



February 2007

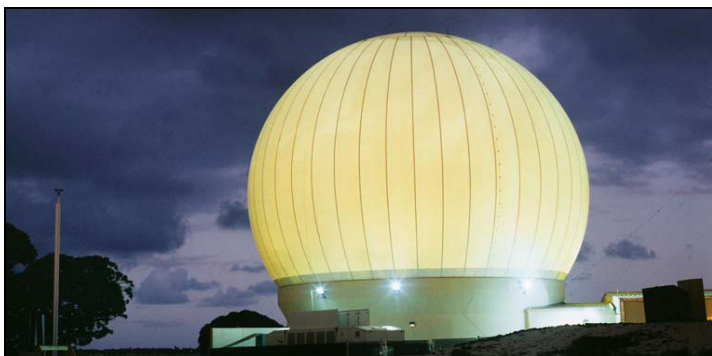
Ambassador Graber Meets Mayors to Discuss U.S. Radar Facility

Ambassador Richard Garber met in Prague and then in Pribram with mayors of towns near the Brdy military area to open a dialogue on the missile defense radar facility that may be built in their region. The Ambassador shared information about the type of radar proposed and its environmental and health safety record. Listening to and answering their questions, the Ambassador assured them that their concerns will continue to be addressed. "This is just the beginning," he said, and promised to return to tour the area with his family.



Ambassador Graber and Mayor Rihak speaking with journalists in Pribram on February 16.

The mayors expressed interest in the practical investment opportunities radar construction could bring to the municipalities. "I have asked Mr. Ambassador to return and bring other experts so that our talks can be more detailed," Pribram's Mayor Josef Rihak told reporters February 16. Ambassador Graber offered to organize visits for the mayors to nearby U.S. military facilities in Germany to see how such facilities work and how they are linked to local communities. He assured the mayors that if the facility is built in the region, it would come under Czech jurisdiction.



This is a photo of the midcourse X-Band radar that will be the subject of negotiations between the Czech and U.S. government during the upcoming months. Many more details on missile defense are available at <http://prague.usembassy.gov>.

The specific details of the project will be negotiated by Czech and American experts and include such issues as access restrictions and environmental, health and safety

standards. Specific security measures within the military area would continue to be determined by the Czech military. Ambassador Graber stressed that the radar is a key element of a missile defense system in Europe that will protect not only the Czech Republic and the U.S., but also most of Europe. If the missile defense project proceeds, the radar facility could be in place by 2011.

A/S Rosenzweig Attends Prague Conference on Visa Waiver

Paul Rosenzweig, Assistant Secretary for International Policy at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, was in Prague on January 24, to address representatives of the 13 Visa Waiver Roadmap countries, including the Czech Republic, on possible changes to the Visa Waiver Program. During the conference, which was organized in cooperation with the Czech Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Interior, Rosenzweig outlined the Administration's efforts to work with U.S. lawmakers in drafting new Visa Waiver legislation that would address important security concerns and allow new members into the Visa Waiver Program. "We have taken the first steps on a long path...but in my personal opinion, we can succeed by the end of the term of President Bush," Rosenzweig told journalists after meeting with senior Czech officials. Rosenzweig also toured the Prague Airport and passport facilities, praising security at both locations.



From left Paul Rosenzweig, Martin Povejsil of Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs and U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Cameron Munter. A transcript of this press conference is available in English at <http://prague.usembassy.gov/702-rosenzweig-press.html>

American Center Roundtable "Journalists in Danger"

On January 23, Director of Radio Free Iraq Sergei Danilochkin, Chief Foreign Correspondent of Czech TV Michal Kubal, and Mlada Fronta Dnes veteran journalist Jan Rybar spoke about challenges of reporting from a war zone or from places where freedom of speech is highly restricted. Over 60 guests attended this public event in the newly opened American Center. For those who were unable to attend this excellent discussion, you can still listen to it at http://prague.usembassy.gov/ac_multimedia.html

Commander of Forces in Afghanistan Eikenberry Visits Prague

Commander of the Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan, Lieutenant General Karl Eikenberry, visited Prague on January 23 to express his appreciation for the Czech decision to send a field hospital to Kabul and praise the professionalism of the Czech forces in Afghanistan. Defense Minister Vlasta Parkanova awarded General Eikenberry the prestigious Czech Meritorious Cross, a gesture which he said greatly touched him. The Czech Republic has currently about 150 troops in northeastern Afghanistan and in Kabul.



