



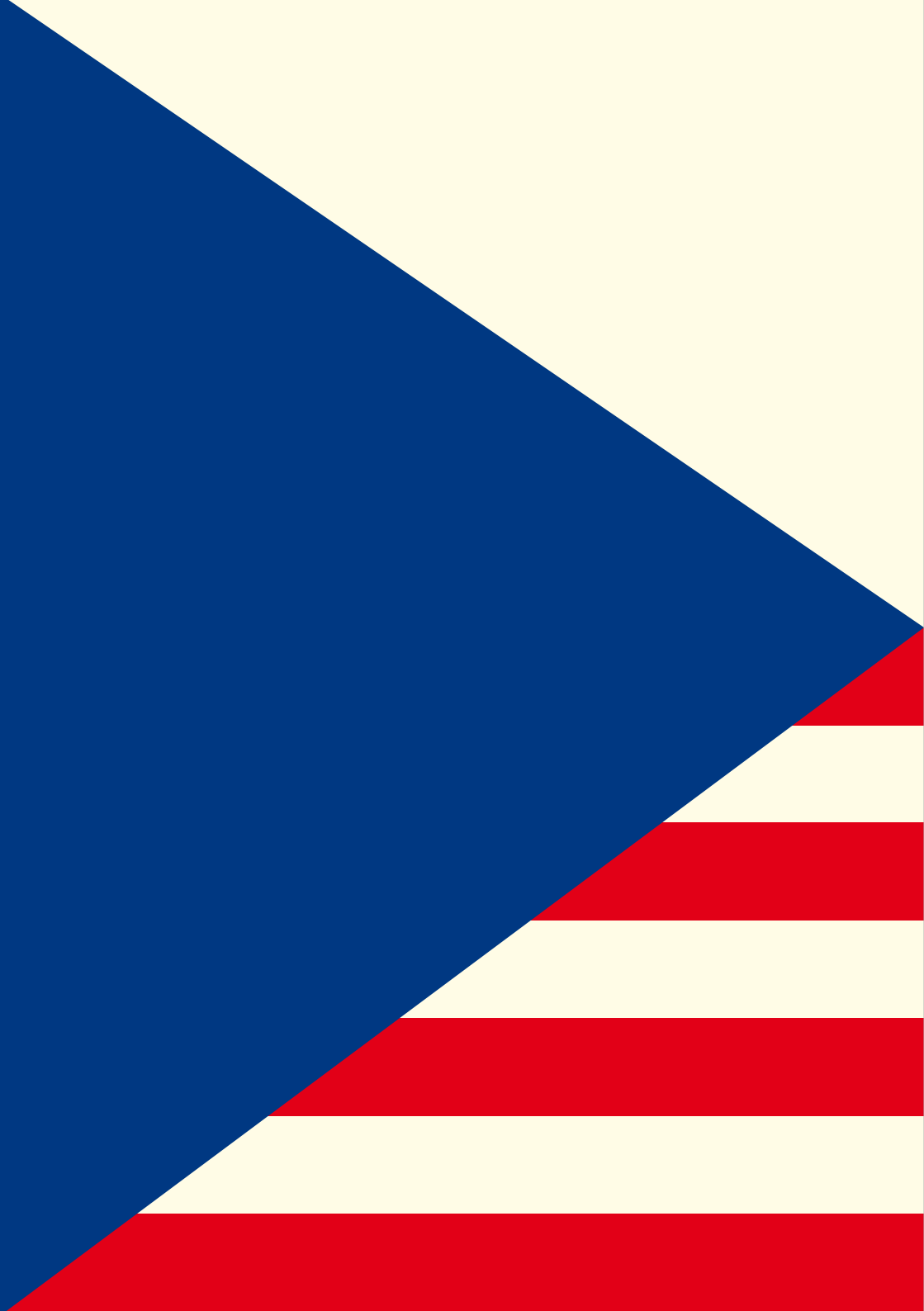
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
of the Czech Republic

# The Lion and the Eagle: Czech-American Relations through the Eyes of Envoys

Symposium  
of Ambassadors of the United States of America  
to the Czech Republic and Czechoslovakia  
and Czech and Czechoslovak Ambassadors  
to the United States of America

*Czernin Palace / Prague  
October 7, 2011*





## Outline)

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For the past century Czech-American relations have been marked by dramatic and often historic bursts of intensity, alternating with long periods of inertia, indifference and official hostility. The crucial role of the United States at the birth of Czechoslovakia was followed by two decades of American isolationism. The return of the United States to Europe at the end of World War II, the direct involvement of American troops in the liberation of the western part of the country and the generous offer of the Marshall plan to Czechoslovakia were abruptly cut off by the fall of the Iron Curtain. In 1968, the brief thaw of the bilateral relationship was reversed by the cold steel of the Russian tanks even before it could have had a visible effect. From this perspective, the period immediately before, during and following the Velvet Revolution of 1989 has been probably the longest time of a sustained American interest in matters Czech, and of a reciprocal Czech enthusiasm for things American. During this time the United States played an indispensable role in supporting the process of democratization and reintegration of the Czech Republic in the Western structures, the Atlantic Alliance first and foremost. This period now seems to be drawing to a close, although in a somewhat less dramatic manner than in the previous instances.

