

**UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE**  
**Fakulta sociálních věd**  
**Institut mezinárodních studií**

**PROTOKOL O HODNOCENÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE**  
**(Posudek oponenta)**

Práci předložil(a) student(ka): **Vojtěch Koláč**

Název práce: **Spolupráce USA se státy Blízkého východu v boji proti Islámskému státu**

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):

**This B.A. dissertation aims to demonstrate the approaches adopted by the United States, Russia, Iran, and Turkey to defeat the Islamic State. In what ways has the Islamic State influenced the strategic goals of the United States, Russia, Iran, and Turkey?**

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

**This topic is demanding. I have no problem with the logic of the argumentation. However, I think that the topic is a bit too broad for a B.A. dissertation and, though I am no expert on the nuances of the Czech language, there are clear cases where the student uses simplistic language and is somewhat repetitive. Also, he claims that the work is theoretical in nature, but little, if any, theory is visible.**

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

**The referencing could be better and, as stated above, so could the presentation (writing style).**

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

**Vojtěch Koláč has prepared his B.A. dissertation on the topic of cooperation between the United States and selected countries in the struggle against the Islamic State (ISIS). The work consists of an Introduction, four main chapters, and a Conclusion. In the next paragraphs, I shall offer my comments on each individual section.**

**In the Introduction, Vojtěch explains the reasoning for his selection of the given topic and he spells out the aim of the work, which is to explain the approaches taken by the United States, Russia, Iran, and Turkey in order to defeat ISIS. The actual research question is: What was the basis of the cooperation of the United States with the powers mentioned above in order to defeat ISIS? I think that the Introduction is fine except for the fact that there is no special section containing a review of the relevant literature and sources. If I may add, the language seems quite simplistic.**

**Chapter 1 consists of a number of sections, in which specific terms are defined. The defined terms are international security, terrorism, and the relationship between Islam and terrorism is also defined in terms of the link between religion and politics. ISIS is based upon an interpretation of Sunni Islam. This chapter is crucial for the reader, who has to grapple with the use of these words/concepts in the rest of the work.**

**Chapter 2 provides needed historical background on the establishment of ISIS and analyzes the traits of the organization. Vojtěch correctly associates the origins of ISIS with the American invasion of Iraq. In Syria, the United States wished to replace the regime of Bashar Assad and, at least initially, supported the goals of ISIS. In addition, Vojtěch also discusses the differences between Sunni and Shiite Muslims that have persisted since the seventh century.**

**In Chapter 3, Vojtěch analyzes the positions of the aforementioned countries concerning ISIS. He begins with Russia, where President Putin has been a supporter of a stable authoritarian order because he is convinced that any liberalization or democratization would serve merely to open the door to Sunni radicalism. Russian geopolitical goals in the region are defined as follows: 1. To counter American and European efforts to deprive Moscow of its allies; 2. To prevent the rise of radical Sunni groups that could potentially penetrate Muslim regions of Russia; 3. To thwart the decline in world oil prices because**

Russia's economy is dependent on the export of oil and natural gas; 4. To increase the export of weapons, nuclear reactors, as well as other products to wealthy Arab countries. Vojtěch describes the Russian intervention in Syria, which began in 2015, as a strategic move to show the world that Russia is still a global player, prop up the Assad regime, and divert attention from the economic difficulties Russia has faced since the imposition of sanctions. On the negative side, Russian actions in Syria have resulted in the deterioration of the security situation inside Russia where Islamic terrorism has increased.

Vojtěch then turns to Iran, which is predominantly a Persian country, and wishes to become a global power. As Iran was never under the control of foreign powers, something which has given its leaders a sense of superiority in the region. Also, Iran is overwhelmingly Shiite and is the largest country in the region. Iran considers Iraq to be its worst enemy and has been an ally of Assad's Syria. As Vojtěch correctly writes, Turkey is somewhat of an anomaly in the region because it is a highly secularized country whose affinities are more of an ethnic than a religious nature. Turkey has large economic connections to Iraq and Syria. However, there is the Kurdish issue, which Turkey believes represents a threat to Turkish territorial integrity. In the case of Syria, Turkey attempted to mediate the conflict between Assad and ISIS, but has indirectly supported the Syrian opposition since Turkish efforts at mediation failed. However, the border between Syria and Turkey has been relatively porous and many Syrian rebels have found shelter inside Turkey and foreign fighters have used this border to enter the Syrian conflict. Due to the Kurdish issue, however, Turkey has been torn. On the one hand, fighting ISIS would be in Turkey's interests because ISIS has struck even inside Turkey and undermined regional stability, but any weakening of ISIS would strengthen the position of the Kurdish minority in Syria, which would ally with Kurds inside Turkey seeking an independent Kurdish state. This conundrum is indeed serious because Kurdish units have proved to be the best allies of the West in the struggle against ISIS. I am at great pains to comment on this chapter. As I have already mentioned, the topic is extremely broad and I fear that Vojtěch has taken on too much.

In Chapter 4, Vojtěch analyzes the interests of the United States and its position vis-à-vis ISIS. He describes the global power status of the United States and how this pertains to the Middle East. The various U.S. military interventions in the Middle East have destabilized the region. Energy needs have played a large role in American strategic thinking as has the War on Terror. American policy has been to degrade and neutralize ISIS, but, at the same time, the United States supported the non-ISIS opposition to Bashar Assad because the United States has felt that Assad should be removed in order to deprive Iran of power in the region. This chapter is interesting, but quite simplistic.

Vojtěch concludes the treatise by recapitulating the main points of the four chapters. He claims that, in order to defeat ISIS, which threatens each of the four countries in question, the powers have had to overcome somewhat their traditional regional stances and collaborate to achieve a common goal. Though this B.A. dissertation satisfies the requirements for a B.A. dissertation, I feel that the topic is far too broad. In addition, there are problems with the referencing. Sometimes Vojtěch includes page numbers, sometimes he does not. I have already stated my reservations about language and theory, so I will not repeat them. I think that a very good classification (C) is in order depending on the quality of the oral defense.

5. OTÁZKY A PŘIPOMÍNKY DOPORUČENÉ K BLIŽŠÍMU VYSVĚTLENÍ PŘI OBHAJOBĚ (jedna až tři):  
**What are Saudi Arabia's goals in the region? How do they differ from those of Iran? Explain.**

**How has the ascent of Erdogan to power in Turkey affected Turkey's foreign policy? Explain.**

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

Datum: **3 June 2018**

Podpis:

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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.