

## LAUDATIO

De Scientia et Humanitate Optime Meritis

H. E. Juan Eduardo FLEMING

4th May 2009

Mr. President, Your Excellency, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

At this solemn gathering I have the honour and pleasure to recall main results and activities of Doctor Juan Fleming, ex Argentinean Ambassador in the Czech Republic, the results and activities for which the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic is decorating him the honorary medal “De Scientia et Humanitate Optime Meritis” – the highest medal of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic.

Doctor Juan Fleming is the first Ambassador and the 14th foreigner to whom this honour has been conferred on since 1989 when this medal was established – a personality whose results, merits and activities are of such extensive amount that reasonable suspicious arises whether Juan Fleming actually is not somehow analogous to the famous French mathematician Nicolas Bourbaki who was not one ingenious person but, in reality, a group of mathematicians. Judge it, ladies and gentlemen, for yourselves.

The longest part of Juan Fleming's journey through life is located in Buenos Aires. He was born there in October 8, 1946, he attended there various schools and received Master Degree at the Faculty of Economics of the Buenos Aires University in 1970. He started there his diplomatic service for Argentina as well. Then he joined the Argentinean Mission at the United Nations, a position coveted in the international community. It was at the time when the UN went through a period of important transformations: in 1977 he attended the General Assembly sessions regarding the New Economic Order -the first sessions devoted to observing international economic affairs and to provide technical co-operation among developing countries. At Mar de Plata, he was the one responsible for the United Nations Water Conference. Moreover at the New York University he completed his studies of economics. During the years 1977 up to 1979 he was a lecturer in microeconomics and on multilateral economic diplomacy. In 1995, on the occasion of the 50th UN Anniversary, he wrote the Chapter „Technical Cooperation amongst Developing Countries“ in the book „Argentinean Contributions to the UNO“. After a short period back in Buenos Aires, Doctor Fleming was posted to London as a Counsellor of the Argentinean Embassy. This was during the period of the Falklands War – the conflict which

severed diplomatic ties between the two countries. Ambassador Fleming did represent his country's interests through the Brazilian Embassy, as the British did through the Norwegians. The effort ultimately succeeded in calming the two combatants as well as in restoring diplomatic recognition. Then he acted pretty well in the Embassy of Argentina in Germany for six years.

In 2001 he came to the Czech Republic. There Doctor Fleming focused his work to strengthen relations of the Czech Republic and its neighbouring countries with Argentina. The objective was to promote cultural exchanges, business activities and human and scientific relations. In fact, it turned out, the cultural and scientific collaborations were Fleming's priority.

In Prague he enjoyed very much Nerudova street and the Prague Castle with their charming atmosphere. When he was driving a car, music of Smetana or Dvořák was usually heard. Whenever possible he took a chance to escape to the Český les to his beloved cottage.

Fleming's opinion about the Czech Republic expresses clearly his words: „It is wonderful and stimulating to be in a country with such a human face, in the country which is, in this sense, really huge and great”.

According to Ambassador Fleming relationships between various countries are based not only on their joint economic, political, cultural and scientific relations but also on their knowledge of great personalities and history. The most ideal is if several of these areas overlap. As an example of that he took the idea of Golem -the topic of poetry of the world-renown Argentinean poet, Jorge Luis Borges and the Golem legend usually connected with famous Rabbi Lowi of Prague. The idea of Golem is very rich indeed and has many interpretations. His Excellency Juan Fleming was driving force of its present interpretation -a leading person of the new cultural and scientific project which is realised by Charles University, The Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, by The Czech Technical University in Prague, The Jewish Museum and The Ministry of Culture and The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and by similar institutions from Argentinean side. In this joint project Golem is viewed as a modern computer and this gives many interesting possibilities. For instance, Golem-Computer can be associated with artificial intelligence, robotics, contemporary informatics and cybernetics but also philosophy, in general, and ethics of science, in particular.

Finally I would like to mention here yet another Fleming's merits in science – his great help to realise the so-called Pierre Auger experiment with its detector covering area of 3000 square kilometres in the Argentinean region Mendoza and with a great participation of Czech researchers and equipments. This experiment, proposed by Nobel prize laureate Professor Cronin, is devoted to study sources and particle events in the Universe with the highest energies, with

energies which are eight orders or more higher than energies of events generated via the present most powerful particle colliders. The experiment will not only detect these events but, hopefully, also clarify mechanisms of their production.

I should stress that Ambassador Fleming in all his activities has used principle that

“government is the servant of the people and not their master”.

He believes that every right implies a responsibility; every opportunity, an obligation and every possession, a duty.

We, who have had the honour and good fortune to co-work with him, admire his way of solving problems and his expertise. It is, therefore, not surprising for us that he received many awards and honours. For instance:

- Order of the Sacred Treasure in Japan,
- Legion d'Honneur et Ordre du Merite in France,
- Order of the Polar Star in Sweden,
- Orden al Mérito Civil in Spain,
- Das Grosse Verdienstkreuz in Germany,
- Order of Merit in Italy,
- Medal Artis Bohemiae Amicis of the Ministry of Culture of CR.

I am glad, ladies and gentlemen, that today to all these honours and awards there will be added another one: the highest medal of the renewed Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic „De Scientia et Humanitate Optime Meritis“ – the medal awarded for very exceptional merits for scientific and cultural growth.

Thank you for your attention.