

CZECH the News

Newsletter of the Embassy of the Czech Republic

Winter 2005

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New Czech Ambassador Arrives in Washington



Photo courtesy of Tomáš Sedláček

Petr Kolar, the new Czech Ambassador to the United States, officially assumed his duties on December 2, 2005. On that day, Dr. Kolar presented his letter of credentials to the President of the United States, George W. Bush.

Ambassador Kolar previously served in Prague as the Deputy Foreign Minister for Bilateral Relations (2003-05), his postings as Ambassador in the past include Ireland (1999-03) and Sweden (1996-98). In the early nineties, he participated in a training program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

The new Ambassador is very aware of the special importance and high standards of Czech-American relations and plans to further enhance the already flourishing relationship between both countries.

Minister of Defense Karel Kühnl Tours the USA

During his three day visit at the end of October, Czech Minister of Defense Karel Kühnl met US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick, visited the Texas National Guard in San Antonio, decorated local officers and compatriots, and took part in a flag-raising ceremony at the NATO headquarters in Norfolk, VA.

Minister Kühnl started his visit in San Antonio, TX. At the Lackland air base, he decorated two officers of the Texas National Guard for their contribution to the 12-year-long cooperation between the Czech Army and the National Guard.

“It seemed impossible just a few years ago, but today Czech soldiers operate alongside US soldiers all around the world,” said one of the decorated officers William Meehan.

Minister Kühnl also bestowed medals upon Mr. and Mrs. Biskup, Czech compatriots from San Antonio, who have been for years supporting Czech students coming to local military schools to improve their language skills. As one of the Czech students noted: “Mr. Biskup is a guardian angel, tutor and a father to the Czech



Photo courtesy of Petr Janoušek

Czech Minister of Defense Karel Kühnl is welcomed in San Antonio, TX.

students here.”

Late in the evening of the first day of his visit, Mr. Kühnl left Texas and flew to Virginia. The next morning, he toured NATO’s Allied Command Transformation, located within the Norfolk naval base. After being greeted by the Chief of Staff, Lt-Gen J.O. Michel Maisonneuve, the Czech Defense Minister took part in a flag-raising ceremony on the occasion of the Czech Independence Day. Kühnl also delivered a short address, in which he emphasized the democratic traditions of the Czech Republic, pointed out the importance of NATO reform and the role of the Czech Army within the Alliance: “We are determined to do everything we can to defend and nurture our

membership in NATO,” the Minister said.

“We fully support NATO’s transformation, which was brought about by changing world events and new threats. The challenges are fierce, and so must we be,” stated the Minister.

The role of the Czech Republic within the Alliance was appreciated, after all, in the opening remarks of Lt-Gen Maisonneuve: “The Czech Republic has proven to be a full-fledged member of NATO, pulling its weight and contributing to global peace and prosperity.” At the close of the

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Message from the Ambassador

Dear Friends,
Let me introduce myself for the first time through our Embassy's "media outlet." My name is Petr Kolar, and I recently arrived in Washington to serve as the Czech Republic's Ambassador to the United States. As you can read on the cover page, I felt privileged to be able to hand over my credentials to President George W. Bush on December 2, thus becoming a full-fledged Ambassador capable of performing my duties in an official manner.

Allow me to sincerely thank my predecessor and friend, Martin Palous, for all he has done during his tenure as Czech Ambassador to the US. I am certain that he has become quite famous in Washington for his personal charm and his passion in advocating issues of importance, such as democracy and human rights. His achievements in fostering Czech-

American bilateral relations are numerous, and the result is a remarkably successful and well functioning alliance between the Czech Republic and the United States. I certainly wish Martin Palous all the best in his future endeavors and good luck on whatever his next mission will be.

During my first month in the US, I familiarized myself with my agenda and I also had the opportunity to meet many US citizens (including senior government officials), Czechs living in this country as well as Czech-Americans who found their second homeland in America. Having observed the current state of relations between our two countries, I have a strong feeling that there is one aspect that still needs to be addressed. We have to build on the already excellent relations of the US and the Czech Republic by extending people-to-people contacts between the cit-



Ambassador Kolar stands with his wife Jaroslava and son Adam in front of his new residence in Washington, DC

Photo courtesy of Zdenka Seifertová

izens of our countries. This is the best way, in my view, to get to know each other and make the relationship really "personal." I find this task rather challenging. Therefore, I am looking forward to pursuing it as vigorously as I can. In addition to this, I will do my best to further enhance the relations between our countries and work hard for deeper transatlantic relations. I appreciate any assistance as well as suggestions

that you might have. Last but not least, let me wish you a Merry Christmas and good luck, strong health and prosperity in the New Year.

