

Is Petr Pavel right, slow or mean-spirited?

U.S. Pres. [Donald Trump](#) said at a [press briefing](#) with Nato Secretary-General Mark Rutte at the summit in Ankara last Wed. that Spain is a terrible partner in Nato. "They don't participate. They don't pay. Uh, I don't want anything to do with Spain. Cut off all trade with Spain, please, including visits, okay?" Yet when Trump spoke to Nato members behind closed doors, he [didn't criticize](#) Spain directly. According to Czech Pres. Petr Pavel, Trump said in his opening comments to the closed-door session that all the allies except for one specific exception had understood the importance of increasing defense spending. And this exception, Pavel told [iDnes.cz](#), was the Czech Republic, and all the allies around the table understood this. "From my perspective," Pavel said, "it was a diplomatic rebuke." This is one of the most curious things Pavel has ever said. It was widely assumed until now that Trump had Spain in mind. If he didn't and meant the Czechs instead, Pavel caught a nuance that was lost on almost everyone else. The other possibilities are that Pavel missed the connection to Spain, or that he intentionally rebuked his own government in a mean-spirited way.

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