



**Remember Vaclav Havel:  
On the Occasion of the Visit of Madeleine Albright  
Former Secretary of State of the United States**

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg  
on September 13, 2012**



*This speech was presented during Former Secretary of State of the United States  
Madeleine Albright's lecture at FIU on September 13, 2012.*

Good afternoon. Before we begin, let us have a moment of silence for US Ambassador Christopher Stevens and his colleagues in Libya.

Ladies and Gentlemen, today is a perfect intersection of three forces. Force 1: Vaclav Havel, an individual with boundless optimism and hope- a symbol for the "Velvet Revolution." We will always be grateful for his timeless essay, "The Power of the Powerless" written in October 1978 that moved millions to reject the trivialization that they were subject to by tyrants and dictatorial governments. We will always be grateful for his presence here at FIU in 1996 when he provided comfort by assuring us that our families and neighbors would soon be reunited. At that gathering, a message from Oswaldo Paya (one of the leading opponents of Fidel Castro in Cuba) was read. Mr. Paya had just led an effort to collect signatures for a referendum on domestic reforms for Cuba. In the message, Mr. Paya praised Havel's courage. How sad that Mr. Paya recently died under mysterious, suspicious circumstances in Cuba.

A second force today is Madam Secretary of State Madeleine Albright--the first woman in the United States ever to serve as Secretary of State! We will always be grateful for Madeleine Albright's courage and for serving as Frank Calzon recently stated as a beacon to us in South Florida where so many are victims of tyranny and oppression as was her family during and after World War II. And the third force? FIU – a university not yet fifty years old that turns the impossible into the inevitable time after time in service to our community. We will always be grateful that this institution is also a beacon of hope and opportunity for our new world community to realize its American Dream!

One day it is our hope to turn the impossible into the inevitable with a Vaclav Havel Center for Human Rights and Diplomacy. Clearly today, at the center of this intersection is our commemoration of the visit here nearly fifteen years ago by President Vaclav Havel, through the presence of his friend and our modern day hero Madeleine Albright. Born in what is now the Czech Republic, Madeleine Albright is a trailblazer. She made history in 1997 when she became the first woman named to the post of U.S.

Secretary of State – making her at that time the highest ranking woman in the history of the U.S. government.

As Secretary of State, she reinforced America's alliances, advocated for democracy and human rights, and promoted American trade, business, labor, and environmental standards abroad. Prior to that, from 1993 to 1997, she served as the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations and was a member of the President's cabinet. Dr. Albright has a long and distinguished career in public service and is a professor in the Practice of Diplomacy at the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service. She also currently serves as chair of the global strategy firm Albright Stonebridge Group, and is also chair of Albright Capital Management LLC, and investment advisory firm focused on emerging markets.

Among her many achievements, Dr. Albright is the recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor. She is also a recipient of an honorary doctor of laws from FIU in 1996. We are thrilled to have Dr. Albright here with us to share her unique insight on Vaclav Havel and his impact on our world. Please join me in giving a warm welcome to Dr. Madeleine K. Albright.