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Rich as a Roman prince

When Marc Antony and Gaius Octavian Caesar were battling Brutus and Cassius for control of the Republic in the fictionalized TV series "Rome," Antony and Octavian identified 1,000 wealthy enemies and had gangs kill them. The objective was two-fold: To quell opposition, and to raise money for the noble cause. In the non-fictionalized modern version, both Barack Obama's Democrats and Jiří Paroubek's Social Democrats are planning to soak the rich as a way to overcome the crisis. Winning support from the "plebeians" for this is easy, because everyone is ready to shift the blame for the crisis onto the affluent. The problem, of course, is that extracting more tax from the 2% or 5% richest people won't raise nearly enough money to achieve the stated goals. As the Romans knew, the only way to proceed is to take the capital of the rich, not merely to tax their current income. And so the U.S. is going after the Swiss bank accounts of 52,000 people. For now, at least, the methods being used are peaceful.



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Prime Minister of the Czech Republic

Ms. Christine Lagarde
French Minister of Finance

Mr. Zdeněk Tůma
Governor of the Czech National Bank

Mr. Charles L. Evans
Governor of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago

Mr. Grigori A. Marchenko
Governor of the National Bank of Kazakhstan

Mr. Pier Carlo Padoa-Schioppa
Deputy Secretary General, OECD

Mr. Alexandr Vondra
Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs of the Czech Republic



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