

Dienstbier for president?

Senators will apparently vote today to partially dismantle the political-party structure in the country by giving the people the right to elect their president. Two of the leading potential candidates don't have direct party affiliation (Jan Fischer and Jan Švejnar) but are trying to play it both ways by remain-

ing independent and seeking party backing at the same time. This would split their allegiances but keep them at least part-

ly beholden to a political party. A bigger threat to the party system could come from tourism specialist Tomio Okamura,

if he decided to run, or Senator Jiří Dienstbier if (as is rumored) he dared to give ČSSD the finger and ride his wave of popularity as the Newt Gingrich or Ron Paul candidate who doesn't rely on the party Establishment. Both Okamura and Dienstbier could probably gather the 50,000 signatures needed to bypass the political parties. One has to wonder whether the party bosses fully understand what they're getting themselves into by approving direct presidential elections.



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