

CZECH the NEWS

Newsletter of the Embassy of the Czech Republic

Special Edition



Photo courtesy of Pavel Vrzada

The public places candles in St. Wenceslas Square in remembrance of Vaclav Havel.



Photo courtesy of Pavel Vrzada

Contents:

Message from the Ambassador....	2
NED Hosts Memorial Event Honoring Havel.....	2
Memorial Service Planned at the Basilica.....	3
Message from the Dalai Lama.....	3
Community Signs Book of Condolences.....	4
Message from U.S. President Obama.....	4
Havel's Life Remembered.....	5
Havel Exhibition on View at Embassy.....	7
Vaclav Havel, Living in Truth by Madeleine Albright.....	7
Havel Library.....	8

Public Mourns Loss of Vaclav Havel

Tens of thousands poured into the streets of Prague to join world leaders in paying respects to the late President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Havel during three official days of mourning, culminating with a funeral in the magnificent, gothic cathedral of St. Vitus on December 23, 2011.

The ceremony was attended by forty-two heads of state and dignitaries, including Czech President Vaclav Klaus, French President Nicolas Sarkozy, German President Christian Wulff, UK Prime Minister David Cameron, former Polish President Lech Walesa, and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton with former U.S. President Bill Clinton.

Archbishop of Prague Dominik Duka shared Pope Benedict's tribute, which read in part, "Remembering how courageously Mr. Havel defended human rights at a time when these were systematically denied to the people of your country, and paying tribute to his visionary leadership... I give thanks to God for the freedom that the people of the Czech Republic now enjoy."

Czech President Vaclav Klaus, who assumed the presidency after Vaclav Havel, gave an eloquent speech, noting:

"We have suffered a great loss by his departure. A great president, politician, intellectual and artist has left us; a person who will be remembered with gratitude, reverence and respect."

Drawing upon Havel's last movie *Leaving*, President Klaus listed what ideas must not



Photo courtesy of Oldrich Svacha

Vaclav Havel passed away on December 18, 2011.

'leave' with the passing away of Havel; ideas such as "freedom is a universal principle and, if it is being taken away from anybody anywhere, it threatens our freedom too."



Photo courtesy of Tomki Nemece

Vaclav Havel and Minister Schwarzenberg

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic Karel Schwarzenberg gave his respects, focusing on President's Havel's choice to take "Truth and Love" as his motto. He stated:

"...Only love can make us listen to the truth of another person, to the truth of others. Such love teaches us to be humble, and Vaclav Havel had more humility than we all do. This is the deep meaning of the motto.... it expresses the very substance of human struggle... (a) struggle (that) will go on as long as mankind exists."

He urged the public to never give up fighting for truth and love.


The former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who was born in Czechoslovakia and a close friend of the late President, also spoke at the funeral, stating,

"As a citizen of the world, he cast light into places of deepest darkness and reminded us constantly of our obligations to one another. Vaclav Havel was fully conscious of human weakness, but we will remember him because of his refusal to accept weakness as a permanent state of being."



Photo courtesy of Oldrich Svacha

Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Vaclav Havel

Church bells rang and an air-raid siren sounded at noon in Prague to honor President Vaclav Havel's memory. 



Message from the Ambassador

“I am deeply touched by the kind words and floral tributes from many Americans who have expressed their compassion with the Czech nation mourning the loss of a man of great courage and profound wisdom. President Havel was not only one of the greatest Czechs of our times but also a true European visionary who has always kept very close to his heart our friends and compatriots in the United States. Though he will be sorely missed, the legacy of his respect for human rights and fight for democracy shall prevail.” ~ Ambassador Petr Gandalovic



NED Hosts Memorial Event Honoring Havel



Photo courtesy of David Frons



Photo courtesy of David Frons



Photo courtesy of David Frons

NED President Carl Gershman



Photo courtesy of David Frons

Former U.S. Ambassador to Czechoslovakia William Luers



Photo courtesy of David Frons

Iranian author Azar Nafisi



Photo courtesy of David Frons

Former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright



Photo courtesy of David Frons

Ambassador Gandalovic

On January 6, 2012, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in Washington, DC, in cooperation with the Czech Embassy and the Vaclav Havel Library in Prague, hosted a memorial event honoring the life and work of Vaclav Havel.

