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Speaker Ryan: Prague, Day One: Solidarity of Western Alliance, Stronger U.S.-Czech Ties

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PRAGUE—House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) today underscored the importance of the solidarity of the Western alliance and stronger U.S.-Czech ties during a visit to mark the centennial of diplomatic relations between our two nations.

At a meeting with Prime Minister Andrej Babiš, the two leaders discussed a range of defense and economic issues as well as the decision by the U.S. and NATO allies to expel Russian diplomats following the attack on British soil. In the evening, Speaker Ryan took part in a working dinner with Prime Minister Babiš and Ambassador Stephen B. King at the Ambassador's residence.

"*As we enter the second century of U.S.-Czech relations, we are poised to further strengthen our security and economic ties*," Speaker Ryan said. *"Today's united action to expel Russian diplomats is a perfect example of how we must work together to defend our interests and values. The Western alliance, particularly through our joint efforts in NATO, has never been more critical."*

Radio Free Europe. In the afternoon, Speaker Ryan visited Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) to learn more about their work reporting in 20 countries without a fully-established free press, and particularly how they reach audiences in Russia. Ryan then sat down for an interview with RFE that focused on today's actions against Russian diplomats. "This is done in solidarity with our allies in Britain," Ryan said. "I think it's fantastic that other European nations, including the Czech Republic right here, followed suit as well." Watch the full interview.

Flag Presentation at the Glorietta. At the Glorietta pavilion overlooking the U.S. embassy and the city, Speaker Ryan presented Ambassador King with an American flag that was flown over the Capitol in honor of this centennial. The flag was raised by the embassy's Marine Detachment. During the period of communist role in Czechoslovakia, the United States kept its flag flying above the Glorietta as a symbol of our solidarity with the Czech people. Watch the ceremony.

Look Ahead. Tomorrow, Speaker Ryan will address a special session of the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of the Czech parliament. He will be the first American leader in history to address this body. Afterward, Ryan will take part in a joint press conference with Speaker Radek Vondráček. More information is available here.