

SLOVENIA AND UNITED STATES POLICY ON NATO ENLARGEMENT¹

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INTRODUCTION

Why did the United States government not support Slovenia's inclusion in the first post-Cold War enlargement of NATO and what can Slovenia and its supporters do to further Slovenia's inclusion if another round of expansion occurs? Although the reasons for Slovenia's exclusion are not yet fully clear, the information available suggests that the main reasons had more to do with the Administration's tactics in domestic politics and the views of Slovenia held by some of its highest members than with objective considerations or matters of principle. Political decisions, even important ones, are often made more on the basis of attitudes, incorrect information and the results of political and bureaucratic struggles than by reference to either facts or academic theories of alliance behavior. This does not mean that defensible reasons for Slovenia's exclusion from NATO have not been made in the NATO expansion debate of the past few years.

The Origins of NATO Enlargement

The end of the Cold War forced a reassessment of NATO's view of the requirements for European security. Although the changes within the Soviet Union and East Central Europe brought about by Gorbachev's policies removed the major problem NATO had faced, they raised new and unsettling ones. Accordingly, NATO studied the European security environment for sixteen months and in November 1991 adopted a new strategic concept. It states that Europe was living with new uncertainties and potentially faced new instabilities arising from the "difficulties ... faced by many countries in Central and Eastern

¹ I am indebted for many useful comments by Andrzej Korbonski, Minton F. Goldman, Roger E. Kanet, John S. Micgiel, M.J. Peterson, and Richard Staar. My informants interviewed "on background" are not individually identified.

Europe.” At the same time NATO created a new institution in response to the changed circumstances concerning it, the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), for consultation and cooperation with the former members of the Warsaw Pact.² However, the NACC was not capable of meeting the security demands of the states of Central and Eastern Europe. It lacked a decision-making structure and offered no security guarantee. By 1993 a RAND study argued that only full membership in NATO could resolve the East Europeans’ security concerns. Soon the idea of enlarging NATO was being debated within the U.S. government. Supporters argued that the U.S. somehow had to show that it was still committed to maintaining European security, that NATO continued to have relevance after the Cold War, and that reform in Eastern Europe could be facilitated and would be rewarded. The Secretary General of NATO was publicly advocating significant changes in security architecture and warning, “In the world of today you simply cannot live in security surrounded by chaos.” The then ongoing massive violence in the former Yugoslavia was probably having a strong effect on thinking on security matters. One result was the creation by NATO in January 1994 of the Partnership for Peace (PFP)—a compromise offering no security guarantees but going beyond the NACC by offering the ex-communist states opportunities for interaction with NATO militaries and for contributions to NATO endeavors such as the force in Bosnia.³

² NATO’s strategic concept agreed upon in Rome on 7–8 November 1991. NATO Office of Information and Press. On the NACC, see the Rome Declaration on Peace and Cooperation, November 1991. NATO Office of Information and Press.

³ The published version of the RAND study appeared as Ronald D. Asmus, Richard L. Kuglar, and F. Stephen Larrabee, “Building a New NATO,” *Foreign Affairs* 4 (September/October 1993): 28–40. On the debate in the U.S. Government, see Daniel Williams, “Clinton’s National Security Adviser Outlines U.S. Strategy of Enlargement,” *Washington Post*, 22 September 1993: A16. The quotation from Manfred Worner, the NATO Secretary General, in his “NATO’s Role in a Changing Europe,” conference paper, 35th Annual Conference of the IISS, Brussels, 9 September 1993. On the creation of PFP, see Les Aspin, then the U.S. Secretary of Defense, “Partnership for Peace: Remarks Prepared for Delivery ... to the Atlantic Council of the United States,” Marriott Hotel, Washington, D.C., 3 December 1993.

The enlargement of NATO was formally approved at the January 1994 NATO summit meeting in Brussels. In December 1994 a White House statement emphasized that expansion was intended to be part of a new and larger European security structure involving both the European Union (EU) and the Council (now Organization) for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). That same month President Clinton, speaking in Budapest, stated that the new democracies of East Central Europe must not be consigned to a "gray zone." President Yeltsin immediately countered by warning that enlargement risked bringing a "Cold Peace" to Europe. Nevertheless, by March of 1995 Vice President Gore was saying that NATO expansion "must take place at the same time the relationship between NATO and Russia is deepened and clarified." The Administration had decided that it would pursue both NATO enlargement and improvement in relations with Russia, policies that many commentators say are mutually exclusive. In August of 1995 Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott put forth a defense of NATO expansion emphasizing its function of strengthening democracy and reform in general in prospective members. In September the NATO enlargement study set forth the benefits of expansion at length and also, with a view toward Russian objections, pointed out that there was "no a priori requirement for the stationing of nuclear weapons on the territory of new members."⁴

Realism on U.S.-Slovenia Relations

Any discussion of the relationship of the Slovene and United States *governments*, if it is to be potentially productive of improvement, must be realistic. The simple fact of the matter is that personnel in the U.S. government and members of Congress are not highly cognizant of even the existence of Slovenia and, if they are, they may see it as "communist," "neo-communist" or as some sort of anti-democratic structure or one that is lacking in positive attributes in some way. As a result, suspicion or even negative attitudes may be present on the U.S. side.

⁴ Strobe Talbott, "Why NATO Should Grow," *The New York Review of Books* 42, 13 (10 August 1995): 27–30. "Study on NATO Enlargement," NATO Office of Information and Press, September 1996, 2, 9–10.

This does not mean that people-to-people contacts and ties are bad or even average. American visitors to Slovenia can come away with pleasant memories of their stays. The problem for Slovenia is that few such people have any political "clout" in the U.S. But this may change a bit for the better as more American political leaders visit Slovenia. Recent visitors have included Senators Lugar and Biden and other leading American congressional figures.

In addition to the problems of lack of American knowledge and understanding there is the problem for Slovenia caused by the main concerns of the superpower status and requirements of the United States. In fall 1997 the main foreign policy concern of the U.S. government was undoubtedly the Middle East and particularly the question of how to get Israel and the Palestinian Authority "back on track" toward a better relationship. By early 1998 the U.S. was preparing to attack Iraq if it did not allow the UN inspectors leeway. By May Washington was wrapped up in issues of U.S.-China relations and the detonations by India and then Pakistan of nuclear weapons. Other major American foreign policy concerns are: the "new strategic environment" and the uncertainties it creates; Russia with its weak government but its nuclear-tipped missiles on "hair trigger" alert and potentially "leaking" missile materials and nuclear know-how; China as a new and unpredictable nuclear-armed strategic competitor in the Far East beginning to add substantially to the U.S. trade deficit; the new phenomenon of the NIS (newly independent states) of the former Soviet Union with vast reserves of oil and natural gas in some of them; a starving but militaristic and nuke-developing North Korea; international drug-trafficking, illegal immigration, and terrorism from abroad. And let us not forget Bosnia and Kosovo and the hellish problems there that do not go away. Failure there, not unlikely, may discredit the Clinton Administration's entire foreign policy. As one columnist puts it, "In the post-Cold War world the combustible cocktail of weapons proliferation, religious extremism, rogue states, and free markets is becoming the biggest threat to U.S. interests."⁵

In this unstable context how can tiny Slovenia even be noticed, particularly since official Washington also has to accustom itself to the

⁵ Thomas L. Friedman, "Missile Myopia," *The New York Times* (hereafter *NYT*) 2 October 1997: A25.

existence and particularities of a number of other new states, e.g., Uzbekistan, Georgia, Latvia? Some of these may be much better situated than Slovenia in U.S. politics, e.g., Armenia, or possess natural resources very important for the U.S., e.g., Kazakhstan.⁶ As one Slovene government official said to me, "Slovenia is not important for America." Indeed, as one American pundit puts it, "How many Americans know the difference between Slovenia and Slovakia?"⁷

A story from my days in the U.S. Navy illustrates the problem. Once our little ship, a destroyer escort, encountered an American aircraft carrier. We immediately rendered honors, since its captain was certainly senior to ours. But, to our dismay, the carrier did not return honors. It ignored us and simply sailed on, majestically oblivious to our petty, workaday existence. True, Slovenia could demand American attention, but such an approach would, first, be "un-Slovene" and two, counterproductive.

