



Who is Kofi Annan? The United Nations "Peacekeeper" Handpicked by the CIA

by

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on

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Kofi Annan: black skin, white masks

Although Kofi Annan's track record at the UN is an indisputable success in terms of management and efficiency, he has been sharply criticized for his political shortcomings. As Secretary General, he aspired to bring the Organization into line with the unipolar world and the globalization of U.S. hegemony. He called into question the ideological foundations of the UN and undermined its ability to prevent conflicts. Notwithstanding, he is today in charge of resolving the Syrian crisis.

Former UN Secretary General and Nobel Peace Prize, Kofi Annan, has been designated by Ban Ki-moon and Nabil El Arabi as joint special envoy to negotiate a peaceful solution to the Syrian crisis. With Annan's extraordinary experience and shiny brand image, his appointment was welcomed by all.

What does this top international official really represent? Who propelled him to the highest-ranking positions? What were his political choices, and what are his current commitments? These questions are met with a discreet silence, as if his previous functions were in themselves a guarantee of neutrality.

Handpicked and trained by the Ford Foundation and the CIA

His former colleagues praise him for his thoughtfulness, his intelligence and subtlety. A very charismatic personality, Kofi Annan left a big imprint behind him because he did not behave simply as the "secretary" of the UN, but more like its "general", by taking initiatives that revived an organization that was mired in bureaucracy. All that is known and has been repeated ad nauseam. His exceptional professional qualities earned him the Nobel Peace Prize, although this honor in theory should have been bestowed for personal political commitment, not a management career.

Kofi and his twin sister Efua Atta were born on 8 April 1938, into an aristocratic family of the British colony of the Gold Coast. His father was the tribal chief of the Fante people and the elected governor of Asante province. Although he opposed British rule, he was a faithful servant of the Crown. With other notables, he took part in the first decolonization movement, but looked upon the revolutionary fervor of Kwame Nkrumah with suspicion and anxiety.

In any event, Nkrumah's efforts led to the independence of the country in 1957 under the name of Ghana. Kofi was then 19 years old. Though not involved in the revolution, he became vice-president of the new National Student Association. It was then that he was spotted by a headhunter from the Ford Foundation who incorporated him into a program for "young leaders". From there, he was invited to follow a summer course at Harvard University. Having noticed his enthusiasm for the United States, the Ford Foundation offered to sponsor his complete studies, first in economics at Macalester College in Minnesota, followed by international relations at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva.

After the Second World War, the Ford Foundation, created by famous industrialist Henry Ford, became an unofficial instrument of U.S. foreign policy, providing a respectable facade for the activities of the CIA.

Kofi Annan's overseas study period (1959-1961) coincided with the most difficult years of the African-American civil rights movement (the start of Martin Luther King's Birmingham campaign). He saw it as an extension of the decolonization he had witnessed in Ghana, but once again did not get involved.

Impressed with Annan's academic achievements and political discretion, his U.S. mentors opened for him the doors of the World Health Organization, where he landed his first job. After three years at WHO headquarters in Geneva, he was appointed to the Economic Commission for Africa based in Addis Ababa. However, not sufficiently qualified to pursue a career at the UN, he returned to the United States to take up management studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) (1971-1972). He then attempted a comeback in his home country as director of tourism development, but found himself perpetually at odds with the military government of General Acheampong; he gave up and returned to the United Nations in 1976.

A successful career despite tragic failures

There, he held various positions, initially within UNEF II (the peacekeeping emergency force established to supervise the cease fire between Egypt and Israel at the end of the October 1973 war), then as Director of personnel at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It was at this time that he met and married Nane Lagergren Master, his second wife. The Swedish lawyer is the niece of Raoul Wallenberg, Sweden's special envoy in Budapest during World War II. Wallenberg is famous for having saved hundreds of persecuted Jews by issuing them protective passports. He also worked for the OSS (forerunner of today's CIA) as a liaison with the Hungarian resistance. He disappeared at the end of the war, when the Soviets allegedly captured him to stem US influence in the country. In any event, Kofi Annan's successful marriage opened the doors that he

could not have passed through on his own, especially those of Jewish organizations.

Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar chose Kofi Annan as Assistant Secretary-General in charge of human resources management and staff safety and security (1987-90). With the annexation of Kuwait by Iraq, 900 UN employees remained stranded in that country. Kofi Annan was able to negotiate their release with Saddam Hussein, a feat that boosted his prestige within the Organization. He was then successively put in charge of the budget (1990-92) and peacekeeping operations under Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali (1993-96), with a brief interlude as a special envoy for Yugoslavia.

According to Canadian General Romeo Dallaire, commander of the UN peacekeeping force in Rwanda, Kofi Annan failed to respond to his many appeals and carries the primary responsibility for UN inaction during the genocide (800,000 dead, mainly Tutsis, but also Hutu opponents).

