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Kofi ANNAN
(Phonetic: ANen)

GHANA




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(b)(3) *Secretary General, UN (since 1997)*

Addressed as: Mr. Secretary General 


Kofi Annan has significantly boosted the prestige and influence of the office of the secretary general in his first two and a half years in the post. Annan's sophisticated representation of the UN to the public has increased international support for the organization's activities, while his efforts to stave off war with Iraq and win extradition of the Pan Am 103 bombing suspects—although severely criticized in some quarters—has led to renewed calls for UN intervention in other difficult or longstanding disputes. He has stripped much of the fat from the organization by cutting personnel and streamlining the UN Secretariat, as well as lit a fire under the organization's lethargic bureaucracy by bringing in dynamic new personalities from both government and the private sector to fill key leadership positions.

Annan also has articulately advocated the UN's humanitarian and internationalist ideals, pressing for new programs to educate the world's poor and to ease Third World debt, but the UN has had much less visible impact in these areas under his stewardship. Moreover, many countries criticize Annan for following Washington's lead too often, particularly in view of continuing US arrears. They also question the need for continued reform and budget cutting, efforts that have failed to produce any tangible benefits as far as they are concerned.


 while Annan will continue push an agenda that he believes promotes the UN's best interests, he is likely to increasingly slant that agenda to assist his reelection bid. This will include putting the breaks on reform and budget cutting, expanding peacekeeping operations outside Europe—particularly in

Africa—and trying to curtail the use of sanctions.

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A Growing Challenge 

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 Annan will adopt an increasingly independent posture toward the P-5 countries to garner support for his reelection from the G-77 and the NAM, a trend that has become increasingly evident in recent months.

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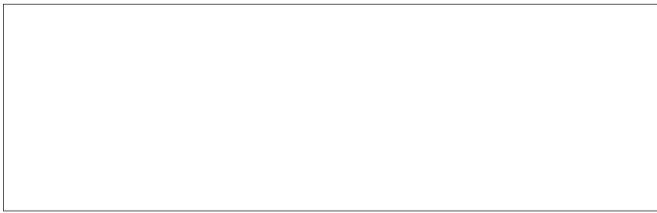
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He also appears particularly concerned about the reaction within the UN Security Council (UNSC) if the United States fails to keep its commitments regarding peacekeeping operations in Africa:

- Annan noted in his 1998 yearend press address that he has finished downsizing the UN and wants to concentrate on the organization's essential tasks.

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Career Highlights



in the Council that would enable it to override a veto by one of the P-5 states.

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- 1963 Began UN career, WHO, Geneva.
- 1965-71 Administrative officer, then chief of personnel section, Economic Commission for Africa, Addis Ababa.
- 1974-76 Left UN to manage government-owned Ghana Tourist Development Company.
- 1976-80 Returned to UN as deputy chief of staff services, Office of Personnel Services.
- 1980-84 Deputy director of administration directorate, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva.
- 1984-86 Named director of the budget, UN Office of Financial Services.
- 1986-90 Assistant secretary general for human resources management.
- 1990-92 UN comptroller and director, Office of Program, Planning, Budget, and Finance.
- 1992-93 Assistant secretary general, Office of Peacekeeping Operations.
- 1993-96 Director, Department for Peacekeeping Operations.



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On the other hand, while Annan is offering no apologies for going the extra mile to talk with tyrants like Saddam Husayn and Muammar al-Qadhafi to obtain peaceful compliance with UNSC resolutions, these efforts, along with renewed divisions in the UNSC, have raised doubts in this country about the diplomatic credibility of the UN, particularly with regard to Iraq. US newspaper editorials and magazine articles have attacked Annan personally and professionally over the past year, charging that he appeased Saddam and undermined UN weapons inspections. Annan and his supporters have responded that his goal has always been to make Iraq obey UNSC resolutions, that the UN charter commits him to seek such ends through peaceful diplomacy, and that the allegations against him were triggered by frustration that Iraq has not obeyed UN resolutions. In fact, Annan's latitude in dealing with countries such as Iraq is severely limited by the need for the Secretary General to at least try to deal equitably with the demands and interests of all UN member states and by a lack of executive power and enforcement capacity beyond the Secretariat.

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- The Secretary General issued a report in early July that said it was too soon to determine Libyan compliance with UNSC resolutions, which is a prerequisite for the lifting of sanctions, but noted that the United Kingdom was satisfied with Tripoli's response to date.
- Annan wants to expand the UN peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic, whose mandate is set to end in November, as well as enlarge the peacekeeping mission in Sierra Leone and establish a new and costly mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- The Secretary General told the press in mid-July that the UNSC's inability to overcome internal divisions to deal effectively with the Kosovo crisis demonstrated the need for reform

Personal Notes



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Annan was born a twin on 8 April 1938 near Kumasi, Ghana. He has studied at the University of Science and Technology in Ghana (1958-59), Macalester College in Minnesota (1959-61), the International Institute of Higher Studies in Switzerland (1961-62), and the Sloan School of Management at MIT (1971-72). Annan speaks excellent English, French, and several African languages, including Twi and Fante. His first marriage to a Nigerian ended in divorce. In 1994 he married Nane Lagergren, a Swedish national, who is the niece of Raoul Wallenberg. The couple has three adult children from previous marriages.

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