The Slovene-U.S. relationship is fundamentally affected by the fact that the United States is still dominated politically by Protestants stemming from northern Europe. As a result, there is an American

⁶ While I was working in the U.S. Government during 1995–96 I was told by an employee of AID (Agency for International Development) that Armenia was number one in per capita U.S. foreign aid. The new "oil patch" of the Caucasus and neighboring Central Asia is receiving a great deal of attention in Washington. For example, when the president of Azerbaidzhan, ex-apparatchik Gaidar Aliev, came to the U.S. capital in August 1997 his newly independent country was "at the top of the international agenda" and profiting from what Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott has called "the geopolitics of oil." See David Fouquet and Alison Beard, "Aliyev Exploits Petroleum to Boost Baku's Stock," *The Washington Times* 31 July 1997: A 11. See also the editorial by Daniel Yergin and Thane Gustafson, "Evolution of an Oil Rush," *NYT* 6 August 1997: A25. They call the Caspian Sea "the hottest spot in the oil industry."

⁷ William Safire, "The End of Yalta," *NYT* 9 July 1997: A29. Safire seems to have the gist of it, however. He says, "Slovakia is backward and grumpy, ... Slovenia is cheerfully enlightened..." Still, it does not help that in an English-language dictionary the words "Slovene" and "Slovenia" can come between "sloven" and "slow." Would Alpinia be better?

tendency to see East Europeans and others not from northern Europe as distant and different "others."⁸ The United States has tended to make its policies toward Eastern Europe less grand than its statements on the area. The scholar Charles Gati has realistically described U.S. policy toward Eastern Europe by writing, "Since 1949 ... the United States sought diversity rather than democracy, liberalization rather than liberation."⁹

Also, there was very little intellectual preparation for the fall of communism. Some say Sovietology "failed." In any case, academics tended to see communism in power as a long-term if not permanent fact of life. For example, a leading scholar of East Central Europe, Andrew Gyorgy of the George Washington University, once wrote, "It would be futile to talk about a 'loosening' of the Socialist alliance or demand even a peaceful 'ideological engagement' in that area. Equally, the Cold War terms of 'liberation' or 'rollback' have lost their relevance...."¹⁰

Certainly the Bush Administration was opposed to the breakup of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. See Bush's "chicken Kiev" speech telling the Ukrainians to stay in the USSR. A former Secretary of State, Lawrence Eagleburger, has spoken of the predictability and relative ease of dealing with big entities. American governments can be predisposed to big powers over small ones. This is despite the fact that many Americans outside government tend to favor "underdogs" over big powers and that some of the states of East Central Europe have been called "American charter states" since they were founded in connection with American politics and attitudes, e.g., President Wilson's Fourteen Points. But that was "then." The American national character has probably changed some in the course of this century—to

⁸ I have made this point somewhat differently in my *United States-Soviet Relations* (New York: Longman, 1989) 246.

⁹ Charles Gati, *Hungary and the Soviet Bloc* (Durham: Duke UP, 1986) 220.

¹⁰ Andrew Gyorgy, *Some Signposts in United States-Eastern European Relations: 1963-1973*, Reprint Series 49 (Washington, D.C.: George Washington UP, 1973) 12. Gyorgy added that the U.S. would have to operate in the area on the "operational principles of flexibility and accommodation." (14). Such a position seemed realistic at the time, but American academe never caught up with reality as it evolved in East Central Europe.

more stress on “me” and less on others. And there is an American tendency to look down on small states, perhaps because they are seen as weak.

On 21 June 1991, the then Secretary of State, James Baker, visited Belgrade and warned the leaders of Croatia and Slovenia that the United States would not recognize their states’ independence.... But, as a CIA report issued earlier in the year had concluded, the breakup of Yugoslavia was already taking place.¹¹

Baker’s statement may well have encouraged the Yugoslav elite to attack Slovenia and Croatia. It also suggests that despite the transparency of political change abroad a U.S. administration can stick with outdated policy. There are many reasons for this. One is that any U.S. government is dealing with so many issues at once that it is unable to identify any particular development quickly. Also, the perpetual inter-agency conflict may cause new developments to be blocked. And, since the U.S. has world-wide interests, a new departure anywhere risks hurting the U.S. position elsewhere. Lastly, subordinates are loath to bring superiors “bad news,” and, even if they do, it may well not be accepted. As the Washington saying goes, “One is always punished for doing the right thing.”¹² Only truly expert politico-bureaucratic capability could allow one to “beat the odds” and win in this context.

Slovenia’s situation in American politics is suggested by the incorrect claim, in a 1996 letter of a Member of Congress to a constituent, that Slovenia was then “placed in a separate category” (from other East Central European states) because it was selling arms to

¹¹ David Rieff, *Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995) 15. Four days later, Slovenia and Croatia declared themselves independent.

¹² This is said on the basis of the author’s experience as a William C. Foster Fellow in the State Department building, with the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, during the academic year 1995–96. I am reminded that the CIA person charged with identifying coming crises advised the Bush Administration that Saddam Hussein was probably going to invade Kuwait but that the warning had no effect within the Administration.

“unfriendly countries in the Middle East.”¹³ Although this claim was in error, it had to have a negative effect on Slovenia’s standing “inside the beltway.” Slovenia’s image is not helped by its characterization by Warren Zimmerman, the last U.S. ambassador to Yugoslavia. He has written:

Their virtue was democracy and their vice was selfishness. In their drive to separate from Yugoslavia they simply ignored the twenty-two million Yugoslavs who were not Slovenes. They bear considerable responsibility for the bloodbath that followed their secession.¹⁴

This is pretty strong stuff and goes way too far—as well as being false and unrealistic. How could Slovenia have averted the bloodbath in Bosnia? Zimmerman’s assertion may signify, however, that Slovene aspirations were seen as a nuisance by some American diplomats, particularly those who had served in Belgrade. It may well be that U.S. Government officials’ views critical of Slovenia, which we shall see again below, were common within the government. It was such views, specifically that Slovenia ought to have tried harder to get along with the Yugoslav elite, that Prime Minister Drnovšek tried to counteract in his speech at Boston University some years ago. The American faith in compromise can be unrealistically applied abroad.

Another problem for Slovenia in the U.S. is that many personnel of the U.S. government see Slovenia, if they see it at all, as just another East European, ex-communist and ex-Yugoslav country with all the characteristics Americans see as negative features in such systems. And certainly the “post-communist” countries have not undergone a clear break with their communist pasts. Most of them are governed by persons whose careers were made in communist parties.