A similar scenario was repeated in Bosnia, where 400 peacekeepers were taken hostage by Bosnian Serb forces. Kofi Annan remained deaf to the calls of General Bernard Janvier and allowed the perpetration of predictable massacres.

In late 1996, the United States vetoed the reappointment of the Egyptian Boutros Boutros-Ghali as Secretary General, regarded as dangerously Francophile. They succeeded in imposing their candidate: a senior official from within the international organization itself, Kofi Annan. Far from playing against him, his failures in Rwanda and Bosnia blossomed into assets after he candidly confessed to them and promised to reform the system so that they wouldn't recur. He was elected on this basis and took office on 1 January 1997.

United Nations Secretary General

Kofi Annan immediately set up an annual two-day seminar behind closed doors for fifteen UN ambassadors. This "retreat" (sic) was generously hosted by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund at the Pocantico Conference Center (upstate New York). There, outside the official framework of the United Nations, the Secretary General discussed the reform of the Organization with the representatives of the States whose support he knew he could count on.

In this context, he reallocated the expenditures of the UN in line with political priorities and significantly reduced the budget of the General Secretariat. He reorganized the administrative functioning around four objectives (peace and security, development, economic and social affairs, humanitarian affairs). He created a post of deputy secretary-general to stand in for him and endowed himself with a real cabinet capable of acting promptly on the decisions of the Security Council and General Assembly.

Kofi Annan's landmark initiative was the Global Compact, the mobilization of civil society for a better world. On the basis of a voluntary dialogue, businesses, unions and NGOs were brought together to discuss and commit to respect human rights, labor standards and the environment.

In practice, the Global Compact did not yield the desired effect on the ground. On the contrary, it deeply distorted the nature of the UN by playing down the power of nation-states and emphasizing that of transnational corporations and of associations which are "non-governmental" only in name and which are covertly funded by the great powers. By promoting lobbies as partners of the United Nations, Kofi Annan buried the spirit of the San Francisco Charter. It is no longer a question of saving mankind from the scourge of war by recognizing the legal equality of nations large and small, but of improving the human condition by supporting the convergence between private interests.

The Global Compact is a deviation from the nearly universally accepted logic that international law serves the common good, to a logic embraced only by the Anglo-Americans for whom the common good is a chimera and good governance consists in bringing together the largest number of special interests. Ultimately, the Global Compact has had the same effect as the charity galas in the U.S.: to give oneself a good conscience by launching high-profile initiatives while condoning structural injustices.



In that sense, the terms of Kofi Annan (1997-2006) reflect the reality of the historical period, that of a unipolar world subjected to the globalization of U.S. hegemony at the expense of nation-states and the peoples that they represent.

This strategy is in line with the device set up by Washington in the 1980's involving the National Endowment for Democracy, an agency that, contrary to its title, aims to carry forward the subversive action of the CIA by manipulating the democratic process. The NED subsidizes, legally or not, employers' organizations, labor unions and associations of all kinds. In return, the beneficiaries participate in the Global Compact, thereby bending the positions of the Nation-States which lack the means to fund their own lobbies. Peace has stopped being a concern for the UN since the unipolar world has its own policeman, the U.S.; thus the organization can concentrate instead on absorbing all forms of protest to better corroborate the global disorder and justify the progressive global expansion of U.S. hegemony.

The soothing rhetoric of Kofi Annan reached its zenith at the Millennium Summit. 147 heads of state and government pledged to eradicate poverty and solve major health problems worldwide, including AIDS, in fifteen years. Universal happiness can dispense with political reform, provided everyone makes an effort and chips in. Why didn't anyone think of this earlier? But alas, the Millennium remained wishful thinking; injustice was not eradicated and continues to nurture war and misery.

In the same vein, Secretary-General Kofi Annan's 20 September 1999 speech to the General Assembly outlined what has been termed the "Annan doctrine". Using his own impotence in Rwanda and Bosnia as an excuse, he argued that in both cases the States had failed in their duty to protect their own people. He therefore concluded that the sovereignty of States, guiding principle of the UN Charter, constitutes an obstacle to human rights protection. The African Union adopted this view under the name of "Responsibility to Protect;" the UN followed suit in 2005 during the World Summit responsible for the follow-up of the Millennium Summit. The Annan doctrine is nothing more than the reincarnation of the right to intervene invoked by the British to wage war against the Ottoman Empire and, more recently, updated by Bernard Kouchner. The new concept will be used explicitly for the first time in 2011 to legalize the colonial operation against Libya.

