

Zeman and the Prince

Karel Schwarzenberg might be the aristocrat, but Miloš Zeman clearly has the better grasp of *The Prince*. Machiavelli argues in his famous treatise that his eponymous hero should be virtuous but should also be prepared to abandon his virtues when necessary. Why was Schwarzenberg then so surprised that Zeman started hitting below the belt? The president-elect's comment about early elections was also straight out of Machiavelli. Zeman would rather be feared by the government of Petr Nečas than loved by it, although the opposite is true when the object of his desire is the bottom 10m. As a president of the people, Zeman has more freedom than his predecessor to oppose the Nečas cabinet. Klaus usually did it in an underhanded way, such as by endorsing Zeman and then declaring that the presidential election was a disaster for the Right. By proclaiming his hostility up front, Zeman will have the will of the people behind him and will also be well-placed to extract bigger demands whenever Nečas needs his signature.

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