

UNIVERZITA KARLOVA
Fakulta sociálních věd
Institut mezinárodních studií

PROTOKOL O HODNOCENÍ DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE
(Posudek oponenta)

Práci předložil(a) student(ka): **Renée Bastlová**

Název práce: **The Trump Administration and Its Impact on Czech Foreign Policy**

Oponoval (u externích oponentů uveďte též adresu a funkci v rámci instituce):

doc. PhDr. Francis Raška, PhD.

1. OBSAH A CÍL PRÁCE (stručná informace o práci, formulace cíle):

The main goal of this diploma thesis is to analyze how Czech foreign policy reacted to the Trump Administration, what impact it had, and how the Czech Republic accommodated changes.

2. VĚCNÉ ZPRACOVÁNÍ (náročnost, tvůrčí přístup, argumentace, logická struktura, teoretické a metodologické ukotvení, práce s prameny a literaturou, vhodnost příloh apod.):

The topic of this MA dissertation is quite challenging. Not only has Renée worked with written sources, but she has also conducted a number of interviews with Czech experts and politicians.

3. FORMÁLNÍ A JAZYKOVÉ ZPRACOVÁNÍ (jazykový projev, správnost citace a odkazů na literaturu, grafická úprava, formální náležitosti práce apod.):

I have no problem with the language used or other formal aspects of the dissertation. The quality of her written English is superb.

4. KONTROLA ORIGINALITY TEXTU

Prohlašuji, že jsem se seznámil/a s výsledkem kontroly originality textu závěrečné práce v systému:

Theses Turnitin Ouriginal (Urkund)

Komentář k výsledku kontroly:

Everything seems to be in order.

5. STRUČNÝ KOMENTÁŘ HODNOTITELE (celkový dojem z diplomové práce, silné a slabé stránky, originalita myšlenek, naplnění cíle apod.):

Renée Bastlová selected the impact of the Trump Administration's impact on Czech foreign policy as the topic of her MA dissertation. The treatise contains an Introduction, three main chapters, and a Conclusion. In addition, there are five appendices containing the text of interviews with Cyril Svoboda, Tomáš Petříček, Martin Palouš, Rudolf Jindrák, and Roman Joch. I will offer my comments concerning each part of the work in the ensuing paragraphs.

In the Introduction, Renée clearly spells out the aim of the thesis, which is “to analyze how Czech foreign policy reacted to the Trump Administration, what impact it had, and how the Czech Republic accommodated changes.” She reminds the reader of the three main conditions for a successful transatlantic relationship, namely shared values, liberal trade, and defense strategy. The individual chapters are summarized and the most important sources are scrutinized. In the methodology section, Renée explains the use of second-generation foreign policy analysis based on qualitative analysis and historical research. As the student explains, content analysis and interviews represent two key methods utilized in the thesis. The Introduction is well-written and informative. Moreover, Renée’s brilliant prose encourages the reader to continue reading.

The subject of Chapter 1 is the role of the Czech Republic in foreign affairs. The first section deals with Czech foreign policy and small state theory. Security, prosperity, and sustainable development are labeled as the three main aims of Czech foreign policy. Human rights and economic growth are likewise highlighted. In the second section, Renée discusses asymmetric relationships in international relations. Besides defining the relevant concepts, she states that the EU and transatlantic multilateral ties are crucial for the successful implementation of Czech foreign policy. In addition, Renée cites the opinions of a number of Czech experts and politicians regarding foreign relations. The third section discusses the role of realism and neo-realism in Czech foreign policy and how realism leads the Czech Republic to foster good relations with the United States. The role of constructivism in Czech foreign policy is analyzed in the fourth section. Mention is made of the Czech Republic’s relations as a member of the EU and UN and it is emphasized that constructivism has played a leading role in the origin of Czech alliances. In the fifth section, Renée explains continued Czech support for multilateralism despite the Trump Administration’s general disdain for the concept. This chapter is of exquisite quality.

