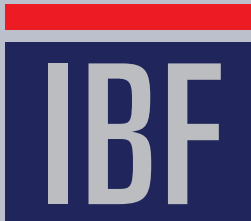


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Establishment loses (and wins)

A vanquished Chair Cyril Svoboda of KDU-ČSL told Czech Television that all the Establishment parties lost ground in this weekend's parliamentary elections. Voters and the media were looking for something new, he said. President Václav Klaus echoed this, saying that it was predictable that the two main parties were going to lose some of their support. So should we now expect something new from Czech politics? Hardly. The main objective of the two new parliamentary parties, TOP 09 and VV, was to soak up the protest vote that was mounting against ODS and ČSSD, and they have gone above and beyond the call of duty in doing this. Now it doesn't really matter much whether the next government is center-left with Martin Pecina at the helm, center-right with Petr Nečas, or a disguised grand coalition with Miroslav Kalousek. The electrostate and the military-industrial complex have prevailed.



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