

## Paroubek's pickle



Some people are already ordering a headstone for ODS Chair Mirek Topolánek and expecting Jiří Paroubek of ČSSD to lead the funeral cortege and Václav Klaus to give the eulogy. Paroubek and Klaus have a common interest in wanting to weaken Topolánek in the May elections, but this mutual interest might actually dissipate as soon as the polls close. Suddenly, it could be in Paroubek's interest to save Topolánek by forming a grand coalition. The other main option could be a ČSSD minority government tolerated by Klaus's part of ODS and other parties. But this would play right into Klaus's hands by allowing him to oust Topolánek, return to ODS and prepare for Miloš Zeman to succeed him as president. If Topolánek can't deliver the votes for a grand coalition, Paroubek could find himself in a real pickle. He could go with Klaus to become PM in 2010, but he'd be ceding the presidency to Zeman in 2013.

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