Very truly yours,

Petr Kolar

President Bush Comments on Czech-US Relations

U.S. President George W. Bush accepted the Letter of Credence and officially recognized Dr. Petr Kolar as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Czech Republic to the United States of America. In his letter, sent to the new Ambassador, he described the current relations between the two countries as excellent.

President George W. Bush also mentioned the successful transition of Czech society to a democracy and a market economy.

"In 1989, the Czech Republic reclaimed its independ-

ence and took its first steps down the long road of political, strategic, and economic transition. Today, a short sixteen years later, the Czech Republic's transition to democracy and a free market economy stands as an example to the world," wrote President Bush at the beginning of his letter.

In regards to Czech foreign policy, President Bush acknowledged the Czech Republic favoring a strong transatlantic relationship, bringing "Europe and the United States closer together." He also stated that "the United States has been

pleased to watch the Czech Republic emerge as a leader in support of other nations' quest for freedom and prosperity."

In this respect, the President appreciated the Czech Republic's pledge to re-deploy its troops in Afghanistan and also its long-term commitment to support forces of freedom in Cuba. "The Czech Republic has demonstrated courage and resolve in its noteworthy efforts to support the Cuban people's dream of living one day in a free and prosperous Cuba," wrote President Bush.

In his concluding remarks,

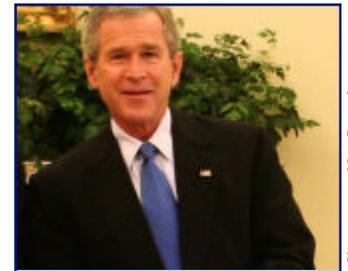


Photo courtesy of Petr Zemanek

President Bush commented on the Czech-American relationship: "The United States is proud to call the Czech Republic a friend," wrote the President and added that "history and shared values are powerful forces bringing Czechs and Americans together."

Meet the New Czech Ambassador

Petr Kolar, the new Czech Ambassador to the United States, officially assumed his duties on December 2, 2005.

Dr. Kolar holds a degree from Charles University, Faculty of Arts, in Research, Library Science and Ethnography (graduated in 1986). In 1991, he participated in a postgraduate program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center, Washington, DC. During the following year,

he attended the Institute of Historical Research at the University of London.

He started his diplomatic career as Director of the Department for Czechs living abroad and Nongovernmental Relations (1993-95), carried on as Director of "Eastern & Southern Europe Territorial Department" and Foreign Policy Adviser to the Foreign Minister (1995-96). In 1996, Mr. Kolar was appointed Ambassador of

the Czech Republic to Sweden (until 1998). Upon his return from Sweden, he became Adviser for the European Integration and the Balkans to Vaclav Havel, President of the Czech Republic (1998-99). Between 1999 and 2003, Petr Kolar served as Czech Ambassador to the Republic of Ireland. In September 2003, Dr. Kolar became Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Bilateral Relations. He remained at that

position until October 2005. In November 2005, he arrived in Washington, DC, to serve as Ambassador to the USA.

Petr Kolar was born on September 27, 1962, in Ceske Budejovice, Czech Republic. He is married to Jaroslava Kolarova (Bendova), they have two sons – Ondrej (born 1984) and Adam (born 1990). His hobbies include international politics, sports, literature, history and fine arts.

Czech and Slovak Freedom Lecture

Lecture Delivered by Ambassador Palous

The 6th Annual Czech and Slovak Freedom Lecture at the Woodrow Wilson International Center in Washington, DC, was delivered by the outgoing Czech Ambassador Martin Palous.

In his speech, entitled "Czech – U.S. Relationship at the Beginning of the 21st Century," Ambassador Palous highlighted the role of the United States and the assistance extended by the US to the Czechs and other central European nations on their way towards democracy. Dr. Palous also called upon the Czech Republic to continue being an active player in today's global struggle for freedom.

Martin Palous acknowledged the support and participation of the Friends of Slovakia, American Friends of the Czech Republic, and the Wilson Center, in organizing the lecture and inviting him to deliver his remarks. He declared this invitation to be an honor to speak after such distinguished personalities as Michael Novak in 2000, Madeleine Albright in 2001, Adam Michnik in 2002, Vaclav Klaus in 2003 and Timothy Garton Ash in 2004. He outlined the topic of his speech, saying that as an outgoing Ambassador he would like to offer some thoughts concerning the nature and current state of the Czech-U.S. relationship.

