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Testing the immunity coalition



Pres. Petr Pavel said [through his staff](#) yesterday that he's prepared to appoint Andrej Babiš as PM but that he first wants Babiš to take appropriate steps regarding his conflict of interest. How fast things now move, the president said, depends only on Babiš. By rushing to put the ball in Babiš's court so as not to be seen as the one holding things up, Pavel created a potential trap for Babiš. A vote on lifting his immunity in the Stork's Nest case won't be held until Jan. or Feb., which means that Babiš could theoretically be delivered to the courts while serving as PM and could even be imprisoned. From today's perspective this looks unlikely, because the "immunity coalition" of ANO, SPD and the Motorists is holding firm. Yet there is no guarantee that there won't be a quarrel in the coalition. One possibility is that Pavel and his advisers are in fact hoping that by pressing Babiš on the conflict issue now, they'll be able to block the formation of a government and evoke just such a quarrel before the immunity vote is taken.

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