

MASTER'S EXAMINER REPORT

GPS – Geopolitical Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Thesis title:	Wagner Group and Opportunism in Russian Foreign Policy: Case Studies of the Central African Republic (CAR), Libya, and Mozambique
Name of Student:	Christopher Strong
Referee (incl. titles):	Martin Riegl
Report Due Date:	January 14, 2022

The thesis has been checked by anti-plagiarism software.

Comments of the referee on the thesis highlights and shortcomings (following the four numbered aspects of your assessment indicated below).

1) Contribution and argument:

The author decided to analyze a key topic of today's geopolitics which is the instrumentalization of PMCs group by Russian federation as proxy tool in different regional hotspots. Its even more important as the presence of Wagner Group in Ukraine, Syria, Libya, or Mali recently attracts a lot of media attention as is more than relevant for strategies of the European Union or particular EU members states in Africa or the Sahel. The topic is relevant as the West needs to understand what are the links between Moscow and the Wagner Group, and what role the Wagner group (but also other similar groups) plays in strategy of the Kremlin. Christopher presents a lot of interesting information and data about the Wagner Group's deployment in all three analyzed countries and reveals its modus operandi, goals, tactics, successes and failures.

2) Theoretical and methodological framework:

Given the relative lack of information on activities of this PMC, Christopher has decided to analyze the instrumentalization of PMCs (with an emphasis on Wagner Group) by the Kremlin. Research design including methodology and theoretical framework suits the goal of the paper, Christopher clearly defined hypotheses that link strategic goals of Russia and activities of this WG. I appreciate the conceptualization of this specific security actors, short introduction in activities of other PMCs or PMSc as well as historical footprint of the Soviet Union in Africa followed by hasty departure of Russian federation. It might be concluded Christopher achieved the defined goal of the paper, tested his hypotheses, although I would appreciate more detailed analysis and discussion of hypotheses in the end of the paper. In a way he has not fully exploited the potential of the topic and especially the enormous data and information he gathered during his research.

3) Sources and literature:

Christopher has gathered all relevant information, including latest studies on the presence of the WG in different theatres, more importantly he has shown an ability to conduct an independent analysis and work with resources correctly.

4) Manuscript form and structure:

There are no major deficiencies and the paper meets all formal requirements of the program and the Faculty. The paper is clearly and logically structured.

5) Quality of presentation

The presented text is coherent and allows fluent reading.

CATEGORY	POINTS
<i>Contribution (research quality, analysis, and conclusions) (max. 40 points)</i>	37
<i>Theoretical and methodological framework (max. 25 points)</i>	22
<i>Sources and literature (max. 10 points)</i>	10
<i>Manuscript form and structure (max. 15 points)</i>	14
<i>Quality of presentation (grammar, style, coherence) (max. 10 points)</i>	10
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)	93
The proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F)	A

Suggested questions for the defence are:

I recommend the thesis for final defence.

Referee Signature

Overall grading scheme at FSV UK:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE	Quality standard
91 – 100	A	= outstanding (high honor)
81 – 90	B	= superior (honor)
71 – 80	C	= good
61 – 70	D	= satisfactory
51 – 60	E	= low pass at a margin of failure
0 – 50	F	= failing. The thesis is not recommended for defence.