the fleet sheet's final word

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Where does the escalation end?

A high-level government source told Lidové noviny that the Czech government will expel more Russian diplomats today. The pro-European Czech opposition will praise the cabinet briefly for this but will then inevitably push for even more, until parity is reached at the embassies or diplomatic relations are broken off. Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova of Russia's foreign ministry said yesterday that the Czechs "in fact know how we will respond. The more they take destructive actions and steps, the more they will receive in return." Ex-Czech PM Mirek Topolánek said yesterday on his podcast that what we have seen so far is just the beginning and that there is reason to be somewhat fearful of what will follow. There is a broader geopolitical and regional context, he said, with Russian tanks and armed units moving to the Ukrainian border. Such regional conflicts can grow into something more, he said. As an employee of Eustream, the Slovak company that imports Russian natural gas into Europe from Ukraine, he probably has good reason to be fearful. If the escalation doesn't end, the gas valves could be turned off.

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