



January 2008

## General Obering Participates in Prague Missile Defense Seminar

Missile Defense Agency Director Lt. General Henry Obering underscored the capability and reliability of the missile shield as seen in successful testing over the past two years. "Some experts say the system is ineffective. This is not based on updated data," Obering said at a January 17 press conference following the Czech National Security Council session. He specified that the three failures out of a total of nine ground-based missile defense tests were caused by small component defects. He added that ten out of 12 sea-based tests have been successful. General Obering was in Prague to open a two-day seminar organized by the Czech Foreign Ministry and MDA to introduce Czech businesses and institutions to potential U.S. partners in the technologies and industry that support missile defense. The seminar attracted over 50 Czech and American businesses.



U.S. Ambassador Graber, PM Topolánek, General Obering and Foreign Minister Schwarzenberg at the January 17 press conference

It was a first step towards long-term collaboration that would be supported by U.S.-Czech missile defense agreements. The success of the seminar led Obering to announce that MDA would fund a detailed study by a consortium of Czech scientific institutions to examine areas of greater potential U.S. investment and cooperation. During this visit, General Obering also met with Prime Minister Topolánek, senior government officials, Czech lawmakers and the Czech media. Another round of negotiations related to U.S.-Czech missile defense cooperation is scheduled for January 28-31 in Prague.

## Visiting U.S. Congressmen Discuss Security and Cuba

A delegation of U.S. senators led by Senator Mel Martinez of Florida met with President of the Senate Premysl Sobotka and other Czech leaders in Prague January 9. Born in Cuba, Martinez arrived in the U.S. at age 15 and now serves as the first Cuban-American in the U.S. Senate. In his meetings with the Czech government as well as

with Czech NGO People in Need and at the meeting at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Martinez stressed his big appreciation for Czech support for human freedoms in Cuba and elsewhere. The delegation -- comprised of members of the Senate Finance Committee, Armed Services Committee, and Appropriations Committee -- also visited Morocco, Turkey and Spain for discussions on global security and bilateral issues.



## Czech Writer Selected for Renowned U.S. Program

Hana Andronikova, Czech author whose works include 'Zvuk slunečních hodin / The Sound of the Sundial, 2001', 'Srdce na udici / Heart on a Hook,' 2002) recently returned from three months of work at the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa, America's premier center for creative writing. Since 1967, over a thousand writers from more than 120 countries have attended this program. Ms. Andronikova is one of several Czech writer to attend. Speaking about her experience, she explained: *IWP is a very special program, one of its kind. It was an amazing experience: twelve weeks spent in the company of another forty writers from all over the world, interesting discussions, time and space to write. This residency provides opportunity for many profound friendships to be formed and gives life to a variety of new ideas and insights, ambitious projects in the future. All the precious memories of my stay in Iowa City will remain a source of true inspiration.* The U.S. Department of State is a major source of support for the program <http://www.uiowa.edu/~iwp>.



## Czech Scientist Joins Prestigious U.S. Society

The U.S. Embassy congratulates Czech scientist Frantisek Sehnal, who has become an honorary member of The Entomological Society of America, an association of five

thousand of the world's finest researchers in entomology. Selection as an ESA Fellow acknowledges outstanding contributions in research, teaching, extension, or administration; only 18 Europeans have joined the association. Dr. Sehnal conducts his work in association with the Entomological Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences. In 2007, he was named Director of the Biology Center of the Czech Academy of Sciences. He has mentored 17 Ph.D. students, registered over 20 patents, and published more than 250 papers. Sehnal is currently on the editorial boards of seven journals and will serve as the Chair of the Council at the next International Congress of Entomology in Durban, South Africa.

## American Center Hosts "Deliberating in a Democracy" Workshop on Minorities



Twenty-five Czech secondary school teachers discussed the position and role of ethnic minorities in a society during the December 14 workshop "Deliberating in a Democracy" held at the American Center. The workshop was part of the international Deliberating in a Democracy (DID) project <http://www.deliberating.org/>. The U.S. Embassy supports DID programs which encourage educational reform and democracy development. The DID project was designed for secondary teachers and their students from partner countries like Azerbaijan, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Russia, Tajikistan, and the U.S. (Chicago, Los Angeles, and Washington) to foster the examination of democratic principles and civic deliberation in the classroom.

## Czech Students Give the Scoop on the U.S. Work and Travel Program



*Czech Work and Travel Program participant at Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah*

*"Take the opportunity and travel, because nature in the U.S. is amazing. Don't be afraid of speaking English. Make new friends." These are some of the recommendations of Czech students the Embassy interviewed after they returned from their 'Work and Travel' job in the U.S. The participants in the program usually choose summer jobs in national parks, seaside resorts or theme parks throughout the country. "I really enjoyed the Big Apple - NYC. It was a*

*'must see' for me, and things I had only seen on TV before were right around me... I enjoyed the fact that I had financial freedom as I earned enough money to support myself,"* recalls Branislav M. from the University of Economics in Prague. He was among 3,500 other Czech students who experienced adventure in the U.S. through the Work and Travel program. More information is available on: <http://www.aic.cz/cms/brochure-worktravel.pdf>.

## Czech-American Award for Talented Students 2008

The International Institute of Political Science of Masaryk University in Brno, in cooperation with the U.S. Embassy and the J.W. Fulbright Commission, welcomes nominations for the third annual Czech-American Award for Talented Students. The competition is intended for university students and recent graduates who wrote or are currently writing a text related to the United States. Topics for this year's competition include history, culture and education. The winner will be awarded

10,000 CZK and the winning text will be published by the International Institute of Political Science of Masaryk University. The authors of other selected texts will receive TOEFL and GRE vouchers. The deadline for submissions is **April 15, 2008**. More information is available at [www.fulbright.cz](http://www.fulbright.cz) or by calling the American Center.



## Czech Universities to Attend Study Conference in D.C.

On January 18, Ambassador Graber encouraged Vice-Rectors for International Affairs from Czech universities to participate in the NAFSA Conference on International Study in Washington, D.C. Together with Commissions from Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland, the Fulbright Commission in Prague has received a grant from the Visegrad Fund to finance a booth for universities from the four countries at the May NAFSA Conference & Expo, the largest event for international educational exchange in the United States and the world. [www.nafsa.org](http://www.nafsa.org). The Czech Republic is emerging as one the most attractive destinations for U.S. students wishing to study in Europe.



*Starbucks Coffee opened in Mala Strana January 21, marking the U.S. company's new presence in Central Europe.*