

UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE
Fakulta sociálních věd
Institut mezinárodních studií

PROTOKOL O HODNOCENÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE
(Posudek oponenta)

Práci předložil(a) student(ka): **Anna Melmuková**

Název práce: **Příčiny neúspěchu americké zahraniční politiky vůči Íránu v letech 1977-79**

Oponoval (u externích oponentů uveďte též adresu a funkci v rámci instituce):

doc. PhDr. Francis D. Raška, PhD.

1. OBSAH A CÍL PRÁCE (stručná informace o práci, formulace cíle):

The aim of the work is to analyze the foreign policy of U.S. President Jimmy Carter towards Iran and why the Islamic Revolution of 1979 was not thwarted. The first half of the dissertation discusses earlier American foreign policy towards Iran, whereas the second half deals specifically with the Carter Administration's foreign policy and its shortcomings.

2. VĚCNÉ ZPRACOVÁNÍ (náročnost, tvůrčí přístup, argumentace, logická struktura, teoretické a metodologické ukotvení, práce s prameny a literaturou, vhodnost příloh apod.):

The topic is challenging. The author argues her points well. Numerous sources are cited and the argumentation is satisfactory.

3. FORMÁLNÍ A JAZYKOVÉ ZPRACOVÁNÍ (jazykový projev, správnost citace a odkazů na literaturu, grafická úprava, formální náležitosti práce apod.):

I have no problem with the formal and linguistic aspects of the work apart from the poor quality of the English abstract and summary.

4. STRUČNÝ KOMENTÁŘ HODNOTITELE (celkový dojem z bakalářské práce, silné a slabé stránky, originalita myšlenek, naplnění cíle apod.):

Anna Melmuková has written her B.A. dissertation on the foreign policy of President Jimmy Carter towards Iran in the late 1970s. In particular, she discusses why the Carter Administration could not prevent the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Colleagues Jiří Pondělíček and Oldřich Tůma have provided excellent guidance to the student. The treatise is divided into an Introduction, three main chapters, and a Conclusion (Chapter 4). I must say that the referencing is done well and the number of sources consulted is laudable. In the ensuing paragraphs, I will offer my comments on each individual section of the work.

In the Introduction, Anna provides a clear indication of the content of the individual chapters and Emphasizes the complexity of the U.S.-Iranian relationship in the twentieth century. She also mentions the differing circumstances in 1953 (when the United States under President Eisenhower succeeded in reinstating the shah) and 1979 when the Carter Administration failed to prevent the collapse of the shah's regime. The literature review is impressive. Overall, I think that the Introduction gently guides the reader into the rest of the dissertation.

Chapter 1 deals with American foreign policy between 1953 and 1977. In order to place matters into context, Anna provides an historical background to the American-Iranian relationship and mentions the previous involvement of Great Britain and Russia (later the Soviet Union). Both the British and Russians had their spheres of influence. The discovery of vast oil reserves served to bolster the interest of these powers in Iran. The shah's father already in the 1920s wished to modernize the country and, therefore, adopted a pro-Western course. During World War II, the British and Soviets occupied Iran with American assistance. The main reason for the occupation was to prevent the Germans from invading Iran and gaining control over the country's oil. It is worthy of mention that Iran played a crucial role in the provision of American military assistance to the Soviets during the war. Though the Soviets sought to preserve their influence in Iran, their efforts failed and the United States gained greater influence. Anna aptly portrays the role played by the emergence of the Cold War and the American desire

to have easy access to Iranian oil. Furthermore, she discusses the political instability in Iran after the war. Mohammed Mossadegh overthrew the monarchy and nationalized American and British oil interests. The Americans subsequently organized the ouster of Mossadegh and the reinstatement of the shah in 1953. Anna then discusses the evolution of U.S.-Iranian relations during the tenure of subsequent American presidential administrations. Basically, the Americans supported modernization efforts and, at the shah's insistence, provided Iran with state-of-the-art military equipment. Though the modernization efforts undertaken in the 1960s (commonly referred to as the "White Revolution") yielded some impressive results and Iran remained pro-Western, there was a huge disparity in wealth and many Iranians were offended by secularization, as well as the erosion of certain traditions and values. Moreover, the American involvement was resented. From the United States point of view, it was necessary to placate the shah in order to minimize Soviet infiltration and to maintain access to Iranian oil. Britain's withdrawal from the Persian Gulf in the late 1960s/early 1970s meant that Iran depended ever more on the United States for the provision of military aid and, likewise, the United States became ever more dependent on Iranian oil. This chapter is informative and aptly written. Above all, it provides a good introduction to the main part of the dissertation.

