

Champagne democrats



Western officials are to meet in London today to draw up a list of senior figures linked to the Russian government who could be subject to an asset freeze and travel ban. Measures have already been taken against 18 Ukrainians. That list of mostly ex-government officials seems reasonable, if you accept that the Yanukovich government was criminal. However, some politicians want the asset freeze on Russians to go much further. [Karel Schwarzenberg](#) told Czech Radio that the accounts of the richest Russians should be frozen. When [Jiří Dienstbier](#) was asked by the same station three days later whether this would be legal, he said that extraordinary measures can be taken in extraordinary circumstances. Punishing Putin's inner circle is one thing, but all of Russia's richest people? If they are criminals, shouldn't measures have been taken against them when they transferred their assets to the West? It's useful to know which of our democratic leaders are in fact "champagne democrats" who are prepared to act like despots when the occasion arises.

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