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Topol's rope-a-dope



An underprepared and overconfident Muhammad Ali won his famous Thrilla in Manila in 1975 by lying on the ropes and taking heavy blows to the body from a very determined Joe Frazier. After Frazier overreached and exposed himself in the middle rounds, Ali went on the offensive and landed punch after punch to the head. Frazier's face got really messed up, and he lost in a technical knockout. After lying low for several days and taking blow after blow from the two-man team of Václav Klaus and Pavel Bém, Mirek Topolánek came back to life yesterday and landed a few good shots of his own. He made progress on the radar in Parliament, accused Bém of having no political program other than one of a "deadly embrace" with the Social Democrats, noted that Klaus himself lost the 2002 elections in a catastrophic way, and hinted that he is willing if necessary to fight this fight to the bloody end. Any objective onlooker would have to wonder who is now the underdog in this thrilla.

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