In Chapter 2, Anna evaluates the onset of the Carter Administration and the shah's decision to soften repression in order to ingratiate himself with the new American leader. It is worth bearing in mind that the shah had previously been ruthless with regime opponents and his secret police SAVAK engaged in torture and murder of numerous dissidents. When the shah liberalized policy somewhat, this provided a stimulus for greater demonstrations. In particular, Islamic protests centered around the exiled Ayatollah Khomeini became common. Though Carter never attempted to force his human rights ideas on the shah and wished to carry on as previous administrations had, the Carter Administration was basically oblivious to the seriousness of the unrest in Iran. This was due to the incompetence of Carter's advisers both in Iran and in Washington. The response of the security forces to the unrest resulted in numerous casualties. This resulted in the opposition losing all hope that Carter would insist that the shah change course and signified the beginning of the revolutionary struggle. Notably, not all opposition to the shah was initially in favor of Khomeini, but American inactivity united different opposition forces behind the goal of overthrowing the shah. Though the shah was mainly to blame for his own demise, Anna points out that American policy hastened the outcome of the revolution for which the United States was completely unprepared. I quite like this chapter and it leads well into the next one.

Anna delves into the reasons for the inept policies of the Carter Administration in Chapter 3. First, she discusses the differences between the respective situations in 1953 and 1979. While stating that American policy towards Iran throughout was based on the containment of Communism and access to oil, Anna argues that the Americans had a hands on, informed approach in the 1950s, whereas, in the late 1970s, the Carter Administration lacked such an approach. One factor was that President Carter became convinced early on in his presidency that the shah was the only one the United States could deal with in Iran. For this reason, the status quo continued despite Carter's professed desire to apply human rights considerations to foreign policy. Another reason was the Carter Administration's preoccupation with other foreign policy concerns. Then there was the legacy of Vietnam and the lingering doubts concerning American power (commonly referred to as the "Vietnam Syndrome"). Moreover, American intelligence estimates were deeply flawed and demonstrated ignorance of local conditions in Iran. Furthermore, no serious studies had been conducted on the opposition and Khomeini. Perhaps the greatest of all American weaknesses was the difference in opinion between national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. Brzezinski wished for the Americans to stand by the shah even if he cracked down on the opposition, whereas Vance was for a more peaceful (even if ineffective or inactive) approach. Thus, even the advice provided to Carter by members of his own administration was contradictory. In the final weeks of the shah's reign, Carter's advisers were still divided. In the end, a coalition government was formed, but demonstrations intensified and the shah left the country never to return. Indeed, the Americans lost Iran as an ally. This chapter is very well written and provides an accurate depiction of the situation at the time.

In the Conclusion (Chapter 4), Anna recapitulates the main points of the individual chapters. She points out that American support for the autocratic shah led the Iranian people to loathe United States leaders. In addition, Carter's blind decision to follow the policies of his predecessors also contributed to the outcome, as did faulty intelligence and disagreements among Carter's advisers about how to react to the deteriorating situation. I have no problem with Anna's conclusion.

This work meets the standard for an acceptable B.A. dissertation. Anna has demonstrated that she can

work with sources and make sound arguments. However, I must say that the work is shorter in length than most other B.A. dissertations I have read and, at times, she is overly repetitive. Also, the quality of the English used in the abstract and summary is far from perfect. That being said, I recommend a classification of B or C depending on Anna's performance in the oral defense.

**5. OTÁZKY A PŘIPOMÍNKY DOPORUČENÉ K BLIŽŠÍMU VYSVĚTLENÍ PŘI OBHAJOBĚ (jedna až tři):
Given the overall tumult in Iran, could the Americans realistically have prevented the Iranian Revolution? Why or why not?**

What role did the shah's health play in his decision to flee the country?

If the shah was so universally hated, why did so many Iranians (especially professionals) flee Iran during the Iranian Revolution and afterwards?

**6. DOPORUČENÍ / NEDOPORUČENÍ K OBHAJOBĚ A NAVRHOVANÁ ZNÁMKA
(A-F): B or C depending on the oral defense**

Datum: **12 August 2019**

Podpis:

Pozn.: Hodnocení píše k jednotlivým bodům, pokud nepíšete v textovém editoru, použijte při nedostatku místa zadní stranu nebo příložený list. V hodnocení práce se pokuste oddělit ty její nedostatky, které jsou, podle vašeho mínění, obhajobou neodstranitelné (např. chybí kritické zhodnocení pramenů a literatury), od těch věcí, které student může dobrou obhajobou napravit; poměr těchto dvou položek berte prosím v úvahu při stanovení konečné známky.