Chapter 2 represents a detailed analysis of Czech foreign policy during the Trump era. The history of the Czech-American relationship is recapitulated in the first section where Renée accentuates the importance of good relations with the United States in the past. When Prime Minister Andrej Babiš visited the Trump White House in 2019, the reception was quite friendly. Both leaders concurred on a number of issues and Babiš even talked of making the Czech Republic great again. Renée points out that Central European leaders tended to have more in common with Trump than did their Western European colleagues. The second section discusses the impact of the Trump Administration on Czech-NATO relations. Renée characterizes the impact as being both positive and negative. Relations between the United States and East Central European NATO members were generally good because of Trump’s opposition to the Global Pact on Migration from which a number of countries withdrew. On the negative side was Trump’s complaint that European NATO members were not spending the agreed 2 percent of GDP on defense and that NATO had become ineffective. His comments that the United States might not support allies that did not raise their contribution to defense resulted in the countries pledging to meet the 2 percent of GDP spending requirement. Moreover, it became clear that Trump preferred bilateral over multilateral diplomacy. In the third section dealing with transatlantic trade, Trump made clear his opposition to multilateral trade agreements and this made the Czech position (based on multilateral organizations and dealings) quite difficult. US trade policy towards China led to closer EU-China collaboration on some levels and the initial Czech trade surplus vis-à-vis the

United States turned into a trade deficit. I find this chapter very interesting and reflective of the reality.

In Chapter 3, Renée analyzes the impact of Trump's policies on Czech foreign policy. She writes that several factors had a negative impact on Czech foreign policy, namely Europe's isolation from the United States and the overall Czech domestic political situation, in which President Zeman and the government of Andrej Babiš often were at odds. Citing Edward Azar's definition, Renée portrays the Czech-US relationship as an international crisis in the first section. In particular, Trump's threatening language and his rejection of the very multilateralism upon which Czech foreign policy is based were detrimental to the Czech Republic and its interests. Economic diplomacy became dominant. Renée offers the opinions of a number of politicians and experts here. The second section represents a comparison between the Trump and Obama presidential administrations on Czech policy. Renée points out the strengths and weaknesses of both presidents and their respective impact on Czech Republic. She says that it is difficult to state definitively which president had a greater impact as the opinions of experts differ. It appears that Trump improved somewhat bilateral US-Czech relations, but that his negative approach to multilateralism and the EU hurt relations in another way. This chapter is informative and thought-provoking.

The Conclusion aptly summarizes the main points presented in the individual chapters and restates Renée's main points. As she writes, there is still not any significant literature on the Trump Administration's impact on US-Czech relations and she feels that this dissertation thus makes a positive contribution to the discussion. I wholeheartedly concur.

Renée Bastlová has produced an outstanding dissertation. I recommend a classification of A contingent on the oral defense.

6. OTÁZKY A PŘIPOMÍNKY DOPORUČENÉ K BLIŽŠÍMU VYSVĚTLENÍ PŘI OBHAJOBĚ (jedna až tři):

How do the Biden Administration's policies compare to those of Obama and Trump?

Has the conflict in Ukraine enhanced the bilateral and multilateral relations between the United States and European countries? Please explain.

7. DOPORUČENÍ / NEDOPORUČENÍ K OBHAJOBĚ A NAVRHOVANÁ ZNÁMKA (A a B výborně, C a D velmi dobře, E dobře, F nevyhověl): I recommend a classification of A.

Datum: **4 June 2022**

Podpis:

Pozn.: Hodnocení píše k jednotlivým bodům, pokud nepíšete v textovém editoru, použijte při nedostatku místa zadní stranu nebo příložený list. V hodnocení práce se pokuste oddělit ty její nedostatky, které jsou, podle vašeho mínění, obhajobou neodstranitelné (např. chybí kritické

zhodnocení pramenů a literatury), od těch věcí, které student může dobrou obhajobou napravit; poměr těchto dvou položek berte prosím v úvahu při stanovení konečné známky.