In any case, in many American eyes Slovenia is from the communist “side of the tracks.” And, with the American entertainment media presenting a warmed over “red menace” supposedly stemming from Russia as one of the current “threats,” Slovenia’s image in the

¹³ A letter of 1996 to a constituent from Nancy Pelosi, Member of Congress for the 8th District of California.

¹⁴ Warren Zimmerman, *Origins of a Catastrophe* (New York: Times Books, 1996) 71.

U.S. is unavoidably affected negatively. Since, as the thinking seems to go, Russia was communist, any other country that was communist is tarred with the same brush. The Cold War lives on in some Americans' thinking.¹⁵

The U.S. Government, particularly because of the Clinton administration's mercantilist stress on increasing exports, is quite sensitive to any attempt by an ally or potential ally to purchase weapons or other military equipment in countries other than the United States. Quite a flap was produced in Washington in the late spring of 1995 when it appeared that the Slovene Defense Minister had decided to buy Israeli, and not American, military radios. Real consternation quickly ensued in Washington. A rather high-level delegation was dispatched almost immediately to Ljubljana to lobby against Slovene plans and messages of very high classification on the topic were circulating within the U.S. Government.¹⁶

None of this means the Slovene-U.S. relationship is bad. I have heard Defense department officials say they have been impressed by some of the Slovene military personnel with whom they have dealt. State Department officials have said favorable things about the people at the Slovene Embassy—good professionals, “very experienced and competent,” helpful, etc., and that Slovenes have been important to the

¹⁵ See Bernard Weintraub, “For Hollywood Villains, It’s Cold War II,” *NYT*, 6 August 1997: B1; on the U.S. dualistic policy toward Russia, see Fred Hiatt, “Don’t Cold Shoulder Russia,” *The Washington Post* (hereafter *WP*) 4 August 1997. Hiatt’s piece parallels my own observations from my experience in the U.S. Government. The Administration is both aiding *and* opposing Russia and possibly other ex-communist states. Strobe Talbott, the Deputy Secretary of State, has argued that such is not U.S. policy. See his article of early 1 September 1997 in *The Financial Times*, “The Great Game is Over.”

¹⁶ I left the government in late May 1996 and accordingly do not know the outcome of this typical flap. A similar problem occurred in Poland’s relations with NATO and the U.S. in 1997. When it was learned that Poland was about to buy missiles from Israel, the American and British ambassadors protested to top Polish government officials and the deal was shelved, at least for a time. Although the U.S. position in such matters is supported by reference to the ideal of NATO interoperability, economic considerations are also involved. See *NYT* 20 September 1997: A6.

U.S. government as “interpreters” and “explainers” of the present rump Yugoslavia and its leaders, including Milošević. One U.S. diplomat said in 1993 that Slovenia and the U.S. had no big issues dividing them. However, an American complaint heard was that the Slovenes tend to come up with seemingly great ideas that cannot be implemented while the Slovenes say that the Slovene desk officer at State is changed too often. They would like to have one person to deal with for a definite period. One U.S. Defense Department official said that the top Slovenes they deal with are impressive but not the lower-ranking people. “Access” means a great deal in Washington. Slovene diplomats in Washington did not get to talk with either Tony Lake, President Clinton’s first national security adviser, early in the Administration. They did, however, get to talk with Vice-President Gore’s foreign affairs advisor, Leon Fuerth.¹⁷

Slovenia has a growing trade relationship with the United States and appears to import more from the U.S. than it exports to it. In 1996, according to Slovene government statistics, Slovenia imported goods worth about 324 million dollars from the U.S. and sold it goods worth about 290 million dollars. For 1996 this amounted to only about three percent of Slovenia’s exports and 4 percent of its imports. Slovenia’s main trading partners are the members of the EU. The U.S. share of Slovenia’s foreign direct investment is only about one percent. A nice little addition to this figure was Goodyear’s investment of \$120 million in a Slovene tire company in 1997.¹⁸ American tourists to Slovenia are not numerous, perhaps about 12,000 per year in recent years, nothing like the large numbers from Austria, Italy or Germany, but at about the same level as tourists from Britain and Switzerland.¹⁹

¹⁷ This is based partly on my interviews at the U.S. Department of State in May 1993 and discussions with a U.S. Defense Department official during 1997.

¹⁸ *NYT* 11 December 1997: D2.

¹⁹ Courtesy Embassy of Slovenia, Washington, D.C. U.S. statistics undercount U.S. exports to Slovenia since some of them go via third countries, particularly Austria. See also: Home Page Slovenia: <http://www.uvi.si/slo>. The US-Slovenia Business Council may also be useful for information. The e-mail address of its Executive Director, Thorsten Knutsson, is: info@usbizcouncil.org.

A U.S. Department of Commerce publication of 1996 called Slovenia “one of Europe’s neglected opportunities” for U.S. business and “one of the region’s safest commercial environments” and stated that Slovenia’s economic strength exceeds that of the region’s “high profile” countries but suggested that Slovenia’s economic prospects will not be generally recognized until it achieves membership in the EU.²⁰ One Slovene official, in discussing the U.S.-Slovene economic relationship, with the U.S. in seventh place in trade (after Russia), emphasizes the long distance and the smallness of the Slovene market as precluding a significant relationship in trade. And Slovenia lacks enough high-quality products desirable to the U.S. to make a real impact in the U.S. market.

Still, the U.S. and Slovenia have not had any bad mutual experiences and Slovenia does not see the U.S. as having any aims in Europe dangerous for Slovenia. In addition, American official policy has been important for Slovenia and is welcomed in several respects. Slovenia enjoyed clear U.S. support during the minor troubles with Italy in recent years. The cooperation on military matters has been “extremely fruitful.” Every six months a U.S. warship is in a Slovene port, thereby indirectly affirming Slovenia’s right to direct access to the sea, important since Croatia and Slovenia have not yet come to an agreement on their maritime boundary. In economics Slovenia was granted MFN and even more—GSP, whereby American tariffs for Slovene goods are lowered further. (GSP, or Generalized System of Preference, is now enjoyed by all the countries of Central Europe.)²¹ The U.S. is strictly following the principle that five successor states derive from the former Yugoslavia and therefore not allowing Serbia to claim all Yugoslav government assets. If the U.S. maintains, along with NATO, a position of strength in Southeast Europe after SFOR (and its successor force) withdraws it will probably need Slovene assistance. In this regard, a top U.S. Government official said in September 1997 that

²⁰ Paul Marin, “Slovenia: Alpine Nation Forges Ahead,” U.S. Department of Commerce, *Central and Eastern Europe: Commercial Update* (November 1996) 1-6 and 7.

