

A Star-Spangled Banner Night

Red, White and Blue Celebration of Czech - U.S. Partnership Grand Tribute to Madeleine Albright President Havel Presents AFoCR Award

At the September 7 AFoCR gala at New York City's Plaza Hotel, Czech President Vaclav Havel presented U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright with AFoCR's Civil Society Vision Award with over 500 guests looking on. Presidents Havel and Clinton served as Honorary Co-Chairmen of the event.

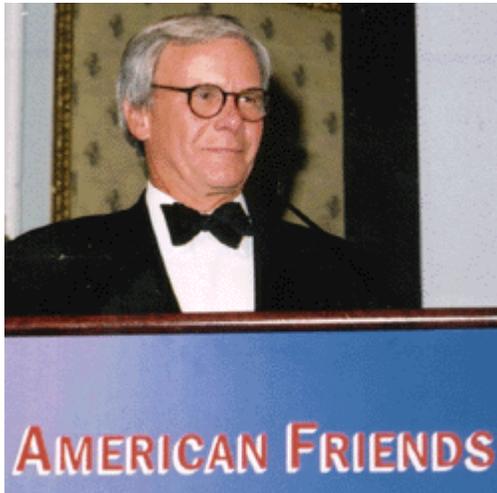


Czech President Vaclav Havel,
AFoCR President Milton Cerny and
Secretary Albright

Frederic Malek presents Co-Chairs, Gala video: Following the opening reception, guests moved to the ballroom where they were greeted by Event Chairman Frederic Malek, founder and Chairman of Thayer Capital Partners. Malek recognized his Co-Chairmen for the event, Maurice "Hank" Greenberg, Chairman and CEO of American International Group, J. Willard "Bill" Marriott, Chairman and CEO of Marriott International, and Sanford Weill, Chairman and CEO of Citigroup, as well as a number of special guests, including George Soros and Eli Weisel. Malek then introduced a video presentation produced specially for the event, "The Enduring Spirit - the Czech American Experience."

The video opened with a quotation from a Madeleine Albright speech earlier this year, setting the tone for her later comments, "We understand that true democracy is never achieved, it is always a pursuit ♦ and we know that if we who love liberty grow weary, those who love only power will one day sweep us away." The video paid tribute to Czech immigrants who made new lives and significant contributions to American and international society. The production highlighted Czech composer Antonin Dvorak as well as famous Americans of Czech birth or Czech descent. These included Chicago Bear's coach George Halas, and McDonalds' founder Ray Kroc. Also featured were athletes Martina Navratilova, Jaromir Jagr, and Dominik Hasek, as well as astronauts

Eugene Cernan and James Lovell. Navratilova, Cernan and Lovell attended. The video concluded with a special and moving tribute to Madeleine Albright.



NBC News anchorman Tom Brokaw

Master of Ceremonies Tom Brokaw: As the evening's M.C., NBC News anchorman Tom Brokaw began by recalling his growing up, with many "classmates, girlfriends and teammates" with Czech surnames, in South Dakota near the town of Tabor, where he enjoyed summers complete with Czech festivals that included kolaches and Czech beers. Brokaw went on to describe his coverage in Prague of the closing days of the Velvet Revolution as his "epiphanous experience as a journalist" and the "most joyous three days of my life." He recounted making his way through the jubilant throngs of people on the street, "knowing freedom was within their grasp," and standing four feet from the podium as Alexander Dubcek addressed that crowd. "It took my breath away," he said. He remembered sending the flag of the newly free Czechoslovakia - the flag he had waved from his car there - to his old friends in Tabor, South Dakota, to fly with pride from City Hall because his connection to that area back home had felt so "pure and inspirational" while in the streets of Prague. Brokaw concluded his introductory remarks with comments that sprang from his book celebrating Americans of World War II, *The Greatest Generation*. He introduced one prominent member of that generation - former Deputy Secretary of State and CEO of Goldman Sachs, John Whitehead, who was a beach commander in the Normandy invasion, and who came to the gala to help pay tribute to Albright and Havel. In his final comment about his book, Brokaw referred again to his three days in the streets of Prague, "forty years hence, a young Czech journalist will write a book about the greatest generation of that country and that time - the people we honor here tonight."

President Clinton's video tribute: Following dinner, Brokaw introduced a video presentation from President Clinton. Clinton began by thanking AFoCR and its president, Milton Cerny, for paying tribute to his Secretary of State. "No one," he said, "has represented American purpose and promise better than Madeleine Albright. It would be hard to think of someone more deserving of this honor than Madeleine Albright, and of someone better suited to present it to her than Vaclav Havel." He

concluded by saying that, "Madeleine Albright and Vaclav Havel have always stood for the right things and done the right things. Thanks in no small measure to them, the friendship between the Czech Republic and the United States is now a partnership so our countries can now do the right things together."

