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Obama and Džamila



Barack Obama and Džamila Stehlíková both got into hot water this week for similar reasons. Obama said that frustration in small-town America leads people to "cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren't like them." Stehlíková, the Czech minister for minorities, said the "Romany ethnic group doesn't need to work, because the state provides the alternative of almost the same money, without work." They were both wrong for generalizing, but otherwise they were both right.

Government policy can have a detrimental effect on a nation's psyche. Naturally, though, the PC patrols immediately jumped on them both, and they had to beat a hasty retreat. "Bitterness" (to use Obama's word) will play an increasing role in the mounting financial crisis, and failure to conduct a frank, non-PC discussion of the implications of it for civil tranquility will decrease the chances of a "soft landing."