

Jiří Skoupý

B.A. Thesis Assessment

*Republikánská zahraniční politika a teroristické útoky z 11. září*

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Jiří (Jirka) Skoupý has chosen the issue of Republican foreign policy and the 9/11 terrorist attacks as the topic of his B.A. thesis. Jirka and I go back a long way and he is one of the best students I ever taught. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that Jirka's work is excellently written on the basis of sound sources. The dissertation is divided into an Introduction, five main chapters, and a Conclusion.

The Introduction (Chapter 1) accurately informs the reader about the structure of the dissertation and explains why Jirka has opted to limit the discussion to the Republicans. As Jirka states: "The aim of the work is to analyze changes in Republican foreign policy brought on by the terrorist attacks and offer possible explanations for the implementation of these changes and which factors influenced their final form..." In addition, the cited literature is evaluated clearly and succinctly.

The first main chapter (Chapter 2) describes the ideological framework of American foreign policy and is neatly divided into two sections. In the first section, Jirka discusses the domestic context of American foreign policy. Here, Jirka places emphasis on the fact that American foreign policy stems from democratic political liberalism, which defines the American political system as such. American exceptionalism is also rightly mentioned.

The next chapter (Chapter 3) deals with the differences in opinion among American conservatives. Jirka underscores the importance of the debate among conservatives, which significantly affects the formulation of American foreign policy. The individual fractions, namely traditionalists, libertarians, paleoconservatives, and neoconservatives are superbly defined and other more marginal groups are acknowledged.



The third main chapter (Chapter 4) represents a detailed analysis of Republican foreign policy between 1994 and 2000. Jirka begins by framing the issue of American foreign policy in the context of the end of the Cold War. The policies of the Clinton Administration are discussed as is the Republican takeover of both houses of Congress in 1994. I find Jirka's discussion of the relations between the Clinton Administration and the Republicans in Congress after 1994 very informative. The concepts of legalism, internationalism, and humanitarian intervention are aptly analyzed. Neoconservatism was revived by the establishment of the *Project for the New American Century*, which paved the way for the foreign policy of the future administration of President George W. Bush.

The next main chapter (Chapter 5) is devoted to Republican foreign policy between 2000 and the tragic terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. Jirka rightly states that George W. Bush's ascent to the presidency provided the Republicans with a unique opportunity to have nearly complete control over American foreign policy. The election campaign is discussed as are the internal differences among Bush's team about the direction of American foreign policy. As Bush himself did not possess great knowledge of foreign affairs, team members started to formulate plans, but, indeed, there were differences of opinion. The section concerning the first eight months of the Bush Administration's foreign policy demonstrates Jirka's grasp of the issues. Essentially, the Bush Administration at this time proved itself to be wary of international agreements such as cooperation with the International Criminal Court and the Kyoto Protocol. This was in accordance with neoconservative thinking, which held that international agreements served to limit, not enhance American power in the world.

The final chapter (Chapter 6) analyzes to Republican foreign policy between 2001 and 2003. Jirka correctly points out that the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 changed the nature of American foreign policy. The initial global reaction to the attacks was



very pro-American and foreign policy became a priority for the Bush Administration. From this point, the war on terrorism would be the decisive factor. Jirka's assessment of the 2002 National Security Strategy of the Bush Administration is accurate. The doctrine of preemption is discussed as are the contrasts between Bush's post-9/11 foreign policy and Bush's 2000 election campaign. Also, the logic behind the decision to invade Iraq is evaluated. Indeed, the neoconservative agenda became dominant.

In the Conclusion (Chapter 7), Jirka recapitulates the evolution of Republican foreign policy between 1994 and 2003. George W. Bush's election in 2000 and the events of 11 September 2001 ensured the implementation of the neoconservative agenda. Jirka rightly concludes his treatise by stating that "the aims of the neoconservatives, namely bolstering American national security and spreading American ideals, are more traditional than controversial for American politics."

Jiří Skoupý has produced a laudable B.A. dissertation. His argumentation is sound, based on solid research, and properly expressed. I believe that Jirka should be awarded an **EXCELLENT** mark and I do hope that he will continue his M.A. studies in the Department of American Studies.