The event occurred on the 35th anniversary of the founding of Charter 77. Also, on the same date two years ago, Vaclav Havel delivered a letter to the Chinese Embassy in Prague demanding the release of Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo who was imprisoned after writing Charter 08, the Chinese version of Charter 77.

Speakers included former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, bestselling Iranian author Azar Nafisi, former U.S. ambassador to Czechoslovakia William Luers, NED President Carl Gershman, Czech Ambassador Petr Gandalovic, as well as prominent dissidents and democracy activists from all over the world. Video messages were sent by Cuban dissident Oswaldo Paya and the Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi. In the speeches, Vaclav Havel was celebrated for his courage, solidarity and inspiration, but also remembered as an informal and humble personality with a great sense of humor.



Photo courtesy of David Frons

The National Endowment for Democracy paid tribute to the life and work of Vaclav Havel. Activist Aung San Suu Kyi gave a special video message at the event.

The program in NED also featured a live video connection with a concurrent event held at the Archa Theatre in Prague. Besides Washington and Prague, events commemorating Charter 77 and Vaclav Havel as one of its three original spokesmen were held in New York, Minsk, and Soul. A requiem for Vaclav Havel was also served in Miami, FL.

Memorial Service Planned at the Basilica

A memorial service in honor and remembrance of former President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Havel will be celebrated by The Most Reverend Jan Vokal, Bishop of Hradec Kralove, in the Crypt Church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on February 12, 2012, at 10 am.

During the Mass, the choir of the Basilica will perform Dvorak's *Requiem in B-flat minor, Op. 89*, under the direction of Dr. Peter Latona.

Monsignor Jan Vokal (born September 25, 1958) was appointed Bishop of Hradec Kralove in the Czech Republic

by Pope Benedict XVI on March 3, 2011. Since 1991, he has served as official of the Secretariat of State (Section for General Affairs). From 1992–2005, he was the personal secretary of Cardinal Corrado Bafale, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. Between 1989 and 1990, he served as a parish vicar of Epiphany Church (Diocese of Preoria in the United States). In addition to his service, he earned a doctorate in *Utroque Jura* in both civil and canon law from Pontifical Lateran



Monsignor Jan Vokal



Photo courtesy of Mary E. Fazio

Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception will host a Memorial Service in remembrance of Vaclav Havel.

University in Rome in 2008. In 1995, 1997, and 2009, he was a member of the papal entourage during the pastoral visits of the Holy Father to the Czech Republic.

The Basilica of the National Shrine is located at 400 Michigan Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20017. For directions to the Basilica, please visit www.nationalshrine.com.



Message from the Dalai Lama

Statement by Dalai Lama for the January 6, 2012
NED Memorial Tribute to Vaclav Havel

With the death of my dear friend Vaclav Havel, the world has lost a great leader, whose steadfast and unflinching determination played a key role in establishing freedom and democracy in what was then Czechoslovakia.

Gentle, honest, humble and full of humor, he was motivated by the idea that truth must ultimately prevail. It was this insistence on the truth that got him into trouble with the authorities when he was young. The same quality inspired his people to choose him to be the President when they threw off totalitarianism during the Velvet Revolution, which Havel led with an extraordinary display of people power.

His abiding concern for human rights meant that once in a position of authority himself he did not indulge in rancor or vengeance, but instead worked to bring about reconciliation. He was also a strong advocate of the Tibetan people's right to justice and freedom. Not content with articulating his support in words, he also marched to show solidarity with Tibetans.

Charter 77, the Human Rights charter he co-authored, had far-reaching ramifications in his homeland and even further afield, inspiring, more recently, Charter 08 in China. Like a true friend, he went to great lengths to defend its author, Chinese human rights activist, Liu Xiaobo. Indeed, I am told that January 6th marks the anniversary of his launch of the successful campaign to give Liu Xiaobo the Nobel Peace Prize.

