

# Smith ICJS conducts conference in Prague

**I**s the separation of church and state a precondition for democracy?

That was the central issue discussed at “The Call for the New World Order: Thomas Jefferson’s Separation of Religion and State,” a scholarly conference held March 7-9 in Prague, Czech Republic, that was organized and sponsored by Monticello’s Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies.

“Since in the American political and legal culture the doctrine of the separation of church and state is so closely associated with democracy, and the Bush administration is determined to export the American model of democracy to the rest of the world, especially the Muslim Middle East, it seemed relevant to pose a number of questions,” said Andrew O’Shaughnessy, Saunders Director of the Smith ICJS. “Is separation a precondition of democracy? Is non-separation contrary to liberal democracy? By what means is democracy exported? Are current efforts to export separation consistent with Jefferson’s ideals?”

“The conference brought together scholars from many countries and a wide range of disciplines to debate these questions and other in a variety of contexts, and the papers that were presented and the discussions they prompted were very stimulating.”

The conference featured five panel sessions, all of which were held in the Archbishop’s Palace, a 16th-century

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## Prague

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structure located on Hradcany Square in the historic center of the Czech capital.

The participating scholars included Nathan J. Brown of George Washington University, Effie Fokas and John T.S. Madeley of the London School of Economics, Bernice Martin and

David A. Martin of the University of London, Ann Elizabeth Mayer of the University of Pennsylvania, Attila Molnár of Hungary's Eötvös and Pázmány Catholic universities, Robert M. O'Neil of the Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression, Jack N. Rackove of Stanford University, Adam Seligman of Boston University, Gordon S. Wood of Brown University, and Robert Fatton, Jr., A.E. Dick Howard, Peter S. Onuf, William B. Quandt, and R.K. (Ruhi) Ramazani of the University of Virginia.

The conference included a videotaped keynote address by Prince Hassan bin Talal of Jordan. The younger brother of the late King Hussein, Prince Hassan holds two degrees from Oxford University, has written seven books, and is an active proponent of interfaith dialogue.

Support for the Prague conference was provided by the Jefferson Institute of Belgrade, Serbia; the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; and the John Templeton Foundation of West Conshohocken, Pa.

Before convening in Prague, O'Shaughnessy, Onuf, Rakove, and Wood participated in a one-day workshop in Budapest, Hungary. "Legacies of Founding: The Heritage of Early American Democracy in Contemporary Times" was held March 5 at Central European University, which sponsored the event along with the U.S. Embassy in Budapest and Hungary's University of Debrecen.

Since it was established in 1994, the Smith International Center has organized and conducted more than 20 scholarly conferences at Monticello and other venues, including Paris; Berlin; London; Warsaw; Edinburgh, Scotland; Bellagio, Italy; and Salzburg,



Credit: Tourism

**Conference sessions were held in Prague's 16th-century Archbishop's Palace.**

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## Prague

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Austria. These gatherings of eminent thinkers are among the vehicles the Smith ICJS employs to advance its mission of fostering Jefferson scholarship, disseminating information about Jefferson to diverse audiences, and highlighting the currency of Jeffersonian principles in today's world.

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