



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Eliška Křížová

Title: Analysis of the impact of Russia's armed actions on Finland's security:
towards NATO membership

Programme/year: Security Studies 2023-24

Author of Evaluation (supervisor): Aliaksei Kazharski

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	10
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	30
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	39
<i>Total</i>		80	79
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	4
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	19
TOTAL		100	98



Evaluation

Major criteria:

Minor criteria:

Assessment of plagiarism:

No indications of plagiarism.

Overall evaluation:

The presented master thesis is of very high quality, and it duly reflects the author's diligent approach that I witnessed throughout the research and writing period. It was a pleasure to read. It is well-structured and well-written, with only very minor issues that I was able to spot, such as some words missing in some sentences. On the terminological side I would discourage the author from conflating the words "realist" and "realistic" as she does once on p. 5. Nowadays, it is not too difficult to imagine a description of international politics that would be realist-inspired but at the same time not very "realistic" in the sense of ignoring some basic facts.

The theoretical framework is very well-reflected. I appreciate the fact that the author also included a critical reflection on Walt's balance of threat theory including a survey of the ensuing theoretical debates. The empirical analysis is also very well developed. It is both sufficiently detailed and concisely written up and thus reflects the significant effort that the author invested in researching her master thesis. Here, I would perhaps have an additional question pertaining to the last part of the empirical analysis which has to do with the shifts in the Finnish threat perception. Relying on her data, the author points out that they were, to some extent, gradual but nevertheless the 2022 full-scale invasion understandably served as a major catalyst, transforming the public attitudes on NATO membership.

Here one line of reasoning caught my attention. As the author argues, "even though it was unlikely Russia would have enough military capabilities to start another attack simultaneously with the war in Ukraine, the probability that the Russian Federation would not hesitate to act militarily in case Finland's potential decision to join NATO could not be ruled out in the future, given the previous experience when Russia showed willingness and capabilities to



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prevent other states from joining the Alliance” (p. 75).

This seems to be a case of circular reasoning: NATO membership was necessary because Russia could attack in the future, yet Russia would attack only if Finland would seek NATO membership. Abiding strictly by this logic, if Finland did not seek NATO membership it would also be unnecessary.

I think there is much more to it and, as the author points out, it also has to do with a major shock that 2022 produced and the seeming impossibility of changing the offensive intentions in the aftermath. Perhaps, this is something that could be elaborated a bit further in terms of the last component of the empirical analysis.

Suggested grade:

“A” (98)

Signature:

Alku