

Be the best you can be



Barack Obama gave an inspirational inaugural address yesterday, and hundreds of thousands of Czechs were among the billions of people listening. Obama made numerous comments that could be transferred to the Czech experience, but it was a remark from a day earlier that might have the most relevance. On Martin Luther King Jr. Day (a national holiday in the U.S.), Obama paraphrased King as saying that, "If you sweep floors for a living, make sure you're the best floor sweeper there has ever been." King's [actual comment](#) was even more eloquent and spoke of sweeping streets "like Michelangelo painted pictures, like Shakespeare wrote poetry, like Beethoven composed music," but the message is the same: "Whatever your life's work is, do it well." This is better advice for confronting the crisis than "spend, spend, spend," because it invokes individual responsibility and commitment. Even in today's cruel world, the best street sweeper, glass maker or engineer is rarely among the first to be let go.

TNP

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