When he established Forum 2000, it was on the principle that it would be good if informed and concerned people, from different continents, different cultures, from different religious circles, but also from different disciplines of human knowledge could come together to talk calmly with each other. This, it seems to me, is the most appropriate way to promote democracy in non-democratic countries and to support respect for human rights and religious, cultural and ethnic tolerance in young democracies. I have assured the Forum 2000 Foundation that I shall be very happy to do whatever I can to contribute to its work and keep alive the spirit of freedom that Vaclav Havel made such efforts to promote.

President Havel honored me with an invitation to visit Czechoslovakia in February 1990, apparently his first foreign guest, soon after he became president of the country. I will never forget the emotional crowd who greeted me, men and women jubilant in their new-found freedom. President Havel himself impressed me as being utterly free of pretence and on the many occasions that we met over the years, he remained a true champion of human rights and freedom everywhere. On the first evening of our meeting, he told me how much he identified with one of my predecessors, the Sixth Dalai Lama, who had a reputation for worldliness and literary flair. More recently, I was touched that he made time for us to meet once more, in spite of his failing health, on International Human Rights Day, a week before he died. Since this time I seem to have been his last foreign visitor, I cannot help thinking that from a spiritual point of view there was a strong connection between us.

On the occasion of this service of remembrance in Washington, I would like to recall with admiration President Vaclav Havel's fundamental humanity and integrity and reflect that, in his consistent concern for the welfare of others, this was a man who lived a truly meaningful life.



Vaclav Havel with the Dalai Lama

Photo courtesy of Oldrich Stachta



Community Signs Book of Condolences

The Embassy of the Czech Republic opened its doors to the public to sign the Book of Condolences for former President Vaclav Havel from December 20-22, 2011.


During that period, hundreds of people came to the Embassy to pay their respects to the late President. Ambassador Gandalovic was the first to sign the Book of Condolences, followed by former U.S. Secretaries of State Madeleine Albright, Colin Powell, many representatives of the DC Diplomatic Corps, and numerous members of the general public. 



Photo courtesy of Martin Pzinger

Above: Former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell signs the book of Condolences for Vaclav Havel.
Below: General Skacha, Jana and Karel Kansky, and Ambassador Gandalovic pay their respects to Havel.



Photo courtesy of Martin Pzinger

Letter from the U.S. President of the United States

*Statement by U.S. President Obama for the January 6, 2012
NED Memorial Tribute to Vaclav Havel*




Photo courtesy of Oldrich Stachia

President Obama greets Vaclav Havel.

I am grateful to join with all of you in paying tribute to the life and work of Vaclav Havel, a playwright and prisoner of conscience who became a president and who continues to be an inspiration for people all over the world seeking freedom. I thank the National Endowment for Democracy, the Embassy of the Czech Republic here in Washington and the Vaclav Havel Library in Prague for organizing the NED event. I am especially pleased that Madeleine Albright – a woman who has contributed so much to both the United States and the Czech Republic – is able to share this message with you. It is fitting that this event is taking place today, on the 35th anniversary of the publication of the Charter 77, in which Vaclav Havel played such a major role. By calling the communist government to account for its failure to abide by human rights obligations that it itself had undertaken, the Charter exposed what President Havel called the “hypocrisy and lies” of the system and showed how individuals could change their society through peaceful dissent and by “living within the truth.”

Having encountered many setbacks, President Havel lived with a spirit of hope, which he defined as “the ability to work for something because it is good, not just because it stands a chance to succeed.” His peaceful resistance shook the foundations of an empire, exposed the emptiness of a repressive ideology, and proved that moral leadership is more powerful than any weapon. He demonstrated what he called “the power of the powerless” to effect real change through individual action and civil disobedience, placing him amongst giants of history from Gandhi to King to Mandela who have demonstrated the moral force of nonviolence. He played a seminal role in the Velvet Revolution that won his people their freedom and inspired generations to reach for self-determination and dignity in all parts of the world. He also embodied the aspirations of half a continent that had been cut off by the Iron Curtain, and helped unleash tides of history that led to a united and democratic Europe. He continues to serve as a beacon to all those still struggling for freedom in our world today.

