



Kofi Annan leaves the UN one step closer to irrelevance Will surely be remembered for botching the Eritrea Ethiopia peace effort

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan is on his way out, and unfortunately is leaving the organization one step closer to irrelevance. Waiting to take his place is the current South Korean foreign minister, Ban Ki-moon. But, is it going to make any difference?

Eritreans, who have been victimized by this organization, not once, but twice, since it came to be, have no reason to be optimistic about any change at the UN.

James Traub, the author of a new book on Annan's ten-year tenure at the helm UN, in a press interview this week quoted John Bolton, the US ambassador to the UN, as having said that Mr. Ban was selected because Mr. Ban would be more "Secretary" than "General" and more accommodating to Western interests.

There are those who see the UN Secretary General as a mere errand boy who is there to do the big powers' bidding. True, the Secretary General's position by design is more secretary than general—but, he has some room where he can make a difference. Our contention is that the current Secretary General used that small breath-

"Eritreans, who have been victimized by this organization, not once, but twice, since it came to be, have no reason to be optimistic about any change at the UN."

ing space to damage opportunities for peace in the Horn of Africa, more specifically, the demarcation efforts of the Eritrea Ethiopia boundary, in accordance with the April 13, 2002, "final and binding" ruling of a neutral and independent international commission, the Eritrea Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC).

Mr. Annan had every chance to push for a full and unconditional implementation of the Eritrea Ethiopia Boundary Commission ruling. It is an airtight ruling and the UN has the responsibility of getting it implemented. However, instead of focusing on the culprit, the intransigent party, the Ethiopian government that was in breach of international law, Mr. Annan looked the other way for four and one half years. On the other hand, he used every opportunity to blame, criticize, and intimidate the compliant party, Eritrea; this, in turn, encouraged the minority regime in Addis Ababa to continue its intransigence on the ruling.

This is one of the failed peace efforts he is leaving to his successor—one of many such failures that litter his past, from Rwanda to Sebrenica (Bosnia). As the first and only sub-Saharan African to attain the pinnacle of international diplomacy, many would have thought he would be a catalyst for peace and stability in Africa; quite to the contrary, under his tenure as an Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Under-Secretary-General and finally as a Secretary General, Africa had gone through two genocides (Rwanda and Darfur), from civil wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Sudan and Somalia, to two major interstate wars between Eritrea and Ethiopia and the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that involved over half a dozen African countries. Mr. Annan's record in resolving any of these conflicts ranges from nil to negative.

In a speech at Georgetown University this week, Annan warned that the Eritrea Ethiopia conflict might erupt again and that it must be handled "very carefully before it leads to another explosion." He talked about trying to "bring the two parties together." But, how can you "bring the two parties together" with an approach that is so one-sided and without an element of fair-

ness?

"The Secretary General is yet to put out a single statement focusing on and condemning Ethiopia's refusal to accept the ruling which the Ethiopian regime signed and UN guaranteed to be 'final and binding.'"

We are where we are today on the boundary demarcation issue because Ethiopia refused to accept the "final and binding" ruling of the Eritrean-Ethiopian Boundary Commission. It has been more than four and half years since the minority regime of Ethiopia told him that it was not going to accept the international ruling—not because of restrictions on the peacekeepers at the Eritrea Ethiopia border. However, the Secretary General is yet to put out a single statement focusing on and condemning Ethiopia's refusal to accept the ruling which the Ethiopian regime signed and UN guaranteed to be "final and binding." But, he never thought twice about singling out Eritrea for blame, criticism, or even outright condemnation on anything Eritrea did or supposed to have done—real, perceived, or fabricated to cast the young nation in a bad light, with the ultimate goal of destabilizing it.

There is no question that for Eritreans this has been another dark chapter in the history of this global organization and there are many lessons the incoming Secretary General can take from it and use the little breathing space of independence he will have to play a positive role in the Eritrea Ethiopia border conflict.

Previous Issue (Volume I Issue 2)

[The Proof of Peace Agreements is in their Implementation](#)