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Clinton's Prague gambit

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton arrived in Prague late last night to meet with Czech officials on "strengthening Czech energy independence," which has been widely interpreted to mean she'll lobby for Westinghouse to win the Temelín deal. ČEZ has indicated that the winner will be chosen based on technical & safety criteria and price. By allowing Rosatom to continue, ČEZ has made it clear that energy security is not a criterion. So what exactly does Clinton want? If she came all the way to Prague to push for a transparent selection process, she'll be suggesting that the tender isn't fair. If she wants Westinghouse to win on the grounds of energy security, she'll be asking the Czech government to go against the implied tender criteria. Perhaps the only thing she can legitimately ask for is that the tender be canceled and reissued with new conditions. This would win the hearts of many Czechs.

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As shareholders in ČEZ (represented by the government), we want to know what the bidders have offered. Otherwise we shall continue to be haunted by the conclusion of the study by Candole Partners, that there is no compelling economic justification for the Temelín project, just geopolitical or even corrupt motives.

Petr Honzejek, Hospodářské noviny, 31.10.2012

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