

## **Bibliographic note**

KLIMEŠOVÁ, Tereza. *The Implications of the Intervention in Iraq for the United States' Policy of Democracy Promotion*. Master thesis. Charles University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of International Studies, Supervisor Ph.Dr. Jan Hornát, Ph.D.

## **Abstract**

Democracy promotion has been an integral part of US foreign policy for more than a century. Particularly at the end of the 20th century, democracy flourished worldwide as autocratic regimes collapsed at large and scholars talked about the “End of History.” Nevertheless, the current situation is very different, and substantial democratic backsliding is observable. Many scholars are tracing the origins of this decline to the Bush’s Freedom Agenda, particularly the intervention in Iraq in 2003, arguing that it was the initial turning point for US democracy promotion. However, this thesis argues that the invasion and the subsequent war were pivotal only in part. The most visible implications were within the public perception of democracy promotion. Due to the US engagement in Iraq, domestic support deteriorated substantially. Moreover, the international community’s perception of the US as a benign democracy exporter crumbled as well. Another change was observable within the rhetoric of President Obama after taking office in 2009. In order to distance himself from the previous Administration, he visibly toned down his rhetoric on democracy promotion. However, due to various factors, he eventually engaged in expansive pro-democratic discourse as Bush did. And last, regarding the changes in the actual policy practice, even though the Obama Administration was rather cautious and reluctant to promote democracy actively, especially at the beginning, a deeper analysis of the policy has proved that the actual policy practice stayed within the semi-realist framework that has been characteristic for the US foreign policy for decades.

## **Keywords**

democracy, democracy promotion, democratization, intervention, invasion, Iraq, Bush, Obama, policy practice, rhetoric

**Range of thesis:** 134 640 characters