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(Posudek vedoucího)

Práci předložil(a) student(ka): Laura Srpova
Název práce: The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Key Building Stone of Obama's Pivot to Asia?

Vedoucí: Jana Sehnálková

1. OBSAH A CÍL PRÁCE (stručná informace o práci, formulace cíle):
In this thesis, Laura Srpova sets her goal to "evaluate and analyze the impact of the U.S. rebalance to Asia strategy on the U.S.-Japan security alliance". The author focuses on answering the following questions: How have the geopolitical changes in Asia impacted the U.S.-Japanese alliance? How important is Japan in the Asian pivot for the U.S.? What role does Japan play in the U.S. Pivot? What are the domestic and outer challenges to the alliance?

2. VĚCNÉ ZPRACOVÁNÍ (náročnost, tvůrčí přístup, argumentace, logická struktura, teoretické a metodologické ukotvení, práce s prameny a literaturou, vhodnost příloh apod.):
The topic the author selected is quite interesting, as the U.S.-Japan relationship represents a key stone of the Asia-Pacific security framework. The author correctly identifies some of the areas of tension between Washington and Tokio, which include e.g. the controversial U.S. base in Okinawa and Japan's ambiguous approach to its own defense posture in response to contemporary security challenges.
There are a few issues with the text. First and foremost, the thesis is missing a clear thesis statement, and the reader is thus left with a few questions the author poses in the Introduction.
Maybe due to the time constraints, the text comes across as rather descriptive and is not well-organized. A lot of space is given to the description of the history of mutual U.S.-Japan relations. The author then proceeds to describe domestic and external challenges to the U.S.-Japan alliance, where individual challenges are lined up randomly. In this section, the author dedicates a subchapter to the rising China, however, the subchapter is incomplete, as it misses China's moves in the South China and East China Seas as well as Beijing's growing assertiveness, which was a result from the Chinese perception of the U.S. in decline following the financial crisis of 2008-2009. These missing themes are then analysed in more detail in Chapter 3, which is called "The Consequences of the Pivot". I would however argue that China's assertiveness was in fact one of the causes of the Pivot.
The author does not really offer a proper analysis of the Pivot and its genesis. I have not found any comprehensive explanation of the strategy, its ideological roots or an explanation of how Pivot has transformed to rebalance. The description of the Pivot is scattered through the text. It is also unfortunate that the author does not use fundamental texts on the Pivot, such as Hillary Clinton's article in *Foreign Affairs* or Kurt Campbell's and Tom Donilon's hearing statements on the Pivot.
There are often jumps in chronology - in one page, we may be moving to the years 2015-2016, only to later go back to 2009. Some chapters seem to have ended in 2014, leaving developments of the two last Obama's years in the White House blank. The text

would appreciate some redacting work, as in places, the author tends to repeat herself and there are significant overlaps between Chapter 1 and Chapter 3.

The author claims that Obama was the brainchild of the TPP, which is not entirely true - the TPP was initiated in 2005 and at that time, the U.S. led by G. W. Bush was part of the initiative. Obama simply expanded on Bush's work.

The author praises the conclusion of the TPP as the "most important achievements of the Obama administration". Since the author was finishing her thesis in December 2017, it would make sense to mention that Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the agreement.

Last but not least, the author does not include any critical analysis of the sources used despite its absence was pointed out in one of the text revisions.

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

Language-wise, the text is generally well-written, although a few paragraphs lack coherence, they either deal with multiple topics, or they are split in ilogical way. In some places, the text is a bit difficult to follow. I would have also appreacited page numbers, for the purpose of easier referencing to the text.

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

The author mostly fulfills the goal of the thesis and answers the questions posed in the introduction. The text presents a rather complex analysis of the security challenges in the Asia Pacific, looks in detail at the development of the U.S.-Japan relationship, as well as analyzes some of the challenges to the relationships. The description of the concrete implications of the Pivot/rebalance to the actual U.S.-Japan relations could have been more analytical. I agree with the author's conclusion that the "practical impact of the pivot on Japan was not substantial and the legacy of the pivot to Asia appears to be unfinished." It is true that the relationship's path was set well before the Pivot - and it makes sense to argue that Pivot/rebalance was not such a big change in the U.S. foreign policy towards Japan.

5. OTÁZKY A PŘIPOMÍNKY DOPORUČENÉ K BLIŽŠÍMU VYSVĚTLENÍ PŘI OBHAJOBĚ (jedna až tři):
   1. How difficult was it for Japan to implement changes to the interpretation of the Constitution in 2015? What was the public approach?
   2. How has the U.S.-Japan relationship transformed with the coming of Donald Trump? What is the plan with the Okinawa base relocation and the realignment to Guam?
   3. In the introduction, the author promises to offer a European perspective on the topic. In what way is the European perspective different?

6. DOPORUČENÍ / NEDOPORUČENÍ K OBHAJOBĚ A NAVRHOVANÁ ZNÁMKA
      (výborně, velmi dobře, dobře, nevyhověl):
Despite the issues mentioned above, the thesis fulfills requirements for Master´s theses and is recommended for defense. I propose grade C.

Datum:January 21, 2017   Podpis: Jana Sehnalkova