

A Participant Observer's Report On A Conference Entitled

|Redefining Europe: Federalism and the Union of European Democracies

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Although it constitutes a time-honored and now well-accepted methodology in the social sciences, some may feel that it is difficult on occasion for a participant to be a scientific observer of an event. As much as possible, the individual is required to rise above the event and see it objectively. However, in this case I can begin as a participant observer writing this report by summarizing it with little fear of contradiction: the conference on Redefining Europe was a complete and stunning success from beginning to end. It achieved virtually every goal set for it by the Association to Unite the Democracies when the board decided to commission the conference.

Thus it was that at the end of March, 2004, scholars from across Europe and America joined politicians, students, officials and others to consider the importance of federalism in the new EU Constitution and to evaluate the role federalism could play in the expanded European Union. The setting of our sessions was a beautiful conference room grandly situated within the parliament of a newly democratic country which is to enter the European Union in just one month; there can be little doubt that the location helped ensure that the topic was relevant. The papers given, and speeches and comments they elicited, resulted in a poignant, well-received, and multi-disciplinary dialogue on the importance of federalism in the new Europe.

The sponsors of the conference included the Association to Unite the Democracies, and the Ashburn Institute, which took the lead roles in mounting the conference; the EuroAtlantis Council of Prague, without which success might have eluded us; the Prague Institute for Global Urban Development, which offered the site for two video-conference sessions, gave us a major speaker, and provided space for a beautiful reception; the English Speaking Union of the Czech Republic; the University of Northern Virginia, the "Comparative Civilizations Review", and others.

Surprisingly, the conference, which proved to be so successful, was almost sideswiped before it could begin. The parliamentary setting had been guaranteed a month ahead of the conference, but problems with the room erupted three days before the events were to be launched. Immediately, two leaders of EuroAtlantis sprung into action. Dr. Jiri

Payne, a former member of parliament, head of both Defense and Foreign Affairs Committees, and a Deputy Defense Minister was joined by John Bok, a great hero of the democratic movement (among whose many credentials are taking a lead role in the ultimately successful November 17, 1989, demonstration for democracy). Together, they went back to the parliament immediately. Following their talks with Atty. Eva Dundaeskova, a member of the Czech Parliament from Pilsen and the Civic Democrats, a revised application was submitted; the trouble, however, arose from a terrorist incident which led to heightened security everywhere in the Czech Republic. Fortunately, Parliamentarian Dundaeskova pushed hard for us, and by mid-day Thursday, just about 24 hours before we were to begin, the situation was rectified.

By my estimate, roughly 150 people were present at one time or another for the conference. For the opening ceremonies, approximately 70 people were present but most sessions consisted of about 30 – 40 participants. The final banquet, which featured a major speech by the Association to Unite the Democracy's former Chairman, Captain Tom Hudgens, was attended by about 40 people.

I: Day One Begins

As the delegates filed in to attend the sessions, they were first greeted by Dr. Rob Fisher. He was located in an antechamber right inside the entrance from the square but just before the police reception area. Dr. Fisher welcomed the delegates and gave them their packets. The packets contained information about the conference, the two books to be published, the attendees, and other matters.

The registrants then signed in an attendance sheet. Dr. Fisher answered their questions and finally directed them to the guards at the official parliamentary security entrance. It is quite a sight to see 100 people lined up for a close check by policemen; each person is anxious to enter and wants to convince the police of his or her authenticity. Although the searches were thorough, they all went well. Much of the credit for this is due to the diligent work of Marielle Reiss, who with me typed up lists of all attendees and potential attendees, by date and time of program, including identification numbers, passport numbers, birth numbers and the like. Also critical was the visible presence of Rep. Dundaeskova herself. She made sure all the attendees were processed in a timely fashion.

From the guard's booth attendees who had been screened were escorted in official groups up two flights of stairs to the meeting room. The room was huge; it is the official meeting hall for the ODS or Civic Democrats to use. It faces out on to Malostranska Namesti, a major Prague square and one of the most beautiful anywhere. Large windows were open and beautiful curtains fluttered in the spring breeze throughout the conference period. (We were graced with weather which started ok and improved to glorious by the final day.) In the center of the hall, which could easily seat at least 60 people, was a large conference desk, shaped in form of a "U". Along the sides of the room additional chairs were placed. The walls were hung with tapestries depicting birds, scenes from the Bible, and other works of art. Outside the room were restrooms and a nice kitchen for our use.

