

POSUDEK OPONENTA HABILITAČNÍ PRÁCE

Masarykova univerzita

Uchazeč

PhDr. Michal Smetana, PhD.

Habilitační práce

The Foundations of Nuclear Order: Norms, Attitudes, and International Institutions

Oponent

doc. PhDr. Francis Raška, PhD.

Pracoviště oponenta, instituce

Institut mezinárodních studií, Fakulta sociálních věd
Univerzity Karlovy

[Text posudku]¹

Dr. Michal Smetana has chosen to write his habilitation thesis on the issue of nuclear order and its foundations. The treatise is actually comprised of a number of individual papers and is divided into two parts (altogether fifteen chapters). What Smetana has offered is a comprehensive recapitulation of the work he has produced from the outset of his career. The work is thematic in nature and encompasses a broad plethora of perspectives. Smetana has selected the papers included in the thesis on the basis of five criteria, namely thematic homogeneity, epistemological and methodological heterogeneity, single-authored and collaborative articles, the exclusion of two articles that formed part of his PhD dissertation, and strict impact factor-based bibliometric indicators. The issue of nuclear order remains very relevant to international security, particularly in light of ongoing events in Ukraine that pit the Russian Federation against the West in a conflict with potentially devastating global consequences. I will comment on both parts of the work in the ensuing paragraphs.

Part 1 consists of eight chapters (papers) that address thinking concerning institutions, norms, and practices of the nuclear order as it exists in the world today. The first chapter represents Smetana's thoughts on nuclear nonuse published in the *International Studies Review* that is co-authored by Carmen Wunderlich. The first and second waves of nonuse scholarship are critiqued here and recommendations are provided for the next wave of such scholarship. The first wave of nuclear nonuse scholarship is depicted as evolving from initial deterrence to "taboo" and "tradition." The differences of opinion between constructivist and rationalist scholars are aptly summarized. When discussing the second wave, Smetana cites use of quantitative methods and survey experiments. In order to approach the "third wave", the author offers seven criteria that should be useful, namely employing a cross-national and cross-cultural perspective, sharpening the public-elite distinction, examining the role of gender and race, investigating the generational aspect, considering (neuro-) psychological factors, studying interactive linkages, and applying a comparative approach. In my view, Chapter 1 is well-argued and well-written and provides a clear roadmap for future research. In Chapter 2, Smetana delves into the approval of nuclear, chemical, and conventional strikes and how they are shaped by moral foundations according to data derived from experimental surveys of American opinion. The results indicate that conventional strikes are the most popular, followed by nuclear strikes, and, thirdly, by chemical strikes. In the discussion, the opinion is offered that chemical strikes are the least popular because

¹ V textu posudku se lze zaměřit například na tyto oblasti: aktuálnost tématu, přístup k řešení, použitá metodologie, kvalita a správnost dosažených výsledků, původnost dosažených výsledků, uplatnitelnost výsledků pro rozvoj oboru a další bádání, uplatnitelnost výsledků v praxi, formální úprava a jazyková úroveň práce, připomínky k habilitační práci uchazeče.

Americans have most recently seen evidence of their consequences as opposed to the nuclear strikes of 1945, which most Americans did not witness in living memory. This chapter is clear and shows American preferences for types of military activity. Suggestions of additional criteria for future research are also offered. In Chapter 3, Smetana and his co-authors discuss the issue of nuclear and chemical weapon "taboos." This time, both American and British public opinion were surveyed. The conclusions indicate that the employment of chemical weapons is less popular among respondents than that of nuclear weapons. Of the reasons provided for this difference in opinion. The most important one indicates that, even though nuclear weapons are known to be more destructive than chemical ones, nuclear weapons are associated with modern states, whereas chemical weapons are viewed as the weapon of choice for rogue states and terrorist organizations. This chapter clearly indicates that further research is required. Chapter 4 discusses Russian attitudes towards the use of nuclear weapons in a potential conflict with NATO. The findings indicate that most respondents do not favor the use of nuclear strikes against NATO even if this means that Russia will lose the given military conflict. Interestingly, when addressing the role played by public opinion in Russian policy decisions, the authors seem to believe that public opinion does play a role in Russia despite its classification as a non-democratic country. Here I have to ask whether the current Russian aggression in Ukraine validates this assertion. The chapter is nonetheless impressive. German opinions regarding nuclear weapons in Europe form the subject of Chapter 5. Surveys were conducted using the German public and German elites. The findings indicate divergences of opinion between the public and elites. The German public is much more skeptical than are elites about the prospect that nuclear weapons represent a deterrent to nuclear threats. However, the public and elites seem similarly skeptical about nuclear weapons as an effective deterrent in the case of non-nuclear threats. When it comes to the actual use of nuclear weapons, however, the elites seem more opposed to such a scenario than the public. Moreover, both the public and elites express approval for the idea that nuclear weapons ought to be removed from Germany for the sake of meaningful arms reduction discussions. This chapter is of superb quality. Chapter 6 discusses gaps between German elites and the German public in attitudes to nuclear weapons. This study confirms the hypothesis that elites are more opposed than the public to the use of nuclear weapons. In Chapter 7, a discussion is offered on how to get the American public to support the abolition of nuclear weapons. The historical background of public engagement on the issue is recapitulated. Six arguments dominate the pro-disarmament agenda, namely nuclear terrorism, nuclear-armed "rogue states", catastrophic nuclear war, humanitarian impact, nuclear accidents, and economic costs and the authors assess the effectiveness of each. The findings suggest that nuclear-armed rogue states and the danger of nuclear accidents are the most effective arguments, whereas the argument concerning overall cost appears to be the least effective. Besides presenting findings, criteria for further research are proposed. Chapter 8 addresses the issue of whether Germany and the Netherlands wish to part with US nuclear weapons. The results of the conducted survey indicate that neither the Germans nor the Dutch support the notion that American stationing of nuclear weapons forms an irreplaceable pillar of the security of NATO countries. In addition, neither country seemed to be in favor of more American troops in exchange for the removal of nuclear weapons. However, when asked whether increasing European conventional forces for the sake of nuclear disarmament, the Germans are still not in favor, whereas the Dutch population seems evenly divided. Bilateral arms agreements between the US and Russia enjoy overwhelming support in both countries. When asked about unconditional unilateral US nuclear withdrawal, the Germans overwhelmingly agree, whereas there is an even split on the idea among the Dutch. Finally, possible future scenarios are laid out. I must repeat my question as to whether the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine might alter opinions now. Overall, Part 1 appears to be well-conceived and there is evidence of original research. More importantly, proposals for future research are offered, which indicates that the issue of nuclear weapons remains relevant.

