

## **Statement**

Good afternoon everyone. I've just written to Foreign Minister Ban Ki-Moon to express my warmest congratulations on the outcome of today's poll in the Security Council. It is clear that he will be our next Secretary-General. It is a great honor and a great responsibility to be Secretary-General, and I wish Mr. Ban every success in that task.

I entered the race because of my devotion to the United Nations, and for the same reason I will strongly support him as the next Secretary-General. The United Nations and the world has a stake in his success.

Throughout this process I have been sustained by my strong faith in the values and principles of the United Nations, in its achievements and its potential, and in the quality and dedication of its staff around the world. It has been a privilege to articulate and defend my vision of this indispensable organization to which I have devoted so much of my professional life.

I should like to express my gratitude to the Government of India for having nominated me as its official candidate. Though I have never been an official of the government, I consider it a great honor to have been the bearer of India's nomination, as well as of the hopes and aspirations of so many well-wishers in India and around the world. I have been humbled by the support, the good wishes, and the prayers that they have conveyed to me.

Although I did not win the race, it is a matter of genuine pride to me that I was deemed worthy by so many people and won the votes of so many governments, including today. I thank you all, and I pledge that whatever task I next undertake I will endeavor to live up to the faith and trust that so many have expressed in me. Thank you very much.

## **Questions and Answers**

### **What were you really running for?**

I was running for the Secretary-Generalship of the United Nations.

### **What are your plans now?**

I will seek to make a contribution, as I have tried to do, in whatever way is open to me, and at this stage I have a job to get back to. I intend to be very much back at my desk continuing to run the Department of Public Information at least as long as that possibility is available to me.

**Would you consider now going back to India and paying back what India has given to you?**

You know, I've actually genuinely been focused on this race with every intention of winning. I have not spent one minute thinking about "Plan B." I think now the time has come to think about it, and now all options are open, including perhaps that one.

**Do you think you didn't have enough time to campaign, and also do you think that the Indian government did not campaign hard enough for you?**

No, no. I make absolutely no excuses. There are candidates in the race who had even less time than I did, and there are some who had more, and I'm not sure that some who had the most time necessarily benefited from that.

I think that one has to put forth the best case one can. I believe I have done so. And as far as the government is concerned, I believe they did everything that they could. I have absolutely no complaints.

**What do you think about the whole process, given that some people suggested that the rules for electing the Pope are more clear-cut than electing a Secretary-General? Also, could you also give us a sense of what qualities you think Ban Ki-Moon has?**

Well on the first part of the question, I think it's important to understand that I have always been an outspoken advocate of greater transparency in this process. And I'd like to think that this year's process has actually contributed to, at least relatively, an increase in transparency. We had a number of developments that were encouraging that are unprecedented. We had, first of all, the decision by the Security Council to convey through the President of the General Assembly to all the Member States their intention to hold a straw poll in July, inviting Member States to submit nominations.

Candidates were officially encouraged by the President of the Security Council to present themselves to regional groups. I certainly took advantage of that opportunity. I believe many of the other candidates did so.

And I believe this process of give and take was actually healthy for the Organization. It was healthy for the candidates because they had to reach into themselves to find answers to questions about the UN. But equally, it was healthy for the Organization because a whole bunch of ambassadors – in fact many of these regional meetings were overwhelmingly attended by ambassadors – came and had a give and take with the candidates. You know, in this kind of organization, normally the immediate and the urgent always trumps the important. In these exchanges they were forced to think in depth about the nature of the Organization and its future direction and about what they wanted to see at the helm of the Secretariat. I think all of these are healthy for the Organization.

I'd love to see the process expanded further. I certainly would have had no difficulty, for example, with public televised debates. As you know an NGO tried to set these up – without success; not enough of the candidates were willing.

But I do believe the more open and public the process is, the healthier it is for the institution, because you would then get a Secretary-General who has been tested through that process of transparency.

**And on Ban Ki-Moon's qualities?**

I don't think it's appropriate for me to comment on other people. I stood on my own qualities. Mr. Ban has spoken very well, I think, for himself and clearly more persuasively and successfully than I have.

**Just one P-5 discouraging you, 10 encouraging; you needed only nine but that one veto was bad enough. So, what went wrong? Did you lose the race, or did Mr. Ban win it?**

I think Mr. Ban won it. Let's give him credit for doing consistently well. In all fairness he came in first in all four straw ballots. I'm pleased that I came second and not worse than that in all four, but first is certainly better than second and I'd like to give him full credit for that.

