ideas and ideologies. Those who proclaim the omnipotence of money are joined by politicians and preachers who claim social engineering as their banner. A narrow group of our fellows once again believe that they possess the absolute truth. They know and they will tell us all who to love, who to live with in a country, what to eat and what to heat with. And ultimately - following the instructive example of the destructive ideologies of the 20th century - they will also tell us what to think. All this, naturally, for the survival and well-being of humanity.

What a wonderfully beautiful idea! Except - I don't know humanity, so I can't say with absolute certainty if I love it. But like our ancestors of 1956, I passionately love my family, my homeland, my country, my friends, my fellow countrymen, and I am prepared to do anything for them.

Dear Friends!

Every single day we must fight for the freedom of action and thought - for the freedom of critical thinking. We all know that this is no easy task, as in today's information world it proves difficult to crawl out from under the rubbish heap of superfluous and false data, of ready-made answers and solutions. But it helps if we know exactly who we are, where we come from and where we aim to go. It aids us when we allow ourselves to be filled with love and be guided by it in our choices.

And thirdly, but not least, we need to hold on to our friends and neighbours. For more than a decade now, the Hungarian and Slovak nations have been firmly on this path, and slowly but surely we are rebuilding the mutual trust which the tragic 20th century almost completely destroyed. I thank our Slovak and Hungarian friends and fellows for being our partners in this effort!

Dear Friends!

The best way to cherish the memory of the heroes of 1956 is to do our utmost for the free future of our children and grandchildren. I am convinced that this task we cannot bear alone.

I raise my glass to the heroes of 1956 and to the common Hungarian-Slovak future!

