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Best of times

"These are the best of times for the Czech Republic," said Václav Klaus in his New Year's address yesterday. In Dickensian fashion, he mixed the good times with the bad, but the overall message was that the Klaus era that began nearly two decades ago has been one big success. It was a continuation of his recent plea for people to take ownership of the 1990s and was a defense against all those who say that "fresh wind" is needed in Czech politics. Just a few hours later on [Rádio Impuls](#), Václav Havel supported Jan Švejnar and suggested that if Švejnar's transformation plans had been implemented, and not Klaus's, the post-1989 history books would have been written differently. Klaus was widely criticized for a weak and vacuous speech, but he was successful in imparting his key message: "My way has proven successful for the past 15 years, so why head now into uncharted waters with someone else?"

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