



## DIRECTORS

MICHAEL G. ROKOS  
*President, AFoCR*  
*Bohemian National Cemetery, Baltimore*  
PETER A. RAFAELI  
*Vice President & Treasurer, AFoCR*  
*Honorary Consul General of the*  
*Czech Republic, Philadelphia*  
ROBERT W. DOUBEK  
*Secretary, Former President, AFoCR*  
PHILLIP M. KASIK, P.E.  
*Past President, AFoCR*  
*Partner, MPR Assoc., Engineers*  
RICHARD SCHUBERT  
*Former President, American Red Cross*  
*Former President, Points of Light*  
*Foundation*  
TIM WHIPPLE  
*Kroll International*  
*Former President Czech-American*  
*Chamber of Commerce in Prague*  
DANIEL R. BALDWIN  
*President, Greater Cedar Rapids*  
*Community Foundation*  
RONALD J. BARTEK  
*Partner, Mehl, Griffin & Bartek*  
PETER BISEK  
*Editor, Americké listy*  
THOMAS R. CECHE  
*Nobel Laureate, Chemistry*  
*President, Howard Hughes*  
*Medical Institute*  
EUGENE CERNAN  
*Astronaut*  
*President, The Cernan Corporation*  
GEORGE DROST  
*Attorney*  
*Drost, Kivlaban, & McMahon, Ltd.*  
VLADIMIR M. KABES  
*President, V.M. Kabes*  
*International Consultants*  
FREDERIC VINCENT MALEK  
*Chairman, Thayer Capital Partners*  
*Former Advisor to Presidents Nixon,*  
*Reagan and G.H.W. Bush*  
GAIL NAUGHTON  
*President/CEO Czech and Slovak*  
*National Museum, Cedar Rapids, IA*  
JOHN SHATTUCK  
*Chief Executive Officer, JFK Library*  
*Former U.S. Ambassador to the*  
*Czech Republic (1998-2000)*  
JUDY BAAR TOPINKA  
*Treasurer, State of Illinois*  
JENONNE WALKER  
*Former U.S. Ambassador to the*  
*Czech Republic*  
LEWIS M. ("JACK") WHITE  
*President, Wilsonian Club*

## SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS

AMERICAN FUND FOR  
CZECHOSLOVAK RELIEF  
AMERICAN SOKOL  
ORGANIZATION  
CSA FRATERNAL LIFE  
CZECH AND SLOVAK SOLIDARITY  
COUNCIL  
CZECHOSLOVAK NATIONAL  
COUNCIL OF AMERICA  
HOUSTON CZECH CULTURAL  
CENTER  
NATIONAL CZECH AND  
SLOVAK MUSEUM  
AND LIBRARY

September 2006

Dear Friend of the Czech Republic:

Last spring, I took part in an event that was quite moving for me, as one who well remembers the days of the Cold War and an Iron Curtain separating the US from the Czech people. The Foreign Minister of the Czech Republic, Cyril Svoboda, was in Washington, DC on an official visit to meet with Condoleezza Rice and others. One of his stops was at the headquarters of the Voice of America near the Capitol. Minister Svoboda presented to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty a check from the Czech government for over \$1.2 million for the construction of new radio facilities outside of Prague. What an amazing gesture from an American ally that would have been unthinkable before 1989.

Since 1989 and the fall of the Iron Curtain, the Czech Republic has made great progress in becoming once again a free, democratic society where the rule of law prevails. The Czech Republic has one of the fastest growing economies in the world. The Czech Republic is our ally, being part of NATO, and it is a part of the European Union as well as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Czech citizens enjoy the full spectrum of democratic freedoms with the same privileges and responsibilities that US citizens have.

