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Hungary: Reformers Take Over Party Leadership

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Summary:

An analysis of the Hungarian government's leaders and their movement toward political pluralism.

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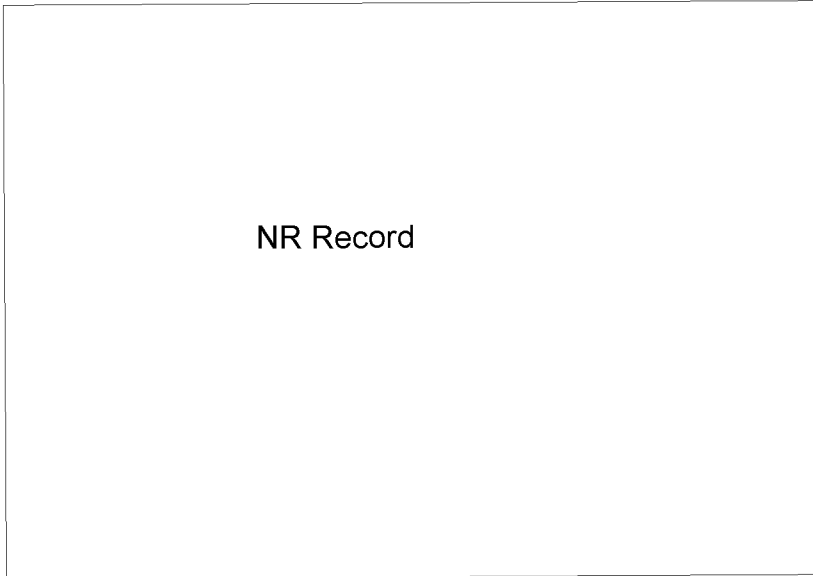
HUNGARY: Reformers Take Over Party Leadership

The capture of the Communist party's leading positions this weekend by members of the party's reform wing ensures that Hungary will continue moving toward political pluralism. New party chairman Rezso Nyers, an advocate of market-style economic reforms and democratic political change, will chair a new four-member presidium that will serve as the party's highest policymaking body. Other presidium members are radical reformer Imre Pozsgay, Nyers' protege and Premier, Miklos Nemeth, and General Secretary Grosz. Nyers will also head talks with the opposition on transition to a multiparty system.

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Comment: Nyers now is unquestionably the most influential member of the Central Committee and the party's real leader. Although Grosz retains the title of General Secretary, that post has lost much of its former importance and probably will involve only day-to-day administration of party affairs. This arrangement probably will maintain party unity until the party congress on 7 October, but the popular Pozsgay—whom the party will nominate as president—probably will continue trying to set the agenda for rapid change. The changes almost certainly guarantee that the still relatively orthodox apparatus will not be able to control the congress and obstruct the reform process.

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