

## Remarks of President Barack Obama

Hradčany Square

Prague, Czech Republic

April 5, 2009

Thank you for this wonderful welcome. Thank you to the people of Prague. And thank you to the people of the Czech Republic. Today, I am proud to stand here with you in the middle of this great city, in the center of Europe. And - to paraphrase one of my predecessors - I am also proud to be the man who brought Michelle Obama to Prague.

I have learned over many years to appreciate the good company and good humor of the Czech people in my hometown of Chicago. Behind me is a statue of a hero of the Czech people - Tomas Masaryk. In 1918, after America had pledged its support for Czech independence, Masaryk spoke to a crowd in Chicago that was estimated to be over 100,000. I don't think I can match Masaryk's record, but I'm honored to follow his footsteps from Chicago to Prague.

For over a thousand years, Prague has set itself apart from any other city in any other place. You have known war and peace. You have seen empires rise and fall. You have led revolutions in the arts and science, in politics and poetry. Through it all, the people of Prague have insisted on pursuing their own path, and defining their own destiny. And this city - this Golden City which is both ancient and youthful - stands as a living monument to your unconquerable spirit.

When I was born, the world was divided, and our nations were faced with very different circumstances. Few people would have predicted that someone like me would one day become an American President. Few people would have predicted that an American President would one day be permitted to speak to an audience like this in Prague. And few would have imagined that the Czech Republic would become a free nation, a member of NATO, and a leader of a united Europe. Those ideas would have been dismissed as dreams.

We are here today because enough people ignored the voices who told them that the world could not change.

We are here today because of the courage of those who stood up - and took risks - to say that freedom is a right for all people, no matter what side of a wall they live on, and no matter what they look like.