Ambassador Richard W. Graber

Ambassador Richard W. Graber served as United States Ambassador to the Czech Republic from September 2006 until January 2009. As Ambassador, Rick was responsible for all matters affecting the United States in the Czech Republic and for maintaining and strengthening the historically friendly relationship between the countries. His duties included promoting increased private sector economic cooperation and investment between the countries, encouraging military to military cooperation, supporting enhanced cultural and educational exchanges and managing a 280 person embassy.

During his tenure, Rick faced issues of significant consequence. He organized, managed and served as the primary spokesman in the Czech Republic for efforts by the United States to locate a missile defense radar facility in the Czech Republic. Among other missile defense related responsibilities, Rick assisted in the negotiation of two treaties between the countries and worked extensively with the Czech Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Defense and members of Parliament to promote the project. Rick also successfully coordinated the entry of the Czech Republic into the United States Visa Waiver Program which now allows Czech citizens to travel to the United States without a visa.

Since leaving Prague, Rick has remained active in international affairs. He is currently Vice President of Government Relations for Honeywell International. He is responsible for the company’s government relations efforts in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Rick is now based in Brussels, Belgium. Prior to joining Honeywell, his law practice at Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren (“Reinhart”), one of Wisconsin’s largest law firms, included advising European companies doing business in the United States and representing American companies with business matters in Europe.

In addition to his responsibilities at Honeywell, Rick is serving as co-chairman of the “Graber-Kolar Commission”. The commission was formed and funded by the Center for European Policy Analysis, a Washington DC based think tank, to study the possible decline of relationships between the United States and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Rick is also a member of the Council of American Ambassadors.

Prior to his departure for Prague, Rick served as President and Chief Executive Officer of Reinhart. Reinhart is a 200 attorney, 500 employee full service law firm with four offices. Its headquarters office is located in Milwaukee.

Rick is very active in his community. In 2010, he is serving as Co-Chairman of the United Way campaign in Milwaukee. Last year, the campaign raised over $45 million for the Milwaukee community. He recently joined the Board of Directors of the Kern Family Foundation, a large Wisconsin based private foundation. He is a former member of the Board of Trustees of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee. Rick served for seven years as Chairman of the Republican Party of Wisconsin and as a member of the Republican National Committee. He is a former director and Vice Chairman of the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago.

Rick graduated from Duke University, magna cum laude, in 1978 and from Boston University Law School in 1981.