

The Mettle of A UN Secretary-General

Annan's tenure is a dismal record of failure

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UN Secretaries-General aren't usually made of the kind of mettle that extends beyond their willingness to serve the interests of the dominant country that effectively runs the UN establishment. It's no secret that the world body is largely a wholly owned subsidiary of the nation where it's been prominently headquartered on Manhattan's east side since 1952. It's also true no candidate gets the top job there without first passing a careful US vetting process to assure a willingness to accede to its agenda. A little wiggle-room is allowed but only as long as it doesn't exceed the limits of the boss' tolerance.

Outgoing Secretary-General Kofi Annan got the job because he agreed to play by those rules and did such an admirable job of it he (and the UN) won a Nobel Peace prize in 2001 as a reward for keeping his head down and doing what he was told but not as disingenuously announced at the award ceremony for "their work for a better organized and more peaceful world." Annan never achieved or worked for peace anywhere, nor would a true airing of his legacy show much more accomplished than he knew who the "management" was, and he showed up every day to serve that "higher authority" and its agenda of exploitative war and colonization.

The result is a 10 year record of failing to fulfill the mandate he was sworn to uphold: "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war; to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights; to establish conditions (promoting) justice....equal rights of men and women (in all nations)....(respect for) international law....promote social progress....to ensure....armed force shall not be used" and much more. Kofi Annan failed on all counts, and he'll leave his UN post shortly with little to boast about except a Nobel award so richly undeserved.

Annan's tenure is a shameless and dismal record of failure:

- He never condemned or acted to end the devastating economic sanctions against the Iraqi people that killed up to 1.5 million defenseless men, women and children.
- He never used his high-profile job to denounce the US criminal war waged there since March, 2003, based on lies and now known to have likely killed another 655,000 or more of them.
- He failed to speak out forcefully against or do anything to prevent that war or the equally brutal and unjustifiable one waged against Afghanistan.
- He's been appallingly silent in the run-up to a potential Middle East apocalypse if the US and/or Israel go ahead with their plans to attack Iran and use nuclear weapons to do it.

— He never used his sworn power and influence to uphold the oath he took to work for peace and protest Israel's genocidal wars on Palestine and Lebanon against defenseless civilians there when the prestige of his office alone might have been enough to stop or at least mitigate them.

— He acted irresponsibly during the three failed US-instigated and funded coup attempts against democratically elected President Hugo Chavez failing in his obligation to denounce them.

— The Ghanaian-born Annan tenure showed a disturbing indifference to the pain and suffering of his own people throughout the continent of his birth. He chose instead to be a dutiful agent of the Global North and its corporate predators and conspiratorially allowed them to ravage Africa's vastness for its resource riches including in Dhafur where control of its oil and other valuable resources and the US's interest in them is central to understanding what this conflict is all about.

— He allowed Blue Helmet stormtrooper thuggery in places like Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo and what now is likely ahead for South Lebanon following Israel's summer aggression there. He dispatched UN so-called peacekeepers to these conflict zones as de facto paramilitary enforcers for the US and Israeli imperial agendas of plunder and exploitation, not with any intent or interest to keep the peace or promote the public welfare.

— Kofi Annan will leave his post with a single notable achievement: a clear shameless record of having pledged fealty to the Bush crime syndicate making him a willing and willful co-conspirator in its reign of terror for world dominance.

This is a man who agreed to his marching orders before showing up for work, understood who's in charge and did his job to please the "management." He's now wrapping up his tenure, will leave shortly with a disgraceful record of mission unaccomplished and is preparing for the arrival of the new man just elected to replace him. People of conscience won't miss him. The Secretary-General-elect will have to work for the same "management" and understands he'll have to serve by its same set of rules. To get the top job, he, like Kofi Annan, had to have agreed in advance to go along with them to get along, but if he does it he, too, will violate the letter and spirit of the Charter all Secretaries-General are sworn to uphold.

Since he hasn't yet arrived, it's premature to judge him, but it's fair to say Ban Ki-Moon never would have been South Korea's Minister of Foreign Affairs if he hadn't been respectful of the country that's occupied his for over half a century and still has enough clout to dictate who gets the most important jobs there affecting South Korean - US relations. Still, the new man on the job will be interesting to watch. In his former capacity, he's at times been a critic of US policy toward the peninsula and even went so far as to rebuke Condoleezza Rice's Senate confirmation hearing statement calling North Korea an "outpost of tyranny." He used diplomatic language, of course, only saying her comment "would never help create an atmosphere of dialogue."

In the aftermath of North Korea's presumed underground nuclear test this month and the economic and political sanctions (with no authorization for force) just imposed against the DPRK, it will bear watching how firm the new Secretary-General will be urging peaceful diplomacy instead of the usual US blunderbuss harshness demanding repressive sanctions

with enough latitude to lead to war which often is the Bush administration's prime agenda in the first place. It will also be interesting to see how the new UN chief handles the continuing confrontation between the US and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez. With the December presidential election fast approaching and a fourth US attempt to oust and assassinate Chavez likely moving toward implementation around the electoral period, will this UN leader act any differently than his predecessor.

Venezuelan Foreign Vice-Minister for North America, Jorge Valero, expressed a tone of optimism saying while still in his South Korean post, Ban Ki-Moon wanted (and presumably still does want) a strong relationship and spirit of cooperation with the Venezuelan Mission to the UN and his country. He also acknowledged Venezuela's progressive proposals and agenda in such multilateral bodies as the Non-Aligned Movement (of 116 nations against imperialism, colonialism, aggression and occupation) and the G-77 nations (that's since grown to 132 developing member states). The Venezuelan Minister said "Ban Ki-Moon assured that he will work with Venezuela on the region's integration. Likewise, he ratified his interest in the results of the elections for a seat on the UN Security Council, where Venezuela embodies a strong contender."

A few diplomatic words prior to heading up the UN Secretariat with an obligation to fulfill the body's Charter in service to all nations is no substitute for what the new man on the job will actually do once he's there. It won't be long to find out though, and the oppressed people of the world in all its troubled spots better hope Ban Ki-Moon takes his responsibilities more seriously than his predecessor and others before him. Based on the past record of UN Secretaries-General though and the oppressive power of the US overshadowing their best intentions, it's hard to hold out much hope. Still, it will be refreshing if Ban Ki-Moon actually takes his obligation and sworn oath seriously enough to respect the rights of all nations, uses his prominent public stage as an advocate for them, and works for peace and an end to all injustice and conflicts still raging around the world. That's his mandate, and it's about time someone in this post took it seriously. Let's wish the new UN Secretary-General well and hope one day he'll be deservedly rewarded for a job well done that he actually did. The world is waiting to find out.

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