

# **MASTER OF ARTS IN INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS**

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## **THE VIETNAM SYNDROME AND THE CONFLICT IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA**

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**Master of Arts in International Security and Civil-Military Relations-December 1996**

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This thesis investigates to what extent the U.S. experience in the Vietnam War and the lessons learned from it, a phenomenon known as the “Vietnam Syndrome,” influenced the decision by the United States not to intervene during the early stages of the Balkan conflict.

The study will argue that the Vietnam War was used as a historical analogy for the current situation in the former Yugoslavia. I further argue that this method was an improperly used historical parallel and should not have been applied.

## **AMERICAN VIEWS OF RUSSIAN NATIONAL INTERESTS IN NATO ENLARGEMENT**

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This thesis focuses on official and unofficial American views of Russian national interests as revealed in the discussion about NATO enlargement. The thesis begins with a theoretical investigation of the concept of the national interest based on the approach of the realist school. Specifically, two positions are considered: namely, the power position and the security position. The thesis applies this theory to the discussion of Russian national interests in NATO enlargement. It reveals a host of attitudes behind official U.S. policy some of them contradictory. These tell us interesting things about American attitudes toward Russia and about the motives behind U.S. support for NATO enlargement. The thesis fosters a better understanding of the rationale behind U.S. foreign policy toward Russia in general and regarding NATO enlargement in particular.

## **U.S. DECISION-MAKING PROCESS ON NATO ENLARGEMENT: IMPLICATIONS FOR EAST EUROPEAN STATES**

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This thesis examines the evolution of post-Cold War U.S. policy toward NATO as a case study of the way in which domestic and international pressures interact to shape security policy. I argue that the expansion of U.S. commitments to post-Cold War Europe corresponds to the way key U.S. Policymaking institutions have framed American national interests. President Clinton, his key advisors and Republican leaders of Congress emphasize that NATO enlargement advances American interests by accelerating the success of democratic and market economy reforms in Eastern European countries and Russia. But NATO enlargement also serves a more defensive mission—that of pushing back threats to the West from the East. The

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process that led to this definition of U.S. interests reflects the flexibility of the U.S. decision-making structure, and the sharing of powers between Congress, the president and other key actors. The interpretation of these national interests, in turn, have been shaped by two factors: geostrategic perspectives and domestic political concerns. Wide agreement has emerged between Congress and the Executive Branch that NATO enlargement serves U.S. geostrategic interests. Moreover, at least until now, partisan political conflict over NATO enlargement has remained muted. Such conflicts could grow as new strategic questions emerge with the prospect of enlargement beyond the Vishegrad countries (Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic).

### **THE IMPACT OF U.S. DE-CERTIFICATION ON COLOMBIAN DEMOCRACY**

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This is a study of the impact of the United States drug-related de-certification upon the consolidation of democracy in Colombia. De-certification is one of the most powerful tools the United States has to focus international attention on the threat of narcotics and drug trafficking. This thesis argues that the de-certification decision made by the United States on March 1, 1996, in the short term undermines Colombian democracy. The de-certification is politically oriented to oust the government of President Ernesto Samper Pizano. President Pizano was targeted because of the infiltration of illegal drug money in his presidential campaign. The de-certification did not accomplish its objective. On the contrary, it brought more instability to the country, made the social situation more volatile and the democracy weaker and more vulnerable. However, it is possible that in the long-term de-certification could have a positive impact on Colombian democracy, by helping the state to develop a strong posture against corruption and the drug syndicates.

### **STATE STRENGTH AND GUERRILLA POWER: THE EQUILIBRIUM BETWEEN THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE GUERRILLA GROUPS**

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This study addresses the question of whether there is an equilibrium between the Colombian government and the guerrilla groups. This subject is addressed for the purpose of gaining an understanding and finding answers to Colombia's violent political conflict.

The study argues that there is an equilibrium between the government and the guerrilla groups. The author uses three variables, the military balance, the peasant support for the guerrillas, and the weakness of the state, to discuss the equilibrium and its effect in this conflict.

In conclusion, the author maintains that the equilibrium between the actors in the conflict is not structural, but is a circumstance of the effects of both the narco-trafficking and the failure of the judicial system. If this balance is to change, action must be taken on two fronts, narco-trafficking and the judicial system.

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