Recalling the fall of the communist regime and the beginning of the 1990s in Czechoslovakia, Ambassador Palous reminded that the immediate goals of the newly liberated country were to "rejoin the West and to return to mainstream European civilization." The country had to "reintegrate as soon as possible into the international institutions and arrangements capable of providing us with the necessary security guarantees" and to "define and pursue our own 'national interests' not with a kind of parochial, self-defensive point of view driven by the endemic inferiority complex of a small nation, but with a broad, generous and worldly perspective that can be shared with all other freedom-loving peoples."

In this respect, the renewed

relationship with the United States was, according to Palous, one of the highest priorities.

"If freedom was what we wanted, the United States was expected to resume, alongside the democratic countries of Europe, the role of our major strategic ally," said the Ambassador and noted that while reviewing the years of transition from 1989 up to today's 16th Anniversary of the Velvet Revolution "the United States indeed has honored fully its commitments to helping us return to the family of European democracies, ...and played an indispensable role in spreading and securing the idea of freedom in our part of the European continent."

Turning his attention to current affairs, Dr. Palous expressed his confidence in what he called a "flourishing relationship" between the Czech Republic and the United States.

"There is no doubt that the relationship between the Czech Republic - a NATO member since 1999 and a member state of the EU since 2004 - and the United States is stronger than ever before," Dr. Palous stated.

He continued, "It is evident by the figures indicating the trends in bilateral economic cooperation and ties between our armed forces. The same can be proven if we focus on culture, education, tourism, and if we highlight the cooperation between our cities and regions or comment on the unprecedented level of informal communications between the ordinary citizens of our countries."

At the same time, however, the Ambassador pointed to important differences between the two countries, which derive from the historical context: "We must not disregard the fundamental reality that this relationship is asymmetrical ... and take into consideration that the American and Czech perspectives are, and must be by definition different than the 'democracy in America' which Tocqueville found so fascinating



Photo courtesy of Petr Zemanek

Ambassador Palous speaks at the Embassy during Czech Independence Day on October 28, 2005

and analyzed with still unmatched insight and clarity, and 'democracy in the Czech Republic' are two different varieties of one and the same species. The 'national interests' of the only remaining global superpower and of a small Central European state simply cannot be identical," said the Ambassador and reminded that these differences must be understood in order to keep the Czech-American relationship strong in the future.

Martin Palous also noted that between 1989 and today, there has been a dramatic shift in the political reality not only in the Czech Republic, but also in the world. "The whole world is changing, and also the role of the United States, which is being tested and reconsidered in our current turbulent times. Being asked where the whole of mankind is heading, confronted with so many challenges of globalization, exposed to all sorts of new, unexpected and unprecedented threats, the only honest answer we can offer is that we do not know," the Ambassador said.

The current state of affairs, according to Palous, calls for us to overcome current differences on both sides of the Atlantic, in order to face the common challenges. "Is not the anti-Americanism, so fashionable today in many parts of Europe, or the contempt and indifference for anything European here in the United States, just a symptom of resignation for our common responsibility, a mark of our spiritual laziness and of our

(Continued on page 4)

News Brief

Topolanek to lead the Prague ticket of ODS in 2006 election

Mirek Topolanek, chairman of the opposition Civic Democrats (ODS), will lead the party ballot in Prague during the general election in June 2006. Second position goes to Jan Buergemeister, who was also re-elected as the head of the Prague ODS chapter.

Klaus most trustworthy politician according to an October poll

President Vaclav Klaus enjoys the trust of the Czech society with almost two-thirds of citizens being satisfied with him. The politicians of the ruling Social Democrats (CSSD) assumed second to sixth places. Roughly one half of the population trusts Culture Minister Vitezslav Jandak and Prime Minister Jiri Paroubek. The leader of the strongest opposition party, the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), Mirek Topolanek, ranked as the eighth public personality with trust voiced by 29 percent of Czechs. Trust in Christian Democrat leader Miroslav Kalousek rose from 20 to 24 percent, while his predecessor Cyril Svoboda is trusted by almost one-third of Czechs.