Arthur Miller introduces his fellow playwright: Brokaw then introduced Pulitzer Prize winning playwright, Arthur Miller, as "one of America's great men of letters and one of America's living treasures." Miller recalled his visit to Czechoslovakia in the 1960s with a small group of literary figures who went to tell writers in Central Europe, including Vaclav Havel, that "their colleagues in the West had not forgotten them." Miller had observed a "funereal air" in Prague, "but a certain crazy humor in the place." "I think oppression breeds absurdity," he said, "because it is so crazy." As he met with these oppressed Czech writers, Miller had asked himself. "How can this last." At the conclusion of the visit, however, he was asking, "How can this ever end," because he "didn't detect a possible way to escape that dreadful weight." "The real absurdity of it all is that one of those writers became President," he concluded, and "his vision persisted in the face of the impossible."



President Havel presents Secretary Albright with the Civil Society Vision Award

President Havel presents Civil Society Vision Award: President Havel paid touching tribute to Secretary Albright. He said the two of them had mused about how fate had provided them both with opportunities and obligations to strive for the same goals. "We have found ourselves," he said, "called upon and, indeed, duty bound to try to devise and to build a better order for the world." He emphasized Albright's stature in that common effort by saying that, in assuming the office of U.S. Secretary of State, she became "not only, probably, the most influential Czech woman in history to date, but also, perhaps, the most influential woman on the planet today." He prefaced his presentation by noting her tremendous contributions "to the advancement of respect for human rights, of a democratic political order, of civil society, and of courage on the part of the democratic world to combat the evil of totalitarianism promptly - in extreme cases, even with the use of force."

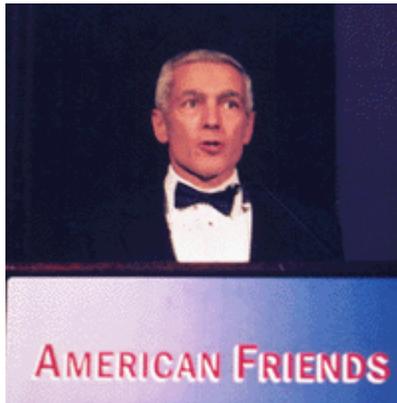
Secretary of State Madeleine Albright: In accepting the Award from Havel, Albright

directed her remarks first to the Czech President -- "In our generation, no one has contributed more to the spread of freedom or to our understanding of the responsibility that freedom entails. We are eternally grateful to you and so very, very proud to be counted as Czechs because of you." She then addressed AFoCR in saying, "I cannot thank all the American Friends of the Czech Republic enough for this magnificent award. I am deeply honored and I will treasure it forever." Albright turned then to some high points of the Czech-U.S. relationship. "We have come together for a singular reason and that is to celebrate the friendship, the partnership, and the alliance of the United States and the Czech Republic." She said she had been extremely proud to sign the final documents bringing the three new member nations into NATO, and added that, "year by year, more and more nations are becoming stakeholders in the age-old dream of a Europe without walls, wholly at peace and fully free."

Hard work remains; Albright calls for joint effort: Albright credited the United States and NATO, including its newest members, for their continuing and important efforts to bring peace, stability and security to the war-ravaged Balkans. She then called everyone's attention to the task that remains before us in the domestic affairs of the Czech Republic. "During the past decade, the Czech Republic has made great strides in developing democratic institutions and a free-market economy, but the road back from decades of communist misrule is not smooth. Like other countries faced with similar struggle, the Czech Republic continues to grapple with such problems as corruption and a lack of transparency in decision-making. The best tool to counter such abuses is a vigorous civil society so that politicians' voices are not the only ones heard in the political arena."

Albright then called upon all to put their shoulders to this wheel together. "For democracy cannot flourish," she said, "without the private sector's investments. And, democracy cannot last without civil society's involvement. And, democracy cannot spread without the willingness of dynamic organizations and freedom-loving citizens to support their counterparts in other lands. Tonight we celebrate our common heritage, our shared values, our commitment to democracy and our faith that the future can be made better than the past." This resounding call from Secretary Albright added momentum to the AFoCR mission - "to support educational programs that help advance a civil, legal and democratic society in the Czech Republic."

Author Peter Sis presents his book: Award-winning children's author, an American of Czech descent, then presented Albright with a copy of his latest book, *Madlinka*. Albright thanked him warmly and told the audience that, although this was the first time she had met Sis, the two of them had been "pen pals" for quite some time. "He sends me all his books, which I have passed on to my grandchildren with great love." Sis also provided a large number of copies of his book for gala participants.



