

**UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE**  
**Fakulta sociálních věd**  
**Institut mezinárodních studií**  
**PROTOKOL O HODNOCENÍ DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE**  
**(Posudek vedoucího)**

Práci předložil(a) student(ka): Jan Liška

Název práce: Pivot to Asia: What, Why and Whither? The Not So New Obama's Asia Policy

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

Jana Sehnálková

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

In his thesis, Jan Liška studies the strategic reasoning behind the launch of the so-called Pivot, i.e. the new focus of U.S. foreign policy to the Asia Pacific, he analyses the evolution of the Pivot policy and discusses the future of the policy. At the beginning (p. 3), the author asks the following questions:

1. What is the Pivot to Asia? What initiatives are part of the Pivot to Asia? Is the Pivot a radical new policy redefining the U.S. foreign policy – is it a paradigm shift?
2. Why did the Obama administration come up with the Pivot policy? What is the reasoning behind the Pivot? Why was it introduced the way it was – as a high profile policy redefining the U.S. priorities for the decade to come?
3. Based on the development of the policy so far, what will likely become of the Pivot? Will it retain its prominence?

As a hypothesis, the author claims that while the Pivot was launched as something more revolutionary, it was not a major paradigm shift of the U.S. foreign policy and the underlying reason behind it was primarily the rise of China.

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

The author selected an interesting topic that received substantial attention among the media, policy-makers as well as academics. The author starts with the definition of what the Pivot actually means through textual analysis of some of the key speeches/texts on the Pivot by leading U.S. decision makers (including President Obama). He points out that the Pivot was presented to the public as a new, high-level, broad, and multi-dimensional policy. However, the author also observes, the “new policy” was only launched via articles and speeches, that there was no official government strategy of the Pivot. He then proceeds chronologically and observes how the presentation and implementation of the Pivot changed over time – he goes year by year since the launch and observes how the Pivot was understood in Washington and how it was molded in response to the situation in Asia Pacific as well as how it reflected U.S. domestic problems, such as defense cuts or government shutdown in 2013. The author also looks at the discussion whether the proposed Pivot strategy had a stabilizing or destabilizing impact on Asia Pacific and confronts the messaging about the Pivot from Washington with perceptions of leading U.S. Asia experts as well as with perceptions from Asia Pacific countries (primarily China). In the third chapter, the author looks at modifications of the policy and puts the Pivot – or Rebalance, as it became known, into context of the development in Asia Pacific with particular attention paid to U.S.-China relations and China's behavior in the region.

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

The author selected works by prominent U.S. scholars as well as a number of primary source material. Unfortunately, the writing suffers from a number of formal flaws caused by lack of proof-reading – frequent typos as well as grammar mistakes, lack of organization of paragraphs and repetitions of what had already been said. Occasionally, it is not clear from where the author draws information used to support his arguments. Direct citations too are not formally correct at places. I would also recommend that it is not proper to refer to the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton as to Hillary only (p. 31). There are no major issues with footnotes.

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

The author chose an interesting subject and it is evident that he enjoyed writing his analysis. I believe that at the beginning – where he states his goals – he asks too many questions. Based on his analysis, we can narrow down the research questions to the following: What is the Pivot? Was the launch of the Pivot a reaction to China's rise? Was Pivot a paradigm change? Why was it launched when it was launched? Nevertheless, the author provides answers to most of his questions, although he could be more analytical in his arguments.

I believe that the author selected the right theoretical framework (neoclassical realism, balance of power theory), however, the explanation of the thought process in the first chapter is confusing.

I am persuaded that we can generally agree with author's conclusion that the Pivot was launched as a reaction to China's rise and it has concrete implications for Asia Pacific despite the fact that the rebalance has been symbolical than practical. I think that the author may have elaborated in more detail on the other actors in the region, such as the Philippines or Vietnam and the role they played in the Pivot thought process. We can also agree that the Pivot did not bring any paradigm change, in fact, it was more of a reaction to the U.S. foreign policy's disproportional attention to the Middle East due to the War on Terror. The Pivot, or the so-called Rebalance, can be thus interpreted as return to normal where the U.S. recognizes that it has important interests in the Asia Pacific. At the same time, supporting allies who are increasingly nervous in reaction to China's rise and Beijing's growing assertiveness, is an obvious reason behind the Pivot. The author also does not forget the situation inside the U.S. He writes on p. 37: "I argue that to overcome this pressure against new foreign policy engagements – and to really convince the Americans that the administration is doing the right think committing to Asia-Pacific – it had to come with something big. Therefore, the reason why the Pivot policy was initially presented as something that will redefine U.S. foreign policy was not only to convince the observers abroad – the Asian countries- but also to convince observes at home – the American people."

I found the analytical chapters 3 and 4 the strongest, although, unfortunately, they are the shortest.

5. SPOLUPRÁCE S VEDOUCÍM PRÁCE (komunikace s vedoucím práce, schopnost reflektovat připomínky, posun od původního záměru apod.)

The author consulted his work. However, I believe that to the final time pressure, some of the suggestions, comments, and corrections were not reflected in the work.

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

You mention that the Obama Administration moved towards more pragmatic, less confrontational policy towards China around 2012. How does this reflect on the general worsening of U.S.-China relations, which were result of the previous failures, such as inability to achieve an agreement on CO2 emissions in Copenhagen, problems in mil-to-mil, and China's increasing assertiveness in South China Sea?

7. DOPORUČENÍ / NEDOPORUČENÍ K OBHAJOBĚ A NAVRHOVANÁ ZNÁMKA  
(výborně, velmi dobře, dobře, nevyhověl):

The thesis fulfills requirements for Master's theses and is recommended for defense. I propose grade **very good**.

Datum: August 18, 2014  
Sehnalkova

Podpis: Jana

Pozn.: Hodnocení pište k jednotlivým bodům, pokud nepíšete v textovém editoru, použijte při nedostatku místa zadní stranu nebo přiložený 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.