

Jan Ludvík

M.A. Thesis Evaluation

2010

Discourse, Practice, and Construction of National Interest: Study of the U.S Security Policy Continuity

Jan (Honza) Ludvík has compiled his M.A. dissertation on the discourse, practice, and construction of national interest and U.S. foreign policy continuity. I have known Honza for some years now and he has always been a diligent student and a faithful attendee of my classes. Not only has Honza been punctual with his work, but also he has stood apart from most of the others in excellence.

The thesis itself is divided into an introduction, three main chapters, and a conclusion. The chapters are not numbered, but this in no way detracts from the work's quality. The work is well-referenced throughout and the bibliography is impressive. I must say, however, that the quality of the written English is far from excellent. I accept this because English is not Honza's native language.

In the introduction, Honza spells out the general direction of the dissertation and he does evaluate his main sources. Basically, he wishes to analyze the changing nature of and rhetoric surrounding U.S. security policy formation and presentation.

The first main chapter gets into the Obama administration's concern about nuclear proliferation, particularly the cases of Iran and North Korea. In addition, the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan respectively as well the Global War on Terror are discussed. As far as the Global War on Terror is concerned, the rhetoric is the main thing that has changed since

Obama took office. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict also remains a concern as does the relationship between the United States and China.

The second chapter examines the lack of a grand strategy. The national interest is discussed from a number of theoretical perspectives and it is obvious that Honza has done his homework here.

In the third chapter, Honza portrays the evolution of American national security policy from the end of the Second World War up until the present day. The Cold War provided a paradigmatic framework of the conflict, which disappeared after the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe. Suddenly, the United States became the world's sole superpower and any semblance of the old Cold War order vanished. Then 9/11 changed the rules of the game yet again.

In the conclusion, Honza makes the case for overall policy continuity, which, in reality, is balanced by differing rhetoric. Basically, what delivers votes often cannot be realized by any president because he must take into account the national interest, which supersedes partisan political interests.

I am satisfied with this dissertation even though I must admit that it is a tad too theoretical for my tastes. However, to each his own! The work satisfies the requirements for an M.A. thesis and I recommend an **excellent** mark.

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