

UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE
Fakulta sociálních věd
Institut mezinárodních studií

PROTOKOL O HODNOCENÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE
(Posudek oponenta)

Práci předložil(a) student(ka): **Pavel Kučera**

Název práce: Analýza: **Byl Barack H. Obama větší mírotvorce než George W. Bush?**

Oponoval (u externích oponentů uveďte též adresu a funkci v rámci instituce):
doc. PhDr. Francis D. Raška, PhD.

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

The aim of this work is to analyze and compare the presidencies of George W. Bush and Barack Obama in their policy decisions concerning the Middle East. The ultimate goal of the author is to answer the question: Was Barack Obama more of a peacemaker than George W. Bush?

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

The topic is a complex one. I think that the structure and argumentation are good and that the student's citation of sources is fine.

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

Though well written overall, one glaring error is unfortunately visible from the beginning. The student has misspelled President Obama's first name, which correctly is "Barack", not "Barrack."

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

Pavel Kučera has selected the topic of George W. Bush's and Barack Obama's foreign policy towards the Middle East as the topic of his B.A. dissertation. The work aims to answer the following question: Was Barack Obama more of a peacemaker than George W. Bush? Kučera has divided the treatise into an Introduction, four main chapters, and a Conclusion. There are some appendices as well. In the ensuing paragraphs, I will comment on each part of the dissertation.

The Introduction fulfills its purpose by spelling out the direction of the work. One minor criticism I have is that the evaluation of the literature is not part of the Introduction, but is included in Chapter 1. However, the reader does get an idea as to the content of the overall work.

In Chapter 1, Kučera provides some basic information on the topic. In my opinion, this could have been included in the Introduction. The chapter begins with a recapitulation of the role played by the president in the formulation of U.S. foreign policy. Though this section is factually correct, one wonders why it is necessary to inform the reader(s) of such basic facts. That being said, it is obvious that Kučera is aware of the options available to any given president. The second section of Chapter 1 examines the opinions of both Bush and Obama on the Middle East and terrorism. Obama's perceived less hostile attitude towards Islamic countries and Islamic countries is mentioned as is his preference for diplomacy as opposed to military solutions. Kučera also points out that Obama was more eager than Bush to end existing wars and reduce American nuclear capabilities for the sake of peace. It is correct that Bush was much more in favor of a strong American military. The third (and final) section of Chapter 1 represents an overview of the relevant literature. As it stands, the chapter is acceptable, but I must reiterate that the content could have been part of a more extensive Introduction.

Chapter 2 represents a discussion of George W. Bush's presidency. Kučera's first section analyzes the neoconservative element surrounding Bush and the influence it had on policy. In the second section, 9/11 and its impact on policy is scrutinized, as are the decisions to intervene in Afghanistan and Iraq. In the case of Iraq, the Bush Administration had claimed that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction and this had resulted in initial mass support for the American invasion. Likewise, the

popularity of American involvement decreased when thorough inspections indicated that there were indeed no weapons of mass destruction. Kučera correctly states that the absence of weapons of mass destruction made George W. Bush's election prospects all the more contentious. However, he incorrectly states on page 17 that Bush was reelected in January 2005. It is common knowledge that American presidential (and most other) elections take place in November. However, presidents are inaugurated on 20 January and this mistake does not detract from Kučera's overall argument. Indeed, his assessment of the evolution of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan is correct. This chapter is an acceptable assessment of George W. Bush's policy in the Middle East.

In Chapter 3, Kučera addresses the presidency of Barack Obama. He has made every effort to contrast Obama's policies with those of George W. Bush. Some good insight is demonstrated when Kučera contrasts Obama's campaign promises to end American involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan with the reality of his eight years as president. The proposed reset with Russia, as well as the "pivot to Asia" are mentioned. Insofar as the main focus of the dissertation is concerned, Kučera makes the crucial point that Obama's presidency was exceptional because throughout his tenure in office, American troops were engaged in foreign conflicts. Apart from "inherited" conflicts, Obama resorted to drone use in Yemen, Libya, and Somalia. Extensive use of drones resulted in the killing of a number of prominent terrorists, but not without inflicting massive collateral damage. The special operation in Pakistan led to the killing of Osama Bin Laden, who had been sought ever since 9/11. Obama did resort to diplomacy, which yielded the famous nuclear deal with Iran and American military intervention played a decisive role in ousting Kaddafi in Libya. What is noteworthy here is that Obama's interventions, in general, were part of broader international diplomatic and military efforts. Obama's greater use of technology made interventions safer, but more expensive. I think that this chapter is well written and Kučera does a good job contrasting the policies of Bush and Obama.

The fourth (and final) main chapter poses the following questions: Whose policy was more effective? Whose policy resulted in the greatest number of killed terrorists? Kučera rightly states that one must firstly be clear when it comes to defining who is a terrorist. He then goes into various figures that demonstrate that the numbers are similar depending on which definition one uses. There is no firm conclusion here, nor should there be because the available data are too murky. I am glad that Kučera does not engage in futile speculation.

In the Conclusion, Kučera recapitulates his main points and writes that one cannot claim that Bush used excessive military force in comparison with Obama and that the circumstances present during the period of both administrations differed. The most important observation, in my view, is that foreign policy does not change overnight with the change of administrations.

Overall, this dissertation is fairly good. I just wish that Kučera had been more careful not to make petty mistakes and had done a better job with the Introduction, which should have included the content of Chapter 1. I recommend a classification of VERY GOOD, but I am open to a classification of EXCELLENT if the student performs exceptionally during the oral defense.

5. OTÁZKY A PŘIPOMÍNKY DOPORUČENÉ K BLIŽŠÍMU VYSVĚTLENÍ PŘI OBHAJOBĚ (jedna až tři):
1. Has Trump's actual foreign policy differed from that of Bush and Obama? Explain.

6. DOPORUČENÍ / NEDOPORUČENÍ K OBHAJOBĚ A NAVRHOVANÁ ZNÁMKA
(výborně, velmi dobře, dobře, nevyhověl): C (A in the event of a strong oral defense)

Datum: 16 January 2018

Podpis:

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.

