

**CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE**  
**Faculty of Social Sciences**  
**Institute of International Studies**

**PROTOCOL ON DIPLOMA THESIS ASSESSMENT**  
**(Supervisor)**

Name of the student: Renée Bastlová

Title: The Trump Administration and its Impact on Czech Foreign Policy

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Supervisor: Jan Hornát

**1. TOPIC AND OBJECTIVE (short information on the thesis, research objective):**

The student has selected a very topical and important subject of inquiry. The Trump administration's approach to the European Union and individual Member States was often portrayed as a paradigmatic shift in US foreign policy or even an historical aberration. It is now time to assess the consequences of the administration's activities and rhetoric. Renée does exactly that on the case of the Czech-US bilateral relationship. She proceeds first by contextualizing Czech foreign policy as such and debating questions related to the role of small states in international affairs and asymmetries in relations between large and small powers. The thesis then moves to formulating Czech foreign policy goals and priorities and juxtaposing those to the policies advocated by the Trump administration. In the final chapter, Renée builds on elite interviews to assess to what extent and how the Czech foreign policy reacted to the Trump administration's positions.

**2. CONTENT (complexity, original approach, argument, structure, theoretical and methodological backing, work with sources, appropriateness of annexes etc.):**

The thesis would be both methodologically and theoretically better grounded if the author were more diligent in applying and elaborating the presented theories. The text claims that it is written within the framework of foreign policy analysis, but little methodological care is given to the concept both in describing it and then in its application. The same can be said both of the "small state" and "asymmetry" concepts – although they are elaborated at the outset of the paper, the student does not use them anywhere else in the text. In a way, the first theoretical/methodological chapter seems fully detached from the following empirical parts. The thesis could also do a better job in explaining the choice of interviewees, their role in the foreign policy establishment of the Czech Republic (i.e. whether and how they are relevant to the subject of the thesis etc.).

**3. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE (quality of language, citation style, graphics, formal aspects etc.):**

The language of the thesis is mostly clear and straightforward – however, it often seems too straightforward to the point that it is banal and even misleading. A language revision would help the text as the style shows that the ordering of words in sentences copies Czech language rather than proper English. The coherence of the citation style across the manuscript could have been approached with more care too. Otherwise, the paper meets the formal criteria of an MA thesis.

**4. STATEMENT ON THE ORIGINALITY OF THE THESIS**

The thesis was checked by the Turnitin anti-plagiarism software and no irregularities were found.

**5. SHORT COMMENTS BY THE REVIEWER (overall impression, strengths and weaknesses, originality of ideas, achievement of the research objective etc.):**

The quality of the thesis is downgraded by some language and style issues and the less diligent work with proclaimed methods and theories. However, though I do commend the author's attempt to provide a more robust theoretical-methodological grounding for her thesis, the execution of this attempt was rather poor. Still, I must also acknowledge Renée's effort in gathering prominent respondents for her interviews, which she somewhat managed to integrate into the thesis itself. I believe that in analysing the "impact" of the Trump administration's foreign policy, the thesis achieved its stated goal only partly. This is because instead of "impact", Renée often tended to focus on the "reception" of the administration's steps by the Czech side instead of the practical implications.

**6. COOPERATION WITH THE SUPERVISOR (communication with the supervisor, ability to reflect comments, shift from the original intention, etc.)**

Renée faced a difficult situation as in mid-academic year she was forced to change supervisors, but communication with me remained fairly frequent and most of my comments were duly reflected (given that the initial drafts contained a number of empirical mistakes).

**7. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED DURING THE DEFENCE:**

1. With the Czech Republic being a small state in an asymmetrical relationship with the United States, does Prague even have any other options than to just follow along any kind of foreign policy approach the US administrations adopt?
2. Could you identify the positives that the Trump era brought into Czech-US relations for the future?

**8. (NON-)RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTED GRADE:**

I recommend the thesis for defence, and I suggest the grade B or C.

Date: 8.6.2022

Signature: Jan Hornat