Like millions of others, I was inspired by his words and leadership, and was humbled to stand with the Czech people in a free and vibrant Hradcany Square as President. The high esteem in which Vaclav Havel was universally held was demonstrated by the dozens of world leaders and dignitaries who attended his funeral and the throngs of Czechs who lined the procession route to St. Vitus Church. I extend my condolences to President Havel’s family and all those in the Czech Republic and around the world who remain inspired by his example. Vaclav Havel was a friend to America and to all who strive for freedom and dignity, and his words will echo through the ages. His legacy continues call on all of us to live within the truth. 

Havel's Life Remembered

Vaclav Havel (October 5, 1936 – December 18, 2011) was a playwright, essayist, poet, dissident, and politician. He was not afraid to stand up in the face of adversity, and he fought for human rights that many take for granted. After the Velvet Revolution, Havel became the tenth and last President of Czechoslovakia and the first President of the Czech Republic. He was the first head of state from a former communist block to visit the U.S. and give a speech to the joint session of Congress. In his speech, he stated: **"The salvation of this human world lies nowhere else than in the human heart, in the human power to reflect, in human meekness and in human responsibility."**



Vaclav Havel

Vaclav Havel grew up in a well-known entrepreneurial and intellectual family, which was closely linked to the cultural and political events in Czechoslovakia from the 1920's to the 1940's. Because of these links, the communists did not allow Havel to study formally after having completed his required schooling in 1951.

In the first part of the 1950's, a young Vaclav Havel entered into a four-year apprenticeship as a chemical laboratory assistant and simultaneously took evening classes to complete his secondary education (which he did in 1954). For political reasons, he was not accepted into any post-secondary school with a humanities program; therefore, he opted to study at the Faculty of Economics of the Czech Technical University. He left this program after two years.

The intellectual tradition of his family compelled Vaclav Havel to pursue the humanitarian values of Czech culture,

which were harshly suppressed in the 1950's. Following his return from two years of military service, he worked as a stage technician—first at Divadlo ABC, and then, in 1960, at Divadlo Na zbradli. From 1962 until 1966, he studied Drama by correspondence at the Faculty of Theatre of the Academy of Musical Arts, and completed his studies

with a commentary on the play *Eduard*, which became the basis of his own *The Increased Difficulty of Concentration*.

From the age of twenty years, Vaclav Havel published a number of studies and articles in various literary and theatrical periodicals. His first works were presented at the Divadlo Na zbradli; amongst these was the play *The Garden Party* (1963). It soon became a component of the revivalist tendencies of Czechoslovak society in the 1960's. This civic self-awareness culminated in the historic Prague Spring of 1968. During this time, Havel not only produced other plays, such as *The Memorandum* (1965) and *The Increased Difficulty of Concentration* (1968), but was also the chair of the Club of Independent Writers and a member of the Club of [Politically] Engaged Non-Partisans. From 1965, he worked at the non-Marxist monthly *Tvar*.

In 1956, he became acquainted with Olga Splichalova, and their diverse family backgrounds attracted them to each other. After an eight-year acquaintance, they married. From that point on, Olga would accompany Vaclav through the most difficult experiences of their lives. The future President would later refer to her as his indispensable source of support.

Following the suppression of the Prague Spring by the invasion of the armies of the Warsaw Pact, Havel stood against the political repression characterized by the years of the so-called communist "nor-



Vaclav Havel writes an open letter to President Husak, 1975.

malization." In 1975, he wrote an open letter to President Husak, in which he warned of the accumulated antagonism in Czechoslovak society. The culmination of his activities resulted in Charter 77.