Thanks to the outstanding coordination led by AUD President Bob Frantz, refreshments were available throughout the program. John Bok led in making sure that coffee was at the ready; there were bottles of water and juice placed at convenient locations around the room, and a table was set up from which coffee and tea were dispensed. Fancy glassware and cutlery were provided.

The first session was the most attended one. That is because it was the Prague Semi-Finals of the National Public Speaking Competition for Schools, 2004. With the theme "A Borderless World", many students and their teacher/coaches showed up to compete. The affair was the perfect beginning for our conference and was ably led by Ian Tervit, Chairman of the English-Speaking Union of the Czech Republic and Deputy Head of the British International School of Prague. Three judges were appointed for the competition. They were Mitchell Young, former Vice President for Academic Affairs and Anglo American University; Atty. Nancy Sedmak, President of the Prague Institute for Global Urban Development; and Magda Sebastova of Radio Free Europe, an interpreter for former President Vaclav Havel.

All eleven students who made it to these semi-finals were judged on criteria which included substance, style and technique, questions, and general effectiveness. They hailed from high schools in Prague and in neighboring cities, including Pilzen. Most of those who witnessed the competition – this writer included – were stunned by the sophisticated and articulate nature of the student presentations. It appeared that college students, not high school students, were competing! There was close attention to the speeches and the judges had to retire for a considerable time until the two winners were selected and announced. They were presented with prizes from Macmillan Publishers and will go to the national finals later in April. The National Champion and a Runner-up will be sent to represent the Czech Republic at the International Finals in London on May 11, 2004.

II: Keynote Address

Following the student competition, the room filled again for the opening of the conference itself. There was a very warm welcome given to all by Dr. Fisher, whose years of service as a member of the faculty at Oxford University showed. He explained again the packet of materials he had distributed to all attendees. Included in the packet was a sheet entitled “Notes on Publication and the Publication Process.” It was explained that up to 12 papers will be published in a themed volume in a series which Dr. Fisher is Executive Editor. I will serve as Editor for the hard volume to emerge from this conference.

Dr. Fisher also announced that all the papers given at the conference will be published as an electronic book. “This will serve as an historical record of what happened at the conference,” he said. He asked for one of the scholars present to volunteer as the editor of the ebook. Ms. Julia White, a Fulbright Scholar, volunteered to become the editor.

We then altered the printed program somewhat so that the president of the Civic Democrats (or ODS in Czech), Mr. Mirek Topolánek, could address the group and give the keynote speech. Mr. Topolánek is also an elected senator and Vice President of the Senate of the Czech Republic. (Note: in the Czech Republic, the senators are elected from regions, while the deputies serve on the basis of proportional representation.) His remarks were recorded by Bob Frantz and transcribed; a copy is available at the AUD office. He is now revising and extending those remarks, however, and we hope to run them in our future publication.

So fascinating were Mr. Topolánek’s remarks, and the responses he gave during the subsequent question and answer period, that instead of the 20 minutes originally allocated, he was present with the group for well over one and a half hours.

Among the major points Senator Topolánek made were:

- it is difficult to provide an accurate prognosis about the future of the EU’s constitution

- the rules of the EU are not clear
- there is no clear set of checks and balances
- there is a lot of experience with European federalism, arising from the time of the Roman Empire, and not so much left to discover about federalism
- if we follow those rules already in place, the EU will work
- if we don't, we can not be sure what to expect; we are in an experiment
- there is a lot of discussion in the EU about the EU serving as a counter-balance to the US
- his party stands for strengthening Europe and for strengthening cooperation with the United States
- terrorism must be fought by a united Europe
- he expressed the hope that the conference itself (of which he was officially the "patron") would come up with interesting ideas about how to strengthen federal relations in Europe and how to strengthen relations with the United States

Questions were asked by Bob Frantz, Tom Hudgens, Joe Drew, and many others. One of the most interesting aspects of the entire period was that, although he speaks English, he felt more comfortable speaking in Czech. Simultaneous translation was provided by Dr. Jiri Payne.

