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Václav Havel R.I.P.



Václav Havel's death yesterday is a great loss for all those who loved and admired him. For the Czech Republic, it was also a moment of 15 minutes of fame, with nearly the entire world pausing briefly to pay its respects to a fallen hero. It might be the last such moment of fame for the CR for a long while. As MP Lubomír Zaorálek of ČSSD put it so well on Czech Television, Havel gave idea and substance to the Czech Republic and determined its spiritual profile. If only we had another such Czech one day whom Europe is so proud of, Zaorálek said. Havel's passing gives Czechs an opportunity to reexamine their past and their present and to decide whether they like their current path, both as individuals and as a nation. Will conditions have to worsen significantly again to produce another Havel, one who comes out of hardship and opposition to the regime. Or will Czechs aim to produce a society where people like Václav Havel are the norm, and not the exception? With every ending comes the chance of a new beginning.



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