


King goes to the Castle



The world has moved on, and the U.S. ambassador in Prague is no longer the force he or she used to be. If you want support for your human-rights or fake anti-corruption NGO, the U.S. envoy is still one of the ones to see, but if you're looking to do an earth-moving deal involving multiple Czech oligarchs, take a stroll down the street from the U.S. residence to the outpost of the Middle Kingdom. The Americans are selling, not buying, TV Nova, which means they are ceding influence to the Chinese, not augmenting what they have. When new U.S. Amb. Stephen B. King passes on the request from Donald Trump to sever diplomatic relations with North Korea, it will be Chinese Amb. Ma Keqing who has more of Miloš Zeman's ear. Zeman has been against sanctions on Pyongyang since at least 2001 and sees sanctions in general as a way to deal with renegades like himself. It doesn't help that North Korea was the public reason given for his not making it to the White House in April. Like his predecessor, King might have better luck with Andrej Babiš, who is no great friend of the Chinese. Yet.

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