Following the keynoter, and a short break, brief words of welcome were given by me and by Bob Frantz. In my remarks I thanked the sponsors and praised John Bok, Dr. Jiri Payne, Marielle Reiss, Mitchell Young; Martin McGoldrick, Sen. Topolaneck, Tom Hudgens, and Bob Frantz. In addition I noted that the famous Hussite king of the Czech people, George of Podebrady, called for an organization much like the EU shortly after he was elected king in 1458. European union has been a lodestar for the Czechs for hundreds of years. I also indicated the strengths of federalism from a Madisonian perspective and called for the admission of new states to the United States – Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, the District of Columbia, and Guam. I also said that AUD should lead a push for a master's and even a doctorate in federal studies.

Bob Frantz also welcomed the delegates. He noted the distinguished history of the Association to Unite the Democracies, going back to the origins in Clarence Streit's book Union Now. He mentioned many of the prominent individuals who have been associated with our organization over the years and praised the leadership today. He cited the work of Captain Hudgens, Merv Strickler, Menko Rose, George Brooks, Bob Stuart, Bob Maddex, and others. Bob said that this would be the first of a series, we hoped, and that the association could help to facilitate cooperation amongst the European states. He noted the presence of many graduate students in the room and said that AUD hoped to be able to use new technologies to enable scholars and others around the world to exchange views on subjects critical to cooperation amongst the democracies. He said AUD favored the expansion of the European Union and was delighted to be present in Prague at this auspicious occasion.

Next we moved to a speech by Dr. Jiri Payne, head of the EuroAtlantis Society of Prague. It was entitled "Splitting the Czechoslovak Federation." Dr. Payne played a key role in the negotiations that led to the break-up of Czechoslovakia and the creation of two new countries, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic.

Beginning with the service of the Czech legions abroad, the new state of Czechoslovakia had to create a legal structure based on at least two systems and possibly more of them – the Hungarian antecedents, important in Slovakia, and the Austrian structures, important to the Czechs, were especially powerful legal systems.

He made many dozens of important points, the most central of which are the following:

- the constitution developed in 1968 under the communists created a federal system with two members; typically, two member federations do not work well
- it was thought that the Communist Party would resolve all problems between the Czechs and the Slovaks. In essence there was no real mechanism for this and the constitution wasn't designed for a democracy
- Dr. Payne made sure that the Czech constitution which he helped draft included checks and balances
- for a federation to work there must be power to make decisions when the constituent sides don't agree
- the Slovaks insisted (after the Velvet Revolution) that Slovak law superceded federation law; this made federation impossible
- a model couldn't be found for a working federation and the priority became how to split peacefully, with no war, and in a constitutional way
- thousands of decisions were involved in the split up -- how should the post office or the railways be split, for example
- Dr. Payne worked with Slovaks on the treaties which would end the federation amicably
- if a federation isn't working, and there are no checks and balances, it is terrible for the people in the country

He then went on to analyze what difficulties federation poses theoretically for the European Union. In his opinion, the European Union is now where Czechoslovakia was when the Slovaks said that they were part of the federation but insisted upon supremacy for their foreign policy and law. The EU says that there is a common foreign policy but it doesn't declare this to all parliaments in the world. Also, as a citizen, to whom can Dr. Payne direct questions about EU policy? The EU system is not completely democratic, the Commission is powerful, and he's not sure it is really a federation at this point. He sees no one suggesting that the member states of the UN from Europe should withdraw from the UN in favor of an EU delegation. Dr. Payne praised the merits of NATO, where EU countries participate as independent countries. Who is representing Europe?

To him, federalism in the EU will be more complicated than it was in the old Czechoslovakia. He sees problems in the areas of the agricultural policy (particularly for the Poles), the economy, science (there are 15 years difference here between the EU and

the US, he asserted), and many other topics. Moreover, Greece was invited to join the EU because Germany had a surplus and could help out, but this is no longer the case. Who will assist the newly accessing countries? Today, there remain conflicts in Germany between the Ossies and the Wessies. The German nation is divided and will be so for quite a while. It is even more distant when we speak of the newly accessing nations and true union with the older EU countries. He fears that the old timers will not accept the Czechs, the Poles and the others as partners. So, he is concerned.

His speech occasioned many questions. I've written them down, but the overall theme was that EU accession and EU federalism are unsettled areas for citizens and for political leaders in Europe.

III: Day One Concludes

After a short break, we went to our first scholarly panel, our student winners. I will not report in depth on the individual papers and comments, because they form the substance of the book to follow. The topic of the session was "Democracy and Security Issues."

The student panel was greeted by Bob Frantz. He noted with pleasure the success the students had achieved by winning the opportunity to present at this session. Each student then read a paper; questions and answers followed.

