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**Kofi ANNAN**  
(Phonetic: ANen)

**GHANA**

*Secretary General, UN (since 1997)*

*Addressed as: Mr. Secretary General*

*I'm here to do a job and self is not involved because we're dealing with much bigger issues, much more is at stake. To put my own ego or my own reputation at the center of it, I think, would be unconscionable and would be a mistake.*

*Kofi Annan, December 1998*



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Overwhelmingly reelected to a second five-year term by the General Assembly in June 2001, Kofi Annan has helped boost the prestige and influence of the UN since becoming its first black African secretary general. His efforts, for example, to stave off war with Iraq and to win extradition of the Pan Am 103 bombing suspects—although criticized in some quarters—led to renewed calls for UN intervention in other difficult or longstanding disputes. He has made the battle against HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases into a personal crusade aimed at establishing his legacy as Secretary General. In addition, Annan has stepped up efforts to promote relations between the UN and Washington, such as visiting US lawmakers in May 2001. US rejection of arms control and environmental treaties and foot-dragging on the repayment of arrears, however, appear to have frustrated the Secretary General and are making it more difficult for him to support US management and reform initiatives or to weigh in with the United States on controversial issues. Other challenges will also test Annan's confidence in the coming months:

**Practical Idealist**   
*Born in Ghana and educated in the United States and Europe, Annan is the first secretary general to be elected from the ranks of the UN. He is the product of the very globalization process in which he wants the UN to play a bigger regulatory role to the benefit of all mankind. He is well known for his gentle personality and nonconfrontational manner but makes quick judgments and prefers to deal with problems head-on. Annan considers the United States the cornerstone of the UN and recognizes that he cannot afford to have bad relations with Washington. Although he worries about US unilateralism, to a large extent, he shares US views about how the UN should deal with the challenges facing the world.*



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**Career Highlights**

- 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 and managed 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 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.

rod for criticism from developed and developing countries alike but appear to have done little to tarnish his image as a selfless public servant or to dilute his international influence. In late 1999, for example, he released two reports, well received in much of the developing world, that castigated the UN and the world's major powers for failing to stop the Serb atrocities at Srebrenica in 1995 and the genocide in Rwanda the previous year. Many commentators, however, considered Annan's criticism of member states—particularly Western ones, which provide the bulk of the organization's funding—troublesome and outside the scope of his authority.

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On the other hand, Annan infuriated many developing countries and drew criticism from Russia and China in September 1999, when he argued that the world has the right to intervene when leaders abuse their people. Many Nonaligned Movement and G-77 countries appear to have viewed Annan's call for humanitarian intervention as an effort to appease the United States in order to secure his reelection bid. They criticized Annan for following Washington's lead too often, particularly in view of US arrears. Nonetheless, Annan overcame developing country resistance to the US assessments reform effort through an eleventh-hour intervention in December 2000.

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**Personal Notes (U)**

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 1984, Annan 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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**More General Than Secretary**

Annan stripped much of the fat from the UN Secretariat during his first term by cutting personnel and streamlining the organization. In addition, he lit a fire under the UN's lethargic bureaucracy by bringing in dynamic new personalities from both the government and the private sector to fill key leadership positions. Annan's articulate advocacy of the UN's humanitarian and internationalist ideals in pressing for new programs to educate the world's poor and ease Third World debt are largely responsible for the renewed emphasis being given to Africa at the UN.

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At the same time, Annan's controversial stance on a variety of issues has made him a lightning

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