Unknown person threatens to shoot Minister Svoboda dead over Cuba

Police confirmed that an anonymous person has threatened Foreign Minister Cyril Svoboda and his family to shoot them dead unless Svoboda stops pushing through a tough stance towards Cuba. The Czech Republic traditionally asserts a strict course against the Cuban totalitarian regime of Fidel Castro and Czech-Cuban relations have been tense in the long term.

News Brief

Czech government to intensify fight against terrorism

The Czech government approved an updated counter-terrorism plan that proposes increasing the powers of intelligence services, posting police officers at Czech embassies abroad, and carefully protecting cargoes containing dangerous material. The plan should be implemented over the next two years.

Havel says that people in post-communist states want change



Photo courtesy of Petr Janoušek

People in post-communist states will sooner or later call for changes as they will not tolerate the interconnection of political and financial elites that replaced Communist regimes in the early 1990s, former Vaclav Havel said at the forum of the Club of Madrid conference in Prague. "I don't expect any revolution to take place in the Czech Republic, but sooner or later this call for change will manifest itself in the elections," Havel said.

Clinton attends conference of Club of Madrid in Prague

Former U.S. President Bill Clinton attended the conference of the Club of Madrid, held in Prague in November. Clinton participated in the debate, which highlighted the role of the state administration and citizenship as central pillars in the transformation to democracy. Clinton told reporters after the forum that democracy is a never-ending process that needs a constant commitment since new challenges constantly appear.

Thousands Celebrate 16th Anniversary of the Velvet Revolution

On November 17, 2005, Czechs celebrated 16 years of freedom. Citizens and officials alike came to lay flowers and candles on Narodni street, and thousands of people gathered in front of the seat of the Czech Communist party for remembrance of the crimes of the past regime.

It has been 16 years, since the brutal police attack against demonstrating students on November 17, 1989, which sparked mass protests that led to the fall of Czechoslovakia's communist regime. Until today, many Czechs come to the place where it all began and recall this important moment in Czech history.

The crowd of citizens who gathered by the memorial on

Narodni street saw several senior officials and other leaders. President Vaclav Klaus, former President Vaclav Havel, Senate Chairman Premysl Sobotka, Prime Minister Jiri Paroubek, Prague Mayor Pavel Bem and several others laid flowers at the site, where students were attacked. Most of them also stressed the importance of remembering the events. President Klaus described the November 17, 1989, as a "key moment" in Czech history and ex-president Havel told reporters that it is important to remember the history in order to prevent certain things to happen in the future.

Several thousand people, mostly students, also gathered for a political happening, which



Photo courtesy of Jan Sobota

November 24, 1989 - The Nation Unites in Protest

should have drawn attention to the crimes committed by the communist regime and warn of the danger of the totalitarian ideologies. Participants connected the current seat of the Czech communist party with the past seat of the German secret police during the Nazi occupation with chain of people with lighted candles. Students wanted to draw the link between the symbols of two totalitarian regimes, which hurt the nation the most in the recent century.

Czech and Slovak Freedom Lecture continued...

(Continued from page 3)

inability or even unwillingness to think and to act as true heirs of our Western civilization?" asked the Ambassador.

The evolution of the world had also posed a different question for the Czech Republic today than sixteen years ago. "The question is not whether we are able to build and sustain all the institutions in which and through which such a society is capable of existing. The answer to this question is a clear yes. We made it, and we are now a part of the West. The questions that now need to be considered are: What is our role in the changing world of today? How can we efficiently protect the freedom we have miraculously regained sixteen years ago, side by side with our new allies? What are our 'national interests' in this new situation and what means should we choose for their realization?"

In response to his rhetoric questions, the Ambassador recalled a speech by President Vaclav Havel before the joint session of the U.S. Congress in February of 1990, in which he said that there was only one thing that we could offer for all the support and assistance and that is our experience with the totalitarian enslavement and

eventually the knowledge that has come out of it. To this end, according to Palous, the Czech Republic should be working today in the world. "It is our Masarykian/Wilsonian idealism that makes us an active player in today's world struggle for democracy and against all, new or old, enemies of our Western freedom," said Palous and added that this is the reason "why the Czech Republic, mindful of her own past, actively supports the dissidents and the human rights activists in Burma, Belarus, China, Cuba and anywhere else in the world."

The Czech Republic should "actively disseminate the ideals of our Velvet Revolution of 1989 ... in order to assist effectively those who still have to struggle for their freedom, for democracy and the respect for human rights in their countries," said Ambassador Palous,

but reminded that it is "barely possible without an active participation of the United States." Therefore the Czech Republic, advised by its own experience, supports the United States in

being a strong world leader and "simply cannot afford to be given a choice to side with Europe or with America."