General Wesley K. Clark

General Wesley K. Clark: Following the Secretary's remarks, Brokaw introduced recently retired General Wesley K. Clark, who was, from 1997 until May of this year, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe and Commander in Chief of U.S. Forces in Europe. General Clark spoke of the allied operations he lead in the Balkans and honored the "great, young soldiers of the Czech Republic and Slovakia." To Albright, he said, "From the first time you stepped on the stage as our UN Ambassador, you had an unerring moral compass." He characterized as "a shot heard 'round the world" one of her early statements in government circles, "What's the point, when there is trouble in the world, of having these large forces if you can't use them," she had said. "You have given our armed forces and the armed forces of NATO," Clark continued, "the opportunity not only to deter war but to end conflict and promote peace. You have put the moral purpose back in our armed forces." Clark concluded by saying, in Czech, to Albright, "You are my hero; you are our hero."



AFoCR President Milton
Cerny

AFoCR President Milton Cerny: Following Dvorak songs performed by Czech opera star Dagmar Peckova, Brokaw introduced president Milton Cerny. Cerny thanked all the guests for helping "honor and recognize a remarkable woman who has made an impact on human rights and international justice like no other person ever has or no other person ever will in the foreseeable future." He also paid tribute to "the immigrants and the children of immigrants who came to America with one thought - to make a better life for their children." To Czech citizens, Cerny concluded, "We want you to know that America supports you and stands at your side as you rebuild the civil

society of the Czech nation." Finally, Cerny introduced Terry Clark of the Metropolitan Opera to sing the closing song and "remind us that we are all part of a world symphony."

Notable Americans with Czech Roots

A Capital American with Czech Roots



Jonathan Ledecy

This prominent Washington entrepreneur is a native of Brooklyn and Queens, New York, where he was born to a Czech immigrant father who began his new life here in the United States as a dishwasher at a Howard Johnson's restaurant. His name is Jonathan Ledecy, co-owner of three Washington professional sports teams - the Capitals NHL Hockey Team, the Wizards NBA Basketball Team, and the Mystics WNBA Basketball Team.

Ledecy graduated from Harvard University and the Harvard Business School before beginning his career in venture capital in Washington, D.C. in 1983. In 1994, he opened his first company, U.S. Office Products, operating from his dining room table and financing on credit. Just three years later, U.S. Office Products was a Fortune 500 company enjoying \$4 billion in sales. He later started U.S.A. Floral Products, the world's largest floral products distributor, and Building One Services Corporation, one of our nation's most successful facilities maintenance firms, each of which grew in their first year of operation to over \$1 billion in sales. To date, Ledecy is founder, co-founder or director of ten publicly traded companies with total sales of close to \$9 billion.

Peter Schultz - Inventor



Peter Schultz

Born in Brooklyn to a mother of Czech origin, Peter Schultz is currently President of Heraeus Photonics, Inc, a technical glass manufacturer specializing in fiber optics and semiconductors. Following undergraduate and graduate degrees from Rutgers University, Dr. Schultz became a scientist with Corning, Inc., where he was co-developer of the world's first practical glass optical fiber for communications. As the co-inventor of the fiber optics now used worldwide for telecommunications, he was inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in 1993 and is one of only 20 living inventors so honored. Dr. Schultz holds 26 patents, has received numerous awards, and has taught in several major universities.

George Blanda - Football Great



George
Blanda

Born of Czech parents and raised in Youngwood, Pennsylvania, Blanda became famous as a quarterback and place kicker in professional football. Well-known for his last-minute heroics, he scored a record 2,002 points, played in 21 title games, held 16 regular-season marks, passed for 7 touchdowns in one game and 36 in a season, and was selected League Player of the Year in 1961. He played until age 48 and his 26-season, 340-game career was the longest ever. He was enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1981.

Stan Mikita - NHL Great



Stan Mikita

Born in Sokolce, Czechoslovakia, Stan Mikita moved to Canada at age 8, knowing nothing of hockey. He became the first Czech-born player in the National Hockey League (NHL), and was the star center for the Chicago Blackhawks from 1958 to 1980. He was the first player to win the Art Ross, Hart, and Lady Byng trophies in a single season - a feat he accomplished twice. He is the Blackhawks' all-time leading scorer and was an 8-time All Star. In 1394 NHL games, Mikita scored 541 goals, 926 assists and 1467 points. His name was engraved on the Stanley Cup in 1961 and he was elected to the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1983.

Paul Moravec-Composer

Paul Moravec, who traces his Czech heritage back through his father's family, is the composer of over seventy published orchestral, chamber, choral, and lyric compositions, as well as several film scores and electro-acoustic pieces. An honor graduate of Harvard University and Columbia University graduate school, his music has earned numerous distinctions, and he has taught at Harvard, Columbia, Dartmouth, Hunter College (CUNY), and Adelphi University. His recorded collections include: "Songs of Love and War," his "Sonata for Violin and Piano," the orchestral work "Spiritdance," and an album of his chamber compositions titled "Circular Dreams."

