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Sobotka's Rudolfinum speech



Bohuslav Sobotka had an epiphany and found Havel, the way others suddenly find God. Sobotka's rebirth was announced to the world in [Foreign Policy](#) in Aug., just as the planning for a Nov. visit to Washington was getting underway. In a piece for the [Wall Street Journal](#) last week, Sobotka sang an ode to the Holy Spirit, mentioning Václav Havel by name 12 times and exalting the former president's "noble ideals." Before he left for Washington, Sobotka even gave his own version of Havel's famous [Rudolfinum speech](#) from Dec. 1997, speaking about the same kind of [disillusionment with democracy](#) that Havel had laid bare 17 years earlier. Just as Havel made a thinly veiled attack then on Václav Klaus for causing the country's woes, Sobotka's unnamed fiend was the oligarch and media baron Andrej Babiš. Unlike in 1997, few heard Sobotka's confession of faith. But the U.S. ambassador - seated in the front row - surely did.

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