

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. note	re: Slovakia (1 page)	00/00/0000	P1/b(1)
002. paper	re: Slovakia (1 page)	06/18/1996	P1/b(1)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
 Speechwriting
 Lissa Muscatine
 OA/Box Number: 12085

FOLDER TITLE:

HRC - Slovakia [folder 2]

2017-1164-S

rc2759

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
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C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

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SLOVAKIA NGO FORUM

I have come to Central Europe with a message of hope, encouragement and support from the American people. I also bring special greetings from Slovak Americans who are proud of their ancestral homeland and the progress you are making toward a free market democracy. Slovakia is a new nation with an old history and a strong culture -- a new nation with a future among the democracies of Europe.

We have already seen you create the basic institutions of democracy where none existed before, and your economy is growing rapidly even under difficult conditions. You achieved the Velvet Revolution, and now the challenges of building a civil society lie ahead. For a democracy and a free market economy to blossom fully, certain conditions must exist. Those conditions include respect for the rule of law, a free press, an independent judiciary, and for minorities.

In light of the challenges that all democracies share, we must join in an alliance of democratic values. We must recognize that democracy is not just about institutions; it is also about the internalization of democratic values in people's hearts, minds and everyday lives.

In the short time I've been in Central Europe, I've already met with people who are forging this alliance of values and building democracy from the ground up. Non-governmental organizations throughout Central Europe today play a vital role in building a civil society and making democracy work. And, that is why I am eager to meet here with you today. I have enormous respect for the work that non-governmental groups are doing often under very trying conditions. Building a civil society is a difficult process, and I know you are facing special challenges here in Slovakia. I look forward to hearing more about the successes you have had and the obstacles that remain in our discussion today.

SLOVAKIA

11. Current events in Slovakia

Slovakia is another candidate for NATO membership, but Karsten Voigt, Chairman of the North Atlantic Assembly (NAA) said that Slovakian democracy as well as general regional stability must appear to be strengthened by such a move in order for member states to approve it. CTK National News Wire reports that the biggest unresolved issues in Slovakian democracy are "democratic culture, the opposition's right to interfere in decision making and the question of the public media." Slovakia is receiving an increasing number of refugees from other countries, but many of these individuals are using the nation as a stop-over point for other asylum places. The Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary and Germany all receive more refugees annually. Meanwhile, Slovak President Kovac met with Hungarian President Arpad Goncz and delivered an address to the Hungarian Parliament. The two countries are negotiating a basic treaty that among other issues would protect ethnic Hungarians living in Slovakia (there are about 560,000). The present Slovak ruling coalition is composed of the Slovak National Party (SNS), Slovak Workers' Party (ZRS) and Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZSD), the first two of which are weaker than the third.

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draft

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS FOR MEETING WITH NGO LEADERS
BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA
JULY X, 1996**

It is a great privilege and honor to be here today, in a city so steeped in history and tradition. I am told that the young musical prodigies Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Franz Liszt gave some of their first concerts in the palaces of Bratislava. ~~Legendary Kings and Queens were crowned here.~~ And many milestones in Slovakian history are marked in Bratislava: The first Slovak newspaper and the first Slovak novel, for instance, were published in this city.

Today, once again, as Slovaks, you find yourselves living in a momentous and historic time. In recent years, this thousand-year old city has become the seat of one of the world's newest democracies. The seeds of democracy sowed many years before have now taken root and begun to blossom. I am grateful for this opportunity to meet so many of you who are working to strengthen democracy in Slovakia.

I am here to let you know that the United States will stand behind Slovakia as you strive to establish a full-fledged democracy and a flourishing free-market economy. America believes that the integration of all of Europe's new democracies is one of our most fundamental challenges in the post-Cold War world. And we are eagerly looking forward to the day when we will welcome Slovakia into the family of democratic nations.

We have a saying in my country, "Freedom is not free." I know that the effort to instill democratic values in the hearts and minds of people throughout this ancient land is and will not be easy. We must always be vigilant and guard against the forces of totalitarianism, intolerance, and isolation that can undermine the very principles of a free society: rule of law, free speech, respect for diversity.

One of the greatest guardians and nurturers of democracy is a free press. A great American president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt once said, "Freedom of conscience, of education, of speech, of assembly, are among the very fundamentals of democracy and all of them would be nullified should freedom of the press ever be successfully challenged."

Roosevelt recognized this even though he and his wife were constantly being criticized in the newspapers. I can say from my own experience that for many public figures, living in a country with a vibrant and often critical free press is not always easy. But a free press is an effective forum for the honest exchange of ideas -- ideas that could help move countries forward. It can shed light on truths too easily obscured by demagoguery, prejudice, and ignorance.

But even more fundamental to an honest and successful democracy are people like you who understand and are acting according to democratic values. All of you in the NGO sector are playing crucial roles in Slovakia's democratic transformation. You are stepping in to meet societal needs where the market or the government have not. And you are courageously continuing to meet these needs despite recent attempts to thwart your efforts. I am eager to hear more about your work, your dedication to democracy, and your perseverance under difficult conditions.

I have no doubt that with your capable and resourceful leadership, Slovakia will soon meet the challenges of becoming a prosperous and democratic nation.

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FROM: Trevor Evans/Kurt Donnelly
EUR/NCE - Poland Desk
Department of State
(202) 647-4139/736-7152
(202) 736-4853 FAX



TO: Milanne Verweer, Dep Chief of Staff

FAX NUMBER: 456-6244

SUBJECT: Slovakia Events.

REMARKS: Milanne:

Here are the draft event papers we have received so far from Bratislava. I know you are still debating which events are the best ones for the visit, so hope that these papers might help you arrive at a decision.

Trevor

TOTAL NUMBER OF PAGES (including cover sheet): ~~8~~ 10

- Note: Also see notional schedule for Budapest, a fax which was sent yesterday but may not have reached you. P.

Meeting with Slovak Judges

Context of the Event

We propose inviting a cross-section of the Slovak judiciary, including representatives from the Constitutional Court and prominent women judges (two of the Constitutional Court judges are women), to a roundtable discussion on legal and practical issues facing the Slovak courts today, followed by a reception. The discussion topic could focus on any of the following: challenges facing the judiciary in the new democracies; avoiding political influence in judicial decisionmaking; strengthening the standards and performance of judges; or encouraging public confidence in the legal system.

