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The other occupation



There's the [old joke](#) about how Putin lands in Helsinki and is asked by the immigration officer, "Occupation?" Putin replies, "No, just visiting." With the occupation of even more of Ukraine, it's no longer such a funny joke. Not discussed as much in the media is the ongoing Russian presence in Syria, in part because Moscow has [diverted troops and resources](#) from there to Ukraine. Another reason Syria isn't discussed much is that the U.S. is also present there - against the wishes of the [government in Damascus](#). A recent drone strike [attributed to Iran](#) highlighted the existence of a U.S. military base. This is pertinent to Czechs because, in the words of the [U.S. State Dept.](#), "the government of the Czech Republic, acting through its embassy in Damascus, serves as protecting power for U.S. interests in Syria." It's not such a funny joke when a country still traumatized by its Munich past and the German protectorate is seen by part of the world as representing an occupying power in the 21st century.

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