



September 2007

## Conference Promotes Transparency in Government, Media and Business

U.S. Embassy Prague, in cooperation with the Czech Senate, organized a two-day conference in mid-September entitled “Transparency & Ethics: Towards an Accountable Society,” to provide a forum in which experts from many countries could share ideas, discuss challenges, and promote best practices to limit corruption and promote accountability in the public sector.



*Transparency Conference in beautiful Senate hall*

U.S. speakers included Attorney Jim Letten from New Orleans, former Congressman Robert Weygand (RI), and New York Times lawyer David McCraw, all of whom have had experience in investigating, prosecuting and rebuilding public trust within American society. Former head of Česká Spořitelna Jack Stack also spoke. Czech, Slovak and other European colleagues, including the former Slovak Minister of Justice Daniel Lipšic, joined the American guests for focused discussions on government ethics, rule of law, the media, and business ethics. Over 200 participants followed the various conference activities. More information about the conference and audio recordings of the discussions will be available online at <http://www.aic.cz/transparency/>.

## U.S. Lawmakers Visit Czech Republic

U.S. Representative Ellen Tauscher, Chair of the House Armed Services Strategic Forces Subcommittee, met with Czech political leaders and lawmakers in Prague on September 14-15. Tauscher underscored bi-partisan support for missile defense, as well as bi-partisan recognition of the threat to the U.S. and European allies posed by Iran’s missile technology. Speaking with the press, Tauscher also noted Congressional support for both the Polish and Czech components of missile defense and accelerating NATO engagement on the topic. She was joined at the press conference by her Democratic colleague Representative Jim Cooper and Republican Representative Michael Turner.



*Representative Tauscher speaks to press*

Several other U.S. Congressmen visited the Czech Republic during the legislative recess. Representative Trent Franks, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, was in Prague August 29-30 to discuss European missile defense cooperation. Franks underscored the threat of attacks from hostile countries and said the interceptor site in Poland and the radar in the Czech Republic would help protect both the U.S. and Europe. On August 27, U.S. Representative Albio Sires led another delegation of U.S. lawmakers focused on the democratization of Cuba. The main objective of their visit was to thank Czech political and NGO leaders for their solidarity in pursuing freedom for Cuba.



*Congressmen Lincoln and Mario Diaz-Balart on Czech Television*

## New American Books at Prague Library

The U.S. Embassy donated the Library of America to the Municipal Library in Prague on September 13. The Library of America is a highly regarded scholarly collection consisting of 150 volumes of the best that American literature has to offer (more on [www.loa.org](http://www.loa.org)). Through this donation, the Embassy hopes to broaden the access of Czech readers to literary masterpieces reflecting America’s historical and cultural heritage. The U.S. Embassy and Prague Municipal Library also continue to cooperate in introducing noted American literary figures to Czech audiences. The Prague Municipal Library is one of four libraries in the Czech Republic that have received this collection. The U.S. Embassy hopes to make the Library of America more widely available throughout the Czech Republic.

## Alexandria Graber Remembers 9/11 with Liberec Firefighters

For the last six years, the firefighters and rescue workers in Liberec region of the Czech Republic have dedicated their annual September exercises to the innocent victims of 9/11. Czech notables and a U.S. Embassy representative participate in this day-long gathering of over 150 Czech professionals. This year, Alexandria Graber, wife of the U.S. ambassador and a health care professional with first-hand experience working with Disaster Action Teams, traveled to Liberec to thank the first responders and to convey the appreciation of solidarity from the Fire Department of New York, which wrote their Czech colleagues that, "With faith and strength, we faced the pain of evil and find the humanity of the many decent people who stand with us as one family. We will not allow the horror of yesterday to prevent us from seeing the hope of tomorrow." Senate Chairman Premysl Sobotka and Regional Governor Petr Skokan also participated.



Alex Graber spent the day with Czech first responders in Liberec, from starting the rally of antique fire trucks, to observing the team trials and awarding prizes.

Every September 11, U.S. Embassy guard Vaclav reminds American diplomats of the two Czech children, ages 3 and 5, who brought toys to leave at the Embassy following the attacks "for the children who are in heaven now." "I have never seen them since, but I will never forget," he says.

## Missile Defense Talks Continue

Formal negotiations related to U.S.-Czech missile defense (MD) cooperation continued September 5. Assistant Secretary of State John C. Rood was in Prague with a 15-member negotiating team for talks he characterized as "intensive, detailed, and frank." "I am very optimistic, based on the goodwill being demonstrated and the progress that we have made, that we are on the path to successfully concluding an agreement," he told reporters. U.S. envoy, Ambassador Richard McDonald, followed up in Prague with talks September 11-12 on a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). The negotiating teams will meet again in late October.

## Important U.S.-Czech Agreements Signed

Several important agreements that enhance U.S.-Czech business, research and security cooperation were signed in

September. U.S. Ambassador Richard Graber and Czech Minister of Education Dana Kuchtová signed a U.S.-Czech Science and Technology Agreement, which promotes effective cooperation among a broad array of scientific organizations and individual scientists in both countries to support critical research and development.



Ambassador Graber and Minister of Industry Rimán

Ambassador Graber, together with Minister of Labor Petr Nečas, also signed an agreement that will remove the burden of paying social security taxes to both nations. Under current law, U.S. citizens working for U.S. companies in the Czech Republic, as well as Czech citizens working for Czech companies in the United States, must make social security contributions to both governments. In addition to lowering the tax burden for individuals, the agreement will improve social security protection for people who work in both countries. On September 17, the Ambassador and Minister for Industry Martin Rimán signed the "Agreement on Cooperation in the Area of Countering the Proliferation of Nuclear Materials and Technology."

## MDA Representative Visits NATO Day



Deputy for International Affairs of the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) Nancy Morgan (left, with Deputy Prime Minister Alexandr Vondra)

visited Ostrava September 14 -15 to participate in the annual NATO Day. Morgan presented the missile defense system which the U.S. hopes to construct in the Czech Republic and Poland during a public gathering at one of Ostrava's major bookstores. This year, NATO Day, with its numerous events and speakers, attracted over 40,000 visitors. <http://www.dennato.cz/>

## Events in American Center

- Oct. 11 - 12 Panel Discussion – "Immigration to the U.S." with Prof. R. Daniels. 4:30 p.m.
- Oct. 17 Exhibition opening – Czech Women in the Arts. 6:00 p.m.
- Oct. 25 Murray Forman on U.S. Hip Hop Culture, 5:30 p.m.