The event would be held at Zichy Palace and would include ten to twelve judges. We would anticipate about a thirty-minute discussion, followed by a reception.

Your Objectives:

- * To show support for the judiciary, to acknowledge their accomplishments and to encourage continued steps towards independent decisionmaking
- * To meet a courageous and outstanding group of Slovak judges
- * To exchange ideas

Talking Points:

- * As a lawyer, I share your concerns for increasing the public's confidence that their legal system will protect their rights, and for developing an appreciation of the role an independent judiciary plays in a democracy.
- * I understand that your constitutional court has shown great independence in decisions it has made upholding the constitution despite sharp political controversies.
- * I would be interested in hearing about your experiences and some of the challenges you are facing in your work.

Scenario
Slovakia: Meeting with President Michal Kovac

Context of the Event

At this event, you will be meeting with Michal Kovac, Slovakia's first President, elected by Parliament in 1993 for a five year term. As a head of state with limited constitutional powers, the President believes that he has a leading role to play in protecting and expanding Slovakia's democracy. Kovac has met with President Clinton on four occasions, the most recent being in New York last October during the United Nations fiftieth anniversary celebrations, and, also in October in Cedar Rapids, Iowa at the opening of a Czecho-Slovak Museum.

The President's Chief of Protocol will greet you at the entrance to the Primate's Palace (where the President's office is located) and will escort you through an honor guard ceremony and then to the meeting site. The meeting will either be held in the President's office or in one of the Palace's tapestry rooms. You and your delegation will be asked to line up to await the President's arrival. Likely participants in the meeting would be Pavol Demes (Foreign Policy Advisor), Jan Findra (Chief of the President's Office), Vladimir Stefko (Spokesman and Director of Press section), and Zuzana Luptakova (Head of Protocol). It is anticipated that there will be photo opportunities during the honor guard event as well as before/after the meeting itself.

Your Objectives

- o To express U.S. support for Slovakia's emerging democracy and institutions.
- o To elicit the President's viewpoint on the state of Slovakia's democracy and evolution as Europe's newest state.

Talking Points

- o I am honored to have the opportunity to meet with you.
- o I bring greetings from President Clinton and the American people.
- o My purpose in visiting Slovakia and Central Europe is to express support for political and economic reform.
- o I look forward to meeting with groups in Slovakia that are playing an important role in building democratic institutions.
- o I would welcome your thoughts on the progress of democracy in Slovakia and on Slovakia's future ties with the West.

Scenario
Meeting with Mayor of Bratislava and
Walk Through the Old City

Context of Event

You will depart your meeting with the President and proceed to one of the halls of tapestries within the Primate's Palace for a ceremonial greeting by the Mayor of Bratislava, Mr. Peter Kresanek and his wife, Mrs. Maria Kresankova.

You will be accompanied by the mayor, who is an historian by profession, and his wife, a former high school teacher, as well as the Mayor's Chief of Staff, Press Secretary, and Head of the Protocol Department.

After the short greeting, you will proceed to the Mirror Hall, Primate's Palace, where you will sign the Golden Book of the City of Bratislava, which will be positioned on the original historic table that was used by Emperor of France, Napoleon Bonaparte, while signing the Peace of Pressburg in 1815. Your signature will be accompanied by a musical fanfare (by musicians in period costumes) from the Mirror Hall Gallery. You will depart the Primate's Palace for a short 30-meter walk through Primate Square to the Old Town Hall. You will proceed through the historical Old Town Hall Courtyard, where "Musa Ludens" - an historic baroque family music group - will be playing, to the main square.

You will see a performance by the children dance folk ensemble in the main square. A girl will hand over a traditional doll in a folk costume as a gift.

You will make a brief stop at the statue of Roland on the main square where the Mayor will present you with a bronze miniature of the statue, which is the symbolic patron of the city, as well as a symbol of pride of citizenship for citizens of Bratislava.

The walking tour of Bratislava's Old Town District will continue to the Zichy Palace.

Note: In case of substandard weather conditions, this event will consist only of the Primate's Palace portion and a guided tour of the Old Town Hall, with the historic family musical group playing inside the Old Town Hall.

Your Objectives:

- o To be seen sharing an interest in Bratislava's culture and history.
- o To greet Bratislava's citizens, who are impressed with the accomplishments of you and the President and who identify with the youth and freshness you and the President brought to office. Bratislava itself is a city with inhabitants averaging 34 years of age.

-2-

Slovakia/Tour of Old Town

Talking Points:

- o I am very pleased to have the opportunity of visiting Bratislava.
- o I am quite honored to have signed the Golden Book of the City of Bratislava which was placed on such an historic table - once used by the Emperor of France, Napoleon Bonaparte while signing the Peace of Pressburg in 1815.
- o I have enjoyed seeing the beautiful historical sites of Bratislava, as well as experiencing some of Slovakia's finest cultural groups, both musical and dance.
- o The citizens of Bratislava have much to be proud of. Bratislava is rich in history, full of culture and its citizens are strong of heart and spirit.

Slovakia: Meeting with NGO Leaders

Context of the Event

At this event, you will meet with approximately 10 to 15 leaders from the non-governmental (NGO) sector in Slovakia. The NGO leaders in attendance represent a good cross section of activities, promoting worthy social causes such as helping the handicapped, aged, women, children, environment, etc. The meeting will be a roundtable discussion, with interpreters present for those who do not speak English, and will last approximately 30 minutes. Afterwards, we propose you attend a reception with 40 or so NGO leaders from all over Slovakia, including USG supported Democracy Network grant recipients. This reception may also include participants from previous events with the Slovak judiciary or academic community (separate scenarios) depending on your preference.

We propose to hold the meeting and the reception at Zichy Palace, an 18th century palace in the heart of Bratislava, used now for receptions and other cultural events.

Your Objective

- To express U.S. support for the NGO sector as a way to bolster the morale of this sector and raise public awareness of the important work this sector does;
- To discuss the work and status of the NGO sector in Slovakia; and
- To meet with a wide range of NGO leaders in Slovakia.

