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Russia turns 'friendly'



Daniel Koštoval did the once-unthinkable on Thur. when he [shook hands](#) with Russian Pres. Vladimir Putin while presenting his credentials as the new Czech ambassador to Russia. When [Russian state TV](#) asked Koštoval whether this means a new start in bilateral relations, he replied that he wouldn't say this and that relations remain tense but that Prague thinks diplomatic relations and communication are important. Russian TV tied Koštoval's words to Pres. Petr Pavel's [visit to Kyiv](#) last week and said that Pavel was following new talking points. By slightly misconstruing Pavel's comment about "a number of painful concessions that Ukraine has had to make and is prepared to make, knowing this will lead to peace," Channel One gave the impression that the Czech president is among those pushing Kyiv to make a deal. It could have just as easily used his words to the opposite effect, but almost five years after Russia put the CR on its list of [unfriendly nations](#), it's now promoting the idea of a thaw.

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