Those who read papers were:

- Ms. Priyanka Ghosh, of Northwestern University, who asked the question "Despite the End of the Cold War and the Leadership of NATO, Why Does Europe Need a Common Foreign and Security Policy?"
- Ms. Rebecca Rogers, of American University, who spoke on "Enlargement and European Defense After September 11."
- Ms. Barbara Jaworek, of the University of Economics in Poznan, Poland, who analyzed on "Issues of Sovereignty"; and
- Mr. Kalin Ivanov, of New York University, who discussed "Rethinking EU Enlargement and Democracy."

These papers were so popular – and the comments so vigorous -- that we ran straight through until 7 p.m.

At the end, the entire body moved to the Prague Institute for Global Urban Development, on the Old Town side of Prague. There, Bob Frantz and Marielle Reiss had prepared a very nice reception. The reception, which we thought would last just a half hour or so, ran on for many hours, until late in the evening.

A highlight of the reception was a discussion which featured AUD members and others asking John Bok and Jiri Payne about the events they witnessed during the Velvet Revolution. Although I have read quite a bit about this period, I learned a great deal

during the interview. It got so impressive that Bob Frantz took a video camera and recorded the last part of the session.

IV: Day Two

Saturday's session began with a major speech by Dr. Maiken Umbach. She is an associate professor at the University of Manchester and has been affiliated with the Center for European Studies at Harvard. Her topic was "Federalism in Europe – History and Future Options."

The paper, which will be published in the forthcoming book, was very well received. It provided an intellectual basis for the rest of the discussions. The main point was that there are historic antecedents for federalism in Europe. This is not a new phenomenon.

Dr. Umbach was followed by our second scholarly panel. This was on "The New EU: Implications for Political Theory." I chaired it. Those who presented papers were the following:

- Mr. Wren Nasr of the Interdisciplinary Center for Comparative Research in the Social Sciences in Paris. He read a paper written by Dr. John Crowley entitled "Scaling Europe: European Democracy and Tension Between Function and Participation."
- Ms. Joelle Schmitz of McGill University in Montreal, Canada. She spoke on "External Cures, Internal Ills: A Federalist Critique of a Committee of the Parliaments."
- Dr. Isabel David of the Instituto Superior de Ciencias Sociais e Politicas at the Technical Institute of Lisbon, Portugal. Her paper was entitled "From Dialectics to Political Theology: Rethinking Complexity in Federalism." And
- Dr. Ivana Simikova of the Technical University in Liberec, Czech Republic, and the University of Pittsburgh. Her topic was "Subsidiarity in the Light of the European Model of Federalism."

All papers elicited extensive comments and the time allocated for debate often was extended. This led to critical comments in the evaluation questionnaire; it was requested that in the future a strict timing be followed. On the other hand, history, sociology, theology, anthropology, political science, and many other subjects entered the lists during this debate. These experts on federalism had much to say about where federalism is heading in the EU.

A lunch was then provided by the association. It was served in the conference room. The police were not anxious to have delegates entering and leaving the building, since it made the security arrangements more difficult. Mitchell Young and Rob Fisher were therefore commissioned to bring in sandwiches.

Following lunch a third scholarly panel was held. This addressed a related topic, “The New EU: Implications for Social Theory.” It was chaired by Dr. Boguslawa Bedardczyk; she is the dean of the Faculty of International Relations at the Andrej Frycz Modizewski College in Kracow, Poland.

The following papers were then presented:

- Dr. Christina Maria Gheorghe of the European Studies Faculty at Babes-Bolyai University, Romania, spoke on “The State and the Challenges on Modernity.”
- Wren Nasser read a paper prepared for the conference by Dr. Elise Feron at the Interdisciplinary Center for Comparative Research in the Social Sciences in Paris. It was entitled “The Emergence of a European Political Class: Sociological Career Paths and Identity Profiles.”
- Next, Olivier Ruchet, a Ph.D. candidate at the Institut d’Etudes Politique de Paris, spoke on “Debating the Democratic Deficit: the Question of Legitimacy in the EU.”
- Finally, for this panel, Prof. Marina Vancatova, from the Faculty of Humanities at the Charles University in Prague, spoke on “Alms Giving in Modern Urban Society: Beggars / Givers Interactions in Two Post-Socialist Societies.”

Once again, the time allocated for comments was fully utilized.