Talking Points

- I am pleased to have this chance to meet with you today to hear more about the important work which you are doing to further the development of a civil society in Slovakia.
- The NGO sector in the U.S. has a long tradition and has played a critical role in our nation's democratic development. In the U.S., NGOs have often stepped in to meet societal needs where the market or the government have not, and have generally done so in a more cost-effective and efficient way. As de Tocqueville wrote "wherever at the head of some new undertaking you see the government in France, or a man of rank in England, in the United States you will be sure to find an association."
- The legislative challenge currently facing the NGO sector in Slovakia has received international attention. The NGO sector has responded to this challenge with remarkable courage and ingenuity. You should be proud of your efforts.
- The momentous work of developing a civil society in Slovakia will take time. However, I believe that with the capable and resourceful leadership you have shown so far, Slovakia will meet the challenge and become a truly pluralistic society.

Slovakia: Meeting with Members of Academia

Context of the Event

At this meeting, you will meet 10 to 15 leading members of academia, including university rectors and members of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAV), to discuss issues of academic freedom. There are 14 universities in Slovakia and we will invite a representative number of the rectors from these universities to the meeting. Additionally, we will invite the top leadership from SAV, which will include the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Scientific Secretary, and 3 Deputy Chairmen of the Presidium. The meeting will be a roundtable discussion, with an interpreter present for those who do not speak English. We expect this meeting to last approximately 30 minutes. After this short meeting, we propose that you attend a reception which will also include participants from the event with NGO leaders (described in a separate scenario).

We propose to hold this meeting at either Comenius University or Zichy Palace, either before or after the NGO meeting, or simultaneously should it be decided that Ambassador Albright will host this meeting with leaders of academia. Zichy Palace is an 18th century palace in the heart of Bratislava now used for receptions and other cultural events. Comenius University is also centrally located in the old town district of Bratislava and has suitable meeting and reception facilities.

Your Objectives

- To emphasize U.S. support for academic freedom, our commitment to academic independence, non-partisan research, etc;
- To exchange ideas on problems of higher education and democracy in general; and
- To meet with leading members of academia.

Talking points

- I am pleased to meet with you today to exchange ideas and experiences on issues of academic freedom and the systems of higher education and research in our two countries.
- All of us gathered here today appreciate the importance of academic freedom and independent research for the development of a free and democratic society. The U.S. is committed to an educational system that is free of ideological control.
- I applaud the accomplishments already achieved by Slovakia's educational institutions during this difficult time of political and economic transformation. You have made significant strides toward re-establishing academic freedom in Slovakia, and reforming curricula and faculties, in spite of limited financial resources. However, I also know that the challenges are not all behind you, and that you are currently engaged in an effort to ensure that future legislation reinforces, and does not jeopardize, gains achieved to date.

Slovakia: Reception with NGO Leaders, Members of
Academia and/or the Judiciary, and Prominent Women

Context of the Event

We propose this event to be a reception for 70 to 80 leading members of Slovak society including participants from the events with NGO leaders, members of academia and/or the judiciary (described in separate event scenarios). Our contacts tell us that the chance for these leaders from all over Slovakia to meet with the First Lady would truly bolster morale and send a positive message of U.S. interest in Slovakia's democratic development. Approximately 40 NGO leaders from throughout Slovakia will be invited to attend this reception, including the 10 to 15 who will participate in the roundtable discussion for NGO leaders. Among these 40 NGOs will be recipients of the USG supported Democracy Network Grant Program. The NGO leaders invited will represent a broad cross section of activities and regions in Slovakia. The members of academia and/or the judiciary present at the reception will be those who participate in the separate events for these areas prior to the reception (depending on your preference as to which of these events you will host and which Ambassador Albright will host), plus an expanded list of members of academia and/or the judiciary, again ensuring broad sectoral and geographical diversity among the participants. In addition to ensuring that prominent Slovak women from the NGO sector, academia and/or the judiciary are included among the invitees for the separate events in these areas, we are also proposing to include at this reception prominent Slovak women from media, business, banking, medicine, the arts, etc.

This reception will be held at Zichy Palace after the meetings with NGO leaders and members of academia and/or the judiciary. Zichy Palace is an 18th century palace in the heart of Bratislava, now used for receptions and other cultural events. It will last one hour.

Your Objective

- To reinforce U.S. interest in and support for Slovakia's democratic development;
- To express U.S. goodwill toward Slovakia and commitment to developing our relations; and
- To meet with leading members of Slovak society;

Talking Points

- It is a pleasure to be here in the independent Slovak Republic, almost seven years after the peaceful fall of the communist regime, and three years after the peaceful dissolution of the former Czech and Slovak Federal Republic.
- The U.S. commends those present here today for the leadership and resourcefulness you have shown during these difficult times of political and economic transformation. I would like to congratulate you on your accomplishments to date and express the continued support of the U.S. to helping Slovakia in its transformation to a market economy and pluralistic democracy.

Slovakia: Meeting with Slovak Journalists**Context of the Event:**

This event will be an informal meeting between members of the White House Press Corps and Slovak journalists to discuss issues of press freedom. We propose this event to take place at Zichy Palace simultaneously with the First Lady's meeting with NGO leaders, or during the reception with leaders of Slovak society. We would arrange for the event to be moderated by the editor of the Slovak Spectator, the only English language newspaper in Slovakia. The editor is an American, but is resident in Slovakia and is familiar with media in both countries. We expect the event to last one hour. Slovak journalists from across the political spectrum and from both print and broadcast media will be invited to participate in the meeting. Interpreters will be provided for those who do not speak English, although the majority of Slovak participants will have English language ability.

Objectives of the Event:

- o To express U.S. support for freedom of the press;
- o For members of the White House and Slovak press corps to meet and exchange ideas on freedom of the press; and
- o To discuss the media situation in Slovakia in general.

Proposed list of Slovak Journalists to be invited:

Ivan Ceredejev and Ivan Melicherik, Praca (newspaper)
Peter Toth, Michal Havran and Marian Lesko, SME (newspaper)
Lubomir Hudo, Slovenska Republika (newspaper)
Leopold Moravcik, Jan Skoda, Vladimir Tvaroska, Pravda
(newspaper)
Tatiana Repkova, Jan Fulle, and Julius Gembicky, Narodna Obroda
(newspaper)
Robert Culen and Peter Skorna, Novy Cas (newspaper)
Olga Bakova and Jozef Baranek, Slovak Radio
Martin Lengyel, Karol Lovas, Radio Twist
Stefan Hrib, Daniel Butora, Radio Free Europe
Emil Kucera, VTV (private TV station)
Tatjana Lesajova, STV (state TV)
Peter Susko, Markiza (private TV)
Viliam Kiss, freelance journalist
Oliver Brunovsky, Trend (economic newspaper)
Michal Stasz, TASR (state wire service)

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U.S.-SLOVAK HISTORICAL REFERENCES

1. Embassy history

The U.S. Embassy in Bratislava was opened as a consulate in the former Czechoslovakia in March 1948, in a building purchased in 1947 that had housed the German Commercial Bank during WWII.

