

UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE
Fakulta sociálních věd
Institut mezinárodních studií

PROTOKOL O HODNOCENÍ DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE
(Posudek oponenta)

Práci předložil(a) student(ka): Bc. Jaroslav Zukerstein

Název práce: The Making of a Special Relationship: Iran in the Foreign Policy of the United States, 1953-1979

Vedoucí práce (u externích vedoucích uveďte též adresu a funkci v rámci instituce):

PhDr. Jan Bečka, Ph.D.

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

In his thesis, Jaroslav Zukerstein intends to analyze the reasons for the failure of U.S. policy towards Iran through constructivist theory. The author follows the US engagement with Iran between 1953 and 1979, i.e. in the context of the Cold War, when Iran became a target of big power politics. The author describes the careful calculations by which Washington was not only protecting its own national interests (access to oil), but also trying to prevent Soviet influence in Iran. This approach required a lot of balancing, which unfortunately often resulted in U.S. courting the wrong side – the side that did not enjoy widespread support in Iran.

According to the author, the U.S. for long was not able to develop a meaningful relationship with any Iranian leader, as they changed too often. The only personality the U.S. representatives could consistently approach was the Shah. Due to the Shah's influence over the military, the U.S. supported relationship-building by weapons delivery (p. 24) and later went almost exclusively through him in promoting the U.S. interest.

With the coming of President Eisenhower and his State Secretary John Foster Dulles, Washington changed its foreign policy strategy. John Foster Dulles, proponent of „roll-back“, was determined to keep Iran under Western influence (and open for West's access to Iranian oil), even by engaging the U.S. directly in a coup d'état in 1953. What followed was a deep U.S. involvement with Iran through economic and political assistance, which, as the author points out, gave Washington the opportunity to influence the political process in Teheran (p. 31). According to the author, the U.S. pursued a commissive policy, promising Iran economic help if Tehran behaved accordingly (p. 32). However, Iran under the Shah often played the Soviet card, thus pushing the U.S. „in a position of forced heronomy“ (p. 33).

With Kennedy and Johnson, the US foreign policy towards Iran was particularly focused on promoting economic and social reforms in order to improve the Shah's perception among the Iranian public. The author then goes on to describe the skillful maneuvering by the Shah himself who used his close relationship with the Johnson administration to strengthen his own position and by threatening to tilt towards to USSR, elicit additional aid (both economic and military) from the U.S.

President Nixon went even further in supporting Shah's régime, by providing broad access to arms purchases while ignoring Iranian discontent with his regime, which occasionally erupted in mass protest (p. 48). Nixon and later Ford perceived Iran as the pivot of the U.S. Middle East policy, essentially buying off Iran's cooperation. When President Carter decided to hold on to the previous administrations' policy line, disregarding the fast-paced changes in Iran, the U.S. was left empty-handed after the Shah fled the country in 1979.

The author concludes that the U.S. relied too much on its relationship with the Shah, and its commissive policy of buying Iran's support, while ignoring many of the domestic factors that indicated mounting opposition to the Shah's regime. Popular protests were critical particularly of the interconnection between the Shah and the U.S. The Iranian people wanted independence, which they felt they did not have. The call for independence was then seized by religious leadership which, after presenting their alternative vision of Iranian state, provided the impetus for coup d'état and rejection of the U.S. role in Iran.

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

Jaroslav Zukerstein has presented a well-written, well-researched paper. He gradually guides the reader through the complexity of U.S.-Iranian relations, pinpointing the most important developments and explaining the motivations of both actors' behavior. He had used a plethora of resources, including a number of primary sources, such as the DOS documents from the FRUS. The writing is logical, the structure of the paper is well balanced.

While no graphs and tables are included in the paper, it would be helpful to be able to take a look at a graphical depiction of the evolution of economic and military aid from the U.S. to Iran.

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

As far as the formal and language requirements are concerned, I have not found any major flaws. With the exception of a few missing commas and few typos, the paper's formal and language standards are very high.

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

As mentioned above, this is a well-written, well-organized thesis, which explains in detail the mistakes and subsequent failure of U.S. policy towards Iran. In the introductory part, the author explains in detail the constructivist theory that he intends to use as a framework for his analysis. Constructivist theory is looking at speech acts and distinguishes three different kinds of speech: assertive, directive and commissive. Here is a disconnect between author's methodology and the analysis – he rarely analyses speech acts, instead he looks at the behavior of the states involved. While the author concludes that the U.S. behavior towards Iran was commissive, I do not think that he has provided the reader with enough evidence in terms of constructivist theory to prove his point. The analysis tends to be more based on a realist approach to international relations.

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

Was there ever a window of opportunity to discuss the future of U.S.-Iranian relations with Ayatollah Khomeini? How do you explain the general lack of understanding of the Iranian domestic issues on the U.S. part? Could it be ascribed to Henry Kissinger's balance-of-power focus of U.S. foreign policy?

6. DOPORUČENÍ / NEDOPORUČENÍ K OBHAJOBĚ A NAVRHOVANÁ ZNÁMKA

(výborně, velmi dobře, dobře, nevyhověl):

Despite the few reservations above, the thesis fulfills all the requirements for a Master's thesis and is ready to be defended. As for the final grade, I propose **EXCELLENT**.

Datum: 14. června 2013

Podpis: Jana Sehnálková

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.