Part 2 (which contains seven chapters) focuses on the interplay between norms, practices, and institutions of the global nuclear order. In Chapter 9, the theme is so-called “nuclear revolution.” There is, according to the author, a link between nuclear weapons and peaceful change. The primary institutions of nuclear order are identified as nuclear deterrence, nuclear arms control, nuclear nonproliferation, nuclear nonuse, and nuclear disarmament. Links between the institutions have contributed to peaceful change or at least preventing violent change. However, the author highlights potential pitfalls, such as technological developments, the gradual disintegration of arms control institutions, and potential accidents. Chapter 10 addresses the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as an “antifragile system” and how contestation enhances the nonproliferation regime. Violations of nonproliferation by India in the 1970s and Iraq in the 1990s are compared. Smetana explains how the two contestations resulted in the improvement of the mechanisms designed to safeguard nuclear nonproliferation. This chapter is quite informative. The European Union and its Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference in 2015 are discussed in Chapter 11. The argument here is that despite the European Union’s desire to raise its profile in the field of nuclear nonproliferation, but largely failed due to the fact that the NPT Review Conference of 2015 resulted in a lack of consensus. Chapter 12 scrutinizes the role played by nuclear infrastructure in the prospects for nuclear disarmament. The author poses the argument that the maintenance of any nuclear infrastructure does not facilitate long-term goals of a nuclear-free world. Rather, Smetana supports the concept of “virtual irreversibility.” The chapter is definitely well-researched. In Chapter 13, the author assesses the multilateral turn in disarmament negotiations. In favor of the multilateral approach, Smetana gives the following reasons in favor: First, the Non-Proliferation Treaty is perceived as being in the midst of an existential crisis; Second, continued buildup raises the risk that terrorist groups will acquire nuclear material and know-how; Third, the revival of arms control negotiations could be beneficial for the overall international security environment; Fourth, China’s continued nuclear buildup poses grounds for concern and involving China in the disarmament process could help to ease tensions. The idea promoted by Smetana is referred to as reduction-cum-freeze. Once again, evidence of serious research is indeed present. In Chapter 14, Smetana discusses the idea that nuclear explosions can be used as “weapons of mass protection” against near-Earth objects (NEOs). Reservations are stated and the lack of scientific consensus on the effectiveness of nuclear energy devices (NEDs) against NEOs is noted. Moreover, the near impossibility of proving the peaceful intent of the state developing NEDs is emphasized as being worthy of concern. Smetana suggests that greater transparency is needed in order not to compromise the credibility of the progress made thus far in the area of nuclear disarmament. Finally, Chapter 15 analyzes the significance of the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) of 2018. The dawn of the “third nuclear age” with China seen as a great power in the nuclear field is discussed. Individual aspects of the NPR are addressed and the author’s conclusion that the document represents a continuation of bureaucratic post-Cold War US nuclear policy seems sound. Though the NPR stipulations differ from those of the previous Obama presidency, they seem to be consistent with the ideas expressed by other post-Cold War Republican administrations. Thus, the author sees no need for excessive alarm. My overall impression of Part 2 is positive. Each chapter has a stated aim, which is, in turn, fulfilled.

Michal Smetana has done much research on nuclear arms and the so-called nuclear order. The fifteen chapters contained in this compendium attest to that fact. I believe that Michal Smetana’s work fulfills the requirements for a successful habilitation thesis.

Dotazy oponenta k obhajobě habilitační práce (počet dotazů dle zvážení oponenta)

How will the current Russian aggression in Ukraine impact future arms control negotiations?

Is Russia still a credible partner in any future security discussions when one takes into account their recent deception?

How potentially will the Ukrainian crisis affect European and American security policy within the context of NATO and the European Union? Will there be a reconsideration of the present European ideas concerning the presence of nuclear weapons on European soil?

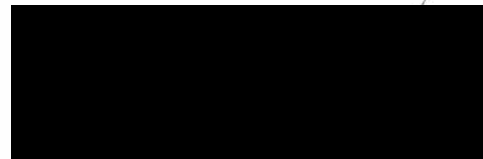
Závěr

Habilitační práce **Michala Smetany**

The Foundations of Nuclear Order: Norms, Attitudes, and International Institutions
splňuje požadavky standardně kladené na habilitační práce v oboru **politologie**.

Praha

Dne **28.2.2022**



podpis