



Corruption facilitator in chief



In the spirit of New Year's conciliation, we'll call President Václav Klaus merely a "corruption facilitator." Many others would label him one of the masterminds. In his New Year's address, he said there's a contradiction between the reluctance of people to pay higher taxes and their unwillingness to accept a reduction in social services. (No mention of the Kč 200bn stolen from the state budget every year.) He praised the cabinet of Jan Fischer but added that the country needs a "strong government," by which he presumably meant either a grand coalition or a ČSSD minority government. But isn't this what the Fischer government already is? Sure, it's a milder version, and without the partisan bickering, but this makes it all the more pernicious. Defense Minister Martin Barták's Kč 3.6bn truck deal goes by almost unnoticed. Instead of seeing the Fischer government as a breath of fresh air, voters should probably begin to look at it as a prototype of what can be expected after the elections. Klaus apparently sees it this way.

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