



June '97 letter

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INTERAGENCY SECURITY CLASSIFICATION APPEALS PANEL,
E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)

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Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I appreciated the opportunity to consider your letter concerning Slovenia and NATO enlargement. As I said during our meeting in New York, I greatly value the enormous progress Slovenia has made under your capable and wise leadership. I also am very much aware of and respect your country's deep-felt wish to be one of the countries invited to begin accession talks at the NATO Summit meeting in Madrid next month.

My decision to support three countries to begin NATO accession talks this year was taken after careful consideration. Let me make clear that my decision is not a rejection of Slovenia's NATO aspirations nor of Slovenia. Slovenia is on the right track and I remain deeply impressed by your new country's achievements: Slovenia's strong and stable democracy, Slovenia's recent progress in deepening cooperation with European institutions and with its neighbors, Slovenia's increasing willingness to extend security to Europe's troubled countries such as Albania and Bosnia, and Slovenia's commitment to provide appropriate resources to its military.

These factors, and my confidence in the Slovenian people's determination to continue on a reformist, democratic course, reinforce my commitment to work with you to support Slovenia's progress toward the goal we share -- Slovenia's increasingly close integration with the western community of nations and its institutions, including NATO.

NATO enlargement is a process, not a one-time event, and our commitment to maintain the momentum of NATO enlargement is unshakable. Beginning with my first NATO summit meeting in January 1994, the United States has urged that NATO "enlarge steadily, deliberately and openly," and I continue to be a committed advocate for a new NATO that will be the strong foundation of security for a united and peaceful European continent, embracing all of Europe's democracies. Maintaining an open door to future enlargement is an absolutely essential element of our approach, and I am determined to see that this commitment is reflected in the decisions we make in Madrid.

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I look forward to working together to strengthen U.S.-Slovenian dialogue and partnership, and to advance Slovenia's integration into western institutions, including NATO. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

His Excellency
Dr. Janez Drnovsek
Prime Minister of the Republic
of Slovenia
Ljubljana