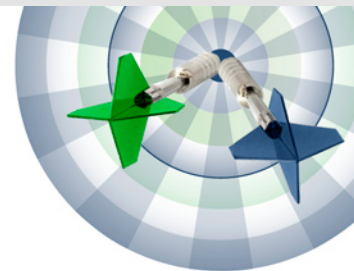


When in Rome



Of the five major Czech corruption scandals in recent weeks, two involve big U.S. companies, Hewlett-Packard and Ford. Two other scandals are Czech specialties (Opencard, and Mirek Topolánek's Navatyp apartment). The final one is a Czech-Italian contrivance (Praga-Export/Iveco armored vehicles). Czech managers and politicians are the common denominator in all of these, but the inclusion of two [Fortune 500](#) companies stands out like a sore thumb. Aren't U.S. companies supposed to adhere to a higher standard? When asked about this, Executive Director Weston Stacey of the American Chamber of Commerce said that the problem is the abysmal performance of the police and the courts to either convict or exonerate in a clear and convincing manner. When accused of corruption, he said, companies should be investigated by the police and, if justified, tried in a court, not just in the media. Until then, it seems, the CR will attract the kind of investors who know how to operate in the existing environment.



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