

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 30, 1997

Dear Senator *Brown* Dole:

Thank you for your letter reporting on your recent trip to Romania, Slovenia and Bosnia.

I appreciated having your candid views about Romania and Slovenia and respect the arguments you advanced in support of their NATO membership. I decided to support only three countries at this time because I believed that, despite Romania's and Slovenia's progress, we needed a somewhat longer track record of reforms before taking the momentous step of extending security guarantees. Romania, despite its dramatic advances, needs a bit more time, I believe, to take on the obligations of NATO membership. Its commitment to reforms is firm but still only seven months old. Slovenia has obviously advanced very far in its democratic transformation and its economy is relatively developed. However, Slovenia has only existed as a country since 1991 and will also benefit from some more time, with active support by the West.

Both countries are very strong candidates for NATO membership in the future, and I was pleased that NATO leaders agreed in Madrid to keep the Alliance's doors very clearly open to additional new members, with a review of the process at our next Summit in 1999.

You are right to raise questions about the impact on both countries of not being chosen at Madrid. I was very pleased, as I am sure you were, by the enthusiastic welcome we received in Bucharest. This was a sign of respect for the United States and the work we have advanced together to support the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe. It is also an indication that Romanians believe the way forward is indeed open to them. Secretary Albright also had very positive meetings in Ljubljana during her trip to the region after Madrid.

I welcome your views and equally welcome the opportunity to work with you in support of an objective we both strongly support: NATO's enlargement as a pillar of a secure, undivided and democratic Europe for the 21st century.

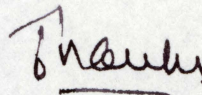
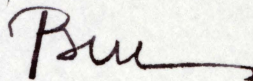
Regarding your trip to Bosnia, I share your concern with the presence of war criminals and their potential political influence. We continue to receive reports on the political influence of Radovan Karadzic, in violation of agreements that he not be involved in political life. We have raised this point firmly in both Belgrade and Pale.

The recent SFOR operation against two war criminals in Prijedor is an important step toward justice in Bosnia, a key ingredient to long-term peace. We will not be satisfied, however, until all indicted war criminals stand trial at the Hague. It is the Parties who bear primary responsibility under the Dayton accords for turning over war criminals. We continue to press the Parties to live up to these obligations, while exploring other ways to support the War Crimes Tribunal.

I welcome your support in urging greater effort by the Parties and the international community to implement Dayton, including on the key issue of refugees and displaced persons. As you know, I have conveyed this same message in recent meetings in Europe. Secretary Albright has pressed the parties directly on these points, making plain that only those who fully cooperate with Dayton will get our support in terms of economic assistance and multilateral lending. In addition, your message to President Izetbegovic was exactly right and echoed the themes I stressed to him during his visit here last March.

Thank you for sharing your views and insights. It sounds like your trip was a great success. I look forward to continuing to share views with you as we seek to forge a bipartisan approach to the European security agenda.

Sincerely,



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