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Defense 'minister' escapes conviction

Zlín Regional Court exonerated five individuals and two companies yesterday of storing illegal landmines at the Vrbětice depot. If the decision is upheld on appeal, the defendants will be cleared, but it could open up the Sobotka government to questions of whether it is complying with the [Mine Ban Treaty](#). That treaty calls for strict transparency and reporting with regard to stockpiling and transferring landmines, but the trial showed that this was far from the case. Why did the court take the side of a shady arms dealer? Perhaps because that defense contractor, Jaroslav Strnad of Czechoslovak Group, is the defense "minister" of [ČSSD a.s.](#), and Martin Stropnický of ANO is his lackey. (Why Andrej Babiš tolerates this is a mystery.) Yesterday's landmine ruling is perhaps the best example so far of how the increasingly blatant efforts to cover up the criminal activity of ČSSD a.s. could bring the CR into collision with its EU and international commitments.

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