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Presidential race begins

It was clever of TOP 09 to announce that Karel Schwarzenberg will be its candidate for Czech prime minister after the Oct. elections. It creates a sense of inevitability about the party's election chances, and it reduces the spotlight on wheeler-dealer Miroslav Kalousek. It might not even matter so much that not everyone who likes Schwarzenberg, such as Viliam Buchert of MFD, thinks the prince would make a good PM. As a junior partner, TOP 09 wouldn't likely get the PM spot anyway, yet Schwarzenberg's elevation to PM-level status would create positive momentum.

Václav Klaus is positioning Miloš Zeman to be his successor, but some people around Schwarzenberg want their own man to be seen as the natural selection for president. Sure, he's a bit old, at 71, to be looking ahead to 2013, but he'd be in the front of the pack if the post became available earlier than that, for whatever reason.

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