



Montenegro Prime Minister Dusko Markovic, center right, after appearing to be pushed by Donald Trump, center, during a NATO summit of heads of state and government in Brussels, on May 25, 2017. Matt Dunham—AP

NATO

Montenegro PM: Trump's Shove Was a 'Harmless Situation' That Doesn't Affect Our Friendship

Duško Marković
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Duško Marković is the Prime Minister of Montenegro

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On June 5 , **Montenegro** will **formally join NATO** – thus reaching a historic milestone and joining the most powerful countries in the world in order to work together on the promotion of the values of the civilization with a view to preserving peace and stability in the world.

Last Thursday's **summit** was really impressive for me personally, for the Montenegrin delegation and for Montenegro. We were there where we belong - at the table where decisions are made, welcomed by 28 leaders of the NATO member states and able to clearly state that, grateful for the up-to-date support, we want to contribute to the key tasks of the alliance in the future and to help and support other developing democracies.

Those who are familiar with the history of Montenegro over the last two centuries understand why the guarantee of our independence, which we definitely get through

NATO membership, is so important to us. It happened several times in history that the fate of Montenegro was decided in its absence. It will never be possible again.

At the meeting of heads of state and/or government, as well as in separate meetings with leaders, I said that we would take part in defense and deterrence and projecting stability beyond the borders of the alliance. I want to recall that Montenegro has been supporting the efforts of allies in Afghanistan to contribute to peace and strengthening security and democracy.

In addition, as a new ally, Montenegro is strongly advocating for stepping up NATO engagement in the fight against terrorism. Bearing in mind its position of the factor of stability in the Balkans for many years, Montenegro will continue to be dedicated to this goal as well as the promotion of peace, with a strong commitment to continuing the policy of expansion of the alliance.

In Brussels, I had the opportunity for a brief encounter with U.S. President Donald Trump and expressed my gratitude for the support that the United States has been continuously providing to Montenegro in order to strengthen democracy, reinforce institutions and become a part of the most powerful alliance in today's world. Enormous media attention was given undeservedly to **what happened with President Trump** during the tour of the new building of the Alliance – it was really a harmless situation that can in no way affect the excellent bilateral relations between the two countries.

I am honored by the attention that the U.S. has given me; therefore, following my recent meeting with Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, I will be again in Washington D.C. on June 5 . I will attend a ceremony at the State Department on the occasion of handing the instrument of ratification for membership in NATO, and after that, I will have a bilateral meeting with Vice President, Mike Pence.

The overall success of Montenegro would not be possible without the help of the United States. I believe that our partnership and friendship are eternal. We all know that friendship is not measured by the size and wealth of a country, but good intentions and deeds. I want to tell the American people that they will always have a sincere and reliable friend in Montenegro.

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