"We need them to work together to defend freedom against all the threats, old or new, emerging in our increasingly and more globalized world.

We need a pro-American Europe, and a pro-European United States. We need both of them as close allies ...

We need both to be aware of our common roots in one European/Western civilization, both being in the position of its equal heirs in the beginning of a new era coming in the 21st century, the heirs understanding and capable of protecting by their words and concerted actions its legacies ... this is the basic objective in which the 'New Europe' of postcommunist countries liberated sixteen years ago must speak up and stand for today," said Palous reminding of the historical experience of the countries which lost their freedom.

Full transcript of the lecture is available at:
<http://www.wilsoncenter.org>.

Czechs and Slovaks Agree on Establishing an EU Battle-Group

The Czech Republic will establish and command a combat unit in the framework of European Battle-Groups concept with Slovakia, Defense Minister Karel Kühnl said after a recent National Security Council meeting.

Three-quarters of the 1,500 members will be Czechs and the rest will be Slovaks. The Czech Republic will be the smallest country to command a EU combat unit.

EU member states agreed in November 2004 that they will form 13 Battle-Groups that will be used for peacekeeping missions, disarmament operations and humanitarian and rescue operations. The units will operate under the auspices of the EU.

Czech Firms Spend More on Science than the Government

Czech companies spend more on science and research than the government, the EU's statistical office Eurostat said, citing data for 2003-4.

The Czech Republic spends 1.28 percent of its GDP on science and research, which is about CZK 34 billion yearly. Companies make up 51.5 percent of the sum, the most among the ten EU newcomers after Slovenia. In comparison, Slovak investment in science fell to 0.53 percent of GDP by 2004, with companies making up 45 percent.

In 2004, all 25 EU member countries spent almost EUR 200 billion on science. The amount dipped to 1.9 percent of GDP from 1.92 percent in 2003. This means the EU is still very far from its goal to raise the share to 3 percent of GDP by 2010. Japan spent 3.15 percent of GDP on science in 2003, and the USA spent 2.59 percent. China could catch up with Europe in four or five years with the current pace.

Minister of Defense Karel Kühnl Tours the USA continued...



Minister of Defense Karel Kühnl (right) meets US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld (left), while Ambassador Martin Palous and Brigadier General Jan Petras stand in the background.

(Continued from page 1) ceremony, the U.S. Atlantic Fleet Band played "Skoda Lasky" in tribute to the Czech Republic. While in Norfolk, Minister Kühnl also visited the aircraft carrier USS Truman.

The last day of Kühnl's visit was filled with important bilateral meetings at the US Capitol. After breakfast with the Czech Ambassador early in the morning, the Minister of Defense left for the State Department for a meeting with Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick. In the early afternoon, Minister Kühnl met with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. In both meetings, Kühnl and his partners discussed the future involvement of Czech military forces in missions around the

world. The Czech Minister of Defense offered deployment of the elite 601 (Special Forces) Unit to Afghanistan during next year.

The US side, in return, pledged future support for finding acceptable market opportunities for a unique radar system, Vera, which is manufactured in the Czech Republic and currently being tested by the US military. Apart from military affairs, the issue of visas for Czech visitors to the United States was also discussed.

After the meeting with Secretary Rumsfeld, which highlighted his trip to the US, Minister Kühnl left for the Czech Republic, where he took part in the celebration of October 28, Czech Independence Day.

Senate Supports Military Missions Abroad

The Senate approved the plan for increased Czech military presence in foreign missions in 2006 and Czech participation in the NATO Response Force. The numbers of Czech troops operating in the largest Czech mission in Kosovo should remain at 560 soldiers. Czechs guard the Kosovo-Serbian border, protect ethnic minorities against the threat of attacks by extremist groups and keep order in the area. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, 85 Czechs participated in the EUFOR in the light infantry unit and the helicopter unit since mid-2005,

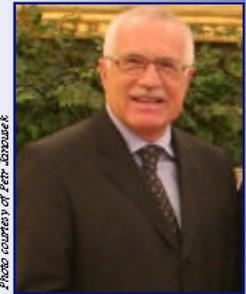
while next year their number should rise to 100. Czechs will also continue to serve in Afghanistan. There are 15 experts to clear mines and 40 troops work in a reconstruction team. In 2006, up to 150 Czech soldiers should operate in Afghanistan. About 100 Czech troops are currently deployed in Iraq and the same number should remain there next year. Up to 320 Czechs troops should be involved in the NATO Response Force and 50 Czechs could participate in the U.N. peacekeeping operations next year.

