

MASTER'S EXAMINER REPORT

GPS – Geopolitical Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Thesis title:	Why Japan cancelled the deployment of the Aegis Shore missile defence system
Name of Student:	Shuhei Aritake
Referee (incl. titles):	doc. Mgr. Michal Kolmaš, Ph.D.
Report Due Date:	

Comments of the referee on the thesis highlights and shortcomings (following the four numbered aspects of your assessment indicated below).

1) Contribution and argument:

The thesis posits a solid argument about a topic that is very much up to date. It argues against the prevailing interpretation about Japanese security development and provides a coherent line of argumentation. The deconstruction of the governmental justification for cancelling the Aegis Ashore missile defense system is well developed and persuasive. There are minor limitations in the coherence of the work, but the analysis itself is by no means shallow.

2) Theoretical and methodological framework:

The theoretical framework is well developed – the author criticizes the often cited neorealist interpretation of Japan's security policy and posits that neoclassical realism is better suited to explain it. Though we may have limitations about this (I myself am a constructivist and not a huge fan of the application of neoclassical realism to Japanese foreign relations), the author uses this theoretical framework well and comes to conclusions that comply with the theoretical paradigm.

Methodology is a bit weaker – according to the theory, the author distinguishes three sites of contestation (three reasons for the cancellation of AS), which are the leader (PM Abe), domestic political system and political culture and foreign powers (US, China). In the empirical part, however, these are often mixed and sometimes confused. Though the methodological idea is clear then, the execution is lacking. I do not think this is a major issue for the thesis, but it is apparent.

2) Sources and literature:

The sources are relevant. Given the nature of the research, which analyses issues from a few years back, it was difficult to find suitable academic sources. The author, however, made use of various older sources that are relevant for the field of study, and complemented them with primary sources in Japanese, which were essential for the depth of the analysis. I also commend on the author carrying out an extensive interview with a former policy advisor to Japanese PM.

4) Manuscript form and structure:

The coherence of the empirical chapter, as noted above, could be better. Otherwise, I believe it is fine.

5) Quality of presentation

Mediocre.

CATEGORY	POINTS
<i>Contribution (research quality, analysis, and conclusions) (max. 40 points)</i>	37
<i>Theoretical and methodological framework (max. 25 points)</i>	20
<i>Sources and literature (max. 10 points)</i>	9
<i>Manuscript form and structure (max. 15 points)</i>	12

<i>Quality of presentation (grammar, style, coherence)</i>	<i>(max. 10 points)</i>	6
TOTAL POINTS	<i>(max. 100 points)</i>	84
The proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F)		B

Suggested questions for the defence are:



I recommend the thesis for final defence.

Referee Signature

Overall grading scheme at FSV UK:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE	Quality standard
91 – 100	A	= outstanding (high honor)
81 – 90	B	= superior (honor)
71 – 80	C	= good
61 – 70	D	= satisfactory
51 – 60	E	= low pass at a margin of failure
0 – 50	F	= failing. The thesis is not recommended for defence.