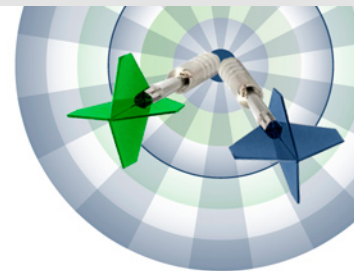


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Šťastný: A happy medium

Defense Minister Alexandr Vondra repeated yesterday on [ČRo1](#) that he'll support MP Boris Šťastný as ODS's candidate for Prague mayor, as long as Šťastný doesn't ban smoking everywhere in the city. It was a simple enough statement, tinged with humor, but it might hide a cunning plan that, if played out correctly, could save ODS's proverbial ass in the municipal elections. By choosing fresh-faced Šťastný as its mayoral candidate, ODS would shift the debate somewhat away from all the dirty deals at city hall and toward such quality-of-life issues as Šťastný's pet peeve (smoking in restaurants), traffic congestion and support of culture and tourism. Even more importantly, a Šťastný candidacy might keep Václav Klaus and Petr Nečas from working at cross purposes. Nečas doesn't want Klaus to be able to blame him for an ODS disaster in Prague, so he's kept out of the race so far. Šťastný is a known Klaus admirer, though, and Vondra's positive words suggest that his cabinet and party boss (Nečas) might be able to embrace Šťastný too.



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