News Brief

Biometric Data in New Passports

The Czech Republic will soon introduce passports with a digital photo and fingerprint of the holder. Digital photos should appear in Czech passports during 2006 and fingerprints probably by mid-2008. The new rules apply to new passports. The old ones will remain valid until expiration date. EU countries agreed on introducing passports with biometric data last year. The improved safety standards are also a condition the USA has set for its decision on whether to lift visa requirements for Czechs.

President Klaus confirms Mladek as Agriculture Minister



Czech President Vaclav Klaus appointed Jan Mladek, a Social Democratic MP, as Agriculture Minister. Mladek replaced Petr Zgarba, who stepped down because of a scandal over sale of land to speculators. The government's Land Fund, chaired by Zgarba, allowed speculators to lay hands on lucrative land which can bring them earnings worth more than CZK 2 billion. Mladek said earlier his goal was to rebuild the Land Fund bodies and to adopt measures preventing similar questionable land transfers.

News Brief

Creator of electron microscopes wins 2005 Czech Head award

Armin Delong, 80, who ranks among the most renowned Czech scientists and an inventor of electron microscopes, received the national award Czech Head (Ceska hlava) 2005 for the best Czech scientists. The jury also awarded chemist Josef Michl for his attempts to create electronic components of organic molecules and researchers Blanka Rihova and Karel Ulbrich, who developed a new generation of antitumor medicines.

EC President Barroso meets President Klaus

European Commission President Jose Barroso met with Czech President Vaclav Klaus during his visit in Prague to discuss their views on the future of the European integration, including their positions on the European constitution, recently rejected by the French and Dutch referenda. Klaus welcomed the European Commission's new information strategy called "Plan D", standing for dialogue, democracy and debate, which Barroso came to present in the Czech Republic. Klaus said he firmly believed that the Commission's intention to carry out a deeper dialogue, as a reaction to the rejection of the EU constitution by two countries, was genuine. Barroso stated that the EU would not have a constitution in the near future, although he believes that the EU constitution is not ideal, but still the best solution to relations within the EU.

AIPES Program

14th Season in Prague

The Fund for American Studies, Georgetown University and Charles University in Prague are currently inviting prospective students to apply for the well-established academic program of the *American Institute on Political and Economic Systems* (AIPES), to be held in Prague in July 2006.

AIPES was created in 1993 and is intended for university students who want to study the political, economic and cultural concepts that are essential to the functioning of a democratic society. The Institute brings together students from Central and Eastern Europe, United States and Western Europe, providing a unique educational environment with over 100 students from more than 25 countries.

The future participants of the program will attend classes for three weeks, participate in a parliamentary simulation, listen to prominent speakers, and attend special events designed to engage them in an educational, cultural and social exchange.

The curriculum is fast paced and intensely packed with daily activities. In addition to what participants learn during the classes and other academic activities they will be sure to enjoy Prague's and Czech



A View of Prague, Czech Republic

Republic's many historical points of interest, theatrical and musical performances, and magnificent architecture. Classes are held in the Faculty of Social Science Building in the center of Prague, only a stone-throw from the busy Wenceslas and the historical Old Town Squares. Moreover, throughout the program, The Fund for American Studies organizes social activities for the participants, including happy hours, a pool party and sporting events.

AIPES is already a well-established academic program with over a decade-long tradition. The core interdisciplinary course in Political Economy, dealing with American political and economic systems of organization, is taught by economics and public policy experts, journalists who cover business and finance, Czech government

and European Union officials, and corporate leaders. Among notable guest lecturers and commencement speakers are several distinguished political figures and heads of states. Past speakers have included current president of the Czech Republic Vaclav Klaus, Prime Minister of Hungary Viktor Orban, ex-president of Poland Lech Walesa, president of Lithuania Valdas Adamkus, and several others.

Students who are accepted may receive scholarship assistance and both graduate and undergraduate credit is available from Georgetown University for students attending the program. Prospective students are encouraged to apply online before the early decision deadline of January 31, 2006. More information about the program can be found at the program website at www.tfasinternational.org.