Stan "the Man" Musial



Stan Musial

Born in Donora, Pennsylvania, Stan "the Man" became a true baseball legend. It was his Czech mother who encouraged him to use his extraordinary talents to pursue a

baseball career rather than follow his father into the zincmines of Pennsylvania. He was named to 24 All-Star teams; was National League MVP three times; League batting champion seven times, and had a career batting average of .331 with 475 homers and 3,630 hits. Sports Illustrated selected him Sportsman of the Year in 1957. Sporting News named him Major League Player of the Year in 1946 and 1951, and Sportsman of the Decade for the years between 1946 and 1956. Upon retirement, Musial held 17 major league, 29 National League and 9 All-Star game records. He was enshrined in the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1969, and in the heart of every St. Louis Cardinal and baseball fan. Always recognized as a spectacular athlete and a real gentleman, his statue stands outside the Cardinals' stadium as a constant reminder of excellence and sportsmanship.

AFoCR Meets with Trade Representative

As part of AFoCR's continuing efforts to promote trade and business between the United States and the Czech Republic, AFoCR President Milt Cerny met with Jiri Kulis, the recently appointed head of the trade mission at the Czech Embassy in Washington. The two discussed new initiatives that could be undertaken with the assistance of the AFoCR to promote and conduct trade seminars, visits and teleconferencing between the Czech Republic and major cities in the United States to enhance contacts that advance Czech and American business interests. Also discussed were new methods for distributing current economic and business news.

AFoCR Co-Sponsors Trade Mission

The AFoCR co-sponsored with CzechInvest a major trade initiative in Chicago, September 9-14, 2000. On behalf of the U.S. Embassy in Prague, this "Czech Trade and Investment Mission to the U.S." brought 10 major Czech supplier companies to the United States to build strong networks of trade and cooperation with U.S. manufacturers. In thanking the AFoCR for its sponsorship, CzechInvest wrote, "our joint efforts aimed at strengthening commercial ties between the United States of America and the Czech Republic were successful." The AFoCR recognizes the importance of such missions to help promote strong, vibrant economic and commercial ties between our two countries as well as a civil, legal, democratic society and free-market economy in the Czech Republic

AFoCR Hosts Czech Senate Committee

The AFoCR, working closely with the Czech Embassy in Washington, arranged the recent visit of a delegation of the Czech Senate's Constitutional and Legal Affairs Committee. The delegation met with US government leaders and jurists in order to better understand the relationship between the judiciary and the Congress in the U.S. system. AFoCR President Milt Cerny arranged the delegation's key meeting with Supreme Court Justice Breyer. The Czech legislators also met with a representative of the House Judiciary Committee, and participated in a luncheon held for them at the

law firm of Caplin and Drysdale, of which Mr. Cerny is a member. Also attending the luncheon were Czech Ambassador Alexander Vondra, leaders of the American Bar Association and other members of the host law firm. This visit was part of an ongoing effort by the AFoCR to support the rule of law and law reform in the Czech Republic. Also discussed with the Czech delegation, was the AFoCR's strong support of the CEELI Institute, established this year in Prague by the American Bar Association to provide graduate studies for the legal and judicial communities of the Czech Republic and the region.

Message from the President

There are times and places in life when things come together perfectly and fulfill our dreams and aspirations -- when the people who are important to us say the right things at just the right times and make us proud of who we are and what we can become. Such a night was September 7th in New York City at the Plaza Hotel. That night will live in the hearts and minds of those who were there as a high-water mark in Czech-U.S. ties. I cannot say it any more eloquently than the speakers you see quoted in this newsletter. It was a truly remarkable evening and, from the bottom of my heart, I thank all of you who participated and made it possible.

Building on the success we have achieved, we see our mission now as developing a more and more creditable, effective voice in the United States and the Czech Republic, supporting the initiatives that advance stability and reform and make the Czech Republic a model for the region. We will partner with other organizations to further economic growth and development of the Civil Society in the Czech Republic. We plan to reach out to individuals and organizations that believe, as we do, in a strong and vibrant U.S.-Czech relationship.

We hope that you will join us in these efforts.

-Milton Cerny, President, AFoCR

Commemorative Video Available

"The Enduring Spirit" produced as part of the Civil Society Vision Award Dinner will be shown in a number of locations in the United States honoring Czech heritage, including Maryland, Florida, Iowa, Kansas and other venues. A commemorative Video tape of the entire Gala event including speeches by President Havel, Secretary Albright, President Clinton, General Wesley Clark and others is available through AFoCR. Contact AFoCR for information by email at afocr@afocr.org or 202-463-8999.



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