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## VB emulates VP



A year ago, Vladimir Putin embarrassed oligarch Oleg Deripaska on [national TV](#) by demanding that he sign a contract for giving jobs back to workers at an alumina factory. Adding insult to injury, Putin demanded after the signing that Deripaska return his pen to him. It made for great political show and gave Putin a boost, but according to journalist [Yulia Latynina](#), the spectacle concealed the fact that the contract was extremely favorable to Deripaska. Czechs don't need to be a skeptics to start wondering whether their own Transport Minister Vít Bárta ever intended to cut the margins on highway and rail construction. The minister's tough words inspired optimistic expectations, but the spectacle is starting to look more and more like another way for Bárta to squeeze something out for himself. He might be a bit taller, paler, hairier-headed and squeakier-voiced, but he actually looks a bit like Putin.



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