Claiborne Pell, then a young Foreign Service Officer and later the long-term Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was sent from Prague to establish a "listening post" one week after the Communist coup felled the short-lived democratic government in the country.

The consulate remained open only about six months, and came under growing pressure from the communist government, who harrassed Consulate personnel and attempted to intimidate those who used consulate services. The consulate was forced to close in May 1950, and the building remained vacant for the next forty-one years.

Ambassador Shirley Temple Black, with Senator Pell as guest of honor, reopened the consulate in 1991 in the presence of several individuals who had suffered harrassment, imprisonment, and other hardship in the totalitarian past as a result of their connection with the U.S. government.

The consulate became an Embassy in 1993 at the breakup of Czechoslovakia and the birth of the new Slovak Republic.

2. OSS Aid to the Slovak National Uprising

The Slovak National Uprising began in August 1944 against the pro-Nazi regime of Father Jozef Tiso and Nazi Germany forces in Slovakia. It was part of a national coup to be coordinated with the Soviet army's arrival in the Slovak territory as it slowly progressed westward. Led by units of the Slovak army, the Uprising included participants from the OSS and the anti-German underground in Czechoslovakia.

The Uprising began when two Slovak army divisions revolted, seized Banska Bystrica, and began radio contact with the Czechoslovak government-in-exile in London. An OSS liaison group and an aircrew rescue unit were sent to transmit intelligence and situation reports and to help evacuate Allied aircrews lost over Czechoslovakia.

After two months of fighting against 20,000 German troops sent to quell the uprising, Slovak and OSS resistance collapsed. On October 26 the Slovaks abandoned Banska Bystrica, and the OSS team, which then totalled 21 OSS agents, 16 airmen, and an AP news correspondent, fled across snow-covered mountains toward Soviet lines.

The Germans captured most of the agents one-by-one. Two escaped with the aid of a partisan girl, Maria Gulovich, to Soviet lines (Gulovich later moved to the U.S. and became a citizen). Those captured were sent to Mauthausen concentration camp, tortured for information, and executed as spies on January 24, 1945. Two other OSS agents were liberated from a POW camp by Allied forces, and one was freed by the Soviets.

The official OSS assessment of the operation faulted the resistance and the Allies for incomplete planning. The expected swift Soviet advance in September 1944 did not materialize because Soviet forces were stalled at the Dukla Pass. The British apparently made no effort to support the insurgents, while OSS air supply efforts were stymied by bad weather.

THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC
Background Country Notes

Geography

Area: 49,030 sq. km. (about the size of West Virginia)

Cities: Capital- Bratislava (Pop. 445,100).

Other Cities: Kosice (237,000), Zilina (98,000),
Nitra (90,100), Presov (89,700), Banska Bystrica
(88,000).

Terrain: High mountains to the north, low mountains in the center, hills to the west, Danube river basin in the south.

Climate: Temperate

People

Nationality: Noun and adjective -- Slovak(s).

Population: (1994 est.) 5,403,505

Annual growth rate: 0.4 percent (1994 est.)

Ethnic groups: Slovaks--86 %, Hungarians--11%, Romanies--1.5%,
Czechs--1%, Ruthenians, Ukranians, Germans, Moravians, Poles.

Religions: Roman Catholic 60%, Protestant, others.

Language: Slovak

Education: Literacy--99%

Health: Life expectancy-- males 69 yrs, females--77 yrs (1994)

Work force (2.5 million): Industry, construction,
commerce--59%. Government and other services--29%.

Agriculture--12%.

Government

Type: Parliamentary republic

Independence: The Slovak Republic was established January 1,
1993 (Former Czechoslovak Republic established 1918)

Constitution: Signed September 3, 1992

Branches: Executive--president (chief of state),
prime minister (head of government), cabinet.

Legislative--National Council of the Slovak Republic (150
seats). Judicial -- Supreme Court, Constitutional Court.

Political parties: Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS)
61 seats; Party of the Democratic Left (SDL) coalition 18
seats; Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) 16 seats; Democratic
Union of Slovakia (DU) 15 seats; Association of Slovak Workers
(ZRS) 12 seats; Coalition of Hungarian Parties (Coexistence
plus Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement (MKDH)) 17 seats;
Slovak National Party (SNS) 9 seats; independent, 2 seats.

Suffrage: Universal at 18 years.

Administrative subdivisions: Three administrative districts
and Bratislava.

Defense: 6.5% of the state budget (1993)

Flag: Three horizontal bands of white (upper), blue (middle),
and red (lower), with heraldic insignia near staff consisting
of double white cross on red field above blue base.

Economy

GDP (1995): \$14.02 billion

GNP: not available

Nominal per capita income (1995 estimated): \$2,645.

Natural resources: Antimony, mercury, iron, copper, lead, zinc, magnesite, limestone, lignite.

Agriculture: Products--milk, eggs, poultry, cattle, hogs, potatoes, oils, grains, vegetables.

Industry: Types--iron and steel, chemicals, light industry, food processing, engineering, building materials.

Trade (1995): Exports --\$8.6 billion: iron and steel, machinery and energy equipment, plastics. Imports -- \$8.5 billion: mineral fuels and oils, machinery, audio/video equipment, vehicles. Trading partners -- Czech Republic, Germany, Austria, Russia, Hungary, Italy, Ukraine.

Foreign Investment: (12/95) \$732.86 million

Exchange rate (1995): 30.7 Slovak crowns (Sk)= US\$1

Geography

The Slovak Republic shares borders with Austria (west), Hungary (south), Ukraine (east), Poland (north), and the Czech Republic (northwest). Its capital, Bratislava, lies on the Danube river, approximately 40 miles to the east of Vienna.

Slovakia's primary geographic features are the series of mountain ranges that run primarily west to east across the northern portion of the country. They include the Fatra, Tatra, and Carpathian ranges. The southern part of the country is characterized by a broad plain that runs west to east from the Austrian to the Ukrainian borders, and it is the country's agricultural center.

