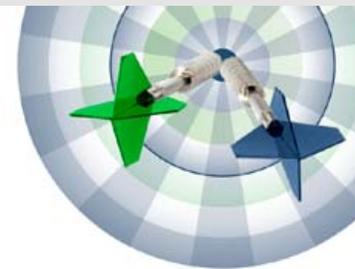


## ODS and ČSSD amateur hour

It's all a conspiracy to get Jan Fischer elected! Why else would ČSSD and ODS sabotage their presidential campaigns so thoroughly? First Miroslava Němcová pulled out of the ODS race. She was the only Civic Democrat with a prayer of winning, except perhaps Bohuslav Svoboda (who never showed interest). With her gone, that leaves Přemysl Sobotka and Evžen Tošenovský, who are for the most part loyal ODS foot soldiers but who for this very reason are expendable as far as voters are concerned. ČSSD is even worse. Jan Švejnar pulled a near-Němcová yesterday when he announced after the debate invitations had already gone out that he's not interested in being ČSSD's candidate but will still take part in the duels with Jiří Dienstbier that begin today. No matter how the debates turn out, ČSSD loses, because its voters will be given two choices. This splits the vote, giving Fischer (and perhaps Miloš Zeman) the edge. After bungling things so badly, ČSSD and ODS have more reason than ever to see that direct elections aren't held.



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