This very rough historical outline begs the question of whether there exist any lasting American interests in Central Europe in general and the Czech Republic in particular and Czech interests in maintaining a close relationship with the United States.

The explanations that have been offered, at one time or another, to account or to argue for, a strong bilateral relationship between the two countries fall into three categories. The first, usually the

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least durable, consists of factors of sentimental nature drawn from the histories of the two countries. The role of the United States and President Wilson at the birth of Czechoslovakia at the end of World War I, the strong American ties and leanings of President Masaryk, the presence of the American troops as liberators on the territory of Czechoslovakia at the end of World War II, the American sympathies for the Prague Spring and the Velvet Revolution, the American empathy for and the support of Czechoslovak democratic opposition during the bleak years of “normalization” and the contributions of Americans of Czech origin to American culture, academia, industry and politics are some of the factors that come to mind.

The second category consists of value-based interests the two countries have in common. This category is obviously also subject to change as the values in question may themselves change although the points of inflection are relatively infrequent and far in between. The crucial points in this respect are the establishment of a democratic government in pre-war Czechoslovakia, its demise in the wake of a totalitarian onslaught and the subsequent half a century of autocratic, foreign-based, semi-democratic and totalitarian governments, and the restoration of democracy in 1989. Other, less conspicuous factors have also played a role. The modest but unmistakable value-based exceptionalism of Czechoslovak and Czech foreign policy, in particular under Presidents Masaryk and Havel, its vocal advocacy of democracy and human rights in other parts of the world based on moral or even religious precepts, its tendency to see the “Czech question” as a European or global question, is distinctly reminiscent of “the city on the hill” rhetoric of some of the founders of the American republic.

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Finally, there are the “hard” factors of geography and geopolitics. Throughout the last century, it has been a shared interest of the two countries to prevent the domination of Europe by a single power, which could then act as a hegemon with respect to its neighbors on the continent and as a major aggressive power with respect to the rest of the world. In the case of the Czechs, it has been an existential interest for much of this time. The American presence in Europe and the emergence of a system of collective defense and collective security in NATO and OSCE, of which both countries are members, is an expression of this interest, which however may be gradually losing in weight and importance as other threats and would-be hegemons emerge in other parts of the world. However, as these new large players in international politics may also offer different social models, political systems and value hierarchies, there will still exist between the two countries a shared interest to nurture, develop and protect the way of life we sometimes think of as our civilization. This kind of value-based geopolitics is in the end as real and rational as the geopolitics based on balance-of-power, access to resources or military considerations.

AMBASSADOR  
**MICHAEL ŽANTOVSKÝ**

## Program)

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09.30 – 10.00	Registration of the Participants
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10.00 – 10.10	Opening Remarks Mr. Jiří Schneider, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs – State Secretary for European Affairs of the Czech Republic
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10.10 – 11.20	Panel Discussion - part 1 Q & A
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11.20 – 11.40	Coffee Break
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11.40 – 13.00	Panel Discussion - part 2 Q & A
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13.00 – 14.30	Buffet Lunch
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## Ambassadors)



### *William Luers*

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William Luers was Ambassador of the United States of America to Czechoslovakia from 1983 to 1986. In 1986 he became President of The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. In 1999 he became President of the United Nations Association of the U.S.A. and since 2009 he has been an adjunct professor at a number of Universities in the U.S. Prior to his 1986 move to New York, Ambassador Luers had a 31-year career in the Foreign Service. In addition to Prague, he was Ambassador to Venezuela (1978-1982) and served in Italy, Germany, the Soviet Union, and in the Department of State. Born in Springfield, Illinois, Ambassador Luers received his B.A. from Hamilton College and his M.A. from Columbia University following four years in the United States Navy.



### *Michael Žantovský*

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Michael Žantovský was appointed Czechoslovak Ambassador to the United States of America in July 1992. In January 1993, he was reappointed as Czech Ambassador and held the position until February 1997. Ambassador Žantovský studied psychology at the Charles University in Prague and at Mc Gill University in Montreal, Canada. He is also a writer, journalist, teacher and translator. In November 1989, he was a founding member of the Civic Forum. In January 1990, he became the press secretary and spokesman for President Václav Havel. He was also the political director of the President's office. In November 1996, he was elected to the Czech Senate. In 1997 and in 2001 he was elected President of the Civic Democratic Alliance, a parliamentary political party. He completed his term in the Senate in 2002 and returned to Foreign Service. In July 2003, he was appointed by the President to serve as Ambassador to Israel. Currently, he serves as Ambassador to the United Kingdom.

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### Alexandr Vondra

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Alexandr Vondra served as Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the United States of America from 1997 to 2001. He is presently Minister of Defense of the Czech Republic. Previously, Mr. Vondra also served as Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs (2007 – 2009) and Foreign Minister (2006). Mr. Vondra also served as a Foreign Policy Advisor to President Václav Havel and the First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. He is a former Transatlantic Fellow at the German Marshall Fund. In 1989, he was the spokesman for the human rights group Charter 77 and co-founder of the Civic Forum in Czechoslovakia. Mr. Vondra earned a Doctorate of Natural Sciences (RNDr.) from the Charles University in Prague.



