

## An emasculated president



What Czechs witnessed on Thur. at the Castle has no precedent in domestic politics. Presidents have sought to bring prime ministers to heel (Václav Havel at the [Rudolfinum in 1997](#), Miloš Zeman at the [Castle in 2017](#)), but never has a PM so thoroughly subjugated a president. Pres. Petr Pavel, in the model of Havel before him, had wanted to be the conscience of the nation with regard to Gaza. Pavel had said 10 days earlier on Facebook (at [8 min.](#)) that the Fiala cabinet shows essentially unconditional support for the government of Benjamin Netanyahu and that Gaza needs an immediate solution. Yet after the luncheon on Thur. the [Castle wrote](#), "They stated clear agreement on key issues of foreign policy." Whether it was National Security Adviser Tomáš Pojar, who prearranged the meeting [in person with Pavel](#), or Fiala who laid down the law isn't clear. But with Czechs [overwhelmingly in support of Netanyahu's Gaza policy](#) and with Pavel's [preferred PM](#), STAN Chair Vít Rakušan, trying to [change their minds](#) before the elections, Pavel needed to be brought into line. We may never know what arguments Fiala, or Pojar, used to convince him.

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