After a short break, the final session of the day at the Parliament Building was held. This featured a talk by Dean Bedardczyk. It was entitled “The European Constitutional Heritage.” In her opinion there is a considerable constitutional heritage and the EU has plenty of experience within Europe to draw upon.

Most of those in attendance indicated that they were fascinated by the breadth and depth of the papers.

The conference then moved on to the Prague Institute for Global Urban Development. There the finals of the video-conference debates by graduate students at universities in the U.S., Poland, and Ukraine were moderated. The students debated EU Enlargement and Trans-Atlantic Relations; they had a theoretical problem related to Turkey, the U.S., Iraq and military intervention to deal with. Difficulties with the machinery retarded the ability of the judges to see all four institutions simultaneously. However, the judges declared that all of the participants were outstanding and the prize was distributed four ways. Each of the participants is to receive an official certificate attesting to the outstanding nature of the presentations and argumentation.

Many of the attendees were impressed with the possibilities offered by the technology. A discussion was opened on a wide variety of topics amongst the conference attendees who were present. After the graduate student debates were over, and the discussion attained full speed, it was realized that it was time for dinner. The delegates then trooped back to the Mala Strana side of the river for a rousing and enjoyable repast with other colleagues.

V: Monday Morning

The final day of the conference began with a very well-received speech given by Dr. Marc Weiss, Chairman of the Board of the Prague Institute. He made many points that occasioned comments and questions. Among them were the following:

- This is the urban millennium. We have just seen the majority of the Earth's dwellers in cities for the first time ever.
- The biggest challenge of the 21st Century will be to make urban life livable.
- The more urbanized a country is, the more prosperous it is.
- The greatest resource and asset value a nation has is its people.
- Only cities promote the two elements needed for innovation – specialization and diversity.
- To succeed, cities need many kinds of specializations mixing together.
- Metropolitan Economic Strategies require partnerships involving public and private spheres plus civic leadership.
- Regionalism can often be “functional” – see sports, the leading edge of a borderless world.
- Economics will soon follow this pattern.
- Economic growth requires environmental protection and social equity. What is most important to economic prosperity is an educated, skilled, motivated workforce.
- How do you keep people? Quality of life. A city needs a good environment.
- Social equity is central. The example of “Jo’burg 2030” was given. Impediments to its success include crime, grime, and HIV.
- Community Productivity Index will measure how poor people give more than they get back.
- Polycentricity – spreading wealth around Europe by nation; more of economic activity in Europe will gravitate to the cities; sprawl comes from polycentricity in an urban setting.
- China has completely adopted the approach recommended by the Prague Institute.

Following a vigorous discussion of these points, the fourth panel, entitled “Constitutional Law and the EU” was convened. Chaired by Dr. Payne, an author of the Czech constitution, it featured the following:

- MSc. Zoran Oklopčić of the Department of Constitutional Law at the University of Zagreb, Croatia spoke on “European Constitutionalism: Assumptions and Consequences.”
- Attorney Mark Gyandoh of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, spoke on “Incorporating the Principles of Co-Equal Branches Into the European Constitution: Lessons to be Learned From the United States.”

These were so well received that it was decided to break for lunch and then resume the panel. During the lunch period delegates were given a great treat: they were recipients of a full tour of the parliamentary buildings. This was given rave reviews.

Following the tour and lunch, the final scheduled speaker of the panel gave his remarks.

- This was Prof. Fausto Capelli. He is the Director of the European College of Parma, in Italy. His remarks called for action on the part of the Association to Unite the Democracies in the case of constitution-building in Iraq.

Many comments ensued on the nature of democracy in a setting where bureaucrats or technocrats have power. In his remarks Dr. Payne stated that if there is no opposition, there is no democracy.

The fifth scholarly panel, “European Civil Society and Cooperation,” then began. Chaired by Dr. Payne, it featured the following:

- Mirella Eberts of the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto, Canada. She spoke on the topic “The Roman Catholic Church and Poland’s Accession to the EU.”
- David Landau of the European Politics and Society Program, St. Anthony’s College, Oxford University, UK, spoke on “Testing the Limits of EU Integration: Minority Rights.”
- Finally, Julia White, a Ph.D. candidate at Syracuse University and a Fulbright grantee in the Slovak Republic, spoke on “Inclusive Education as a Human Right and Slovakia’s Accession to the European Union.”

