

Alžběta Bernardyová

B.A. Thesis Assessment

Protiteroristická strategie USA po 11. září 2001: klíčové aspekty domácí politiky

2008

Alžběta Bernardyová (Bětka) has produced an informative B.A. dissertation about United States antiterrorism strategy after 11 September 2001. Bětka consulted with me on a regular basis and we agreed that she should organize the thesis along certain lines. She accepted my advice and the work is structured accordingly. The dissertation contains an introduction, five main chapters, and a conclusion. The English-language summary at the end of the work is helpful and the meticulous division of the bibliography into sections demonstrates Bětka's attention to detail.

In the introduction, Bětka discusses the organization of the dissertation and briefly explains how the events of 11 September 2001 changed the American perception of terrorist threats. She discusses the content of each following chapter and analyzes the sources she utilized in order to reach her conclusions.

Chapter 1 discusses the difficulties faced by various administrations and even individual governmental agencies when defining the terrorist threat. Bětka then explains how 9/11 dramatically altered the American perception of terrorism and resulted in the war on terror, which remains American policy to this day. In essence, terrorism has come to be seen as a form of warfare and American policy has been adapted to this reality.

Chapter 2 analyzes American policy prior to 11 September 2001. This chapter is necessary in order to place matters in perspective and I am glad that Bětka independently realized this. She recapitulates the policies of previous administrations as well as George W. Bush's stance before the 9/11 events. I have no problem with this chapter.

Chapter 3 offers a detailed account of the infamous Patriot Act, which has been

so controversial in the United States and abroad. First, Bětka addresses each aspect of the Patriot Act and later she discusses the controversy surrounding its promulgation and later extension. What strikes the reader is Bětka's intimate familiarity with the issues at hand and why they are so important.

Chapter 4 deals with the Department of Homeland Security. I must say that Bětka really appreciates the need to unify American intelligence-gathering capabilities. She emphasizes just how complex this issue has been and describes the steps leading to the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security and the actual functioning of this agency. In addition, she discusses the organizational hurdles involved and other problematic aspects.

Chapter 5 assesses the reform of intelligence agencies and the role of both the Joint Inquiry as well as the 9/11 Commission in this process. The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act is scrutinized and potential problems are discussed as well. Once again, this chapter is wonderfully written.

In the conclusion, Bětka offers her own views on post-9/11 policy and she offers a balanced evaluation, which concludes that, even though the actual results of the post-9/11 war on terror have not been ideal by any means and that much waste and inefficiency remain, it cannot be said that the overall course adopted since 9/11 has been a failure.

Bětka Bernardyová has done an admirable job discussing post-9/11 American antiterrorism legislation and its pitfalls. There are some minor typographical errors, but I suspect that the main culprit is the spellchecker of Microsoft WORD. I recommend that she be awarded an **EXCELLENT** mark. Finally, I look forward to having Bětka as an M.A. student in the American Studies program.