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Klaus and Kasparov



Václav Klaus was the proper host when he met yesterday in Hluboká with retired chess champion Garry Kasparov. Although their views on Putin's Russia are as far apart as Moscow and Kamchatka, Klaus was polite and merely said he's not sure Kasparov's way to change in Russia is the right one. Kasparov is an outspoken critic of Putin who pulls no punches. "Russia is a police state," he told [CNN](#). "It's some sort of soft version of one-party dictatorship." Klaus, in contrast, is almost a Putin [apologist](#) who wants the West to give Moscow the benefit of the doubt. Both Kasparov and Klaus exaggerate the situation, and that's what makes them so alike. In their own milieux, they're each contrarians on Russia. It's telling that Putin praises Klaus for speaking Russian (when they meet) and criticizes Kasparov for speaking English (when arrested for attending a banned anti-Kremlin rally). Klaus and Kasparov are opposite sides of the same publicity-seeking coin.

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