General Eikenberry in Afghanistan, right, looks at the plans for the construction of an Afghan National Army Regional Brigade facility

Ambassador Graber Continues His Countrywide Travels

In January and February, Ambassador Graber continued his visits around the Czech Republic. On January 23-24, he visited Ceske Budejovice. Besides meeting the Deputy Mayor and Hejtman (Gov.) Jan Zahradnik, the Ambassador met with students of the Czech-English gymnasium and the University of Southern Bohemia. He toured the Budvar brewery and greeted U.S. and Czech Special Forces training with the Czech Special Operations Group. On January 29, Ambassador Graber traveled to Hradec Kralove, where he spoke with the rector of Hradec Kralove University, several deans and student representatives. Over lunch, he met with Hejtman Pavel Bradik, and then toured the famous Petrof piano factory. In mid-February, Graber visited Pardubice. After meeting with local officials, he took part at the press conference announcing the formation of the Czech-American ERA Company, which is expected to expand from 180 to 250 employees by the end of this year. The following day, the Ambassador visited Inecon Trams Company in Ostrava and attended several Davis Cup matches with his family.



Ambassador Richard Graber with Czech soldiers in Boletice Military Area, where Czech and U.S. troops train together for the mission in Afghanistan.

Iraq Discussion at the American Center

On February 12 the American Center and the Center for Security Policy of Charles University organized a panel discussion on Iraq. Panelists included Cameron Munter, the Embassy's Deputy Chief of Mission, who headed a reconstruction team in Iraq from January-June 2006; Cyril Bumbalek, analyst with the Association for International Affairs; Bretislav Turecek, correspondent for *Pravo*; and Ludvik Cimburek, former military adviser to the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq. Panelists examined the current security situation in Iraq, the role of Iraq's neighbors, the Baker/Hamilton report, and the new security strategy put forward by President Bush in January.

First U.S. Pavilion at Brno Trade Fair



For the first time, the high-profile Brno trade fair IDET will feature an Embassy-arranged USA Pavilion; the deadline for participation is March

12. IDET, Central Europe's biggest defense industry trade show, takes place May 2-4 and is an ideal meeting place for major players in the Czech and U.S. defense and safety/security markets. Whether exhibiting or just attending, participation in the U.S. Embassy's value-added program provides access to a networking reception, business breakfast, and one-on-one meetings during IDET 2007. For more information, please contact the Embassy's Commercial Section at prague.office.box@mail.doc.gov or visit internet pages <http://www.micexpos.com> and click on "IDET".

Ongoing and Upcoming Events

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| Mar 1 | Opening of the photo exhibit and film documentaries of William Ferris, whose work captures the spirit of the Delta Blues
(6:00 p.m., American Center) |
| Mar 2 | Grand Opening of the Embassy's renovated Consular Section – more space and seating, plus beautifully restored Renaissance ceilings! |
| Mar 7 | Civics Workshop – Ivana Havlinova of CIVITAS – CZ for students of the Pedagogical Faculty
(1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., American Center) |
| Mar 8 | Award-winning American Indie Films
(6:00 p.m. American Center) |
| Mar 15 | U.S. film documentary on corporate criminality
(6:00 p.m. American Center) |
| Mar 22 | Street Fight, a film by Marshall Curry
(6:00 p.m. American Center) |
| Mar 29-30 | Workshop on Transformational Diplomacy with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the CEELI Institute (MFA, AC) |

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