IMSISS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Student Matriculation No.	**Glasgow** 2338522 **DCU** 17116481 **Charles** 71403040
Dissertation Title	Why Smaller States Recalibrate Military Alliances? A Comparative Study of RP-US and ROK-US Alliances (2011-2019)

INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

Reviewer 1 Initial Grade *For internal use only*	*Reviewer 2 Initial Grade* *For internal use only*	*Late Submission Penalty* *no penalty*
Word Count Penalty *(1 UofG grade point per 500 words below/above the min/max word limit +/- 10%)*		
Word Count: 21104 **Suggested Penalty:** *no penalty*		

JOINT GRADING (subject to agreement of the external examiner and approval at Joint Exam Board)

> **Final Agreed Mark.** *(Following correspondence reviewers should list the agreed final internal grade taking before and after any penalties to be applied).*
>
> **Before Penalty:** B1 [17]   **After Penalty:** B1 [17]

DISSERTATION FEEDBACK

Assessment Criteria	Rating
A. Structure and Development of Answer This refers to your organisational skills and ability to construct an argument in a coherent and original manner	
• *Originality of topic*	Very Good
• *Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified*	Very Good
• *Appropriate methodology and evidence of effective organisation of work*	Very Good
• *Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions*	Very Good
• *Application of theory and/or concepts*	Very Good
B. Use of Source Material This refers to your skills to select and use relevant information and data in a correct manner	
• *Evidence of reading and review of published literature*	Very Good
• *Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument*	Good
• *Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence*	Very Good
• *Accuracy of factual data*	Good
C. Academic Style This refers to your ability to write in a formal academic manner	
• *Appropriate formal and clear writing style*	Good
• *Accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation*	Good
• *Consistent and accurate referencing (including complete bibliography)*	Excellent
• *Is the dissertation free from plagiarism?*	Yes
• *Evidence of ethics approval included (if required based on methodology)*	Not required

• *Appropriate word count*	Yes

ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

Reviewer 1

This dissertation poses an interesting research question, asking to what extent small powers are able to affect military alliances with greater powers.

Specifically, it compares the alliances that the USA has developed with the Philippines and South Korea, with a particular focus on their different responses to the so-called "Asia Pivot" and the rise of China.

It seeks to challenge some prevailing assumptions to demonstrate that small powers have more choices at their disposal than classical realism scholars would claim.

The argument is, overall, reasonably clear and developed logically, with a first part of the dissertation used to present a conceptual analysis, a second part devoted to empirical analysis, and a third part devoted to analysis. In general, it is supported by adequate evidence, with the author drawing on different types of sources, both primary and secondary.

The author shows a good understanding of a number of relevant concepts such as power, military alliances, foreign policy choices, based on a good review of existing academic work.

Yet, at times more critical engagement with different strands of the literature would have enriched the quality of the dissertation. Furthermore, some sentences are opaque, which partially weaken the argument.

Nevertheless, this remains a good piece of research.

Reviewer 2

This was a good, thoroughly-researched, and well-organised dissertation, which demonstrated quite well the importance of 'small states' in alliances with bigger powers, and, in particular, the considerable role that domestic pulls play in such relationships. It successfully answers the research questions set out at the beginning of the dissertation through the use of the chosen theoretical approach.

A missing aspect in this study is a larger discussion on the role of personality, which seems important in this era of 'strongman'-type leadership (e.g. Trump, Duterte and Kim Jong-Un), and of some importance for the relationships in question, particularly in recent years. While such individuals are mentioned very briefly, I think that further analysis of this would have been of benefit.

In terms of the US-RP relationship, a consideration of colonialism and neocolonialism - U.S. or otherwise - in the country might have shed further light on the state of this alliance. Similarly, a look at U.S. - Japanese relations, in terms of its effect on US-ROK relations, would have been of value.

I would be skeptical of the statement that current inter-Korean rapprochement is 'US-led'. Furthermore, while U.S. military spending (as distinguished from defence spending) did decline somewhat for a number of years, overall defence spending in the U.S. has been growing for the past five years. Similarly, further reading of critical historical sources would be advised, particularly regarding the inaccuracy re: America's "forefathers" and globalism.

I would have liked to see more of the author's voice in this dissertation - more critical analysis, particularly of the reviewed literature, would have been welcome.

At times, the writing was unclear, and there were some consistent and recurring grammar issues, and a few typos as well. Further proofreading would have been of benefit.