The final panel, the sixth, was entitled “Cultural Identity in the New Europe.” I chaired it. The speakers and their topics were:

- Prof. Xenophon Contiades, Scientific Director of the Center for European Constitutional Law, Athens, and Professor at the Democritus University of Thrace, Greece. He addressed the topic “Democracy as a Fundamental Principle of the European Union Institutional Order.”
- Next, Lisa Vanhala of the European Politics and Society program at Hertford College, Oxford University, UK, spoke on “Sovereignty, Stateless Nations, and the European Order: Seeking Statehood.”
- Finally, the two Oxford University delegates, David Landau and Lisa Vanhala, joined forces for the last presentation, entitled “Circumventing the States? The Demands of Stateless Nations, National Minorities, and the Proposed European Constitution.”

Surprisingly, the panels were so fascinating, and the question periods so gripping, that the conference participants lasted through to the Final Banquet was set to begin. In the meantime, however, a number of delegates had gone to the Prague Institute for Global Urban Development. There, under the leadership of Bob Frantz, and chaired by Prof. Mitchell Young, an international high school videoconference was held. Students from

Mexico, the Dominican Republic, the United States, Canada, and the Czech Republic joined to discuss the topic “Building Sustainable Democracies.” They interviewed a number of our delegates on the subject of democracy. Among the respondents were Mr. Frank Burgdörfer from Germany, Dr. Ivana Simikova from the Czech Republic, and Ms. Marielle Reiss from France. Two students from Bosnia and Russia, both attending the British International School of Prague, significantly contributed to the debate. Leading the discussion from the Wilmington, Delaware, Friends Academy was Rick Grier Reynolds. The conference was dramatically “bridged” through new facilities run by Tony DePrince and Reno Domenico in New Jersey. Afterward, many of those present indicated that it was a superlative session. The teacher and students from Prague were so intrigued that the conference’s next session may well be held at the British International School of Prague.

VI: Closing Session

The closing event was a dinner sponsored by the Association to Unite the Democracies. It was attended by about 40 people. After a series of warm-up speeches and other unifying events (such as a book giveaway – the books were a gift from Dr. Rob Fisher and attendees were queried on such items as U.S. political history) Bob Frantz took the floor as president. He praised the great work done by the former Chairman of the Board, Captain Tom Hudgens and said that it had been an honor to serve on AUD under Tom’s leadership.

In the presence of his daughter-in-law and grandson, Tom responded with a warm expression of gratitude to all who had made the meeting such a success. He alluded to the history of the Association to Unite the Democracies and he cited, by name, the current members of the Board of Directors. He gave special thanks to the conference organizers.

Then, Captain Hudgens recounted his wartime experiences. He told how he had lost three colleagues at flight school to World War II. He described how his brother, an aviator, had been shot down after sorties against the enemy in World War II. And he said that he determined then that he would work to oppose war whenever he could. He told the crowd of the wonderful book, “Union Now,” by Clarence Streit. He said that he believed that the democracies should unite and that this would help to alleviate the causes of war. He said that the United States should seek to enter the European Union and that, eventually, this union should encompass India, the Philippines, South Africa, and other freedom-loving democracies. Captain Hudgens explained that military, economic, and foreign matters could be coordinated at the union level. He asked those present to join him to work for a better world, one in which advanced democracies cooperated for the benefit of all.

Following his remarks, the crowd, obviously touched, responded in kind. He was asked to keep up the good work and he noted that, although it seems a way off now, it is possible that what he proposed will come to pass. In the meantime, he said, he hoped that

the European Union would succeed and he stated that he looked forward to additional conferences as follow-ups to the one just concluding.

VII: Post-Conference Meeting

On Tuesday, March 30, a delegation went at mid-day to thank Dr. Dundaeskova. It was she who had made our presence in the Parliament possible.

Joining in the group, led by President Robert Frantz, were: Marielle Reiss, John Bok, Dr. Jiri Payne, Prof. Martin McGoldrick, and myself. Prof. McGoldrick had to go to teach a class, but the others of us presented flowers and a gift to the parliamentarian. She invited us to a luncheon at the Democracy Club, within the parliamentary walls.

During the lunch Dr. Dundaeskova, who is also a Czech attorney, was most gracious and had kind words to say for our attendees and the purpose of our conference. She also said that she would be visiting Washington, D.C., in the next few months. President Frantz invited her to visit the Association to Unite the Democracies and proposed that we would interview her on our video conferencing equipment and seek to arrange a proper reception for her in Washington.