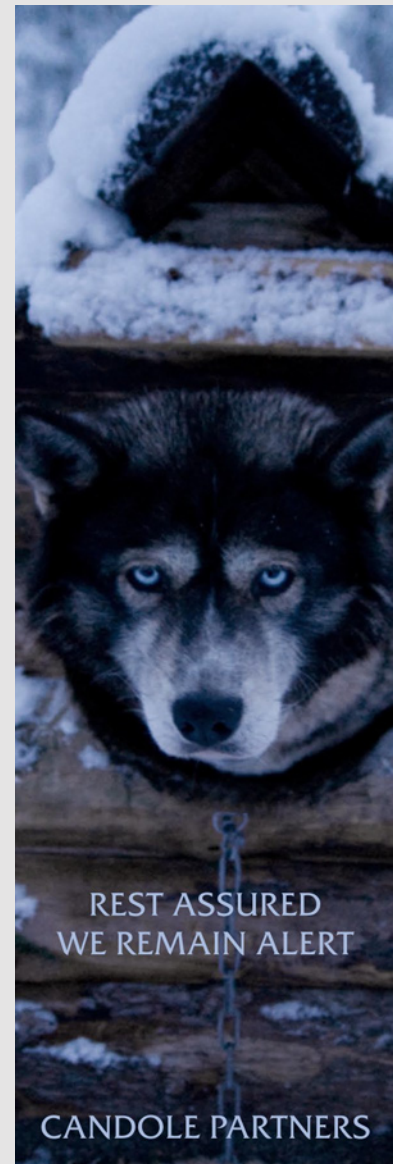


Recess appointment



Not even many Americans know what a "recess appointment" is, but plenty of Czechs will now become familiar with the concept of "jmenování o prázdninách" after Barack Obama performed the action yesterday. This constitutional technicality allowed Obama to appoint Norman Eisen as ambassador to Prague while Congress was out of session, despite the failure of the Senate ever to confirm Eisen. Czech Radio, which reported the appointment early this morning, made it sufficiently clear that use of such a "trick" is highly controversial in Washington, because it is perceived as an effort by the president to circumvent the legislative branch. But Obama has been on a roll in the past week or so and apparently thinks such a transgression will be forgiven in the name of bipartisanship. He has about a year to convince the Senate to confirm Eisen. The recess appointment shouldn't have a negative effect on Eisen's authority as ambassador. After all, Czech politicians find it perfectly normal to engage in all kinds of trickery.



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