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### John Shattuck

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John Shattuck served as Ambassador of the United States of America to the Czech Republic from 1998 to 2000. John Shattuck, an international legal scholar and human rights leader, became the fourth President and Rector of Central European University on August 1, 2009. Before coming to CEU, he was CEO of the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation, Boston, and Senior Fellow at Tufts University, where he taught human rights and international relations. He also served as Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor under President Clinton. Prior to his government service, President Shattuck was a Vice-President at Harvard University. Shattuck's career began at the American Civil Liberties Union. He is the author *Freedom on Fire*, a study of the international response to genocide and crimes against humanity in the 1990s, and *Rights of Privacy*.



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### Martin Palouš

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Martin Palouš was Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the United States of America from 2001 to 2005. Ambassador Palouš is Director of Václav Havel Library in Prague and Senior Fellow at School of International and Public Affairs at Florida International University in Miami. During his diplomatic career he also served as Czech Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York (2006 - 2011), and Czechoslovak and Czech Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. Being one of the first signers of Charter 77, he served as spokesman for the human rights group. In 1989, he became also a founding member of the Civic Forum. He was elected to the Federal Assembly in 1990. Martin Palouš studied Natural Sciences, Philosophy and Law. He received his Ph.D. in Public International Law from Masaryk University in Brno. He held a number of teaching positions and is author of numerous publications both at home and abroad.



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### Craig Roberts Stapleton

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Craig Stapleton served as Ambassador of the United States to the Czech Republic from August 2001 to December 2003. Ambassador Stapleton is former President of Marsh and McLennan Real Estate Advisors of New York (1982 – 2001). He has served on the board of directors for several companies including Allegheny Properties, Metro PCS, TB Woods and Winston Partners. During the administration of George H. W. Bush, Ambassador Stapleton sat on the Board of the Peace Corps. In 2004, he was the Connecticut State Chairman for the Bush-Cheney reelection campaign. In June 2005 he was appointed Ambassador to France and served until July 2009. From 1989 to 1998 Stapleton co-owned the Texas Rangers baseball team. In July 2009, he became a co-owner of the St. Louis Cardinals.



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### *William J. Cabaniss, Jr.*

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William Cabaniss was sworn in as Ambassador of the United States of America to the Czech Republic by Secretary of State Colin Powell in Washington, D.C. on December 9, 2003. He arrived in Prague on January 9, 2004, and presented his credentials to President Klaus on January 13, 2004. He served as Ambassador until October 2006. Prior to his nomination as Ambassador by President George W. Bush, Mr. Cabaniss was a successful business, civic, and political leader in Birmingham, Alabama. In August, 2004, Mr. Cabaniss was inducted into the Alabama Academy of Honor, and in October 2006, he was inducted into the Alabama Business Hall of Fame.



### *Petr Kolář*

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Petr Kolář served as Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the United States of America from 2005 till 2010. He graduated from Charles University Faculty of Arts in 1986 in ethnography and librarian studies. In the late 80s and early 90s he held several research positions, including fellowships to the Woodrow Wilson International Center (1991) and the University of London's Institute of Historical Research (1992). Since 1993, he has worked for the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, holding directorships from 1993 to 1996. He was an advisor the Czech president V. Havel on the issues of European integration and the Balkans (1998-99). Between 2003 and 2005, Petr Kolář served as a Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for bilateral relations. He also held the post of Czech Ambassador to Sweden (1996 - 1998) and Ireland (1999 - 2003). He is currently Ambassador to Russia.



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### *Norman L. Eisen*

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Norman L. Eisen is the current Ambassador of the United States of America to the Czech Republic. From January 2009 to January 2011, he served in the White House as Special Counsel to the President for Ethics and Government Reform. Prior to that, he was the Deputy General Counsel to the Obama-Biden Presidential Transition. Before entering the Administration, Ambassador Eisen was a partner in the Washington, D.C. law firm Zuckerman Spaeder. He spent almost two decades at the firm. Ambassador Eisen is the co-founder of Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), a government watchdog group. Between college and law school, the Ambassador served for three years as an Assistant Director of the Los Angeles office of the Anti-Defamation League, a national civil rights organization. Ambassador Eisen received his J.D. in 1991 from Harvard Law School and his B.A. from Brown University in 1985, both with honors.



### *Petr Gandalovič*

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Petr Gandalovič is the current Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the United States of America. From 1997 to 2002, he served as Consul General of the Czech Republic in New York. Prior to this posting, he was Director General of the Economic and Information Section at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2002, he was elected as Mayor of the City of Ústí nad Labem. From 2006 until 2011, he was Member of the Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of the Czech Republic. During this period, he served on the Agriculture Committee and Foreign Committee. In 2006, Ambassador Gandalovič was appointed Minister of Regional Development and Minister of Agriculture from 2007 to 2009.











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