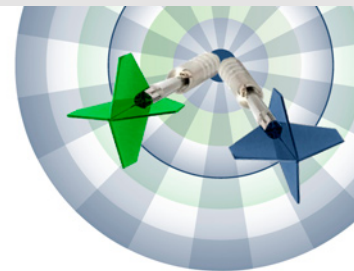


Central Asian brazenness

Read carefully the following [statement](#) by Václav Klaus from a year ago: "I consider it out of the question to try in any way to usurp a third term in office along the model of a Central Asian president. Nothing of the sort has ever occurred to me. I unequivocally declare that this is entirely beyond consideration." Notice that he did not actually say he would not run for a third term if there were direct elections. Klaus's entire political career, including his rivalry with Václav Havel and his recent "[lack of trust](#)" in Karel Schwarzenberg, bears witness to an overriding desire to govern in perpetuity, like a Central Asian president, even if European convention does not allow him to state it bluntly. The problem is that the justice minister's draft for direct elections makes it impossible for him to run again. This is an uncharacteristic oversight on the part of the Klaus machine, which usually plans several moves in advance. It's not too late to correct it, but it might not be possible at this late stage without a touch of Central Asian brazenness.



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