

Babiš's Plan B

Andrej Surňák, a lobbyist who was linked in the past to Stanislav Gross and is now very much against ČEZ, was apparently the first person to go public with the rumor that Pres. Miloš Zeman had offered CEO Daniel Beneš of ČEZ the position of PM in a caretaker government if ČSSD's referendum failed. Surňák posted this on [Twitter](#) on May 11, saying that it meant the country would be run by people who weren't elected by anyone. Andrej Babiš's LN ran the story as its lead today and referred to it as Zeman's Plan B. The paper quoted Pilsen businessman Roman Jurečko of ODS as saying that Beneš would be able to win support in Parliament for such a government with just 10 minutes of phone calls.

Where, though, would Beneš get the necessary votes? From ANO? Certainly not if Zeman went around Andrej Babiš to replace him as the PM with a representative of the very organized group of political and business interests that is doing absolutely everything it can to prevent him from remaining in power. From the Communists, whose chairman, Vojtěch Filip, has declared publicly that he is against the split-up of ČEZ that is being pushed so eagerly by Beneš and those in his organized group? From the Pirates, whose public persona has been defined for most of its nine-year existence by its opposition to ČEZ's secret dealings? From TOP 09, whose then-chairman, Karel Schwarzenberg, said in 2011 that then-CEO Martin Roman of ČEZ had financed all political parties other than TOP 09 (which implicitly meant the Pirates, ČSSD, ODS and KSČM, among others)?

Any political party that raised its hand for a Beneš government would immediately be suspected of aiding the "[creeping privatization of public authority](#)" that Miroslav Kalousek had spoken about in 2009 before switching to the ČEZ camp. Whether it won confirmation or not, the Beneš government would come to be seen as a last big push to privatize the remaining lucrative state assets. If Beneš were put front and center, it would become much more difficult for the vast political, business and media interests behind him

(which we often refer to as ČSSD a.s.) to continue to provide such open support.

Zeman himself complicated Beneš's position with a comment he made on [TV Barrandov on April 26 \(see the 31:00 mark\)](#). Zeman said that he told Beneš that

and Zeman apparently still want the current negotiations to be successful.

The focus now, though, is on the ČSSD internal-party referendum, and it's a fool's game to try to predict how it will turn out. No one can be sure whether

the media assault that we are already seeing from ČSSD a.s., and the counter-assault from Agrofert a.s., will be productive or counterproductive.

Perhaps political analysts, including us, have been asking the wrong question. Instead of asking where Babiš is going to get the votes for confirming his government, perhaps the more pertinent question will be where the opposition is going to get the votes to defeat Babiš.

When MFD asked Babiš yesterday what he would do if the referendum in ČSSD failed and Zeman didn't try to put together his own caretaker government, he mentioned not only the possibility of early elections, but also the idea of using the government program to go to Parliament to ask for a vote of confidence from across the political spectrum. When he last spoke about this in Feb., he didn't have anything agreed with any of the other parties. Now, he has a 30-page document that has been accepted by ČSSD's leadership and, with a few tweaks, could serve

as the basis for winning the backing of the necessary number of MPs. Babiš's idea of a one-party minority ANO government is no longer a pipe dream.

If ČSSD's members vote against the coalition, Babiš could still perhaps reach an agreement with enough of ČSSD's MPs, esp. if they think that this could be their last chance to taste power (as ex-ČSSD MP Zdeněk Jičínský said today in *Právo*). The Communists are making a fuss now, but it wouldn't take many changes in the program to get them back on board. SPD is also ready and willing to participate.

Babiš has 78 MPs, so to win a confidence vote, he would need at least 45 others to simply stay in their seats and abstain. SPD has 22, the Communists have 15 and ČSSD has 15. That makes 52. If more than half of ČSSD's MPs refused to play along, a few of SPD's or KSČM's would have to walk out or raise their hands. It would be tight, but it's doable.



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Zatímco @cssd jedná s @AndrejBabis , Miloš Zeman nabídl premiérské křeslo v úřednické "prezidentské" vládě D. Benešovi. Pokud nedopadne referendum, nebude ani ČSSD ani ANO ve vládě. Budou vládnout lidé, které nikdo nevolil.

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Pokud ČSSD odmítne účast ve vládě, mohly by být podle Babiše na jaře 2019 ...
Vedení hnutí ANO v pátek schválilo návrh koaliční smlouvy s ČSSD a programového prohlášení případné koaliční vlády. Novinářům to po jednání výboru a poslaneckéh...
lidovky.cz

1:57 PM - 11 May 2018

if any businessman in another field had made the same errors that ČEZ did in the Balkans, where it almost lost it under-shorts.... He was then interrupted by Jaromír Soukup but finished the thought by saying that Beneš told him that Martin Roman is responsible for everything.

The implication was that there is plenty to answer for at ČEZ but that Beneš is not the one who holds the responsibility. Yet, as Beneš proudly noted this week, he is by far the longest-serving board member in ČEZ history - 13 years. He was there when the decisions were made, and he would hardly be able to escape the public scrutiny if he became PM.

The question now is whether the reports of a Beneš government will help or hurt the current efforts to form an ANO+ČSSD government. Our assumption is that LN would not have run the story on its front page today if it didn't think that it would help Babiš's cause. He