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Supervisor's report on master thesis „How will the UN be able to resolve international conflicts under the current international system?“ by Mohammed Khayat

The author offers a comparative analysis of the UN conflict resolution efforts in Iraq and in Afghanistan. He argues that the end of the Cold War opened new opportunities for the UN to take its preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution functions which were attributed to it since its very origins in 1945 but which were blocked by the super power rivalry until the late 1980s.

The thesis starts with the analysis of the evolution of the international system after 1945. Following this, it deals with the UN examining its conflict resolution tools: envoys, missions, resolutions, sanctions and peacekeeping. Finally, the UN failures and successes in Afghanistan and Iraq are compared with respect to these tools. The author concludes that the UN provides an important contribution and that this contribution was more decisive in Iraq than in Afghanistan despite a shaky start of the Iraq mission.

The thesis is able to reflect on some of the relevant literature, uses a clear methodology, and it is more analytical and less descriptive than it is usually the case with this kind of work. On the other hand, the analysis of the international system is theoretically and conceptually underdeveloped, one would expect more references in the literature review and the clarity of analytical findings is somewhat questionable.

All in all, I believe that the author should get the opportunity to defend his thesis.

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