



Conversations with Ban Ki-moon What The United Nations Is Really Like: The View From The Top (Conversations with Giants of Asia)

By Tom Plate

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Exclusive interviews with the UN General Secretary, now in his second term at the UN. Only eight people have been privileged to hold the job of Secretary General since the United Nations' founding in 1945. And only one of them has ever told the inside story of the UN while still holding that special office. That man is Ban Ki-moon, the veteran diplomat and former star foreign minister of South Korea now in his second term as SG. Because he understands that the UN is in crisis and because he fears the reasons for this are not widely understood he believes it is time to unveil the truth about the organization and explain why its failure would be a catastrophe. The result, via unprecedented conversations with American journalist Tom Plate, is a deeply revealing book about the kinds of issues and challenges whose resolutions (or lack thereof) will in fact determine the future of the world

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Editorial Review

Review

... I have very much enjoyed [Tom Plate's] previous Giants of Asia books Ban Ki-Moon ... is known to be candid about the UN's problems.... His conversations with Ban Ki-moon are equally interesting and informative. - Former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger

This excellent and highly readable book by Tom Plate humanizes the head of the world's premier governmental organization while also reminding us what is at stake. Author Plate stands out among Western journalists. Not only has this former editorial director of the Los Angeles Times, syndicated columnist and Loyola Marymount University professor relentlessly chronicled the most important story of our era -- the rise of Asia -- but he has done so through his rare personal access to the key leaders in the region. Now, the latest in his series profiles United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon (whose) lasting impact on the world, not much covered by less far-minded journalists, promises to be immense. - Globalization expert and columnist Nathan Gardels in The Huffington Post

... American journalist and academic Tom Plate has been writing books called Giants of Asia. Now it is Ban Ki-moon's turn The formats of all the Giants books are ... built almost entirely on taped conversations But in this case the subject is different. In numerous interviews with Plate that moved from the secretary-general's residence to restaurants and clubs around New York Ban knew that he was not a glittering celebrity. In one of the most revealing passages in the book, Ban said: The first year, there were, I think, some misunderstandings about me (at the UN) But in the end, during the last four-and-a-half years ... I think they now understand, clearly, that Asian values are also one of the very important values, and cultures, which should be respected, and Asian countries ... they're doing well now. And that's why people have been saying that the 21st century will be led by the Asia-Pacific. --Former Polk Award Winner and New York Times UN Correspondent Barbara Crossette

This excellent book, which patiently uncovers the mind behind the image, shows that what the UN chief lacks in charisma, he more than makes up for in his dedication to the fate of the world's most vulnerable peoples.... This is what the South Korean UN chief has been trying to do since he took office on Jan 1, 2007 and was re-elected unanimously in June 2011 to a second term that will take him to the end of 2016. Mr Ban's challenges are the motifs of Mr Plate's book ... a part of Mr Plate's Giants Of Asia series, which has featured Mr Lee Kuan Yew and Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, among others....In dealing with them, Mr Ban, a career diplomat who rose to become his country's foreign minister before helming the UN, is all too familiar with the grey areas that shade so much of international politics. He is accustomed to breaking bread with leaders of different political systems, but he draws the line firmly at assaults on the idea of humanity. The international community has to intervene when these occur, he says unambiguously --Asad Latif, The Straits Times (Singapore)

I have known Ban Ki-moon since we were both foreign ministers. I feel that I understand him even more now after I have read this unique book. The book takes the readers deep inside the inner thoughts of a man who has described his job as the most impossible job in the world. It also offers a rare look at the inner workings of the United Nations. This combination makes the book a must read for students of multilateral diplomacy. He is willing to take physical risks in remote parts of the world in his determination to improve the quality of life for people in need.

This book is not a public relations exercise for anyone. Tom Plate is a tough and experienced interviewer,

with a gentle touch. --Professor Kantathi Suphamongkhon is the 39th Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand. He is a Senior Fellow at the Burkle Center for International Relations at the University of California at Los Angeles UCLA

About the Author

Tom Plate is an experienced writer, journalist and syndicated columnist. He is director of the Pacific Perspectives Media Center in Beverly Hills, a non-profit organisation that syndicates high-end op-eds. He is currently Distinguished Scholar of Asian and Pacific Studies at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles and also a Visiting Professor at United Emirates University in Dubai.

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