

Matthias Nienkämper: Middle Eastern Economics and Politics: Co-dependent or Independent? The Israeli – Palestinian Conflict.

(75 PG + appendixes)

FSV UK

International Economic and Political Studies, 2007

External Examiner's Opinion

The topic chosen by Matthias Nienkämper is a complex one. It looks at the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from rather an atypical angle.

Despite the fact that the author starts the thesis with conventional (conventional in nature, not in the content though) description of the roots of the current conflict, the following chapters address rather infrequent aspects of the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians, leaving the most substantial issues in negotiations out of the scope of the thesis. The author is aware of this fact and aims to present a different view and aspects of the conflict. Therefore a basic knowledge of the milestones of the Israeli-Palestinian / Arab conflict is crucial for understanding the issues discussed in the core chapters.

The primary focus of the thesis sheds light on various questions: such as what the Palestinians lack to succeed in creation of an independent state, how the War in 1967 together with corruption within the PLO opened door for Hamas radicals. The roots of Hamas rise to power are less known, however, due to the current situation, when Hamas conquered the Gaza Strip, they become very important. Finally, the author draws attention to the role of media and powerful lobby groups in the U.S. and their influence on the policy-making. In the last chapter the author discusses and explores potential peace proposals, reaffirming his major argument of the thesis that economics and politics are interlinked – by economic improvement political stability can be achieved.

The thesis is analytical in nature, trying to address the topic from various angles in order to point to the complexity of the whole problem. The author addresses the issues from a very personal way, often mentioning his own experience from the time he spent in the Middle East. This is, on the one hand, an advantage of the thesis, since it offers a different perspective; on the other hand, it sometimes misguides the analysis and leaves readers with a feeling that the whole text is rather less academic. Rather than being descriptive the thesis offers and suggests some ideas aiming to ameliorate some problematic aspects in the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians, and that is its biggest contribution.

The overall objective of the thesis outlined in the introduction, i.e. to shed light on various aspects of the Israeli – Palestinian / Arab conflict that are often underestimated was accomplished. The thesis is based on a solid study

of resources and it is clear that the author has a solid knowledge about the Middle East realities. The author presents the topic in an elaborate way.

Hence, I recommend the thesis for defense; I qualify it by mark "výborně" ("A").

Prague, June 18th 2006