Having said that, I need to make certain that you know there is also a serious problem in the relations between the US and the Czech Republic. Americans traveling to the Czech Republic do not need a visa and are welcome to enter the Czech lands. The Czech Republic is not included in the Visa Waiver Program of the US. Czechs wishing to come to the US need to apply for a Visa. This is a costly, lengthy, and often humiliating procedure that creates a sense for Czechs and others that we are not truly partners and the support given to the US by the Czech Republic and other allies is not taken seriously by the US.

The Visa Waiver Program (VWP) was established in 1986 with the objective of promoting better relations with US allies, eliminating unnecessary barriers to travel, and stimulating the tourism industry and people to people contacts. Currently 27 countries participate in the Visa Waiver Program, including many of the European Union countries. However, the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, and Malta are not included in the program.

One of the tasks of the American Friends of the Czech Republic is to educate and inform Americans concerning issues that affect relations between the US and the Czech Republic. The visa issue is the biggest concern that exists today. This document will familiarize you with the VWP, what Congress is doing to address its inconsistencies, and how you can help. For your convenience, we have enclosed a sample letter that you may send to your US Representative at his or her home office. If you do not know who your Congressman is, this information is available online or you can contact AFoCR.

In 1999 we at AFoCR undertook a similar program of education that resulted in NATO expansion for the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. This expansion proved to be a good thing when September 11th happened. The Czech people have stood with us in the war against terrorism ever since. Hopefully, we can stand with the Czech people at this time.

I would ask that you share this letter and information with your family and friends.

With all good wishes, I am

Michael G. Rokos

## ADVISORS

ADRIAN A. BASORA  
*Former U.S. Ambassador to Czechoslovakia*  
*(1992-95)*  
ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI  
*Center for Strategic and International Studies*  
WILLIAM J. CABANISS  
*Former U.S. Ambassador to the Czech*  
*Republic (2003-2006)*  
ROBERT CHARTENER  
*Partner, Winslow Partners*  
ARTHUR J. COLLINGSWORTH  
*National Security Education Board*  
MILOS FORMAN  
*Film Director*  
PATRICIA HAMPL  
*Writer*  
JINDRA KADLEC  
*Tatra Travel, NYC*  
HENRY KISSINGER  
*Former U.S. Secretary of State*  
PETR KOLAR  
*Current Czech Ambassador to the U.S.*  
JAMES A. LOVELL, JR.  
*Astronaut*  
WENDY W. LUERS  
*President, The Foundation for a Civil Society*  
SEN. RICHARD G. LUGAR  
*Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations*  
*Committee*  
MARTINA NAVRATILOVA  
*Tennis Professional*  
JULIAN M. NIEMCZYK  
*Former U.S. Ambassador to Czechoslovakia*  
*(1986-89)*  
MICHAEL NOVAK  
*American Enterprise Institute*  
MARTIN PALOUS  
*Current Czech Ambassador to the U.N.*  
*Former Czech Ambassador to the U.S.*  
RICHARD PIVNICKA  
*Hon. Consul General of the Czech Republic,*  
*San Francisco*  
JAN POKORNY  
*FAIA, Architect, Educator,*  
*Commissioner, New York City Landmarks*  
*Preservation Commission*  
EFFIE ROSENE  
*Houston Czech Cultural Center*  
JAKUB SIMON  
*University of Maryland*  
PETER SIS  
*Author and Artist*  
SISSY SPACEK  
*Actress*  
CRAIG STAPLETON  
*Current U.S. Ambassador to France*  
*Former U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic*  
*(2000-2003)*  
PAUL SVAB  
*Principal, International Private Solutions*  
JAN SVEJNAR  
*Everett E. Berg Professor of Business*  
*Administration and Professor of Economics,*  
*University of Michigan*

*The American Friends of the Czech Republic is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) and described as a public charity under section 509(a)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. Contributions are tax deductible under section 170(c) of the Code.*  
*Federal Tax ID #52-1921393*

4410 Massachusetts Ave. 391, NW  
Washington, DC • 20016-5572  
Tel: 202.413.5528 • Fax: 410.366.6016  
Email: afocr@afocr.org  
Website: <http://www.afocr.org>  
Treasurer's Office:  
P.O. Box 777  
Springhouse, PA 19477 USA  
Phone: 215.646.7777 • Fax: 215.646.7770

