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## Petříček the punching bag



Pres. Miloš Zeman and PM Andrej Babiš will likely decide at their meeting today whether they want a permanent punching bag at the helm of the foreign ministry. The situation is much different from when Bohuslav Sobotka served in this thankless role as the prime minister. Sobotka and his puppeteers were still guiding the government agenda and needed to be cut down to size. Now Zeman and Babiš are in control, and their main interest is to preserve the status quo, not to disrupt it. So Zeman can probably be taken at his word when he says that Tomáš Petříček won't become the foreign minister, or won't remain the foreign minister for long, if he doesn't sever his ties to Miroslav Poche. But if Petříček isn't allowed to serve the same puppetmasters as Sobotka, what good is he to those who are pulling him out of nowhere to place him into such a prominent position? Petříček's fate is that he must either serve them, however briefly, or become *their* punching bag.

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### Colson Whitehead

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for *The Underground Railroad* at the Prague Writers' Festival

"I have black skin, but don't have a tail. As far as I know, I never thought to look."

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