New Honorary Consulate in the Boston Area

On September 17, a new Honorary Consulate of the Czech Republic opened in Wellesley, MA. Professor Igor Lukes has been appointed as the Honorary Consul. Professor Lukes, born in Prague, Czechoslovakia in 1950, studied philosophy at Charles University, where he also received his doctorate (PhD.). In 1985, he obtained his PhD. in International Relations at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. Since 1988, he has served as a professor of history and international relations at Boston University. He has written numerous publications.

The jurisdiction of his office covers the territory of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine.



Igor Lukes

Office hours:

Tuesday and Thursday
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Address: Honorary Consulate of the Czech Republic, 28 Howe Street, Wellesley, MA 02482

Phone: 1-617-358-1776

Fax: 1-617-353-5084

E-mail:

boston@honorary.mzv.cz

Please note: There are several minor changes at three other honorary consulates in the west coast and the southwest of the United States:

San Francisco, CA

New address: 500 Sansome St., 8th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94111

Phone: 1-415-772-9603

Fax: 1-415-772-9670,

E-mail:

pivnickacgz@earthlink.net

HK Portland, OR

New E-mail address:

cz_consul_pdx@joimail.com

Houston, TX

New E-mail address:

Composer Karel Husa 85th Birthday in 2006

During the 2005-06 and 2006-07 seasons, orchestras, conductors, chamber ensembles and soloists worldwide will celebrate the 85th Birthday of Czech-American composer Karel Husa. The award-winning composer/conductor enters his 85th year with "too many commissions to complete" and a true joy-of-life spirit as he continues to travel the world.

Born in Prague on August 7, 1921, Karel Husa's life has geographically followed a course dictated by others. Narrowly escaping forced labor in German factory in 1941, he continued studies at the Prague Conservatory until the final year of the war when all classes were suspended until Allied liberation in 1945. In 1946 he traveled to Paris, honing his composition and conducting skills with the French masters of the day and earning accolades (both as composer and conductor) from the

international press. In 1949, the communist government of Czechoslovakia rescinded his passport, making him a man without a country. In 1953 he conducted the first European recording of Bartok's *The Miraculous Mandarin*. In 1954, famed American musicologist Donald Grout invited Karel Husa to America. Cornell University granted him tenure and he remained there nearly 40 years. In the ensuing years, Karel Husa was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Music (*Third String Quartet*), the Grawemeyer Award (*Cello Concerto*), the Friedheim Award (*Recollections*), and the Sudler Award (*Concerto for Wind Ensemble*), among numerous other awards and honors. Like many of his generation, Karel Husa views America and its open arms as his home.

The output of Karel Husa remains forever exciting, changing, and challenging. Of the



1987 premiere of his *Concerto for Orchestra* (a work the composer believes to be one of his most important) by the New York Philharmonic, Musical America wrote, "This is a work fervent and luminous...there is much in this concerto which recalls the intensity of Bartok and the mystical eloquence of Mahler...but there is no sense of the derivative in Husa's rhetoric; his language is personal and deeply felt."

With over 50 recordings of his music to date, the works of Karel Husa are certainly part of the musical fabric of our time.

This contribution is courtesy of "Stanton management."

2006 Czech Course in Dobruska

If you are interested in learning the Czech language, please be advised that a four-week course in Dobruska (Czech Republic) will be organized also in the summer of 2006. Eligibility for the course, however, is limited.

Please note that only those who actively assist Czech American organizations and societies to preserve and promote Czech language and culture, and whose language

skills will in the future contribute to the activities of these societies, are eligible to apply for the fully covered course.

Therefore, recommendation from at least one such society is required. Please be advised that very few people are admitted to the courses as paid for by the Czech government.

Applicants should decide before submitting their final applications whether or not they would like to apply for the

self-payers' course, as well. The deadline for the applications to reach the Embassy will be the middle of March 2006. For more information, feel free to contact the Cultural Section of the Czech Embassy in Washington, D.C. (3900 Spring of Freedom St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20008, fax no. 202.966.8540, phone no. 202.274.9127, E-mail: broskevic@yahoo.com

MFA Financial Contribution for 2007

Financial assistance to organizations and societies of Czechs abroad will be offered by The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic for the year 2007. According to the rules, the support will only be provided for specific projects planned for the year 2007, for non-investment expenditures only. The contribution may not be used to cover the overhead expenses of the organization, the rent of its permanent seat, salaries of its employees and assistants, travel and accommodation costs, etc. More detailed information, including the "Rules" and appli-



Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague, Czech Republic

cation forms, will be sent out to those who will contact the Cultural Section of the Czech Embassy in Washington, D.C.

