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With friends like that...

Russia's commercial attaché, Sergei Stupar, revealed in Právo on Fri. that Miloš Zeman has been invited on an official visit to Moscow this fall but that Zeman has not accepted so far. The Castle refused to comment, and Luboš Xaver Veselý missed a great opportunity to ask Zeman about this during last night's initial Presidential Pressklub. The Kremlin has every right to announce such an invitation, but it's hard not to see this as a way to put pressure on Zeman. Imagine the impact if Zeman went to the AIPAC policy conference in March as the first EU head of state to accept a state visit to Moscow since the start of the Ukrainian crisis! Zeman will presumably say yes to Putin's hospitality - Petr Kellner needs him now in Moscow perhaps more than he needed him in Beijing - but Zeman would no doubt like to wait to accept until after his Washington visit. First the Russians gave Zeman a "virus" because he insulted their ambassador, now they are putting him in a delicate predicament prior to a key trip to the U.S. With friends like that, who needs enemies?

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