



March 2009

Schwarzenberg Meets Clinton and Gates to Discuss Afghanistan and Missile Defense

In a press conference with Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg in Washington on February 10, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton thanked the Czech Republic for its role in NATO's Afghanistan mission while reaffirming the U.S. government's commitment to the security of the U.S. and its allies. Speaking about the proposed missile-defense system in the Czech Republic and Poland, Secretary Clinton noted that numerous considerations, predominantly technical, were part of the ongoing missile-defense dialogue. In a reference to Iran, Secretary Clinton noted that a willingness on the Iranian government's part to abandon its pursuit of nuclear weapons would also be factored into the equation. "We had a very good discussion about our hopes to work together – the European Union and the United States – in dissuading the Iranians from pursuing nuclear weapons. But if the Iranians continue on this path, certainly one of the options for free countries like the Czech Republic, other Europeans, and the United States, is to defend ourselves. So this is one of those issues that really will rest with the decisions made by the Iranian Government." While sounding a hopeful note about dialogue with Iran's government, Secretary Clinton recognized that defensive measures were important. "Our slogan can be 'hope for the best, but plan for the worst,'" she concluded, "I think that's a realistic approach."



U.S. State Secretary Hillary Clinton and her Czech counterpart Karel Schwarzenberg in Washington on February 10. (Photo: U.S. State Department)

Schwarzenberg also met in Washington with U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates to discuss US-Czech cooperation and with Senators John Kerry and Carl Levin. Secretary Gates noted the exemplary contribution the Czech Republic has made to the NATO mission in Afghanistan.

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Swanee Hunt Fights Trafficking in Women

Ambassador Swanee Hunt met with Czech women leaders and NGO's during a visit sponsored by the U.S. Embassy on Feb. 9 and 10. Her meetings included a working lunch with Chargé d'Affaires Mary Thompson-Jones and women legislators in the Czech and European parliaments. She met with Czech government officials, international organizations, and NGO's to discuss international approaches to reduce demand for trafficking in women.



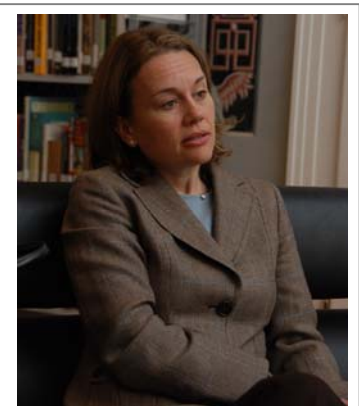
Ambassador Hunt poses in a burkha with Paikar Paikar at NGO Berkat (Photo: Saul Hernandez)

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Ambassador Hunt also met with journalists from Radio Free Europe and Czech NGOs People in Need and Berkat. She concluded her visit with a round table with Czech women's groups to plan ratification of a National Action Plan for UN Security Resolution 1325, which calls for a greater role for women in peace negotiations and peacekeeping.

CSIS Expert Says NATO Goes through Identity Crisis

Washington-based CSIS expert on Euro-Atlantic affairs Julianne Smith said in Prague on February 12 that NATO "is experiencing an identity crisis" and needs a new strategic concept that would redefine its purpose. She noted that NATO members' concerns and priorities differ, citing their approach to the war in Afghanistan as an example. "Norway is concerned about the far North, Portugal about refugees from Africa and the U.S. about terrorism." NATO's doors remain open but it will be a long time before nations like Ukraine and Georgia join the organization, Smith said. Discussing U.S. missile defense perspectives, she commented that, "while [our allies] and we might have a few ripples in our discussions on this,



Julianne Smith talks about NATO in American Center (Photo: Michal Stichauer)

eventually I imagine the missile-defense system will be pursued, though maybe not in 2009." Smith said the U.S. must focus on countering Iran's nuclear ambitions and is doubtful things will improve dramatically in Iran after elections later this year. Smith believes U.S. President Barack Obama will seek new approaches to Russia but "cannot send a signal that [Russia] has veto power over missile defense or NATO enlargement. "One of the Obama administration's main priorities is reassuring its allies that U.S. commitments to them are firm and non-negotiable.

Abraham Lincoln's Bicentennial Birthday

The celebration night at American Center was the height of Abraham Lincoln's bicentennial anniversary month. The main item of the program was a lecture by Professor Joseph Fornieri, the author of many books with 16th American President's subject matter. In the connection



Pepa Nos singing at Lincoln's anniversary event (Photo: Michal Stichauer)

well-known Czech singer Pepa Nos, who is Lincoln's admirer since childhood, performed in honor of former President of U.S. two songs in English and Czech. The singer, fighting all his life with Communist regime and after

revolution for right of privacy, really appreciated the opportunity for public performance on ground of the U.S. Embassy.

RFE Broadcasts from New Headquarters

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) began a new chapter in its long and distinguished history on February 6 when Radio Free Iraq broadcast its first program from RFE/RL's recently completed Prague headquarters. The six-minute news bulletin at 18:00 Baghdad time was part of RFE/RL's 17 hours of daily programming to Iraq. The broadcast was the first step in relocating all of RFE/RL's more than 500 Prague-based employees to the facility in Hagibor, ten minutes from the city center. The five-story, 236,000 sq/ft broadcast center features multimedia recording studios, interlinking offices, and a modern newsroom. It is also energy-efficient and one of the most secure buildings in Europe. "Our new home is tailor-made to meet the needs of a 21st century media organization," said RFE/RL President Jeffrey Gedmin. "It allows us to stay ahead of the technological curve as we broadcast news and information to many places where authorities are hostile to free and independent media."

Kennedy Center President Shares Rules for Success in Cultural Activities

Michael M. Kaiser, President of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, led a master class for managers of leading theaters, orchestras, cinemas and galleries from all

parts of the Czech Republic at the American Center on February 12. The U.S. Embassy sponsored this follow-up to his popular April 2008 seminar. Kaiser presented his "universal



Master class participants in American Center (Photo: Michal Stichauer)

rules" about institutional identity and fundraising, and how these rules can make the difference between success and failure for cultural projects and organizations. Audience members gave Kaiser a warm reception, shared their own experiences, and acknowledged that applying these rules could help many cultural organizations survive the current financial crisis. More about the Kennedy Center at <http://www.kennedy-center.org/index.cfm>.

Retired U.S. General Wesley Clark Sees Benefits to Collective Security

Wesley Clark, former commander-in-chief of NATO forces in Europe and past Democratic Party presidential candidate spoke at the international round-table, Prague Transatlantic Talks on February 17. The Association for International Affairs organized the event, which commemorated NATO's 60-year history. Clark stressed that among the chief transatlantic priorities remains the NATO mission in Afghanistan, which Clark believes has a clear connection to European security. Clark said the broad strategy must include military involvement as well as development assistance. "Our security problems are your security problems," summarized Clark to Czech diplomats and experts. "An attack on one is an attack on all. No single issue is more important than the NATO consensus." The Prague Society sponsored General Clark's visit to the Czech Republic.

Upcoming Events

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| March 11 | Masaryk And His Family: U.S. Connotations and Inspiration, American Center, 6 p.m. |
| March 12 | Lecture by Prof. Honerkamp: American Litarary History, A.C., 5:30 p.m. |
| March 19 | Katherine Kramer: Step into the World of American Jazz Music and Dance. Film screening. A.C., 6 p.m. |