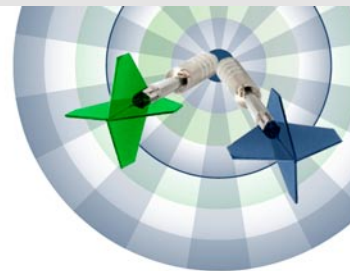


Moral authority



Barack Obama will likely give an inaugural address tomorrow that is both uplifting and cautionary. If Americans tighten their belts and pull together, he will say with eloquence, they will overcome the current difficulties. He'll be able to ask his fellow citizens for sacrifice, because he has an enormous level of moral authority. Although, as a senator, he was one of the ruling elite even before winning election as president, he isn't being held responsible for the current situation.

Other world leaders have it worse. Mirek Topolánek, for example, would have trouble asking his fellow citizens for sacrifice. Not only because his government has mostly denied that a crisis exists, but also because some of its policies are seen to be a direct contributor to the CR's worsening economic situation. Topolánek and his National Economic Council will spend untold hours trying to identify the proper crisis measures, but what Topolánek's government needs most is a plan for gaining moral authority and the respect of its citizens.



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