The country is divided into four administrative regions; Bratislava (the national capital), western, central, and eastern Slovakia. Kosice, the second-largest city after Bratislava, is the capital of the Eastern Slovak Region. Other large cities include Zilina and Banska Bystrica (central Slovakia), Nitra (western Slovakia), and Presov (eastern Slovakia).

The Slovak Republic was the eastern part of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic which split peacefully on December 31, 1992. For approximately ten centuries prior to the formation of the common Czechoslovak state following World War I, the area was a part of the Hungarian empire. Hot summers, punctuated by occasional periods of rainfall and long, dry winters are typical of the moderate continental climate found in the Slovak Republic. The northern mountain ranges receive heavy snowfalls in the winter.

People

The majority of the 5.3 million inhabitants of the Slovak Republic are Slovak (86%). Other major ethnic groups include Hungarians (11%), Romanies 1.5%, and Czechs (1%). There are also Ruthenians, Ukranians, Germans, Moravians, and Poles.

The Slovak constitution guarantees freedom of religion. The majority of Slovak citizens (60%) practice Roman Catholicism; the second largest group are Protestants. About three thousand Jews remain of the pre-WWII population of 135,000.

The official state language is Slovak. There is a 99% literacy rate in the Slovak Republic. According to official statistics, life expectancy among Slovak males is 69 years and among Slovak females 77 years. The Slovak labor force makes up approximately 43% of the population (2.5 million). Industry, construction and commerce employ the majority of Slovak workers (59%). The government or other service sectors employ 29%, and 12% of the work force is engaged in agricultural activities.

Government

Slovakia's highest legislative body is the 150-seat unicameral National Council of the Slovak Republic. Delegates are elected from three districts plus the capital, Bratislava, for four-year terms, on the basis of proportional representation. The Slovak political scene supports a wide spectrum of political parties ranging from the successors to the Communist party, the Party of the Democratic Left (SDL), to the nationalistic Slovak National Party (SNS) on the right.

Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar's party, Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS), returned to power in December 1994 after winning a substantial plurality in the Fall 1994 elections. HZDS has formed a narrowly based coalition government with two smaller parties: the ultranationalist Slovak National Party (SNS) and the leftist Association of Slovak Workers (ZRS). This makes the third government that the Slovak Republic has had since gaining its independence on January 1, 1993, following the peaceful dissolution of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic (CSFR). The previous government headed by then Prime Minister Jozef Moravcik had succeeded the country's initial HZDS-SNS coalition government led by Meciar after it lost a vote of no-confidence in March of 1994.

Michal Kovac is the current President of the Slovak Republic. A former active member of HZDS, he declared himself non-partisan upon assuming his office. Under the Slovak constitution, the president serves as commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and enjoys other limited powers, including the right to dissolve parliament under certain circumstances. The country's highest court of appeals is the supreme court, elected by and responsible to the National Council. The constitutional court, which rules on constitutional issues, is also appointed by the National Council.

Defense

The Slovak Armed Forces have a total of approximately 58,000 personnel, approximately 30% of whom are professionals. As of November 1993, however, only 60% of career military service posts were filled. The armed forces are made up of a total of six divisions, two of which (14th Mechanized Division and the 13th Tank Regiment) are currently at full combat strength. The Slovak air force and air defense command are subordinated to the army of the Slovak Republic. The Slovak armed forces are currently being restructured with a view towards eventual integration into European security structures.

History

The Slovak Republic was the eastern part of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic. Formed into a common state after World War I (October 18, 1918), the Czechs, Moravians, and Slovaks remained united for more than 75 years. On January 1, 1993, the two republics split to form two separate states.

The Slovaks lost their national independence to the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1620 at the Battle of White Mountain and, for the next 300 years, were ruled by Austrian Monarchy. With the collapse of the monarchy at the end of World War I, the independent country of Czechoslovakia was formed, encouraged by, among others, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson.

Despite cultural differences, the Slovaks shared with Czech similar aspirations for independence from the Hapsburg state and voluntarily united with the Czech. The Slovaks were not at the same level of economic and technological development as the Czechs, but the freedom and opportunity found in Czechoslovakia enabled them to make strides toward overcoming these inequalities. However, the gap never was fully bridged, and the discrepancy played a continuing role throughout the 75 years of the union.

Although Czechoslovakia was the only East European country to remain a parliamentary democracy from 1918 to 1938, it was plagued with minority problems, the most important concerning the country's large German population. Constituting more than 22% of the interwar state's population and largely concentrated in the Bohemian and Moravian border regions (the Sudetenland), members of this minority supported in large part by Nazi Germany undermined the new Czechoslovak state. Internal and external pressures culminated in September 1938, when, at Munich, France, and the United Kingdom yielded to Nazi pressures and agree to force Czechoslovakia to cede the Sudetenland to Germany.

Fulfilling Hitler's aggressive designs on all of Czechoslovakia, Germany invaded what remained of Bohemia and Moravia in March 1939, establishing a German "protectorate." By this time, Slovakia had already declared independence and had become a puppet state of the Germans.

At the close of World War II, Soviet troops overran all of Slovakia, Moravia, and much of Bohemia, including Prague. In May 1945, U.S. forces liberated the city of Plzen and most of western Bohemia. A civilian uprising against the German garrison took place in Prague in May 1945. Following Germany's surrender, some 2.9 million ethnic Germans were expelled from Czechoslovakia with Allied approval.

Reunited after the war, the Czechs and Slovaks set federal and national elections for the spring of 1946. The democratic elements, led by President Eduard Benes, hoped the Soviet Union would allow Czechoslovakia the freedom to choose its own form of government and aspired to a Czechoslovakia that would act as

a bridge between East and West. The Czechoslovak communist party, which won 38% of the vote, held most of the key positions in the government and gradually managed to neutralize or silence the anti-communist forces. Although the communist-led government initially intended to participate in the Marshall Plan, it was forced by Moscow to back out. Under the cover of superficial legality, the communist party seized power in February 1948.

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After extensive purges modeled on the Stalinist pattern in other East European states, the communist party tried 14 of its former leaders in November 1952 and sentenced 11 to death. For more than a decade thereafter, the Czechoslovak communist political structure was characterized by the orthodoxy of the leadership of party chief Antonin Novotny.

