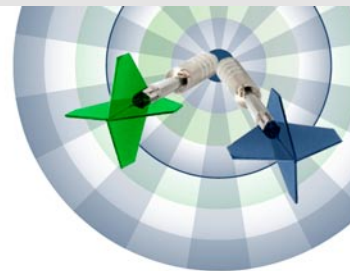


Bait and switch



The Czech government has been following a bait-and-switch strategy for enlarging the Temelín nuclear-power plant. The bait is the Kč 130-150bn construction contract, which is very enticing for EU companies such as Areva and Alstom. PM Mirek Topolánek has rightly recognized that the nuclear debate must be moved to the European level, and something like the [Declaration on Strategic Partnership](#) on energy and other issues signed in June with France helps accomplish this.

The switch comes when the Czechs cast aside their French friends to do a nuclear deal with Russia. [Gazprom](#), after all, is said to be a reliable partner. But then along comes Georgia and messes this all up. It's hard to imagine Europe standing by now as the CR becomes even more dependent on Russia for energy, when European champions are ready to step in. So, unless Georgia goes away quickly and leaves no marks, the ČEZ government will need to revise its nuclear strategy.



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