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## Spending Trump's peace dividend



Czech politicians seem not to have really noticed that a new president will soon take up residence in the White House. The U.S. elections haven't in any event affected the way they talk about defense policy. Bohuslav Sobotka asked Martin Stropnický yesterday to speed up military acquisitions, and Stropnický is pressing ahead with plans to increase the army budget and the number of soldiers. Why the sudden rush? Nato's two biggest areas of outlay are for supporting the export of democracy and preparing for a possible confrontation with Russia, and Trump has vowed to change U.S. policy in both of these respects. True, Trump has also said he won't defend Nato members who don't meet their Alliance obligations. But if Trump changed U.S. policy, perhaps the 2% Nato commitment could be lowered. What if the sudden enthusiasm in Prague for defense spending has less to do with Nato or with an EU army than with next year's Czech parliamentary elections?

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