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Isolating Putin and Zeman



U.S. Speaker of the House Paul Ryan issued a statement from Prague on Mon. [applauding the Trump administration's expulsion of Russian diplomats](#) and saying that, "The U.S. must continue to lead international efforts to isolate Russia so that it understands its behavior will not be tolerated." Miloš Zeman is much less absolute than the [State Dept.](#) in attributing blame for the nerve-gas attack, and Ryan won't be meeting with the Czech president during his short stay in Prague. The impression, whether true or not, is that Ryan is snubbing Zeman as a way to isolate him, because he's too pro-Putin. Zeman is nevertheless the president of a Nato ally. By seeking to isolate him, the U.S. could be endangering its own commercial interests (one of Ryan's chief tasks in Prague is to hawk Bell helicopters). They're also giving an early campaign boost to whichever Zeman-like candidate runs for president next time. Zeman will eventually be gone, but his 2.85m voters will remain.

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