## *Help Connect Czechs and Americans!*

*After years of enjoying a free democratic society, NATO and European Union (EU) membership, and countless positive changes, Czechs are still subjected to a lengthy, costly, and humiliating visa procedure for U.S. travel, while Americans travel visa-free to the Czech Republic...*

### ***Why the Lack of Visa Waiver Program (VWP) Participation Affects U.S.-Czech Relations:***

This asymmetrical visa barrier for Czech citizens:

- Reduces U.S.-Czech economic and business opportunities, student exchanges, tourism, and regular people-to-people contacts.
- Affects U.S.-Czech bilateral relations and creates negative public opinion and anti-Americanism.
- Negatively impacts the common fight against terrorism and the international security framework.

### ***Why the Czech Republic Is Politically Qualified to Participate in the VWP:***

- The Czech Republic is *developed* and *politically stable*, a member of NATO and the European Union (EU).
- The Czech Republic is a *dependable ally* of the United States fully cooperating in the *fight against terrorism*. The Czech Republic has been actively involved in operations in Afghanistan, in Iraq, and in other trouble spots worldwide since their beginning.
- The Czech Republic helps *spread democracy and promote respect for human rights* worldwide.
- Czech citizens enjoy all *opportunities afforded by EU enlargement* including an expanded labor market and rewarding work opportunities close to home.
- The Czech Republic's *economy* is one of the *fastest growing* in the world.
- The Czech Republic's *legal system is compatible with other EU states*. Czech immigration policies, border protection, passport issuance security, and other security practices are fully comparable to all EU countries.

### ***What Has Already Happened:***

In 2005 the United States introduced the Visa Waiver Program Road Map, a guide to prepare countries for VWP participation. The Czech Republic is committed to complying with the Road Map requirements. However, fulfilling all Road Map criteria is no guarantee of VWP inclusion in the foreseeable future.

### ***What Is Happening Now:***

The first signs that close and strong relations matter to the U.S. Congress are already here. In May 2006, U.S. Senators Santorum (R-PA), Mikulski (D-MD), and Frist (R-TN) proposed Amendment SA 4000 to the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act allowing additional countries to participate in the VWP if they are providing material support to the United States or the multilateral forces in Afghanistan or Iraq. Although the Czech Republic is participating in both operations, as written, this amendment applies to only one EU country not already in the VWP—Poland. The amendment's material support quotas eliminate the smaller EU countries also involved in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In June 2006, Representatives English (R-PA), McCotter (R-MI), Diaz-Balart (R-FL), Bordallo (D-GU), Wexler (D-FL), and Davis (R-VA) proposed bill H.R. 5730 designating six NATO and EU states as participants in the VWP under section 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act. This stand-alone bill is not dependent on other legislation, but must pass the Judiciary Committee before going to a full vote.

The Czech Republic welcomed both of these acts as initial steps toward VWP participation. Nevertheless, without full congressional backing, neither piece of legislation will lead to entry in the VWP.

## *Help Connect Czechs and Americans!*

### *How You Can Help:*

The American Friends of the Czech Republic (AFoCR) needs your help in explaining to Congress that the Czech Republic is one of its best allies. The Czech Republic shares the same values as the United States and consistently supports U.S. foreign policy priorities. It contributes to the war on terrorism in many ways, including the deployment of troops to Afghanistan and Iraq, and prevention and intelligence efforts. The Czech Republic treats the United States as a full partner offering it all the privileges shared by democratic allies, while the United States applies different standards to EU allies, thereby undervaluing small democracies. Only the U.S. Congress has the authority to solve this issue. Although the two currently proposed legislative acts are a positive sign that some in the U.S. Congress recognize the importance of including EU allies in the Visa Waiver Program, many members of Congress are not aware of the current double standard in U.S. foreign policy. Only with their support can real change occur. Please contact your members of Congress to explain this discrepancy and tell them that the Czech Republic's participation in the Visa Waiver Program is important to you. Tell your friends and family to do the same. For your convenience a sample letter is enclosed. Just sign and address the letter and send it directly to your representative at his or her home office.