²¹ GSP is a tariff preference (zero tariff) offered some states by the European Union. (It was adopted by the EC in 1971.) Apparently, the U.S. has decided to grant it to many countries, including Slovenia.

a “follow-on force” would be based in Hungary “and maybe in Slovenia.” How Slovenia would respond to this cannot be stated now.²²

Slovenia and the Prospect of NATO Membership

Prior to any consideration of NATO membership for Slovenia, or for any other putative member in East Central Europe, it must be recognized that membership in the European Union (EU) would be a good and perhaps preferable substitute. What the area needs to develop its capabilities and to “return to Europe” is an authoritative and useful form of political and economic Western European acceptance. However, because of Western Europe’s current serious economic difficulties, this is out of the question for now. With twelve to fourteen-percent unemployment almost everywhere in Western Europe and with powerful domestic agricultural interests, as well as a renascent chauvinist nationalism in some countries, bringing low-priced competitors into the fold is politically impossible. Accordingly, even though Slovenia was invited in December 1997 to begin talks on EU accession and despite its now being one of a small group of countries on the fast track for membership, it cannot become a member for some time. Still, Slovenia’s chief negotiator with the EU said in 1998 that he expects Slovenia to be admitted by 2003 and to qualify for monetary union in 2005.²³ NATO membership alone would not and cannot solve the fundamental problems of East Central Europe. It is financially and politically costly and not favored by those who desire an all-European security structure that would include Russia. Although several countries of East Central Europe, including Slovenia, have association agreements with the EU, actual membership still awaits internal restructuring of their economies and an improvement of the economies of Western Europe and the “biting of the bullet” of formal acceptance. It is feared in Western Europe that “enlargement could irrevocably change the character of the EU” and turn it into a “kind of development community.” Indeed, according to the eminent scholar Ralf Dahrendorf, as quoted by the Hungarian writer Peter Nadas, the EU “isn’t telling the truth to the East Europeans ... Germany and France

²² Interview, September 1997.

²³ RFE/RL *Newsline* (Prague), e-mail service, 15 May 1998. (Hereafter RFE/RL).

will block their entry." Accordingly, "We have no other possibility but to enlarge NATO to the east."²⁴

Though NATO may be a "lesser option" it is still sought because the present is unstable and the future is uncertain. The Nobel-Prize-winning poet Czeslaw Milosz says that "only geopolitics can provide for these peoples and cultures." In the more "realist" words of Ignac Golub, State Secretary of the Slovene Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "While the Cold War has ended, neither the nature of man nor that of international relations has fundamentally changed."²⁵ Freud may have been correct, at least for Europe, in the thesis of his *Civilization and its Discontents*, that civilization breeds its own breakdown. Certainly, three times in this century the United States has sent a military force to Europe to help reinstate stability. A central pertinent fact is that, as the war in Chechnya has starkly shown, even though Russia currently cannot fight its way out of the proverbial paper bag, its elites have not given up 500 years of Russian hegemonistic thinking. As recently as October 1997 a Russian diplomatic note stated that "Russia views the Balkans and southeastern Europe ... as a vital sphere of its interests." Given Russia's history and potential future capabilities, this cannot be dismissed as mere words. Also in the same month, the Russian defense minister said that President Yeltsin wants NATO transformed into a purely political alliance.²⁶ This would kill NATO as

²⁴ Lecture by Franz-Lothar Altmann, 27 September 1995, as reproduced in Woodrow Wilson Center, East European Studies, *Meeting Report*, November–December 1995: 3–4. See also Jacqui Moorhouse, "Central and Eastern Europe: Accession to the European Union," *Aussenpolitik* (English ed.), IV/1996: 368–78. For Dahrendorf's view, see Peter Nadas, "Democracy Without Borders," *NYT* 28 September 1997: 15. In late October 1997 the EU was close to deciding to open talks in 1998 with six prospective members, including Slovenia. See *NYT* 27 October 1997: A 10.

²⁵ From a book review by Donald Davie of Milosz' *A Year of the Hunter* in *The New York Times Book Review* 28 August 1994: 9. Milosz was once a diplomat of communist Poland and after defecting wrote a profound book on the nature of communism, *The Captive Mind*. Ignac Golub, "Preparing for Membership: Slovenia's Expanding Ties to NATO," *NATO Review*, 44.6 (November 1996): 24–25.

²⁶ Both in RFE/RL 2 October 1997. Russian commentary on NATO enlargement has tended to include the claim that Russia had been led to

NATO. If even a weak Russia speaks, people listen—and act accordingly. Russia has always emerged strong and expansionist from its disasters. A Lithuanian leader has pointed out the obvious—the key to peace in Europe is the security of small states “because there are no threats to the security of large countries.”²⁷ And Golub has correctly pointed out that “it is clearly in the interest of European security that the U.S. maintains its presence in Europe.”²⁸

What Slovenia Offers NATO

There are several good reasons why Slovenia could be a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and why its membership would be in NATO's and America's interest. In fact, there are so many supporting reasons it is easy to leave some off the list. Partly because of this it did seem for a time that Slovenia would be included in the first group of those invited. Slovenia is at a par or even better in most NATO requirements, except possibly in the transparency of the defense budget, a deficiency easily remedied. First perhaps, Slovenia is clearly a democracy, as are almost all the members of NATO, and the one with the highest standard of living among the many states that have emerged from communism. (Not all present members were democracies when they became members, e.g., Turkey, which is not fully a democracy even now.) Second, Slovenia's geographical location would be of particular importance as NATO moves into East Central Europe. Slovenia provides, for example, a “land bridge to Hungary” from both Italy and the Adriatic. Slovenia was never part of the Warsaw Pact, as were Poland and Hungary, and accordingly does not present the sorts of security problems with classified matters NATO may have with some new members. In addition, most Slovenes want to be part of NATO and are quite willing to bear NATO's costs and obligations. For example, in

believe that such a development would not occur. For example, a Russian writer claims that a top-level Helsinki meeting on 10 July 1992 decided that NATO would be only “a component of European security” and accordingly not enlarged. See Yuriy N. Rakhmaninov, “Some Thoughts on NATO Enlargement,” *SShA* (USA) 2 (February 1997); trans. In *DJRL*, 15 April 1997: 1–2. I have also been told that James Baker, when he was Secretary of State, told the Russians that NATO enlargement would not occur beyond Germany.

²⁷ Vytautas Landsbergis, speaking in Prague, RFE/RL 21 April 1997.

²⁸ Golub 25.

a Slovene poll taken in 1997 forty-three percent of those polled preferred NATO membership over neutrality and sixty-three percent said they would vote for NATO membership.²⁹ Militarily, too, Slovenia has shown impressive combat capabilities, albeit as a territorial defense force. In the Ten Day War of 1991 its forces prevented the Yugoslav army in Slovenia from going into action by quickly surrounding its barracks and defeating the units of the Yugoslav expeditionary force sent to the Slovene border crossings. Within two days the Slovenes had more than a thousand prisoners and had stopped most Yugoslav air force flights over Slovenia.³⁰ Lastly, and for some Americans unfortunately the most important, authoritative Russian government officials have stated unequivocally more than once that Russia does not at all care if Slovenia joins NATO.³¹ Indeed, if NATO enlargement had a southerly emphasis, as some NATO members desire, Russians would be relieved. Accordingly, those Americans who have in effect granted Russia a “veto” over NATO expansion need not be concerned over Slovenia’s entry into NATO. Despite the fact that Secretary of State Albright has made a good argument why Russia ought not to have a veto, it does seem to have one,³² at least over former parts of the USSR joining.

