


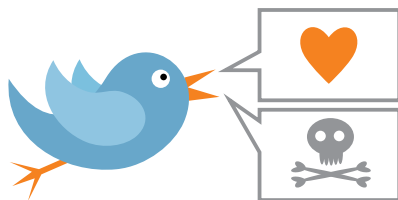
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Babiš vs. Brussels



If we can believe the Czech media, U.S. Amb. Andrew Schapiro has concluded a "strategic friendship" with Andrej Babiš. The logic behind this is clear: Pres. Miloš Zeman is strongly pro-Russian, PM Bohuslav Sobotka is strongly middle-of-the-road, and Babiš can provide at least the optical illusion of being strongly pro-U.S. If Babiš were in fact so pro-U.S., he would have been allowed to meet with some truly high-level American officials during his recent visit, but the media illusion is more important to Washington now than the reality. The U.S. usually beats the anti-corruption drum but is willing to close its eyes in this respect to Babiš, because the foreign agenda is the priority. Not so for the EU. It will only put up with Babiš's conflicts of interest to a certain point. The fact that Babiš has agreed to climb down on the issue of [biofuel subsidies for Agrofert](#) shows that he realizes that he has to be careful about pushing his luck with Brussels.

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