### *General Information*

#### *What is the Visa Waiver Program and what are its current requirements?*

The VWP enables citizens of certain countries to travel to the United States for stays of 90 days or less without a visa. The program was established in 1986 to promote better relations with U.S. allies, eliminate unnecessary travel barriers, and stimulate tourism.

Currently, 27 countries participate in the VWP—Andorra, Austria, Australia, Belgium, Brunei, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

To participate in the VWP, countries must meet criteria set forth in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) (U.S.C. 1187), the Border Security Act, and the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act (EBSVERA). They require that:

- Governments provide reciprocal 90-day visa-free travel for U.S. citizens.
- Governments issue secure machine-readable passports that contain biometric identifiers.
- Governments certify that they report lost or stolen passports on a timely basis to the U.S. Government, and do so in practice.
- The country must have a very low non-immigrant refusal rate.
- The incidence of foreign nationals traveling as nonimmigrant visitors who are denied admission, withdraw their application, or violate the terms of VWP admission is less than 2 percent of the total number of non-immigrant nationals traveling to the U.S. during the previous fiscal year.

The INA also requires that the Department of Homeland Security evaluate the effect that a country's designation as a VWP participant would have on U.S. law enforcement and security interests, including enforcement of immigration laws and the existence and effectiveness of extradition agreements and procedures. For a country to be designated as a VWP participant, a determination must be made that U.S. interests would not be compromised. Specific factors considered in such a review are not established, but have included political and economic stability, security and law enforcement threats, cooperation with the United States on law enforcement issues, and nationality and citizenship laws. For more VWP information, visit [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### *Where can I find a list of mailing addresses or public e-mail addresses for members of Congress?*

All representatives and senators are listed on [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) or [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov). Entering your ZIP code will lead you to your representatives' Web sites where you can find their mailing addresses. To contact them by e-mail, each representative's Web site generally has a "Contact" link which allows you to type in your message and send it directly to their office.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Since 1989 the Czech Republic has been a fully democratic society participating as a reliable ally. It stands shoulder to shoulder with the United States on foreign policy priorities, contributing to anti-terrorist operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other trouble spots, and to terrorism prevention and deterrence. It shares our values and is committed to spreading democracy worldwide. Czech citizens enjoy one of the fastest growing economies in the world, and all the opportunities of European Union (EU) membership including an expanded labor market and rewarding work opportunities close to home. It treats the United States as a full and equal partner, offering us all the privileges of democratic partnerships, including no visa requirement for U.S. citizens traveling to the Czech Republic. In return, the United States imposes a visa requirement on Czech citizens, while applying different standards to other EU allies. This double standard can't help but signal that we undervalue some of our best democratic friends.

I am asking you to include the Czech Republic in the U.S. Visa Waiver Program. As a leader who recognizes the strategic importance of building strong coalitions, you can ensure that Congress adopts the appropriate legislation that will open the Visa Waiver Program to the Czech Republic. The visa waiver issue is important to me as your constituent, and as a concerned citizen of the United States. I believe we cannot continue to treat certain close allies as strangers while favoring others. This discrepancy in U.S. policy divides us from our friends and unites our enemies, adversely affecting our safety, tourism, student exchanges, and the all-important people-to-people contacts on which close bilateral relations are built.

Please help include the Czech Republic in the Visa Waiver Program—a program designed to promote better relations with our allies. With the courage of your leadership, we can remove this last barrier to otherwise excellent U.S.-Czech relations and demonstrate that we value and respect our Czech friends as full and reliable members in our family of freedom-loving nations.

With warm regards,

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_