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Snub



When the last U.S. president visited Prague - George W. Bush in June 2007 - neither Václav Klaus nor Mirek Topolánek could be bothered to welcome him at the airport. They sent Chancellor Jiří Weigl and Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg instead. Now, with superstar Barack Obama scheduled to make an overnight stop in Prague, both Klaus and Topolánek are coming running to tie his shoe. Trouble is, he's wearing loafers, figuratively speaking. Washington's priorities have changed, and Obama doesn't really need the Czechs' help with missile defense right now. Obama apparently originally wanted to visit Prague in support of the idea that not all CEE countries are basket cases, but he was then thrust straight into the wicker when the Topolánek government unexpectedly fell. Paying anything more than a courtesy call to Klaus might be interpreted as support of such disruptive politics. So, yes, Obama's "romantic" Saturday night in Prague with Michelle is a snub, but only one Czech should take it personally.

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