

## Selecting the UN Secretary-General: Vetoes, Timing and Regional Rotation

### Secretary-General Decision: Vetoes

The exercise of the veto by permanent members of the Security Council has been the defining feature of the choice of every new Secretary-General, except in two cases: the appointment of U Thant and Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

YEAR	HISTORY OF VETOES IN APPOINTMENT PROCESS
1946	Trygve Lie (Norway) was selected, with all other candidates opposed either by the USSR or the US.
1950	Lie's reappointment was vetoed by the USSR but eventually renewed by the General Assembly without a Council recommendation.
1953	Dag Hammarskjöld (Sweden) was selected after several candidates were eliminated due to lack of majority, and Lester Pearson (Canada) was vetoed by the USSR.
1957	Hammarskjöld was reappointed for a second term, with no vetoes.
1961/62/66	U Thant (Burma) was appointed, with no vetoes.
1971	Kurt Waldheim (Austria) was eventually appointed despite 14 vetoes; Max Jakobson (Finland) and Carlos Ortiz de Rozas (Argentina) each received 12 vetoes.
1976	Waldheim's reappointment was initially vetoed by China, then accepted.
1981	Javier Pérez de Cuéllar (Peru) emerged as a new candidate and was selected after Waldheim, running for a third term of office, received 16 vetoes from China. Salim Ahmed Salim (Tanzania) received 15 vetoes from the US, and Sadruddin Aga Khan (Iran) received one veto from the USSR. Straw ballots were used for the first time.
1986	Pérez de Cuéllar was reappointed with no vetoes.
1991	Boutros Boutros-Ghali (Egypt) was selected after other candidates were eliminated on the basis of the level of overall support. No vetoes were cast.
1996	Kofi Annan (Ghana) was selected. The US vetoed Boutros-Ghali's reappointment. There was then a high number of subsequent "vetoes," or negative straw ballots, cast by permanent members after Boutros-Ghali withdrew. The exact number is uncertain but it was probably more than 30 spread over four candidates.
2001	Annan was reappointed, with no vetoes.
2006	Ban Ki-moon (Republic of Korea) was selected. Only the last straw poll differentiated the ballots of permanent members, all five of whom cast "encourage" votes for him. It seems in the three earlier polls, one or more of the "discourage" votes for Ban may have been from a permanent member.
2011	Ban was reappointed with no vetoes.

### Secretary-General Decision: Timing

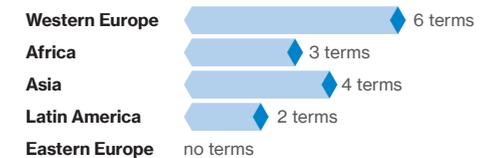
The issue of timing was not addressed in 1946, and the practice relating to the first three Secretaries-General does not provide any helpful guidance. The early resignation of the first Secretary-General, and the death in office in 1961 of the second, presented cases in which member states had to respond to unforeseen situations well before the expected expiry of the terms. The problems in 1966, triggering the need for a short rollover of U Thant's term, appear to have arisen more as a result of indecision by the Secretary-General than due to any timing factor.

The more recent practice is shown below:

SECRETARY-GENERAL	DATE OF SECURITY COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION (All previous terms expiring on 31 December)
Kurt Waldheim (appointment)	21 December 1971
Kurt Waldheim (reappointment)	7 December 1976
Javier Pérez de Cuéllar (appointment)	11 December 1981
Javier Pérez de Cuéllar (reappointment)	10 October 1986
Boutros Boutros-Ghali (appointment)	21 November 1991
Kofi Annan (appointment)	13 December 1996
Kofi Annan (reappointment)	27 June 2001
Ban Ki-moon (appointment)	9 October 2006
Ban Ki-moon (reappointment)	19 June 2011

### Secretary-General Decision: Regional Rotation

The actual history of the terms allocated between the regional groups does not establish a clear practice. The allocation of Secretaries-General by region has been:



The pattern of candidacies that have been presented over the years is also an important indicator. It reveals that, on the majority of past occasions, candidates from multiple regions were presented and seriously considered, suggesting that both the candidates and the governments nominating them did not accept the existence of a norm of rotation. The pattern is as follows:

YEAR	COUNTRIES OF THE CANDIDATES
1946	Norway
1953	Canada, India, Philippines, Poland, Sweden
1961/62	Burma
1966	Burma
1971	Argentina, Austria, Finland
1976	Austria
1981	Austria, Iran, Peru, Tanzania
1991	Canada, Egypt, Iran, The Netherlands, Norway, Zimbabwe
1996	Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mauretania, Niger
2001	Ghana
2006	Afghanistan, India, Jordan, Latvia, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand
2011	Republic of Korea