

IMESS dissertation						
Name/code:						
Dissertation title:						
<b>Scale: 5 - excellent, 4 - good, 3 - satisfactory, 2 - poor, 1 - very poor</b>						
	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>ARGUMENT:</b>						
Clearly defined research question	X					No clearly defined research question
Answers research question	X					Does not answer research question
Well structured	X					Badly structured
Shows theoretical awareness	X					Shows no theoretical awareness
Conceptual clarity	X					Conceptual confusion
Empirically appropriate & robust	X					Full of empirical errors
Logical and coherent	X					Illogical and incoherent
Analytical	X					Descriptive
Critical	X					Uncritical
Shows independent thought	X					Does not show independent thought
<b>SOURCES &amp; USAGE:</b>						
Evidence of reading/research	X					No evidence of reading/research
Effective use of sources/data	X					Ineffective use of sources/data
<b>WRITING STYLE:</b>						
Clear	X					Obscure
Good punctuation	X					Poor punctuation
Grammatically correct	X					Grammatically incorrect
<b>PRESENTATION:</b>						
Appropriate length	X					Too long/short
Good referencing	X					Poor/inconsistent referencing
Good spelling	X					Poor spelling
Good bibliography	X					Poor bibliography
Deducted for late submission:	Deducted for faulty referencing:				<b>Mark*:</b> A	
Charles marker: Vladimír Handl	Signed:				Date: 20.6. 2012	

\* Mark: A = 70+; B = 65-69; C = 60-64; D = 55-59; E = 50-54; F = fail, less than 50

**Scheme of award (assessment criteria):**

	Charles University**	IMESS
<b>Excellent</b>	Výborně [1]	A
<b>Very Good</b>	Velmi dobře [2]	B
<b>Good</b>	Velmi dobře [2.5]	C
<b>Satisfactory</b>	Dobře [3]	D
<b>Sufficient</b>	Dobře [3.5]	E
<b>Fail</b>	Neprospěl [4]	F

## CONTINUES OVERLEAF

**NOTE: Please provide substantive and detailed feedback**

Comments (at least 300 words)

The study is based on a wide range of literature. The author develops on the constructivist idea that national interests are results of the shared meaning that shape a state's understanding of the state's place in the World /p.7/. She proves that the Czech Republic has played a role of a mirror of what the American policy was to see. The US-Czech relations are a part of a wider social (international) interaction that produces and reproduces the interests and identity of the US. The Czech Atlanticist's admiration and support for the US thus has played a minor but a constitutive role in American foreign policy thinking.

She understands geopolitics as a discursive practice for the spatialization of politics /23/. The Czech Republic is an ideal case for geopolitics as and the author seeks to explain conceptualizations of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic with the help of geopolitical thinking. She turns to critical geopolitics as purposefully designed in order to shape identity and action.

The study though goes beyond the presidential statements; popular geopolitics is reflected in the outlets of selected American media. In her analysis, the author uses qualitative approach and focuses on content analysis. The number of sources analysed provides a solid base for the study and does not pose the question of validity of the author's findings. It is correct that her intrinsic study focuses solely on the Czech case (which is largely different from the Polish one). Also, the exclusively qualitative approach is not perceived as a problem or weakness of the study. The collection of the texts analysed is representative and also the focus on the key-figure of the President is justifiable, given his in the American political system.

The author shows that construction of mental maps as a set of co-ordinates important for the political action may not necessarily reflect reality but sometimes rather distort it. So, there is an instrumental element to it: the USA, the UK and other states need the image of the Czech Republic as a post-communist democracy and a part of the West. This image of the country has been important in the US foreign policy. The strong image of the fusion of Czech and American identity /44/ is very important for the results of the study.

Like the president, the media draw a very simplified picture of the CR – as an ally and outpost of the US policy, as a victim of appeasement policy vis-à-vis Russia etc. The conclusion of the author as regards the banal geopolitics dominating both presidential texts and media outlets is convincingly backed and argued.

Specific questions for oral defence (at least 100 words)

The analysis poses the question – among others - about multilateralism in American political thinking: how important has been the image of the Czech Republic as a part of a wider multilateral construct. Does the study suggest that NATO is perceived as a collection of individual allies with their specific value? Has the Czech membership in the EU influenced the place view of the country in the “mental map” of the US policymakers?

Another interesting question is how far has been the US “banal geopolitics” a reflection of the “banal geopolitics” on the side of the Czech (and Polish, Georgian...) political elite and media?

Does the analysis reveal understanding of the American political elite of the lack of unity among Czech elites when it comes to the US? The social democratic governments would hardly subscribe to the project of missile defence. Does the content analysis reflect the specifics of the Czech governments' “two level game”?