

Kofi Annan exercised a soft leadership role with being a good listener as he also mentions during the film and a equidistant diplomat for almost all nations, including some of the oppressors. According to my observations, he has been very careful in establishing his personal relationships with heads of states; however, his voice was almost unheard in some cases when the big powers of the UN needed to be challenged such as the second Iraqi war. His tenure had almost no particular success in the reforming needs of the institution and he seemed not having provided any added value in the role of the UN for the resolutions of world conflicts. Having said all, however, his tenure also witnessed some accomplishments which ended up the influence of oppressors as in the case of the independence of East Timor.

Annan spent a big effort and was very successful in the negotiation process between the governments of Indonesia and Portugal which concluded the agreement between the two governments requesting him to consult the East Timorese people on whether they would accept or reject the proposed constitutional framework for autonomy. This process initiated the independence of the country before the East Timorese voted to the favor of independence. Backed by the US, which had been reluctant before for an intervention in order not to undermine its ties with strategic friend Indonesia, Kofi Annan used his authority to draw the attention of international community -at least the powerful states whose support was needed- and managed to persuade the Indonesian government for not being against a probable self-determination of East Timorese. Whereas every stage of the process may not be a success such as the failure of security role of the UN when three-fourths of the country were burnt by the Indonesian military, other operational phases such as campaigns, registration of the voters, and balloting were successful, and finally the happy end was a complete victory for the people of East Timor when the country became the 191st member state of the United Nations in September 2002.

When Kofi Annan was the Undersecretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations in Rwanda, he failed -as he clearly admits in the film- to get involved in preventing a Tutsi genocide which ended up with 800,000 killings in 100 days. He was overly passive in his response to the 1994 genocide and was claimed to hold back UN troops from intervening to settle the conflict and from providing more logistic and material support. He was not successful in mobilizing the international community and in working

with different factions -namely states- represented in the Security Council. Following Rwanda failure, Annan was made a Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the former Yugoslavia, serving for five months but he returned to his duties as Undersecretary-General in April 1996. Indeed, these two tasks were both far away from achievement in any means; however, they did not prevent him in being appointed to become the next SG following Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The biggest opportunity missed in Rwanda case, I believe, was the persuasion of the third world that the UN was really an international organization capable of serving to the needs and calls of the oppressed and it was not solely an American interest server as even many Americans claim, like former Ambassador Bolton.

Annan also failed to exercise a strong leadership in two cases where an ethical standing should have been taken by a leader. In Lubbers investigation, a June 2004 report on the complaint of sexual harassment, abuse of authority and retaliation against Ruud Lubbers, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, found Lubbers guilty of sexual harassment; however, on July 15, 2004, Lubbers was declared innocent by Kofi Annan. Annan's decision only lasted until November when Office of Internal Oversight (OIOS) issued its annual report to the UN General Assembly noting it has found Lubbers guilty. In the second case, in December 2004, reports surfaced that Annan's son Kojo received payments from the Swiss company Cotecna Inspection SA, which won a lucrative contract under the UN Oil for Food program. While in his first interview with the Inquiry Committee, Annan denied having had a meeting with Cotecna, he later recalled that he had met with Cotecna's chief executive Elie-Georges Massey twice. Needless to say, both incidents only served to weaken Annan in his shoes of UN Secretary General.

Annan's tenure as SG has witnessed a weak period for UN with him being too nice with -or at least not being hard against- the powerful nations, mainly the US, in global conflicts. I think the three biggest constraints of being the SG lie behind, first, the appointment process when the top diplomat faces a debt for his supporters, second, the tough mediation process when he faces especially in ideological issues or national interest conflicts among the powers in the Security Council; and finally, the absence of having necessary funds and military personnel at his discretion to overcome the problems both in the UN organization and in international issues.