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**Final Examiner's report by Prof. Dr. Sebastian Harnisch, Heidelberg University
Review of Ph.D. Dissertation by Ms. Ivana Karásková, "Between Power and Perception.
Analyzing China's Influence in International Relations"**

I am writing this final report at the request of the Dean of the Departments of International Relations and Security Studies, Institute of Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague, to assess the revised doctoral dissertation of Ms. Ivana Karásková entitled "Between Power and Perception. Analyzing China's Influence in International Relations". This report builds on the earlier Examiner's report dated May 20, 2019. It will focus on the changes reported in Ms. Karásková's Protocol tracing the changes made in her thesis (undated) and the revised version of the PhD dissertation.

The thesis is motivated by a need to better understand the drivers and obstacles involved in how the People's Republic exerts influence through its public diplomacy efforts, particularly through the so-called Belt-and-Road-Initiative launched in 2013. It seeks to fulfill two related tasks: first, to firmly establish the theoretical concept of "institutionalized perception" by way of analyzing the perception of various Czech media outlets of the People's Republic image and respective public perceptions. Secondly, examining the Chinese influence public and governmental perception of China since the restart of the Czech-Chinese relations in 2012. It finds that China's campaign to exert influence on its perception in the Czech Republic has been limited, if not negative in some cases.

The author develops a large database encompassing 1,257 media outputs by 42 of the most widely used media outlets. A multi-staged analysis then identifies prevailing topics, variation in frequency and distribution over across media outlets. In addition, the material is analyzed for affec-

tive attributes, meaning and potential agenda setters. This enables a new suite of causal arguments to be tested as a prelude to drawing conclusions on the main influences that determine media's and public perceptions of China's image.

In the revised version of the dissertation, the Ms. Karásková presents a careful thorough and plausible response to the suggestions of the examiners. In particular, she addresses most, if not all, critical points directly and comprehensively. In doing so, she shows a strong command of related theoretical concepts, methods and empirical material.

More specifically, the author addresses the following major points sufficiently: 1) Ms. Karásková clarifies the theoretical underpinning of the study by using a positivist approach more consistently throughout the text; 2) the author added a new chapter on the Czech media landscape thereby strengthening her argument of a political parallelism between specific media outlets and individual political actors, 3) Ms. Karásková also added a new chapter on the triangulation of the media outlets perceptions with public opinion polls (Chapt. 3.3.5), thereby supporting her claim that the neutral/skeptical view of China in the media is reflected in public opinion; 4) she also corrected various typographical issues and problematic statements that could be misinterpreted. Overall, Ms. Karásková has substantially revised her earlier version, resulting in a much more readable, comprehensive and well-founded argument.

The principal contribution of the thesis lies in its conceptual innovation and careful empirical analysis of the Czech media discourse on China. It represents probably the first such extensive analysis the Czech media's perception and the related public opinion in the Czech Republic. The empirical data base and multi-staged analysis undertaken supports thesis's finding, even if the theoretical grip of the study could be strengthened by relating the concept of "institutionalized perception" to other pertinent concepts, such as "mediatization", "strategic culture", "national identity" etc. The author deserves great credit for the meticulous work with the data and graphics.

Based on the quality of this thesis examined, I recommend accepting this revised dissertation as a prerequisite for the award a Doctor of Philosophy.

Prof. Dr. S. Harnisch