


## Fiala's 400-billion-crown fighters

During his six-hour speech in Parliament yesterday about the "tax package" and everything else but the price of tea in China, Andrej Babiš managed to slip in a few sentences about the [planned purchase of F-35 fighters](#). "We just want to ask whether the [F-35s](#) are really going to cost 400 billion, as we read in the media," he said. The government keeps telling us that it has no money for anything, Babiš said, so it would be good to know how much the F-35s are actually going to cost. He was referring to an estimate by [Gen. Petr Mikulka](#), who commanded the Czech air force until the end of last year. The Kč 122bn figure being given is just the acquisition price, Mikulka said, and it doesn't take into account the cost of the major upgrades needed over the life cycle of the fighter, not to mention the need to continually upgrade the software, sensors and weapons. A total cost of Kč 400bn is possible, he said. Babiš, as a business owner, would never buy a major piece of equipment without having a cost estimate for its entire useful life. Unless he gets one, it will be easy for him to argue that PM Petr Fiala is buying a pig in a poke.

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