



November 30, 2009

The Vice President  
Executive Office Building  
Washington, DC 20501

Dear Mr. Vice President:

The American Hungarian Federation (the "Federation"), founded in 1906, represents a broad cross section of Americans who trace their heritage to Central Europe.

We applaud you for focusing on Central and Eastern Europe, as most recently demonstrated by your well-received and successful trip to the region. And while we support close and mutually beneficial relations between the United States and Hungary, including official bilateral visits at the highest levels, we were concerned that an invitation by President Obama to Prime Minister Bajnai would have been premature, as mentioned in our previous letter. Our concern was based on the fact that such an invitation a few months before Hungary's parliamentary elections would have been widely interpreted as a show of America's support for Mr. Bajnai's political party. This, in turn, would have resulted in cynicism among the large number of Hungarians who have been pro-American even before the fall of the Berlin Wall and who support an even-handed policy by the United States toward all democratic parties.

We appreciate that there are important bilateral issues relating to Afghanistan, NATO and energy security that will be on the agenda during your meeting with PM Bajnai this week. Another issue we urge be placed on the agenda and addressed relates to Slovakia's ill-advised language law that criminalizes the use of Hungarian and other minority languages in the public sphere.

This law not only constitutes a human rights violation, degrading democracy in Slovakia and causing considerable anxiety within the Hungarian community in that country, it has caused tensions between two NATO allies at a time when there is a great need for unity within the alliance to enable NATO to effectively carry out its critical mission and prevail in the war in Afghanistan.

As you will recall, during a trip to Prague in March 1997, you went to the heart of the matter by reminding NATO aspirants that the United States wanted assurances that prospective NATO members would maintain democratic institutions and respect minority rights. That consideration is as important today as it was then. We, therefore, respectfully suggest that the Slovak language law be discussed with PM Bajnai, with a resolution that Slovakia be urged to repeal this discriminatory law, as both the United States and Hungarian interests would be served by such an enlightened step.

Thank you for considering these views.

Sincerely,

Frank Koszorus, Jr.  
Co-president and Chairman  
International Relations Committee

Akos Nagy  
Chairman of the Board