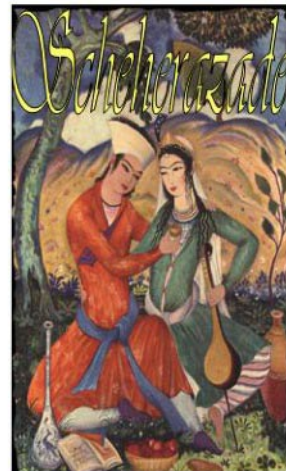


the fleet sheet's final word

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Visa success

No U.S. visas for Czechs as of Oct. or Nov. of 2008! This surprising news meets the ambitious objective of Czech Amb. to the U.S. Petr Kolář, who had said last Aug. that it would be absurd for Czechs to need visas at the time of the CR's rotating EU presidency in 2009. Better than many others, Kolář apparently understood from his D.C. vantage point just how eager the U.S. is to get hold of more passenger information. The CR is being presented as the bad guy by the EU for going it alone and giving too much personal data to the Yanks in exchange for a visa-waiver, but we've seen this drill before: The EU criticizes a new U.S. security measure only to quietly implement the measure itself a short time later, in the name of reciprocity or keeping up with the Joneses. Instead of criticizing the CR, the EU should thank it. The Czech visa strategy will ultimately make it easier for EU members to increase the amount of personal data they collect on travelers from all countries.



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