Several Slovene officials have stated the Slovene intention to join NATO. For example, Prime Minister Drnovšek, upon signing the NATO Partnership for Peace offer in 1994, stated: “We have made a firm decision to continue in this vein, and we are sure that the final stage ... will be membership of NATO for Slovenia.” And Davorin

²⁹ A telephone poll taken by the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana, reported in *Mladina* 2 September 1997: 16–17. This result is similar to that in Czechoslovakia, where sixty percent of the population says that NATO membership is the best solution to the country’s security problems. RFE/RL 20 May 1998.

³⁰ Personal observations in Slovenia during the Ten Days War.

³¹ At a round table discussion on Russian views on NATO expansion held at the Davis Center of Harvard University on February 11, 1998 a Russian diplomat, in response to a question about possible Russian reaction to the candidacies of Romania and Slovenia, stated quite emphatically that the question was not worthy of a serious response since it was hypothetical at this time. That is, for Russia the NATO problem does not rest on these states’ entry.

³² Testimony of Secretary of State Albright before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 7 October 1997. C-Span, 11 October 1997.

Kračun, the then Slovene minister for foreign affairs, spoke in 1996 of Slovenia's "vital interest for joining the alliance" in order to be "fully integrated into the Euro-Atlantic community" and added, "Slovene foreign, security and defense policy ... is aimed at early accession to NATO." At the same time he also stated that Slovenia was participating in Partnership for Peace (PFP) "without hesitation" and cooperating with IFOR and extending this cooperation to SFOR in allowing transit and overflight of NATO forces and also offering some of its medical and military facilities to the NATO effort in Bosnia.³³ Indeed, in a way, Slovenia is already in NATO, but without formal membership. For example, Slovenia participates actively in PFP, the NATO preparatory organization. In 1995 Slovenia soldiers took part in a large PFP military exercise in Louisiana and since then Slovene military forces have held maneuvers with several NATO countries' forces within the PFP structure. Recently, Slovenia, Italy and Hungary have set up a joint brigade.³⁴

The American press has published some very positive references to Slovenia as a prospective new member of NATO. Popular sentiment for joining NATO was said to be "overwhelming" in Slovenia and it appeared that "the mere prospect of membership has prompted Slovenia to accelerate its reform program...." It was also noted that all Slovene political parties backed NATO membership.³⁵

Slovenia came to be seen as a future member of NATO as part of a natural politico- strategic process. A source who has worked for NATO notes in mid-1997:

³³ Golub's speech is in Brussels *Le Soir* 31 March 1994: 2; translated in FBIS-EEU-94-063, 1 April 1994: 54; Kračun's Address to the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), Brussels, 11 December 1996; in NATO Integrated Data Service (NIDS), 11 December 1996.

³⁴ NATO member defense ministers regularly visit Slovenia. See, for example, *Večer* (Maribor), 1 January 1998 on the visit of the German defense minister, and *Dnevnik* (Ljubljana) 8 January 1998 on the visit of the Danish defense minister. On the joint brigade, see RFE/RL 20 April 1998.

³⁵ *NYT* 11 June 1997: A1; *NYT* 18 May 1997: E. 1; and RFE/RL 18 April 1997.

The European members of NATO were extremely reluctant to go along with NATO enlargement. The Brits and French opposed it initially as did most of the Mediterranean countries. Only when they realized that it was a test of U.S. engagement in Europe did they come on board.[But—KR] none of them want to pay a penny for it. That said, they did make a convincing case that if enlargement was going to happen, it should have strategic foundations—which meant inviting Romania and Slovenia.³⁶

French president Chirac “strongly backed” the candidacy of five states, including Slovenia, stressing the assistance for the consolidation of democracy and making for Romania an argument that would apply to Slovenia as well. It was not a member of the Warsaw Pact.³⁷ (France may have been motivated partly by a desire to look better than the U.S. and gain “points” in new places.) Several prominent American political figures also supported Slovenia’s inclusion in NATO. For example, Senators Biden and Lugar have publicly supported it. And Senator D’Amato (R-C-NY) specifically listed Slovenia among the nations which he said “should be given invitations to negotiate for inclusion in NATO.” In addition the staff of the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe found Slovenia and eight other states to be “in substantial compliance” with international standards relating to human rights, democracy and the rule of law.³⁸

Objections to NATO expansion were widespread in the U.S. during 1997 and still are today, despite the favorable Senate vote of 80-19 of 30 April 1998. Isolationism, fixation on cost and an inclination to technical objections have not disappeared from American political culture. But no case of specifically arguing against Slovenia’s inclusion has been found in print by this author. The Prime Minister of Canada, Jean Chretien, ridiculed American politicians’ support for NATO enlargement as being solely for “short-term reasons, to win elections.”

³⁶ Personal communication, 1997.

³⁷ Embassy of France, Washington, D.C., *News from France*, 30 June 1997: 2.

³⁸ *CSCE Digest*, 20.6 (June 1997): 63–64 and 67–68. The eight states found to be in compliance are: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia. Slovakia, and Macedonia were found not in compliance.

True, the U.S. government had opted for expanding NATO only after the April 1993 Washington ceremony to open the Holocaust Museum at which Presidents Havel of the Czech Republic and Walesa of Poland urged President Clinton to admit East European countries to NATO. One magazine article even said Clinton, then in office for only three months, had been “cornered” by Havel and Walesa, and that Clinton accepted the prospect because the polls indicated that foreign policy successes improved his chances for re-election. This decision by the Administration did not automatically bring support within the government. One rumor has it that Ambassador Holbrooke shouted at top Defense Department officials who opposed enlargement that they were disloyal since the President had already decided in favor of it. Henry Kissinger criticized the project. He noted, for example, that “the new members of NATO are clearly joining in a second-class status subject to unprecedented restrictions with respect to the deployment of other NATO forces and nuclear weapons.” This conveniently “forgets” that there have always been “second-class” non-nuclear members of NATO, Denmark, for example, and that what he calls “second-class status” attests to the defensive posture of NATO. Perhaps the most scathing condemnation of NATO enlargement comes from the respected veteran essayist of American foreign policy, William Pfaff. For him, NATO expansion is

spiritually empty because fundamentally unserious, unrealistic and vainglorious, designed to glorify its authors and reward the administration’s clients. There is no need for it among either allies or former enemies. Its promotion at the zenith of American power will generate the enmities that the abuse of power invites.³⁹

It may be no accident that Pfaff is often resident in Paris, that capital of opposition to all things American. In any case, opposition to

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Kissinger is cited from his column of 8 June 1997 in *WP*. Chretien was talking in Madrid at the summit meeting at which three new potential members were named. He did not know a live microphone was nearby. See *NYT* 11 July 1997: A6; Douglas Waller, “How Clinton Decided on NATO Expansion,” *Time* 14 July 1997; Henry Kissinger’s column, *WP* 8 June 1997; William Pfaff, “Clinton’s Global Project: Pompous and Unneeded,” *International Herald Tribune* 29 May 1997, quoted in *David Johnson’s Russia List* (e-mail), 29 May 1997.

the enlargement of the Alliance was many-sided—citing unnecessary cost, antagonizing the Russians and even undermining the fragile democracy there, weakening NATO, “fixing something that ain’t broke,” putting American lives on the line for Prague, etc. (The old disparaging argument of Prime Minister Chamberlain at the time of Munich about people “in a faraway country ... of whom we know nothing” was not actually quoted but the sense of it was conveyed often and in many ways.)

