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Ali Abdulhusein Ebrahim, "An Examination of the Effectiveness of the United Nations at Protecting the Interests of Smaller Nations within a Realist Unipolar World"

Ebrahim has written a very fine, nuanced paper on an important topic. So much of the literature on UN peacekeeping and peacemaking (the subjects of his work) is vague and idealist. Ebrahim has a more hard-headed approach. He is well aware of the problems of collective action, and well aware that major states, which have to foot the bill for UN operations, won't do so if they don't find it in their interests. These gaps mean that small states cannot count on the UN to step in and solve problems related to civil war and ethnic conflict. The result is a well-organized, sharply analytic paper that reaches balanced conclusions about the UN, neither exaggerating its importance nor excluding it from positive roles in the future.

Grade A

Sincerely,



Charles Lipson

Professor of Political Science

Director, Program on International Politics,
Economics, and Security (PIPES)