**Do you think the quota system that necessitated an Asian candidate this time should be translated to nominations in the next administration – meaning that there should be a Deputy Secretary-General from the South, a woman or whatever?**

Look, I think that this organization has to have a certain amount of geographical balance in its positions for the obvious reason that there are 192 countries, each one of which has a legitimate stake in the ownership, the leadership, and the direction of the United Nations. I think it is in the interest of the big powers to have the small powers feel engaged; it's in the interest of each continent to feel that every other continent has a possibility. In my view this question of balance is not something that is unhealthy for the organization.

As far as Asia is concerned, I think it was certainly an appropriate time for this youthful, dynamic, transformative, progressive continent to have an opportunity to serve at the helm of the Secretariat. But it's also true to say that other continents will have their turns in the future. One could well argue that the positions at lower levels of the Secretary general have, traditionally in any case, been distributed. You have seen by and large a pattern where it's relatively rare for one country to have more than one Under Secretary-Generalship. There have been cases of two, but very, very few. So that's again normal. It's part of ensuring that responsibility is shared widely, and as I said earlier, it is

important that every country feels it has a stake in this organization. To me that is fundamental.

**Will India get a USG a position in the next administration?**

At the moment India is privileged to have two, so perhaps one will survive.

**Where do you think your campaign fell short?**

I don't know that it fell short, to be quite honest, except in the vote tally. I think that we have really nothing to reproach ourselves for, in terms of the message that was conveyed and the thoroughness with which we tried to reach out to everyone we could. And I speak both for myself here and for the government, which has played its own part in trying to reach out.

At the end of the day, ultimately, the votes are the only thing that matter and I don't think that I have anyone to blame, anyone to reproach, not even myself. I think I did everything I could, and if it was found wanting, well there we are. That's life, we move on.

**Given the fact that in the United States the United Nations has sort of a negative perception, with this new Secretary-General how much of an uphill task will it be for him to correct that image of the UN? If you turn around and see, every American doesn't seem too happy with the United Nations. What will it take, in your opinion, to turn that around?**

I think that is a very important challenge for the new Secretary-General because clearly we do need to bring about a certain amount of change of attitude in elements of this society. I think the U.S. is indispensable to the UN; I've not hesitated to say so in the past and during my campaign, and I think that includes U.S. public opinion. This is a democracy, its political leadership is accountable to the public, and therefore we do need to reach the public. There is certainly a problem that some of the things we do don't please everybody, and there is also a problem that some of things that are said about us which get a wide hearing are not always entirely accurate. But the fact is we have to continue to go out and do our job, and I do believe the Secretary-General of the United Nations has a great opportunity through his own personality and the bully pulpit that this job offers – including the presence of all of you here and elsewhere – to make a difference, and I will certainly wish Mr. Ban well in doing that. I do believe that's an important challenge.

**Have you called him and talked to him?**

I don't know what hour it is in Korea. I have written to him, but I would certainly be

very happy to call him and express the congratulations personally. I didn't want to be the one waking him up.

**Did you send an email to him?**

No, I sent a faxed letter through the Ambassador at the Korean Permanent Mission, which is the way we do things at the UN. Perhaps one last question.

**In the September/October issue of *Foreign Affairs* Sir Bryan Urquhart refers to the selection process for the Secretary-General as a “haphazard lottery.” He says, “There is still no formal procedure for searching for, nominating, or vetting candidates, nor is there any provisions to interviewing candidates. He adds, “It’s a fairly widespread view that the candidate should come from Asia,” but he also said that it should not exclude any exceptional person from any region of the world. What do you think?**

I agree with Sir Brian, who is someone I've had a lot of respect for and a lot of contact with over the years. I certainly, as I mentioned in responding to the earlier question about transparency, I would be in favor of some of these additional elements coming in. I think this year we went further in that direction than in any previous years, so that's been a good thing. As far as other continents having a crack at it, we did have at least one candidate in these ballots who was from another continent, and I think it was healthy that she was also considered; I have no difficulty with that.

But equally I do believe that a certain amount of rotation is healthy for the Organization. Three of the first four Secretaries-General of the United Nations were all from Western Europe. While we have high regard for Western Europe, I think it's important that others also feel that they have as much of a chance of producing a Secretary-General. If Asia now has through today's ballot been able to produce a Secretary-General, I think that's nothing for the rest of the world to be unhappy about. I do believe that once selected, the Asian Secretary-General will not be Asia's Secretary-General, but will be a Secretary-General for the entire world.

Thank you all, and thank you for your interest in what I had to say. Good evening.