



OFFICE OF THE POLITICAL ADVISOR  
HEADQUARTERS KOSOVO FORCE  
FILM CITY, PRISTINA



Opponent's Evaluation of a Rigorous Thesis:

**KINDL, Lukáš: The Impact of China's Engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa on U.S. Political and Economic Interests on the Continent (2000–2012). UK FSV IMS, Prague, 2014, 127 pp.**

The author focuses in his thesis on the issue of the engagement of the People's Republic of China in Sub-Saharan Africa and the impacts of this engagement on the U.S. political, economic, security and humanitarian interests in the region. This is a very interesting topic as the Sub-Saharan Africa is often considered to be one of the potential "battlegrounds" between the two powers and there is a growing anxiety among some American experts that China might eventually push the United States out of the region. Regardless of the view taken on the probability of this scenario, the topic of the thesis is very relevant and well-worth researching.

The author works with the initial hypothesis that the Chinese engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa is driven almost solely by economic considerations (mainly the need to secure the natural resources to be found in some of the countries and also the markets to export its products), that not all the interests of Beijing and Washington are mutually contradictory and, that in the long-run, potential confrontation between them would not be in the interest of any of the two actors (pp. 17–18). This thesis is sound even though the sometimes very assertive nature of the Chinese approach to the African (and not only African) countries might create a feeling in the United States, at least in some circles, that such an attitude must be directly confronted and countered more than was the case so far. On the other hand, given the current geostrategic situation, it is unlikely that the United States would consider any major engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa unless it was absolutely needed, as there are a number of protracted crises and hotspots in other parts of the world.

The thesis is well-structured, with the first two chapters used to describe the Chinese and American policy toward Sub-Saharan Africa, their main goals and priorities and the ways these are being accomplished. In this part of the text, the author provides us with a general, but very informative and comprehensive overview which sets the stage for the third chapter, where he deals with specific countries, namely with Angola, Nigeria and Sudan. Finally, in chapter four he presents an analysis of the overall impact of the Chinese activities on the U.S. political, economic and security interests while also providing a comparison of the approach of both countries.

The author has managed to collect a large number of relevant data which he skilfully analysis to formulate his conclusions and to support his initial thesis. He also works with the opinions of the leading experts on the topic. I would maybe expect a little more attention being paid to methodology and the theoretical framework of the thesis, but otherwise the author maintains a very high academic standard throughout his work. I would also point that in the conclusion to his thesis, he not only provides a final wrap-up of his arguments, but he also includes specific recommendations for the United States to mitigate some of the negative effects that the

Chinese policy has on its interests, which is an added value. I remain a bit sceptical about the feasibility of some of these, for example the potential of resolving some of the disputed issues through economic and strategic dialogue with China (p. 108) or the enhancement of cooperation with China in the supporting the local healthcare systems and implementing agricultural projects (p. 109). Achieving greater synergy between the two actors would require a lot more effort from both sides, which would in turn require that the Sub-Saharan Africa would get a higher priority on the foreign policy topic list of the United States. At the same time, the current Ebola epidemics in Africa has shown us again very clearly the challenges involved in coordinating efforts between various state and non-state actors who are involved in countering the threat, and yet this is the case where everyone involved has the same interest. It is much more difficult when the interests are divergent. Yet, these are just my personal views on the matter and do not present in any way an attempt to invalidate the conclusions of the author.

The author's use of English is impeccable and the text is written in a fashion which makes it interesting and very well-readable. There are no issues with footnotes and quotations and the thesis includes all the mandatory attachments. It is also appended with a number of maps, charts and graphs which illustrate the points that the author makes throughout the text.

In conclusion, I would like to say that Lukáš Kindl has written an excellent thesis which meets the highest academic standards. I thus recommend that the thesis is defended with an **excellent mark**.

In Pristina 9 OCT 14

PhDr. Jan Bečka, PhD.