

**Supervisor's Review of the  
Master's Thesis Submitted by Lara G. Hudak  
"Rising Tensions in Troubled Waters: China's and the Philippines' Competing Claims in  
the South China Sea"**

The problem of territorial claims in the South China Sea is one of the hot issues in the contemporary international relations. Even if there are still not so many victims and military operations in the region as in the Middle East, Syria or Afghanistan, a potential of escalating the conflict and destabilizing of East Asia is very high. China and Philippines are two key actors, and their mutual territorial claim in the South China Sea can set fire to the situation at any moment. It's why the thesis of Lara G. Hudak looks so relevant from practical and scholarly points of view.

In the dissertation, the author presents China-Philippines territorial claims in the wide historical perspective. She thoroughly studies numerous geographical, political and legal factors, which are important for proper understanding of the issue. Lara gives a special attention to describing the positions and interests of another ASEAN participants of the dispute, and great powers: the United States, Russia, and Japan. Possible outcomes and suggestions how the conflict could be resolved addressed by the author in the third chapter.

The dissertation of Lara G. Hudak is based on various documental and other primary sources; author demonstrates good knowledge of the contemporary literature on the subject. I consider that author has managed to bring her main points to the reader. Many aspects of the topic are known to Lara "from inside", that brings special importance to her work and allows us to recommend it to everybody who interested in current developments in the South China Sea. The dissertation, written by Lara G. Hudak, is the good quality research work and can be given an "excellent" grade.

Associate Professor of the Department of American Studies,  
Ph.D.

Ivan A. Tsvetkov

May 31, 2017