Published in January of 1977, it embodied the character of the Czechoslovak population which silently protested against the communist government and resultant oppression, as well as providing a name for the movement. Vaclav Havel was one of the founders of this initiative, and one of its first three spokesmen. In April, 1979, he became a co-founder of the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Prosecuted. He was imprisoned three times for his civic views, and spent nearly five years behind bars.

During this time, Czechoslovak authorities made it impossible to publish any of Havel's texts. Under the guidance of Havel's former literary agent, Klaus Juncker, the German publishing company Rowohlt, based in Reinbek near Hamburg, compiled a nearly complete publication of Havel's

works.

In the second half of the 1980's, at a time of increasing dialogue between the Soviet Union and the Western Democracies, there was perceptible increase in open dissatisfaction with the government in Czechoslovak society. The citizens became less willing to accept the repressive policies of the communist regime, which was seen in the willingness to sign the petition of "A Few Sentences," of which Havel was one of the authors. Whereas Charter 77 had only a few hundred signatories, ten thousand Czechoslovaks signed the petition.

The beginning of social change began with a peaceful demonstration of students on November 17, 1989, on the occasion of the closure of Czechoslovak post-secondary schools by the occupying Nazis. The communist regime's police force brutally suppressed this demonstration on Narodni Trida in Prague. Students and artists came to the forefront of subsequent civic uprisings. The meeting of the Drama Club of

Continued on page 6

Havel's Life Remembered

(Continued from pg. 5)

November 19th gave rise to Civic Forum, which became an umbrella group for organizations and individuals who demanded fundamental changes in the Czechoslovak political system. From its inception, Vaclav Havel became its leading figure. The social upheaval came to a climax on December 29, 1989, when Vaclav Havel, as the candidate of Civic Forum, was elected President by the Federal Assembly of Czechoslovakia. In his inaugural address, he promised to lead the nation to free elections, which he fulfilled in the summer of 1990. He was elected to the Czechoslovak Presidency a second time by the Federal Assembly on July 5, 1990.

Due to his unyielding political stance through the years of communist totality, Vaclav Havel became a recognized moral authority. The depth of his perception of the problems of civilization and his contemplation of their formulation enabled him to become very well-respected, even in the framework of his new function as Head of State, and outstanding amongst politicians.

During the course of his second term in office as President of the Czech and Slovak Federation, however, a rift between the Czech and Slovak

political representatives over the future organization of the state began to emerge. Vaclav Havel was a determined supporter of a common Federation of Czechs and Slovaks, and always used his political influence to promote it. After the July 1992 parliamentary elections, the strongest contingents failed to agree on a functional model of the Federation and, as a direct result of this, the rift between Czech and Slovak political factions widened and failed to provide Havel with the required number of votes in the presidential elections of July 3, 1992. According to Czechoslovak law, he was able to remain President for a period of time, which stretched to July 20, when, due to his inability to fulfill his oath of loyalty to the Republic in such a manner to be in line with his conviction, disposition, and conscience, he resigned the Presidency.

After leaving office, Havel retired from public life for a while. In mid-November 1992, during a time when the onset of an independent Czech state was imminent, he confirmed that he would be seeking the Presidency. The official nomination of his candidacy was submitted on January 18, 1993 by four political parties of the ruling coalition government. On January 26, 1993, the Chamber of Deputies elected Vaclav Havel to be the first President of the independent Czech Republic.

Meanwhile, his wife Olga dedicated her time primarily to charitable activities. Inspired by the work of the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Prosecuted, she founded the Goodwill Foundation in 1990, whose activities were directed at helping the mentally and physically handicapped.



Photo courtesy of Oladicek Stachta



Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Photo courtesy of Oladicek Stachta

Havel shows pictures from his speech he gave at the U.S. Congress, 1990.

She died in 1996 after a severe, prolonged illness.

The end of 1996 dealt Havel another blow—a serious medical condition in his lungs. Early detection and quick, radical action on the part of his physicians were decisive in a successful recovery. His source of support in this time of trouble took the form of his friend Dagmar Veskrnova, whom the President married shortly after his release from hospital in January 1997.

