



April 2009

## President Obama Sets out Plan in Prague for Nuclear-Free World



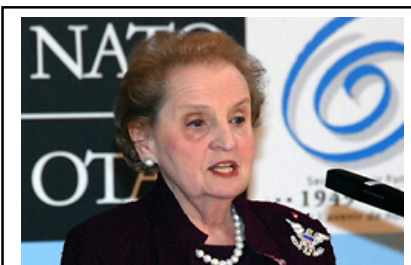
President Obama with his wife Michelle at Prague Castle  
(Photo: Tomas Krist)

U.S. President Barack Obama visited Prague on April 4-5. He delivered a speech at Prague Castle in which he proposed measures to reduce and eventually eliminate existing nuclear arsenals, halt proliferation of nuclear weapons and prevent terrorists from acquiring nuclear weapons or materials. The U.S. president called for efforts to strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and ensure access to peaceful nuclear power while minimizing the risk of nuclear proliferation, saying, "Just as we stood for freedom in the 20th century, we must stand together for the right of people everywhere to live free from fear in the 21st. And as...the only nuclear power to have used a nuclear weapon the United States has a moral responsibility to act. We cannot succeed in this endeavor alone, but we can lead it. So today, I state clearly and with conviction America's commitment to

seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. This goal will not be reached quickly - perhaps not in my lifetime. It will take patience and persistence. But now we, too, must ignore the voices who tell us that the world cannot change...". Obama also attended in Prague a U.S.-EU summit at which he called on Europe to accept Turkey as an EU member and to take some of the inmates the U.S. currently holds in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

## NATO Enlargement Ten Years on

The U.S. Embassy proudly supported the international conference „NATO Enlargement Ten Years On: Achievements, Challenges, Prospects“, in Prague on March 12-13 to mark the first post-Cold War expansion of NATO. Speakers at the conference agreed that NATO is the most successful alliance and champion of freedom and democracy. Former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine



Former U.S. State Secretary Madeleine Albright in Prague on March 13.  
(Photo: Michal Stichauer)

Albright, recalling the day ten years ago when Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic joined NATO in Independence, Missouri, stressed the need to explain to the world's youth the past and current

importance of NATO. U.S. General John Craddock spoke about unity as an essential NATO element. Conference participants agreed that a stable Afghanistan is a vital and legitimate goal for NATO. Formed in 1949 with the signing of the Washington Treaty, NATO is a security alliance of 28 countries from North America and Europe. NATO's fundamental goal is to safeguard the Allies' freedom and security by political and military means.

NATO enlargement has furthered the U.S. goal of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. Article 5 of the Washington Treaty -- that an attack against one ally is an attack against all -- is at NATO's core.

## Czech Farmer Pleased with GM Corn

Vitezslav Navratil, the owner of agricultural company Rostenice, a.s. in South Moravia, is one of the pioneers of genetically modified (GM) corn growers in the Czech Republic. He started with so-called Bt (biotechnological) corn in 2005. It is now planted on 600 of his 8000 hectares. "We are doing pretty well economically with the corn. It is more or less the same price as standard



Rostenice silos with corn for export near Slavkov u Brna  
(Photo: Rostenice, a.s.)

corn and is much more resistant to pests and diseases. This saves us a lot of money because we can harvest later and thus don't have to spend additional money to dry it." Navratil says the Czech Republic belongs among liberal EU countries when it comes to GM crops and that the Czech Agriculture Ministry is sympathetic to his business. "We would welcome more types of GM crops, but first

we must see changes in EU policies, which remain very conservative. Countries like Austria and Greece, in particular, block any progress. But the development cannot be stopped and we hope the EU as a whole will understand there will be no other way in the future.” Navratil noted he had heard no concerns from local folks related to his GM crops. “It’s politicians who are often against this, not other farmers or end users.” About two-thirds of his GM corn production is sold in the Czech Republic for fodder and the rest is exported, mostly to Germany. Last year, more than 170 Czech growers farmed a total of 8300 hectares of Bt corn. The European Union currently permits only one genetically modified crop – MON 810 Bt corn.

### Volker: NATO has Changed Profoundly in the Past 10 Years

U.S. Ambassador to NATO Kurt Volker said in an interview for the U.S. Embassy in Prague on March 13 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ed2eQ8mrGM4&feature=channel>) that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has dramatically transformed in the past ten years, adjusting to the changing situation in the world: “In 1995, NATO had 16 members, didn’t have any partners, and conducted no military operations, only exercises. In 2009



Ambassador Volker reads letters in RFE's Afghan section (Photo: Jakub Hornek)

it has 28 members, has partners in Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Middle East, Maghreb, Australia and Japan; it’s been active in the Balkans and Afghanistan and trained troops in Iraq. Other activities include various counter

operations - for example against piracy off the African coast.” Volker noted the Czech Republic’s substantial contribution and pointed out that NATO must not rest on the laurels of its successful 60-year history, but rather must adapt to new kinds of security threats in areas like energy security, cyber-terrorism and failed states. “NATO needs to figure out how to address these issues in the long term,” he added. Volker, visiting Prague on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of CR in NATO, met Czech foreign affairs officials and press in the Czech Senate, toured Radio Free Europe’s new headquarters and took part in a panel discussion about adapting NATO to the challenges of the 21st century.

### TV Journalists Blog From Crisis Regions

For several days in late February and early March, Jakub Szanto of Czech Television and Jan Novak of Prima TV

reported for Czech audience about the security situations in Iraq and Afghanistan, respectively. Szanto was based in Diyala Province, Iraq; and Novak in Kabul, Afghanistan.



Their assignments were partly possible thanks to special U.S.



government programs available to the foreign media. Both journalists regularly blogged on the U.S. Embassy-Prague website at <http://prague.usembassy.gov>.

### Choreographer Presents American Jazz

American choreographer and tap dancer Katherine Kramer came to American Centers in Brno and Prague on March 18 and 19 to share a bit of American jazz and dance with the Czech public. She brought her audience back to the 1930s, ‘40s and ‘50s when jazz-related tap dance was among the most popular art forms of its time. Accompanied by Czech jazz guitarist Jaroslav Kantor, Katherine demonstrated



Kramer dances with Czech students in American Center (Photo: Michal Stichauer)

communication through tap dance and personally grabbed her visitors’ attention with a tap dance course after the lecture. Katherine Kramer has worked with many musicians, choreographers and dancers. She is working as a Fulbright Senior Specialist on a project organized by the Prague’s Academy of Performing Arts’ Music Faculty.

### Older Passports Valid for Travel to the U.S.

Visitors to the U.S. with older non-biometric passports that contain valid visas are welcome to travel to the U.S. with them until the passports or the visas expire (whichever comes first). Czechs who wish to take advantage of visa-free travel to the U.S. under the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) **do** need new biometric passports. Got questions? Find answers at:

[http://prague.usembassy.gov/general\\_information.html](http://prague.usembassy.gov/general_information.html)

### Upcoming Events

- April 20 John Zogby’s “Polling in the U.S.”, American Center (A.C.), 5 p.m.
- April 23 A Century of Quilts – Art of Patchwork with Jana Lalova, A.C., 6 p.m.