The 1968 Soviet Invasion

The communist leadership allowed token reforms in the early 1960s, but discontent arose within the ranks of the communist party central committee, stemming from dissatisfaction with the slow pace of the economic reforms, resistance to cultural liberalization, and the desire of the Slovaks within the leadership for greater autonomy for their republic. This discontent expressed itself with the removal of Novotny from party leadership in January 1968 and from the presidency in March. He was replaced as party leader by a Slovak, Alexander Dubcek.

After January 1968, the Dubcek leadership took practical steps toward political, social, and economic reforms. In addition, it called for politico-military changes in the Soviet-dominated Warsaw Pact and Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. The leadership affirmed its loyalty to socialism and the Warsaw Pact but also expressed the desire to improve relations with all countries of the world regardless of their social systems.

A program adopted in April 1968 set guidelines for a modern, humanistic socialist democracy that would guarantee, among other things, freedom of religion, press, assembly, speech, and travel; a program that, in Dubcek's words, would give socialism "a human face." After 20 years of little public participation, the population gradually started to take interest in the government, and Dubcek became a truly popular national figure.

The internal reforms and foreign policy statements of the Dubcek leadership created great concern among some other Warsaw Pact governments. On the night of August 20, 1968, Soviet, Hungarian, Bulgarian, East German, and Polish troops invaded and occupied Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak Government immediately declared that the troops had not been invited into the country and that their invasion was a violation of socialist principles, international law, and the UN Charter.

The principal Czechoslovak reformers were forcibly and secretly taken to the Soviet Union. Under obvious Soviet duress, they were compelled to sign a treaty that provided for the "temporary stationing" of an unspecified number of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia.

Dubcek was removed as party First Secretary on April 17, 1969, and replaced by another Slovak, Gustav Husak. Later, Dubcek and many of his allies within the party were stripped of their party positions in a purge that lasted until 1971 and reduced party membership by almost one-third.

The 1970s and 1980s became known as the period of "normalization," in which the apologists for the 1968 Soviet invasion prevented, as best they could, any opposition to their conservative regime. Political, social, and economic life stagnated. The population, cowed by the "normalization," was quiet.

At the time of the communist takeover, Czechoslovakia had a balanced economy and one of the higher levels of industrialization on the continent. In 1948, however, the government began to stress heavy industry over agricultural and consumer goods and services. Many basic industries and foreign trade, as well as domestic wholesale trade, had been nationalized before the Communists took power. Nationalization of most of the retail trade was completed in 1950-51.

Heavy industry received major economic support during the 1950s, but waste and inefficient use of industrial resources resulted from central planning. Although the labor force was traditionally skilled and efficient, inadequate incentives for labor and management contributed to high labor turnover, low productivity, and poor product quality. Economic failures reached a critical stage in the 1960s, after which various reform measures were sought, with no satisfactory results.

Hope for wide-ranging economic reform came with Alexander Dubcek's rise in January 1968. Despite renewed efforts, however, Czechoslovakia could not come to grips with inflationary forces, much less begin the immense task of correcting the economy's basic problems.

The economy saw growth during the 1970s but then stagnated between 1978-82. Attempts at revitalizing it in the 1980s with management and worker incentive programs were largely unsuccessful. The economy grew after 1982, achieving an annual average output growth of more than 3% between 1983-85. Imports from the West were curtailed, exports boosted, and hard currency debt reduced substantially. New investment was made in the electronic, chemical, and pharmaceutical sectors, which were industry leaders in Eastern Europe in the mid 1980s.

The Velvet Revolution

The roots of the 1989 Civic Forum movement that came to power during the "Velvet Revolution" lie in human rights activism. On January 1, 1977, more than 250 human rights activists signed a manifesto called the Charter 77, which criticized the government for failing to implement human rights provisions of documents it had signed, including the state's own constitution; international covenants on political, civil, economic, social, and cultural rights; and the Final Act of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Although not organized in any real sense, the signatories of Charter 77 constituted a citizens' initiative aimed at inducing the Czechoslovak Government to observe formal obligations to respect the human rights of their citizens.

In the days after November 17, 1989, Charter 77 and other groups united to become the Civic Forum, an umbrella group championing bureaucratic reform and civil liberties. Its leader was the dissident playwright Vaclav Havel. Intentionally eschewing the label "party," a word given a negative connotation during the previous regime, Civic Forum quickly gained the support of millions of Czechs, as did its Slovak counterpart, Public Against Violence.

Faced with an overwhelming popular repudiation, the Communist Party all but collapsed. Its leaders, Husak and party chief Milos Jakes, resigned in December 1989, and Havel was elected President of Czechoslovakia on December 29.

The astonishing quickness of these events was in part due to the unpopularity of the communist regime and changes in the policies of its Soviet guarantor as well as to the rapid, effective organization of these public initiatives into a viable opposition.

A coalition government, in which the communist party had a minority of ministerial positions, was formed in December 1989. The first free elections in Czechoslovakia since 1948 took place in June 1990 without incident and with more than 95% of the population voting. As anticipated, Civic Forum and Public Against Violence won landslide victories in their

respective republics and gained a comfortable majority in the federal parliament. The parliament undertook substantial steps toward securing the democratic evolution of Czechoslovakia. It successfully moved toward fair local elections in November 1990, ensuring fundamental change on the county and town level.

Civic Forum found, however, that although it had successfully completed its primary objective--the overthrow of the communist regime--it was ineffectual as a government party. The demise of Civic Forum was viewed by most as necessary and inevitable.

By the end of 1990, unofficial parliamentary "clubs" had evolved with distinct political agendas. These solidified into the parties that make up the Czech political landscape. Most influential is the Civic Democratic Party, headed by Prime Minister and former Federal Minister of Finance Vaclav Klaus. Other notable parties that came into being after the split were the Civic Movement and Civic Democratic Alliance.

By 1992, Slovak calls for greater autonomy effectively blocked the daily functioning of the federal government. In the election of June 1992, Klaus's Civic Democratic Party won handily in the Czech lands on a platform of economic reform. Vladimir Meciar's Movement for a Democratic Slovakia emerged as the leading party in Slovakia, basing its appeal on fairness to Slovak demands for autonomy. Federalists, like Havel, were unable to contain the trend toward the split. In July 1992, President Havel resigned. In the latter half of 1992, Klaus and Meciar hammered out an agreement that the two republics would go their separate ways by the end of the year.

Members of the federal parliament, divided along national lines, barely cooperated enough to pass the law officially separating the two nations. The law was passed on December 27, 1992. On January 1, 1993, the Czech Republic and the Republic of Slovakia were simultaneously and peacefully founded.

