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Boosting and cutting defense spending

Defense Min. Jana Černochová of ODS asked in the legislative-review process that the cost-cutting measures of the cabinet's austerity package not be applied to her ministry. The cabinet wants to boost defense spending next year to 2% of GDP, which would mean an increase in just one year of 34%, to more than Kč 150bn. It seems rather odd in such a case to ask the defense ministry to cut back on operating expenses and salaries. Army Chief of Staff Karel Řehka said in Oct. of last year that anyone who questions the 2% Nato commitment should be [disqualified from public debate](#), "because it is a commitment, and respectable people and respectable countries meet their commitments. Period." But that was before the cabinet made its additional commitment of across-the-board cuts. How is the defense ministry supposed to cut costs next year and simultaneously increase defense spending by nearly Kč 40bn? By front-loading equipment contracts? That won't sell very well among cash-strapped voters.

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