



July/August 2008

## Secretary Rice Signs Radar Agreement in Prague



On July 8, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg signed the Missile Defense (BMD) Agree-

ment on stationing a U.S. missile defense radar in the Brdy military area southwest of Prague. "It is an important step in our efforts to protect the United States and the Czech Republic, as well as our other NATO Allies, from the growing threat posed by the proliferation of ballistic missiles of increasingly greater ranges and sophistication, and potentially armed with weapons of mass destruction," said Rice in Prague. The radar will provide precision tracking of ballistic missiles launched out of the Middle East, and will be linked to other U.S. missile defense facilities in Europe and the United States. Czech and U.S. experts are now working on the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA); both documents will be submitted for ratification to Czech parliament.

## General Obering Meets Mayors in Brdy

Missile Defense Agency Director, General Henry Obering met with journalists and mayors of the hamlets around the



planned radar site on July 10 to answer their questions on the future facility. He noted at the beginning of the meeting that the radar

will not be constructed if the Czech parliament does not approve it. If Czech lawmakers pass it, he said, local people will "not even know that there is a military facility in the forest." He noted the villages will benefit from the U.S. personnel and mentioned a joint U.S.-Czech water treatment plant and the possibility that U.S. soldiers will teach English in local schools and help in emergencies. The mayors also wanted to know how big the radar facility will be; what will be the extent of the area cleared of trees; and where the U.S. personnel will live.

## Embassy Celebrates Day of Independence

The U.S. Embassy Prague was celebrating together with over one thousand other Czech, Americans and international dignitaries and friends the 232nd anniversary of America's July 4th Independence Day at the Ambassador's residence in Prague 6. The guests on the sunny day included Senate President Premysl Sobotka, former President Vaclav Havel, ministers and other representatives of political and cultural life. Independence Day is a family celebration, a major civic occasion, with roots deep in the transatlantic tradition of political freedom. Over a dozen



American hotel, food and beverages companies offered outstanding support for the event. The U.S. Embassy appreciates their special efforts.

## Ambassador Opens Super Bowl, Throws Pitch at Baseball

Ambassador Richard Graber did the kick-off for the Czech National League of American football on June 27. It is the traditional conclusion of the season of the national league, which is celebrating its 15th anniversary. This year, the Prague Panthers team defeated Prague Lions. Besides Prague, American football teams are active in all major Czech cities. The following day Graber threw out the opening pitch at the KRC Altron Baseball Club. On July 12, the Ambassador was present at the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of firefighters in Misov, Brdy.



## Experts Lecture in Prague on U.S. Foreign Policy

Former Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs and current Vice-President of the Heritage Foundation Kim R. Holmes visited Prague at the invitation of Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty on July 1. In addition to his program there, Dr. Holmes gave a lively lecture at the American Center on



U.S. foreign policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Despite full Czech summer holiday season, it attracted a full house of think-tank pundits, academics, government officials, foreign diplomats and students. The expert was also interviewed live by Czech Television and several other journalists. Holmes is the author of numerous influential Heritage publications, including the new book *Liberty's Best Hope: American Leadership for the 21st Century*. On July 7, Boston University Professor of International Relations and History Igor Lukes discussed current U.S. foreign policy with professionals, academics and students at Prague's Institute of International Relations.

## Embassy Organizes Overseas Citizens Garden Event

The Embassy opened its garden to the local American community on June 30 in honor of Overseas Citizen Voter Week. In addition to providing information on voting, representative from the Foreign and Interior Ministries were present to answer questions about residing in the Czech Republic. Some 200 American citizens and their families got to meet Ambassador Graber and enjoy the fantastic view of Prague from the Glorietta (the white summer house at the top of Embassy gardens).



The visa processing fee is set by the U.S. Department of State at \$131 worldwide. In the Czech Republic it was 2,096 CZK but dropped on August 1<sup>st</sup> to 1,965 CZK as a result of the strengthening of the Czech currency.

## Students Speak about Current Czech-U.S. Topics with Embassy Officials

Speakers' Bureau organized through the American Center offers an excellent opportunity for both Czech and American students to learn about the United States Embassy and American foreign policy. This summer, members of the Embassy met with a number of high school and university students. Discussions have ranged from the history of the Embassy building to current events and topics such as missile defense, presidential elections, the European Union and the Visa Waiver Program. The Speakers' Bureau brought in students from North Carolina State University; University of New Orleans; Gymnasium Holesov; and ANOA, Gymnasium, Prague 6. American university students were intrigued with the Czech history and its impact on current foreign policy; they were also interested to hear how American foreign policy is formed and implemented with regard to the Czech Republic. Czech students were particularly curious in the American presidential election and how its results might affect them.

## Discover Hawaii at the American Center

The American Center's summer season special attraction will be an evening of pleasant Hawaiian surprises. This thematic event, appropriately „Discover Hawaii“, is the first in a series about America's 50 states. Not only is Hawaii unique for being the newest and only island state, it is America's most sought-after vacation destination. In addition, we are lucky to count on the presence of one of the best known Czech-Americans living in the Hawaiian capital of Honolulu, Václav Pěnkava, who is currently back in the Czech Republic and will be our master of ceremonies for the evening. He will be joined by Margita Fuchsová, who until recently was Czech Consul General in Los Angeles. Come join us on August 5 at 7 pm, American Center, Prague.



## Upcoming Events

- Aug 20 Lecture by Edward Lutwak *American reflections on the Prague Spring*, American Center, 5 pm
- Aug 21 Exhibition of Dusan Neumann's photographs on the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968
- Aug 28 – Sep 7 1<sup>st</sup> Street Art and Graffiti Festival, Trafacka Gallery, Prague 9

<http://prague.usembassy.gov>