Relationships between the two states, despite occasional disputes about the division of federal property and governing of the border have been as peaceful as Prime Ministers Klaus and Meciar promised. Both states attained immediate recognition from the U.S. and their European neighbors.

THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Political Developments:

Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar's party, Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS), returned to power in December 1994 after winning a substantial plurality. HZDS governs in coalition with two smaller parties: the ultranationalist Slovak National Party (SNS) and the leftist Association of Slovak Workers (ZRS). This makes the third government that the Slovak Republic has had since gaining its independence on January 1, 1993, following the peaceful dissolution of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic (CSFR). The previous government, headed by then Prime Minister Jozef Moravcik, succeeded the country's first government, also led by Meciar, after it lost a vote of no-confidence in March of 1994.

Slovakia is a functioning parliamentary democracy whose constitution guarantees fundamental rights recognized under OSCE principles. Its parliament and government were elected in free and fair multi-party elections.

The right to associate freely and form political parties and movements is protected by law and was respected in practice in 1995. Freedom of religious belief and faith are guaranteed by the Constitution and by law. Citizens who associate on the basis of a particular religious persuasion may freely proclaim and practice their beliefs.

The constitution mandates independent courts. The 10-judge Constitutional Court in Kosice reviews the constitutionality of laws and the decisions of national and local government bodies. The Supreme Court reviews the decisions of lower courts.

Despite constitutional guarantees protecting fundamental human rights and civil liberties, there were disturbing allegations of human rights abuse by civil authorities in 1995. In August, the President's son was tortured during the course of a violent abduction to Austria in which Slovak Intelligence Service (SIS) personnel are alleged to be implicated. SIS initially refused to permit its personnel to be questioned and has accused police investigators of wrongdoing. The lead police investigator and key supervisory personnel were fired. In September an opposition politician was beaten at his home after two days of surveillance. In both cases government representatives sought to discredit the victims' reports of their injuries. The "lustration" law of the former CSFR, barring from high public office persons who previously collaborated with the Communist-era secret police, is technically still in effect in Slovakia, though not enforced.

The constitution prohibits censorship and guarantees freedom of information and expression. Though dependent on state-owned printing and distribution companies, the print media are free and uncensored, and newspapers and magazines regularly publish a wide range of opinions and news articles.

The state-owned electronic media have become increasingly politicized since the Parliament named new television and radio councils and hired new directors in November 1994. The diversity of views, political coverage, and objectivity of news and documentary programming on Slovak television dropped

sharply. Further, the government recently enacted legislation for the Protection of the State, which would penalize or imprison those who intentionally spread false information abroad that is damaging to the interests of the republic. The "interests of the republic" are not defined. Although this law is being reconsidered in Parliament, these actions have caused some journalists and citizens to fear speaking out publicly.

Though most Slovaks and ethnic Hungarians coexist peacefully, a political debate continues over the legal status of the country's large (estimated 560,000) ethnic Hungarian minority. The Constitution provides minorities with the right to develop their own culture, receive information and education in their mother tongue, and participate in decision making in matters affecting them. In March 1996, the Parliament ratified a bilateral treaty with Hungary, which deals extensively with treatment of ethnic minorities. Hungary and Slovakia are now completing the final details for the treaty to enter into force. Slovakia has also ratified the Council of Europe framework Convention on Ethnic Minorities.

There are occasional outbreaks of anti-Hungarian feeling in Slovakia, mostly in areas where the two ethnic groups do not coexist. The government continued to provide funding for cultural, educational, broadcasting, and publishing activities for the major ethnic minorities, but at greatly reduced levels. Ethnic Hungarians worry about the Ministry of Education's "alternative education" plan, which seeks to introduce the use of the Slovak language for certain subjects in schools where Hungarian is the language of instruction. Supporters of the program note that participation is voluntary. Ethnic Hungarians also criticize the Meciar government's plans to redistrict Slovakia, saying it could dilute their vote by incorporating their communities into overwhelmingly ethnic Slovak districts.

Ethnic Hungarians have also expressed great concern over the recently approved state language law. They charge the law violates constitutional minority language rights as well as the Council of Europe's Convention on Minority Rights. Slovak government leaders have denied these accusations, declaring publicly that minority rights will not change as a result of the law. The government has also promised to pass companion legislation on minority languages in 1996. The final form of the minority language law, as well as the administrative regulations being developed to implement the language law, will in large part determine the actual impact this legislation will have on the lives of ethnic minorities in Slovakia.

The Romanies, whose numbers are estimated at between 100,000 and 400,000, suffer disproportionately from poverty, crime and disease. Credible reports by human rights monitors indicated Roma continue to suffer from discrimination in employment, housing, and administration of state services. Skinhead violence against Roma is a serious and growing problem, and human rights monitors report police remain reluctant to take action. Prime Minister Meciar has declared that the government would devote special attention to the economic, social and cultural advancement of the Romanies, and established a government plenipotentiary to deal with problems of "disadvantaged citizens."

SLOVAKIA

Economic Developments

The Slovak economy maintained its strong recovery in 1995 driven largely by increased domestic consumption and, to a lesser extent, a rise in domestic investment. This recovery follows several years of deep recession, climaxing in a 4.1-percent decline in real GDP in 1993. Slovakia's dramatic turnaround began in 1994, when it posted a 4.8 percent rise in real GDP. This upward trend continues, with real GDP up 7.4 percent in 1995 compared with a year earlier. Industrial production was up 5.5 percent in the first half of 1995 compared to the same period in 1994. Tight monetary and fiscal policy led to a sharp reduction both in the annual inflation rate, which fell from 14 percent in 1994 to 7.2 percent in 1995, and in the fiscal deficit, down from 7.6 percent of GDP in 1993 to 1.9 percent in 1995. Unemployment, while still high, declined gradually through 1994 and 1995, and stood at 13.1 percent in 1995.

In December 1994, Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar returned to power after a hiatus beginning in March 1994 when his previous government received a vote of no confidence. During the interim period (March-December), a coalition led by then Prime Minister Jozef Moravcik actively pursued economic reform and privatization. In July 1994, this government negotiated with the IMF both a new 20-month \$168 million Standby Arrangement and the terms for disbursement of the second tranche of the \$180 million Systemic Transformation Facility approved in 1993. In September 1994, representatives from the Group-of-24 countries met in Bratislava and declared their willingness to provide up to \$245 million of balance of payments support to Slovakia.