Please note that the successful applicants will receive the Ministry's contribution only in mid-2007.

Address:
Embassy of the Czech Republic
3900 Spring of Freedom St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20008
Fax: 202.966.8540
Phone: 202.274.9127
E-mail: broskevic@yahoo.com

Please be advised to express your interest as soon as possible as the deadline for submitting the filled-in applications to the Embassy is March 31, 2006. Unfortunately, forms received after this deadline will not be considered. No project will be accepted without the Embassy's statement.

Cultural Events

For an updated listing of cultural events at the Czech Embassy, please visit:
www.mzv.cz/washington

Business Buzz

Czech crown hits the record

The Czech crown rose by beginning of December to a record level against the Euro of CZ 28.88. It was helped by an upgrade of Standard & Poor's outlook for the Czech economy from stable to positive. If Hyundai decides in the coming days to build a new plant in the CR, the crown could get another boost.

CTS Corporation invests in the Czech Republic

American CTS Corporation, a leading designer and producer of electronic components for the automotive and electronics industry, intends to invest nearly 22 million dollars into building a new facility in the Ostrava region of the Czech Republic. The company is to hire more than 160 people here within three years at the latest. Production in CTS's new plant should be up and running as early as June 2006. "This investment in the Czech Republic will enable us to raise our production capacity and better serve the European market, which at present is supplied mainly from our plant in Great Britain," commented Ron Bell, Director of CTS's European Automotive Operations. "The Czech Republic is the second European country, after Great Britain, where CTS Corporation is investing into construction of a new facility," noted Rene Samek, director of the Investment and Applied Research Division at CzechInvest.

Business Buzz *continued...***SAPs largest shared services center in the world opens in the Czech Republic**

SAP AG officially opened its newest shared services center, the SAP Business Services Center Europe (BSCE) in Prague. SAP BSCE provides human resources (HR) and finance and administration (F&A) services to SAP branch offices in the Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) region. The center's current workforce of approximately 132 employees supports 70 countries in 15 different languages.

SAP analyzed and evaluated 18 European cities to determine the best location for the new BSCE. The company ultimately chose Prague because of the city's highly skilled and flexible workforce, advanced telecommunications and IT infrastructure, cultural compatibility and stable eco-

nomie and political conditions. In addition, the city is ideally located within Central and Eastern Europe.

Chinese manufacturer decides to build its new plant in Nymburk

The Memorandum of Understanding is to be signed by the Chairman of Changhong, Yong Zhao, and the CEO of CzechInvest, Tomas Hrudka, at a meeting attended by both the Chinese and Czech Prime Ministers. In its first phase, the investment in the new plant will total up to 10 million dollars and will employ some 300 people. "After a thorough screening, we chose the most convenient country for our investment – the Czech Republic. The main reason is the central location with respect to our European customers as well as the availability of a skilled workforce," stated Zhao Yong, Chairman of the Board of Changhong.

The majority of products will consist of the latest generation of LCD TVs. In the first phase the plant will produce approximately one million TVs per year, which will be mostly delivered to Changhong's European customers.

Czech Republic should facilitate bringing in "foreign brains"

Czech Education Minister Petra Buzkova espoused the European Commission's brain drain idea aimed to help the EU keep pace with U.S. and Japanese competition: "It is difficult to prevent the other European countries from accepting graduates from our universities on their labor market. That is why it is entirely correct to ease the procedure of gaining permanent residence as well as Czech citizenship for successful university graduates from third countries." She took

part in a meeting of the EU's 25 education, culture and youth ministers in Brussels. It usually takes foreigners 10 years to obtain a permanent residency permit in the Czech Republic. The Labor Ministry has launched a pilot project of luring foreign experts that cuts the deadline down to two and a half years.

Parliament approves the state budget

The Czech Parliament gave final approval on December 7 to the 2006 state budget. It calls for revenues of CZK 884.4bn, expenditures of CZK 958.8bn, and a budget deficit of CZK 74.4bn. Experts suggested that a more reliable figure for the deficit is the nearly CZK 100bn that the government is borrowing each year.

Embassy of the Czech Republic
3900 Spring of Freedom Street
Washington, DC 20008
Tel.: 202/274-9100 Fax: 202/966-8540
www.mzv.cz/washington
Petr Janousek, Chief Editor
Mary Fetzko, Art Director
Veronika Spicakova, News Digest
Pavel Prikryl, Contributing Writer