And then there was the “Russianist” argument of opposition to enlargement. For example, in “An Open Letter to President Clinton” of June 1997, organized by Susan Eisenhower and signed by more than forty prominent national security figures, it was confidently claimed, as if its signers could foretell the future, that NATO expansion would strengthen the non-democratic opposition in Russia, undercut those who favor cooperation with the West, force the Russians to question the entire post–Cold War settlement and galvanize resistance in the Duma to START II and III.⁴⁰

The Administration’s position and strategy vis-à-vis Russia had already been stated by Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott (who had translated Khrushchev’s memoirs as a *Time* correspondent and once had been the President’s roommate at Oxford). In October 1996 Talbott had said that the U.S. Government is pursuing the process of NATO enlargement “in parallel with” constructing “a cooperative and mutually reassuring relationship between NATO and the Russian Federation.” He added, revealing the Administration’s actual priorities, “There’s no subject to which I’ve devoted more of my energies.”⁴¹

⁴⁰ “An Open Letter to President Clinton,” late June 1997. Susan Eisenhower is Chairman, Center for Political and Strategic Studies, Chevy Chase, MD. The letter suggested that PFP be enhanced and a cooperative NATO-Russia relationship be developed. The Administration has been working along these lines.

⁴¹ Strobe Talbott, speech at the 50th anniversary celebration of the Harriman Institute of Columbia University, 29 October 1996; DJRL 30 October 1996. Talbott added, “We should weave relationships and devise incentives that will encourage Russia to evolve as a democratic, secure, stable, prosperous state, at peace with its neighbors and integrated into a community of like-minded nations.” Another aspect

Some of the arguments against NATO expansion claimed that excessive influence was being granted to Russia even before new states joined. For example, the émigré analyst Dimitri K. Simes condemned the NATO-Russian agreement of 1997.

So, ... before any new members have been invited to join the alliance, Russia has already gained unprecedented input into NATO discussions through the newly created NATO-Russian Permanent Joint Council ... From now on Russia will become a heavy presence in NATO deliberations.⁴²

Expanding NATO while at the same time propitiating Russia will be a most delicate and difficult business. For, whatever the realities at any given moment, the appearance may well be one of Russian gain and NATO loss.

Despite the fluidity and uncertainties of the run-up to the enlargement of NATO, it did not seem in late 1996 and the first half of 1997 that Slovenia's candidacy to be included in the first round of NATO expansion was precluded or out of the question. Foreign Minister Thaler said at the end of May that it looked as if "the shares of Slovenia are rising" and that Slovenia expected to be invited to Madrid as a country that had fulfilled all the criteria for NATO membership.⁴³ The outcome would all depend on which variables came out ahead. This was impossible to predict until just prior to the Madrid meeting of NATO.

of U.S. policy as it in fact operates, to have influence in certain areas of the former Soviet Union, is never stated.

⁴² Dimitri K. Simes, "Russia to Get Too Big a NATO Voice," *Newsday* 22 May 1997; quoted in DJRL 22 May 1997. Kissinger too decried the formation of a formal NATO-Russian relationship. "The ultimate irony is that Russia, through the Founding Act, will have a voice in NATO two years before the first wave of new NATO members do." Kissinger, 8 June 1997.

⁴³ A Reuters dispatch in the *International Herald Tribune* 31 May–1 June 1997: 6.

Exclusion at Madrid: The Reasons Why

The Madrid summit of NATO met on 8–9 July 1997, but about three weeks earlier the U.S. had let it be known that it preferred that only Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary be invited to join NATO in the first round of possible admissions. This announcement, by Secretary of Defense Cohen at a NATO ministerial meeting in Brussels, “clearly took some members by surprise,” according to a NATO source. It may well have alienated U.S. allies. A NATO diplomat spoke of the “brutal” way the U.S. had made its position known.⁴⁴ Apparently, even NATO Secretary General Solana was not told of the U.S. decision. One NATO source says that there was “bewilderment across the board” even in Washington and that the decision was made “somewhere between Kornblum and Albright” and that the Slovenes had been “fooled.”⁴⁵ Ironically, there had been rumors circulating “inside the beltway” in late May that the Administration had not yet made up its mind on which countries to invite, even that the decision could be made right up to Madrid. Given the number of interests within the U.S. Government and the difficulties of coordinating them, this is not unbelievable. At this time, early June, some in Slovenia were still hopeful that Slovenia would be in the first tranche, though one official of the Foreign Ministry said he thought Slovenia would not be included. Apparently, Secretary Albright had told Prime Minister Drnovšek in May that Slovenia met all the requirements for membership but had added that more could be done, in opening markets and in further privatization, for example. In mid-June Drnovšek said that Slovenia’s exclusion might produce “compensations,” in the form of increased support for its membership in the EU. On the twenty-first Dr. Ernest Petrič, the Slovene ambassador in Washington, said “We had pretty big hopes.”⁴⁶

The American statement of intentions did not reduce the support for Slovenia’s inclusion by several European governments. At the Denver “summit of the eight” (now that Russia was included in the Group of Seven for the first time) there were “clear tensions” with the

⁴⁴ Reuters, Brussels, June 12, 1997. *NYT* 21 June 1997: 6.

⁴⁵ Personal communication, 1997.

⁴⁶ An American visiting Slovenia in early June. Drnovšek’s statement about “compensations” was reported by Reuters, Poitiers, 13 June 1997. Petrič was quoted in *NYT* 21 June 1997: 6.

French and the Italians, who wanted to include Slovenia and Romania in the first new group to enter NATO.⁴⁷ Indeed, at this time nine members of NATO, including Canada, favored Slovenia's early inclusion, and several leaders of NATO states "made clear" they were not ready to let Washington decide the matter prior to the Madrid NATO summit on 8 and 9 July. Poland and Hungary, too, expressed their support for Slovenia's inclusion.⁴⁸ The Slovene government also did not accept the American decision without response. The Slovene foreign minister said that his country would continue to push for early membership and on the twenty-second Drnovšek sent Clinton a letter asking him to reconsider his position on Slovenia.⁴⁹

After the NATO meeting in Madrid on 8 July the U.S. position on NATO enlargement became the NATO position. Only Poland, Hungary and the Czech republic would be invited to join in 1999. Apparently, there was debate on this, with France, backed by eight countries, arguing the case for a greater enlargement that would include Slovenia and Romania. The U.S., supported by Britain ("NATO is a military alliance, not a political club," said Prime Minister Blair), the Netherlands, Norway, Iceland and Denmark, held out, and the only consensus that could be arrived at was for three new members. The U.S. had won. After all, as the Italian Prime Minister Prodi realistically said, "Without America, NATO doesn't exist." At the end of the day, with the prodding of French president Chirac, a statement was issued, backed by all sixteen members, that put Slovenia and Romania first among the nine also rans: "With regard to the aspiring members, we recognize with great interest and take account of the positive development toward democracy and the rule of law in a number of southeast European countries, especially Romania and Slovenia."⁵⁰ The Secretary of State

⁴⁷ *NYT* 21 June 1997: 6. A French official called the American decision "fundamentally imperial" and asked, "When exactly did the Americans go from leadership to hegemony?" while an Italian spoke of "American presumption."

⁴⁸ Reuters, Poitiers, 13 June 1997. The Polish Premier stated that both Poland and Hungary wanted Slovenia included in the first wave of NATO expansion, but he noted that "it is not up to us..." RFE/RL 3 July 1997.

