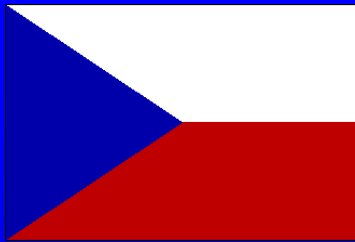


# Political Relations Between Russia and the Czech Republic: Or There and Back Again



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## Motto

All you need is ignorance and  
confidence and the success is sure.

Mark Twain

# Aim and Structure of the Presentation

Analysis of the relation in three steps:

1. What has happened so far?
2. Why was the return to normalcy so slow?
3. Future of the relation



# Czech Policy Towards Russia

	Russia as a threat	Russia as a partner
Frequent references	Stage I (1993-1996)	Ideal situation
Rare references	Stage II (1997-1999)	Stage III (since 2000)



# Russian Policy Towards the CR

Stage	Predominant behaviour
Stage I (1993-1996)	political pressure
Stage II (1997-1999)	cold peace
Stage III (since 2000)	construction of a normal relation

# Stage I (1993-1996)

- Main issue: NATO enlargement
- Russian choice:  
    To acquiesce or to oppose?
- Czech discourse: Russia as a threat

## Stage II (1997-1999)

- Decision about NATO enlargement
- Russia: cold peace with the CR
- Czech discourse: „Russia can indeed have her interests in the CR just like we can in Patagonia.“

## Stage III (since 2000)

- Putin's rise to power (pragmatism)
- Main issues:
  - debt payment
  - visa regime
  - EU enlargement
- Series of official visits



# Why So Late?

- Objective factors
  - geography  $\Rightarrow$  no Eastern policy
- „Construction of identity“ factors
  - „return to Europe“ obsession
  - small country complex
  - special role of Czech Communists

# Conclusion

- Return to normality
- EU as an opportunity for both sides
- More emphasis on economic relations
- Ongoing political dialogue