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Review

of the Master thesis in European Studies submitted to the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Charles University Prague by Mr. **Vladimír Randáček** "The OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission 1998-1999"

The author wants to demonstrate that the wide-spread negative assessment of the KVM 98/99 is based on false premises and that the mission has, indeed, been rather effective. The reasons for the escalation of the Kosovo conflict are to be found beyond the reach of KVM. His study attempts to be an empirically based correction of that negative image.

The study is in terms of the methods used by the author not really a comparative one (p. 5) but a well-founded case study with a wide (sometimes a little too wide) historical horizon. In his introduction chapter, the author introduces the concept of conflict prevention which both a part of classic diplomatic action and a relatively new concept in dealing with local and regional conflicts from the standpoint of the international community. The critical remarks by Mr. Randáček about the huge gap between early warning and early response remind us that conflict prevention may be a very helpful instrument, but only under certain condition.

Chapters two and three are mainly descriptive and a little too long, but I was positively surprised by the author's ability to present the complex material in a fresh manner. Even if the readers know many of the data presented here they will like to read the text here because it is well organized and well written. The most important chapters four and five inform about the development and the institutional shape of KVM and the six months activity in the field. The

author is successful in convincing the reader of this study that the negative image of KVM is not justified.

There are no doubts as to the academic soundness of the study. The author has gathered a lot of primary and secondary material in a rather skilful manner. Sometimes minor (language) slips should be corrected – Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* was certainly not “positivist” (p. 24), but what the author means is probably something like “constructive” or “co-operative”.

It might have been useful to compliment the study by a short reflexion on the problematic or even precarious status of the OSCE as a security organisation after the end of the East-West conflict. For one of the reasons for the negative image of KVM may well be the general impression that the OSCE which has not been very successful in the Balkans over the preceding years is unable to do any good job and that a reasonable (feasible) solution of the Kosovo crisis could only be provided by a more muscular security organization. May be, that is one of the questions the authors could deal with during the defence of his thesis.

As I learned that the grading system at Charles University comprises a 1 to 5 system (4= not passed; 3 = satisfactory; 2 = good; 1 = very good/excellent), I am glad first to ask the Faculty to accept this thesis as a part of Mr. Randáček's Master examination, and secondly, I propose to grant him the best grade:

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