

## Аэрофлот



When Aeroflot starting using a flying elephant as its media mascot a decade ago, it made fun of its own safety record by suggesting in advertisements that, "Elephants can fly, and so can Aeroflot." KDU Chair Jiří Čunek wants to ban Aeroflot from the privatization tender for ČSA because of just such safety concerns, but there's an even bigger reason to fear that the CR might be getting a white elephant if it allows Aeroflot to buy ČSA. The Kremlin is in the process of creating a new generation of oligarchs, and Aeroflot co-owner Alexander Lebedev is one of those being pushed aside. A new airline, Rosavia, is being pieced together by the Russian government, and Aeroflot is suffering as a result. The Kremlin's apparent objective is to force Lebedev to use his Aeroflot shares as loan collateral and then to have a preferred oligarch scoop them up. Aeroflot and Rosavia might eventually be merged to create a single national champion, but Aeroflot's position will likely deteriorate considerably before it gets better.

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