In addition, Kofi Annan's terms as UN Secretary-General were marked by the "Oil-for-Food" programme which was devised by the Security Council in 1991, but was effective only from 1996 to 2003. It was originally intended to ensure that Iraq's oil revenues would be used exclusively to meet the needs of the Iraqi people and not to finance new military adventures. However, in the context of the international embargo and under the personal supervision of Kofi Annan, this program became an instrument in the hands of the U.S. and the UK to bleed Iraq while they occupied the "no-fly zone" (which corresponds roughly to the current autonomous Kurdistan region) until the outbreak of the aggression against and destruction of the country. For years, the population was undernourished and deprived of life-saving medicines. Several international officials who were in charge of that program qualified it as a "war crime" and even resigned after refusing to apply it. Among them, the UN Assistant Secretary-General Hans von Sponeck and UN Humanitarian Coordinator Denis Halliday considered that this program brought about the genocide of 1, 5 million Iraqis, including at least 500,000 children.

It was not until the invasion and destruction of Iraq that Kofi Annan finally rebelled and denounced those who had paid for his education, propelled his rise to Secretary-General of the UN, and awarded him the Nobel Peace Prize. He described the attack on Iraq as illegal and voiced public concern that this precedent would eviscerate International Law. Washington responded brutally with a spying operation against Kofi Annan, his cabinet, his family and even against his friends. The Secretary-General's son, Kojo Annan, was accused of embezzling "oil for food" program funds with his father's blessing. The prosecution did not manage to convince UN member states and, on the contrary, consolidated the authority of the Secretary-General. However, during the last two years of his mandate, Kofi Annan was paralyzed and forced to toe the line.

Back to square one

After 10 years as Secretary-General, Kofi Annan continued his career in several more or less private

foundations.

In December 2007, elections in Kenya degenerated into conflict. President Mwai Kibaki appeared to have defeated the candidate backed by Washington, Raila Odinga, reportedly a cousin of then-Senator Barack Obama. U.S. Senator John McCain challenged the election results and called for revolution as waves of anonymous SMS exacerbated inter-ethnic differences. Within days, riots left more than 1,000 dead and 300,000 displaced. Madeleine Albright proposed the mediation of the Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights. The institute sent two mediators: former Norwegian Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik and former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, both members of the Board of Administration.

As a result of that "mediation", President Kibaki was forced to bow to U.S. wishes. He was able to stay in office, but first had to accept a constitutional reform that stripped him of his powers in favor of the Prime Minister and to agree to the choice of Odinga as Prime Minister. In his role as wise old African, Kofi Annan helped to give a veneer of legitimacy to a regime change imposed by Washington.

Kofi Annan currently exercises two key responsibilities. First, he chairs the Africa Progress Panel, an organization created by Tony Blair after the G8 summit held in Gleneagles for the purpose of ensuring media coverage of the actions of the British Ministry of Cooperation (DFID). Unfortunately, like the Millennium Summit, the G8 promises were not fulfilled and the activity of the Africa Progress Panel is negligible.

He also serves as chair of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), which aims to solve the food problems of the black continent through biotechnology. In fact, AGRA is a lobby funded by the Bill Gates and Rockefeller Foundations to promote the dissemination of GMO's produced by Monsanto, DuPont, Dow, Syngenta and others. Most independent experts agree that, beyond the issue of their environmental impact, the use of non-reproducible GMO crops keeps farmers under the thumb of their suppliers and introduces a new form of human exploitation.

Kofi Annan in Syria

So what has this former high-ranking international official come to Syria for? In the first place, his appointment suggests that the current UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon, whose image has been tarnished by his kowtowing to the United States and by a string of corruption scandals [10] was not up to the task, while Kofi Annan, despite his balance sheet, still enjoys a positive image.

Secondly, a mediator can succeed only to the extent that he has been selected by the parts in the conflict. But this is not the case. Kofi Annan represents the Secretary-General of the UN and his Arab League counterpart. He defends the honor and reputation of both institutions in the absence of clear political instructions.

If the appointment of Mr Annan was approved de facto by the members of the Security Council and those of the Arab League, it is because it satisfies conflicting expectations. For some, the joint special envoy is not intended to broker peace, but to clad a peace that has already been negotiated between the great powers so that everyone can stand tall. Others expect him to repeat the Kenyan script and bring about regime change without further violence.

Over the past three weeks, the action of Kofi Annan has been to present his own plan, an amended version of the one developed by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. In doing so, he has rendered the plan palatable for Washington and its allies. In addition, Mr. Annan has intentionally introduced an element of confusion by suggesting that he had convinced President al-Assad to appoint one of his vice presidents, Farouk al-Shara, to negotiate with the opposition. This is portrayed as a concession made by Syria to the Gulf Cooperation Council. In fact, Vice President al-Shara has been in charge of these negotiations for a year and the demand made by Saudi Arabia and Qatar is totally different: that President al-Assad should step down because he is an Alawite and that power be transferred to the Vice President for being a Sunni. It would thus seem that the joint special envoy is engineering a way out for those states that have attacked Syria and invented



the fable of a democratic revolution crushed in blood.

However, the doublespeak of Kofi Annan, who when in Damascus was satisfied with his meeting with President al-Assad but expressed disappointed once back in Geneva, has not raised any questions about his true intentions.