⁴⁹ RFE/RL 13 and 23 June 1997.

⁵⁰ *NYT* 9 July 1997: A1 and A8. Commentary here on the 8 July NATO meeting is from this issue. Slovenia's backers within NATO were said to

made an implicit promise to all those not accepted with the pledge that “no European democracy will be excluded because of its position on the map.”

The U.S. may have missed an historic opportunity to expand NATO. It would have been easier to do it then than it will be later when Russia will only feel either stronger or more alienated from the West. Also, by going for a larger expansion the Administration could have argued it was doing something momentous for the stabilization of Europe and not just doing what was safest. Imagine the Marshall Plan not being directed to all of Europe.

Clearly, what the U.S. wanted carried the day. What were the Administration’s reasons for excluding Slovenia? Although this question cannot be answered with clarity by this writer at this time, exploration of the question may provide some sense of what Slovenia might do in trying for admission to NATO in the future.

In the first place, there is the tactical side of American domestic politics. Being restrictive suggests that one is being careful and using objective criteria. The initial U.S. decision in 1993 to enlarge NATO had raised a small storm of opposition in the country. The Administration wanted to disarm that opposition, and increase chances for Senate ratification of a revised NATO treaty, by keeping the list of prospective members as short as possible. “Small is beautiful,” said one top administration official to me in October 1997.⁵¹ Also, most politically important people in the U.S. have heard and know something about the three countries approved by the Administration. Slovenia is much less known, and when it is, it is seen as “Yugoslav” in some way. Not to be forgotten is “post—Cold War euphoria” and also the American tendency to isolationism and “America firstism.” NATO enlargement requires a “re-commitment” of the United States to new areas, places that were conceded to be outside the U.S. “sphere” in 1956, when President Eisenhower decided not to aid the Hungarians. Why go back in now, many ask?

be: Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain and Turkey, with Italy being the main supporter. *NYT* 8 July 1997: A4. However, other sources have said Slovenia had the support of nine NATO members, including Canada, which wanted six states invited.

⁵¹ Interview with a top State Department official, October 1997.

A common American rejoinder, particularly within the diplomatic corps, to questions on why Slovenia was excluded from the first round is: "The Brits were against it." (And so were the Dutch and the Danes. The "Anglo-Saxons?") This easy "answer" ignores what might have happened if the U.S. had been for Slovenia. It's hard to believe any NATO member would have opposed Slovenia then unless the French "flipped" to an anti-Slovene position just to oppose the U.S., a not uncommon "Gaullist" ploy which always plays well in French politics. Of course, the fact that Britain opposed Slovene entry suggests Slovenia ought to "work on" this some.⁵²

An "easy out" for the U.S. was the military factor. It has several aspects. First, Slovenia undoubtedly lacks "the big divisions" that Poland and even Romania, I am told, can provide. (Remember, in the Warsaw Pact Poland's mission was to take the low countries by airborne assault with its eight airborne divisions.) Second, it is probably difficult for a typical American military officer to appreciate what is, in effect, a guerrilla war army, even one with the high capability demonstrated during the Ten Days' War. The U.S. has always limited the promotability of special forces personnel. It still has a Ulysses S. Grant-Patton-Eisenhower military mentality—"chew 'em up" with massed equipment and firepower—used as recently as the Gulf War. Third, the "keep NATO strong" attitude is prevalent in the U.S. Slovenia clearly does not bring military "muscle" to the alliance. I have heard Romania preferred over Slovenia for this particular reason. Despite the first-rate job performed by Slovene military doctors in Albania during the turmoil of 1997, the "SecDef" has said that with only 4,100 full-time soldiers and obsolete Soviet-era arms, "Slovenia was not militarily ready to join NATO."⁵³ There is not much Slovenia can do to overcome this fact. It might, however, counter with the "quality" argument—that it has a very

⁵² The British Consul General in Los Angeles has been said to have stated that the British objection was genuine; that British boys were not going to die for Slovenia, but that if Slovenia kept changing it might make it into NATO later on.

⁵³ *NYT* 13 June 1997: A6. This sort of point is also made in Michael Mihalka, "Why Only Three Countries Will Likely Be Included in First Wave of NATO Enlargement," RFE/RL (e-mail) 7 July 1997, as well as *NYT* 29 June 1997: 8—. Slovenia's military does "not yet meet the alliance's standards."

good small force that would be useful in its area, in keeping a road open to Hungary, for example.

Some high-level U.S. officials have a negative view of Slovenia. One actually said to me about Slovenia in October 1997, "I don't like their attitude; they don't feel they have any responsibility to help solve problems in the former Yugoslavia." He even went on to say that Slovenia is responsible for the breakup of Yugoslavia. "It started it."⁵⁴ This suggests that Slovenia's natural inclination to feel free of Yugoslavia is not paying off in the upper reaches of the U.S. Administration where, apparently, Slovenia is seen as still "Yugoslav" and bearing a responsibility for the solution of problems in what Slovenes tend to call the "South." Maybe the best way to deal with this problem is to talk about it with Administration officials and show some flexibility on the matter. However, this same official suggested that Slovenia might be a base for a future follow-on force for Bosnia—an "over the horizon reaction force." This might serve as a bargaining chip for Slovenia's admission to NATO. Another implied criticism of Slovenia in the U.S. Government is that it came to the "expansion game" late and simply has not done enough to make itself a member. Samuel Berger, the President's national security adviser, speaking at a White House press conference in July 1997 implied that Slovenia's value as a NATO member is seen mainly to "countries bordering Slovenia" and that more time is needed to make sure Slovenia (and Romania) "maintain the same path" as they have. If they do, their admission is a definite possibility, he added.⁵⁵ In early 1998 the Secretary of Defense was saying, "The door to NATO is always open," and implied he wished that Slovenia had been admitted.⁵⁶

France may have had a role, perhaps inadvertent, in Slovenia's exclusion. It seems driven to come up with positions other than those held by the U.S. at every opportunity; probably for domestic political reasons and the morale of its bureaucracy. By "attaching" Romania to Slovenia as a possible entrant France, which most probably favored the "Latin" Romania over Slovenia, undercut Slovenia's chances since Romania is clearly not ready for NATO membership. It has been on the democratic "track" only for several months, not years, as Slovenia has.

⁵⁴ Interview of October 1997. See note 50 above.

⁵⁵ C-Span-2, 2 July 1997.

⁵⁶ Speech in Munich, 8 February 1998, shown on C-Span TV.

In the future Slovenia will have to try to avoid becoming “attached” to other states that cannot be accepted in the near term, e.g., Slovakia and Croatia.

