



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Mgr. Tatevik Tadevosyan

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

Programme/year: Bezpečnostní studia/2020

Author of Evaluation (supervisor/external assessor): Ondřej Rosendorf

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	8
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	23
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	33
<i>Total</i>		80	66
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	4
	Formal requirements	5	4
<i>Total</i>		20	18
TOTAL		100	82



Major criteria:

This thesis presents a comparative case study of two “surprise attacks” – the case of the 1982 Falklands War between Argentina and Great Britain and the “April War” of 2016 between Azerbaijan, Armenia, and the *de facto* Republic of Nagorno Karabakh. The two questions which drive this research are: “Why the attacks happened in the first place?” and “How the timing of attacks was chosen?” (p. 5).

There are several notable strengths of this thesis. First, the author demonstrates their excellent knowledge of the topic through an exhaustive review of the existing literature, thorough description, and extensive analysis of both empirical cases.

The relatively weaker aspects relate to the presentation and identification of key concepts relevant to the empirical analysis and application of the theoretical-conceptual framework in the empirical analysis itself. First, the thesis suffers from unclear separation between literature review and theory – in fact, there is no separate section with theory, which is instead discussed in the literature review. Second, even though the literature review covers a high number of “concepts” (e.g., predictability, false alarms, deception, etc.), their application throughout the empirical parts is fairly inconsistent (some are not utilized at all).

At one point in the text, the author identifies a set of recommendations on how to achieve strategic success in the context of (defence against) surprise attacks (p. 21–22) – this potentially interesting contribution is, however, not well developed in the empirical part. The author could elaborate on what was the motivation behind the inclusion of these recommendations, what recommendations if any can we deduce from the specific cases of the Falklands War and the April War.

Minor criteria:

The length of the thesis, the number and quality of used sources are adequate. For the most part, the text is clear and concise (misuse of bullet points at some points).

Overall evaluation:

The quality of the submitted work is above the standard. The author demonstrates excellent empirical knowledge of the topic. The identification of key concepts and their application in the empirical analysis constitute a weaker point.

Suggested grade: B

Signature: 17/09/20, Rosendorf