



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Tatevik Tadevosyan

Title: The Element of Surprise: A Study of Two Modern Surprise Attacks

Programme/year: Security Studies / 2020

Author of Evaluation (supervisor/~~external assessor~~): Jan Ludvík, Ph.D.

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	10
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	25
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	35
<i>Total</i>		80	70
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	20
TOTAL		100	90



Evaluation

Major criteria:

This is a well written and thoroughly research thesis. It asks why the surprise attacks happens and how is the timings of attack chosen (p.5). Such objectives are well motivated and reasonably narrow to be answered with the thesis' two detailed case studies. While I think this is a strong thesis, I believe a few changes would have made it even stronger.

First, I think the thesis could be more ambitious in developing its own central argument about why and when surprise attacks happen. From the literature review, through conceptual sections, empirical chapters, and even in the conclusion, the thesis remains a bit under specific about its key argument. Instead, the thesis points to numerous important factors, which sometimes play a role. I believe some of the factors might be more important than other. Alternatively, some the factors may only work in a conjunction with other factors. Specifying relationships among these "elements of surprise" would be valuable. I think this could have been done in the thesis. The literature review, which is meticulous and well researched could have culminated in a development of clear theoretical argument about why and when states attempt to surprise their enemies with a military attack.

Second, I think the thesis is unnecessarily overloaded with contextual information. I think the information like the root causes of conflicts in Nagorno Karabakh and Falklands does not tell much about why Azerbaijan attacked in 2016 and Argentina in 1982. Similarly, information about whether the surprise brought desired objectives, or why was the defender surprised might not be needed to explain why the attacker decided to strike and when. The thesis, I believe, should explain how this information shed light on attacker's decision making. Otherwise, the space, which is devoted to contextual information could have been better used to dig deeper into the decision-making processes of the attacking country.

Minor criteria:

I find the thesis style, sources, and formal requirements entirely satisfactory.

Overall evaluation:

Overall, I think this is a well written and well researched thesis. I am missing the central argument and I think the analysis could be a bit narrower and deeper. I would not hesitate to suggest an excellent grade had the two aforementioned issues been addressed. In its current form, I think the thesis is a borderline between excellent and very good, which still deserves to be applauded.



**FACULTY
OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**
Charles University

Suggested grade: B

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jan J.", followed by a long, wavy horizontal line.