Under difficult political circumstances, he was re-elected to the Presidency by both Chambers of Parliament on January 20, 1998.

After leaving office as

President of the Czech Republic on February 2, 2003, he focused his activities on the respect of human rights worldwide, particularly in Cuba, Belarus and Burma, as well as on his literary work. As co-founder of the Dagmar and Vaclav Havel Foundation Vize 97, he supported humanitarian, health and educational projects.

For his literary and dramatic works, for his lifelong efforts and opinions, and for his position on the upholding of human rights, Vaclav Havel was the recipient of a number of state decorations, international awards, and honorary doctorates.



Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Havel Exhibition on View at Embassy

The Embassy of the Czech Republic will host a special exhibition celebrating the life of Vaclav Havel by leading Czech photographer Tomki Nemeč from February 13 to March 9, 2012.

The selection of 41 black and white photographs reveals the humor and nuances of the life of the former president. Some of the renowned pictures from Havel's life include being elected president, giving his memorable speech at the U.S. Congress, meeting the Rolling Stones, traveling to Egypt, Poland, and Spain, as well as saying goodbye to citizens at the National Theater after 13 years in office.

In the early 1990s, Nemeč served as the personal pho-

tographer for Czechoslovak President Vaclav Havel. He published a volume of photographs that constitute a unique document of Havel's first term in office.

Nemeč has received wide acclaim for his works. He has twice been awarded prizes in the World Press Photo contest and his work has been published featured in numerous prestigious periodicals, including *The New York Times*, *Time Magazine*, among many others.

The exhibition is open to the public Monday thru Thursday from 10 am-4 pm and Friday from 10 am-2 pm. To schedule an appointment, please e-mail czech_events@yahoo.com.



The photograph pictured to the left was taken by Tomki Nemeč in Sintra, Portugal in 1990. Vaclav Havel walks on the beach near Cabo da Roca, the westernmost point of mainland continental Europe.

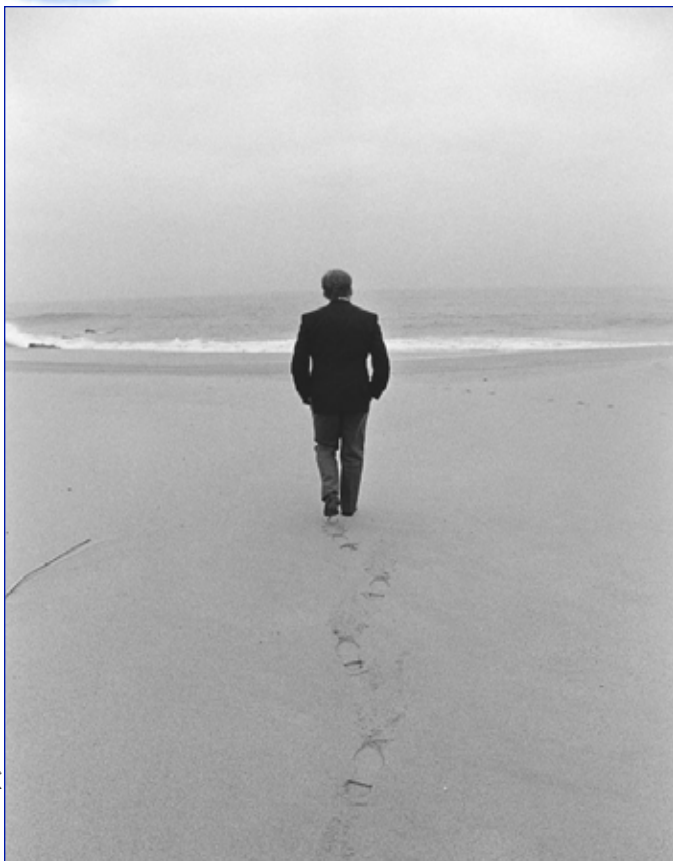


Photo courtesy of Tomki Nemeč

Vaclav Havel, Living in Truth

By Madeleine Albright | Published in *The Washington Post*, December 21, 2011

Vaclav Havel was, in some respects, an unlikely revolutionary. He wasn't much of an orator or particularly charismatic: He was shy, sometimes diffident, prone to speaking in philosophical abstractions or with an air of irony natural to a Central European intellectual. He was drawn to absurdist artists like Frank Zappa, and his own plays could be hard to follow. When he was not in prison, he lived in a huge apartment block with the name Havel chiseled over the entrance—the legacy of his bourgeois family.

