

Babiš and the 2% Nato mantra



Andrej Babiš essentially admitted to Právo that expelling three Russian diplomats had more to do with cultivating good EU relations than with punishing Russia. As he sees it, the CR will need leverage when it comes to refugee quotas, the EU budget and opposing duty on steel. And why not play along, since it doesn't cost Babiš or the country much? The same can't be said of his overt willingness to double defense spending by 2024. Blindly subscribing to the 2% Nato mantra pushed by Donald Trump will mean the CR becomes more militarized than countries less dependent on exports. According to the [World Bank](#), exports made up 11.9% of U.S. GDP in 2016, 29.3% of France's, 46.1% of Germany's and 79.5% of the CR's. Devoting 2% of GDP to military spending essentially means that Czechs will buy a part of an armored vehicle or military helicopter for every dividend expatriated by export-happy foreign investors. Linking defense spending to 2% of GDP quickly becomes untenable in such a situation. Babiš surely understands this, but for now he's more interested in cultivating good U.S. relations.

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