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Lobbyist in chief



Pres. Petr Pavel's main [message to Parliament](#) yesterday, that there is no justifiable reason for defense and security spending to stagnate, is in direct contradiction to the [policy statement](#) of the Babiš government. It says: "We will ensure effective, economical and transparent investment in defense that will genuinely strengthen the country's defense capabilities." By taking the position that any defense spending is good spending, Pavel highlights his own potential conflicts of interest. First is that his chief adviser, [Petr Kolář](#), is a defense lobbyist who argues for as much investment as possible into the European defense industry. Second is Pavel's association with the ammunition program of the Fiala government, which the [BIS counterintelligence agency](#) reportedly found to be untransparent and overpriced. And third is the fact that Pavel was army chief of staff and therefore an integral part of a system that, according to ex-procurement officer [Jaroslav Štefec](#), is designed intentionally to feed "numerous hungry mouths." If theft and waste in defense procurement is rampant, stagnation in defense spending is unjustifiable mainly for those who are part of it.

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