Yet perhaps precisely because he was neither a rabble-rouser nor an ideologue burning with anger, Mr. Havel pioneered an entirely new form of political revolution—one that is as relevant in the tumultuous year of 2011 as it was when he first spelled it out in the mid-1970s. His simple but extraordinary idea was that the most effective way to defeat a totalitarian regime was for citizens to reject its lies and “live in truth.” That meant, first of all, telling the truth in answer to official propaganda, but also behaving as if fundamental human rights—which most dictatorships claim to respect—could be taken for granted.

This was a peaceful strategy but also one that required enormous courage. After writing his seminal essay “Power of the Powerless” in 1978, Mr. Havel spent nearly five years in prison, where his health was badly damaged. For 16 years afterward he suffered incessant monitoring and harassment from the secret police of Czechoslovakia, the most coldly repressive regime of the Soviet Bloc. He and the small band of dissidents who made up the Charter 77 movement were dismissed by most of their countrymen, and most of the outside world, as engaging but irrelevant dreamers.

The stunning success of the 1989 Czechoslovak “Velvet Revolution,” when the sight of massive crowds gathered in Prague's Wenceslas Square prompted a rotting Communist bureaucracy to collapse, proved that Mr. Havel's strategy could work. It also helped to establish a model that has spread around the world—to Serbia and Ukraine, Lebanon and Kyrgyzstan, and now—in another landmark year of revolution—Tunisia and Egypt. Such peaceful assertion of human rights doesn't always succeed. Some rulers, such as Syria's Bashar al-Assad, still respond with mass murder. In China, a movement modeled after Charter 77 and called Charter '08 has been ruthlessly suppressed—for now—though its prime author, Liu Xiaobo, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Mr. Havel never received that award, but he didn't seem to mind much. After his own nation's fight for freedom was won, he reveled in fighting for others—including Mr. Liu, Burma's Aung San Suu Kyi and the Dalai Lama of Tibet. Not all of his causes enamored him to Western liberals: He also worked assiduously for the opposition movement in Cuba, and he supported war in Iraq as “an act helping people against a criminal regime.” In his last days he tried to inspire the Russian opposition to Vladimir Putin—which, following his example, was peacefully insisting on its right to tell the truth to a government built on lies. He will be greatly missed—but the moral revolutions he conceived will go on.



Madeleine Albright signs the Book of Condolences at the Czech Embassy.

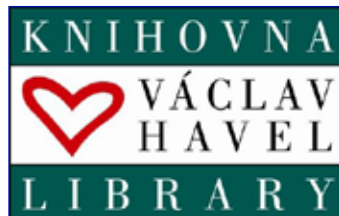
Photo courtesy of Martin Pizinger

“I really do inhabit a system in which words are capable of shaking the entire structure of government, where words can prove mightier than ten military divisions.” ~ Vaclav Havel

Havel Library

Inspired by the U.S. tradition of presidential libraries, the Vaclav Havel Library was established in Prague in 2004. The mission of the Library is to preserve the works and legacy of Vaclav Havel focusing on the battle for freedom, democracy and human rights in the second half of the 20th century.

The director of the Library is Martin Palous, former Czech Ambassador to the United States and Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Following the passing of Vaclav Havel, the Library is planning on expanding its activities



to organize conferences, student competitions, and exhibitions focused on issues embodied by Vaclav Havel.

Aside from the library, the public may also visit the permanent exhibition on the life of Havel in the Montmartre Gallery in Prague. For more information, visit www.vaclavhavel-knihovna.org.



The public pays their respects to Havel in Prague on December 21, 2011.

Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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