“Making the second round believable” may well have played a role. If Slovenia, which was a “favorite” for first-round admission, had indeed been invited in 1997, it would have signaled that the expansion was a one-time affair (which it may well be.) Accordingly, leaving Slovenia for the promised “second round” makes that far-off eventuality seem believable. That is, the Administration did not want to “take the heat” of having said, “This time and never again.” The admission of the “Baltics” and of Slovakia and Croatia is simply not credible—at least not for a very long time—and a very different Russia. “It’s saving shoo-ins like ... Slovenia for the second round so as to avoid the tough decision of which countries to invite then.”⁵⁷

Given the great weight the Administration places on maintaining the present political path in Russia it was imperative to limit the first group invited to the smallest possible number. It may have seemed in Washington that three was the most that could be attempted without risking (or seeming to risk) Russia going off the rails. It is doubtful that NATO expansion alone would cause Russia to do so, but it has been under such horrendous pressure from its current and continuing national degradation that it is not unthinkable that one more shock would cause a political explosion there. Certainly Russia, not the West or the U.S., is primarily responsible for its present malaise, but a chauvinist voice sounds more loudly and effectively in today’s Russian politics than any realistic one. In the Administration’s eyes, why risk a Russian political collapse over Slovenia and Romania? Remember, with the French pushing Romania, Slovenia could not be admitted without Romania. And, if Romania came in why not the “Baltics?” And if the “Baltics,” then Russia would have to react—and negatively—and the Administration’s foreign policy would have seemed an obvious failure that would be pure grist for the American political mill. And putting

⁵⁷ Gregory F. Treverton, “NATO Expansion Is a Sensible Move,” *Newsday* 16 July 1997; reproduced in *DJRL* (e-mail) 17 July 1997 and Kurt Bassuener, “The NATO Shuffle,” (a letter) *WP* 8 July 1997. I have received intimations of this reason from other sources.

Russian stability first is not only an American fixation. The old "Thunderer," *The Times* (London) stated sensibly,

Damage limitation is now the name of the game; and the most important task by far is to understand that a stable, democratic Russia at ease within its shrunken post-imperial frontiers is the grand strategic prize without which Europe can never be durably secure.⁵⁸

A leading specialist on Russian foreign policy, Alvin Z. Rubinstein, writes, "NATO expansion could result in a re-polarized Europe ... and Russia might turn away from accommodation with the West."⁵⁹ With voices like these raising the specter of a new Cold War, the Administration's caution is understandable. They may be wrong, however. A Russia that sees no chance for imperial revival may thereby be encouraged to become a normal state.⁶⁰

Although no one knows how much NATO enlargement will ultimately cost and how much the U.S. will pay, the issue of cost is now very much alive in American politics—and also between the U.S. and its NATO allies. As the GAO says, all cost estimates on this are "notional," making it easy to charge the Administration with trying to cover up a huge financial outlay. Cost was a big topic in the Senate debate on NATO enlargement, and it behooves the Administration to come up with some believable (and low) figures, not an easy thing to do.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Editorial, "Menace in Madrid," *The Times* (London) 7 July 1997.

⁵⁹ *NYT* 9 July 1997: A8, quoting an article by Rubinstein in *Problems of Post-Communism*. The columnist Thomas Friedman says, "Russia still matters ... and it can thwart our designs ... simply by not joining the volunteer fire department." See *NYT* 2 October 1997: A 25.

⁶⁰ This is an argument for NATO expansion made by Polish Foreign Minister Geremek in Washington in an interview on Newshour with Jim Lehrer, 16 February 1998.

⁶¹ See U.S. General Accounting Office, *NATO Enlargement: Cost Estimates to Date Are Notional* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. GAO, August 1997) and two articles in the *NYT* on the U.S. Senate debate on the costs of NATO expansion: 10 October 1997: A 9 and 22 October 1997: A 11.

Conclusion

It is not yet possible to determine which, if any, of the above reasons cited is the main one for Slovenia not being invited to join NATO. This might be stated only after additional research and after the passage of enough time to enable much more information on pertinent U.S. governmental decision-making to become available. Even so, it is important not to fixate on any one or indeed all of the possible reasons given above. Chance plays a big role in politics and particularly in American politics. Who knows what effect Madeleine Albright now being Secretary of State may have on U.S. foreign policy and on Slovenia's relations with the United States? She is strongly in favor of NATO expansion. Nor can anyone say what it will mean to have Al Gore as the next President, certainly a possibility. So much happens in the U.S. because of short-lived but crucially important "windows of opportunity." Slovenia's very independence is partly the product of taking advantage of such a "window" in Yugoslav and European politics. Slovenia and its supporters must be prepared to take advantage of the opportunities, even momentary ones, that will inevitably emerge in the future and may allow Slovenia to enter NATO as it grows from an alliance into a "security management institution."⁶² Such an institution is inclusive and defends not only against "threats" but also against risks by including many of them within the institution as possible. By this reasoning, Russia will eventually be included in NATO.

If Slovenia keeps being the successful democracy and economically reformist country that it is and does not do anything to cast itself in a negative light it will enter NATO in the next round, assuming there is one. Apparently, the "door" is still open. A leading American official said in May 1998 that it was the American view that NATO expansion should continue beyond the first round.⁶³ It might be worth studying and emulating to a degree the experience of small states that have done well in their relationship with the U.S., e.g., Luxembourg, Denmark, Norway, to the extent possible. It might also be worth trying to get the "Brits" on Slovenia's side if that is feasible. The U.S.-

⁶² The term has been used and defined by Professor Robert O. Keohane of Duke University, a leading specialist on international politics.

⁶³ Frederick C. Smith, the principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, speaking in Tallinn, Estonia on 5 May 1998. RFE/RL 6 May 1998.

British “special relationship” does exist and it can count in policy in Washington. (I have seen British opposition to a Canadian initiative produce instant American opposition to it.) Slovenia’s sending of troops to participate in SFOR in Bosnia is a very good idea.⁶⁴ It may mollify American government annoyance at Slovenia as well as, more importantly, show that Slovenia can do what NATO does and thus deserves to be a member. Slovenia ought to continue, of course, to participate in PFP exercises in the meantime. In addition, Slovenia must appear to be as “reformist” in economic matters as possible. This is a topic American officials take very seriously.

There is no valid or overwhelming reason why Slovenia cannot enter NATO in the near future. In some ways it is a better potential member than the countries invited. But to pursue the goal effectively Slovenia and its supporters in the United States must be as realistic, imaginative and wide-ranging in their efforts as resources and circumstances allow.

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⁶⁴ RFE/RL, “Slovenia Joins Bosnian Force,” 4 November 1997. Slovenia is now the thirty-seventh participant in SFOR.

POVZETEK**SLOVENIJA IN AMERIŠKA POLITIKA V ZVEZI S ŠIRITVIJO NATA**

Čeprav razlogi, zakaj ameriška vlada ni bila naklonjena vključitvi Slovenije ob prvi širitvi Nata, še vedno niso popolnoma jasni, se kaže, da bi morebitni negativni pogledi na Slovenijo med elitnimi ameriškimi politiki za zunanje zadeve imeli odločilno vlogo. Pomembno vlogo pri tem je igrala tudi taktika Clintonove administracije v domači politiki (npr. da bi bilo videti, da politika v zvezi s širitvijo temelji na bolj racionalni osnovi, kot v resnici je). Torej je bila slovenska želja po vstopu v Nato žrtvovana v prid politične nastrojenosti, potreb in koristi ameriške administracije. Če bo prišlo do drugega širjenja Nata, pa ima Slovenija zelo dobre možnosti za sprejem, še posebej če že naprej ostane zgledna demokratična država z reformiranim gospodarstvom in Če bo sodelovala v prednatovskih organizacijah, kot je Partnerstvo za mir in v Natovi misiji na področju nekdanje Jugoslavije. Konec koncev je Slovenija bolj pripravljena za vstop kot ostale kandidatke.