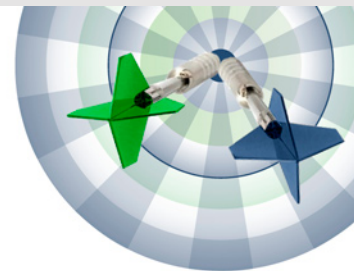


Cold War skulduggery

Czechs laughed when 10 bumbling Russian agents were rounded up in the U.S. and sent home, but they might soon have reason to cry if their own ex-Defense Minister Martin Barták is sent to Washington as ambassador. Barták was never caught red-handed in a proverbial bag-pickup from a defense contractor, but his reputation in this respect is rivaled only by that of Miroslav Kalousek. Barták's bad luck was to hold out his hand to a U.S.-owned company, Steyr, that has since gotten serious about tracing the money trail. It shouldn't be hard for the FBI to sniff out Alseda and other interested parties. Who knows, maybe the NSA has even been eavesdropping on Barták, just as it reportedly did to the [Kaczynski twins](#). With diplomatic immunity, Amb. Barták would no longer need to fear getting arrested when touching down at Dulles, but the U.S. could trump him by just refusing to give him agrément. On the other hand, the U.S. might find it quite useful to have Barták there, because of the leverage it would have over him.



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