The new Meciar Government has kept Slovakia's conservative fiscal and monetary policies in place. In mid-1995, Slovakia ceased to draw on its IMF stand-by arrangement (with the concurrence of the IMF), but maintained a regular policy dialogue with the IMF. In June 1995, the government cancelled earlier plans for a mass privatization voucher-based program to institute a less transparent approach offering state enterprises for direct sale to current management, employees, and other bidders. The government has retained a decisive voice in the privatization of key enterprises, and has followed a policy of favoring domestic over foreign investors during this phase of privatization.

As a result, Slovakia's record on privatization is mixed. Almost all small state-owned enterprises in Slovakia have been privatized. At the same time, the government excepted a large number of the most lucrative Slovak state enterprises in the energy, telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, and transportation sectors from privatization for the foreseeable future on strategic grounds. However, the GOS has committed itself to completing privatization of all other firms, including the vast majority of large state enterprises, by mid-1996. So far, 700 large enterprises, valued at \$5.8 billion, have been privatized; about 150 large enterprises, valued at about \$2.0 billion, remain for privatization. This government has

accelerated the pace of the privatization process. Since February 1995, the National Property Fund has approved the sale of all or part of more than 342 state enterprises valued at approximately \$1.78 billion.

Foreign investors have not flocked to Slovakia. Through 1995, Slovakia had received only \$732 million in total direct foreign investment. Austria and Germany are the largest investors. U.S. investment, at more than \$90 million, ranks fourth among foreign investors.

Despite the low level of foreign investment and unpredictable nature of privatization, the grass roots private sector in Slovakia has grown rapidly. In 1995, the private sector generated an estimated 65 percent of GDP, compared with 2 percent in 1989, and employed nearly half of the industrial workforce. By the end of 1996, the private sector is expected to generate over 70 percent of Slovakia's GDP.

Slovakia's export sector has been a driving force behind the country's economic recovery and supports the investment-powered growth in capital goods imports. Slovakia reported a \$97.4 million trade surplus during the first nine months of 1995, compared to a surplus of \$130 million for 1994 as a whole. Exports increased by 22 percent from the first nine months of 1994, while imports rose 21.3 percent. In March 1994, the Moravcik Government imposed a ten percent import surcharge to help correct its balance of payments situation, which the current Government has continued in 1995. The government has made a commitment to the World Trade Organization (WTO) that it will eliminate the surcharge by mid-1996. A May 1995 five percent devaluation of the Slovak crown against the Czech crown also contributed to the large \$240 million trade surplus with the Czech Republic in the first half of 1995. The Czech Republic purchases nearly 35 percent of Slovakia's exports and supplies 28 percent of its imports.

The United States accounts for about two percent of total trade with Slovakia. The Slovak Republic has Most Favored Nation status and receives duty-free (GSP) benefits for many of its exports.

Slovakia enjoys a healthy foreign exchange position. It has little foreign debt, \$5.2 billion in 1995, and has built up its reserves to \$5.1 billion in 1995 compared with \$400 million in 1993.

The government has applied for membership in the OECD and the EU. Slovakia signed an Association Agreement with the EU in October 1993, which went into effect in February 1995. The agreement provides for the phased-in creation of a free trade arrangement concerning most industrial goods. In 1994, Slovakia, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland agreed to speed up implementation of their 1992 Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA; now including Slovenia). During the first half of 1995, Slovakia sent over 45 percent of its exports to its CEFTA partners and nearly 30 percent of its exports to the EU.



U. S. Department of State
Bureau of Consular Affairs
Washington, DC 20520

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Consular Information Sheet

Slovak Republic

November 9, 1995

Country Description: The Slovak Republic is a moderately developed European nation undergoing profound economic and political changes. Tourist facilities are not as developed as those found in western Europe and many of the goods and services taken for granted in other European countries are not yet available.

Entry Requirements: Travelers to the Slovak Republic can obtain entry information at the Embassy of the Slovak Republic at 2201 Wisconsin Avenue N.W., Suite 380, Washington, DC 20007, telephone (202) 965-5160/1.

Medical Facilities: Medical facilities are available. However only a limited number of doctors are English speakers. Doctors and hospitals expect cash payment for health services unless the patient can present an insurance number from the Slovak National Insurance Company. U.S. medical insurance is not always valid outside the United States. Travelers have found that in some cases, supplemental medical insurance with specific overseas coverage has proven to be useful. Further information on health matters can be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's international travelers hotline at (404) 332-4559.

Information on Crime: The Slovak Republic has a low rate of violent crime. However, particularly in the summer, there has been an increase in street crime such as pickpocketing in shopping centers, in the vicinity of major hotels where foreigners stay, near major tourist sites, and on night trains, especially Prague-Bratislava-Budapest or Budapest-Warsaw. The loss or theft abroad of a U.S. passport should be reported immediately to the local police and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. The Department of State's pamphlet "A Safe Trip Abroad" is available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. It provides useful information on safeguarding valuables and protecting personal security while traveling abroad.

Drug Penalties: U.S. citizens are subject to the laws of the country in which they are traveling. Penalties for possession, use and dealing in illegal drugs are strict and convicted offenders can expect jail sentences and fines.

Registration and Embassy Location: U.S. citizens may register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Bratislava and obtain updated information on travel and security in the Slovak Republic. The U.S. Embassy in Bratislava is located at Hviezdoslavovo Namestie 4, telephone (42-7) 330-861.

No. 95-142

This replaces the Consular Information Sheet dated May, 11, 1994 to update information on crime.

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
STATEMENT UPON DEPARTURE FROM SLOVAKIA
JULY 6, 1996**

I am glad to have had this chance to visit Bratislava, a city that has played an important role in European history, and to have met with people striving to make a difference in this period of historical opportunity.

During my brief stay, many people told me of Slovakia's accomplishments and of the challenges still confronting the nation as it seeks to rejoin the democratic family of the West. Democracy depends on the full participation of all segments of society, and I was gratified to meet with so many Slovak citizens and representatives of non-governmental organizations who are embracing the principles of democracy and trying to integrate them into the life of their country. I also met with President Kovacs and Prime Minister Meciar, who were generous in sharing their views about Slovakia's aspirations for progress.

To the government and people of Slovakia, I offer thanks for the hospitality and warmth extended to me today.

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