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Diplomatic negotiation : essence and evolution

Meerts, P.W.

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Author: Meerts, Paul Willem

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Diplomatic Negotiation

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Essence and Evolution

Paul Meerts

Picture of the secret final negotiations on the German First World War reparations in the room of British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald in the Hôtel Beau-Rivage (Lausanne, 1932), taken by Dr. Erich Salomon (Berlin 1886–Auschwitz 1944), inventor of the 'candid camera'. French Prime Minister Briand called him '*le roi des indiscrets*'.

Names and functions of those portrayed on the picture can be found on the inside cover.

Paul Meerts

Portrayed on the cover picture, from left to right:

Count Johann Schwerin von Krosigk
Minister of Finance of Germany (standing)

Jules Renkin
Prime Minister of Belgium

Dino Grandi
Foreign Minister of Italy

Baron Konstantin von Neurath
Foreign Minister of Germany

Baron Franz von Papen
Prime Minister (Reichskanzler) of Germany

Edouard Herriot
Prime Minister of France

Duncan Sandys
Secretary of the British Embassy in Berlin

Georges Bonnet
French Minister without Portfolio

Ramsay MacDonald
Prime Minister of Great Britain (chairing)

Colonel Sir Maurice Hankey
British Cabinet Secretary (standing)

Louis Germain-Martin
Minister of Finance of France

Emile Francqui
Minister of Finance of Belgium

Professor Hesnard
The French interpreter (standing)

Interestingly enough, the Germans and the French are sitting next to each other at the same side of the table.

© bpk Photo Agency / Erich Salomon; source: De Vries and Hunter, 1963

Synopsis of the dissertation
Diplomatic Negotiation – Essence and Evolution

Diplomatic Negotiation is difficult to grasp, both in practice and in theory. Yet it is important to get to grips with this process, as negotiations between states and in international organizations are the lifeblood of the international body politic. The Charter of the United Nations, for obvious reasons, ranks negotiation as the foremost instrument in the peaceful settlement of inter-state conflicts. Scholars of international relations, however, are still searching for methodologies and theories to explain the outcomes of negotiations by the processes that produce them.

This doctoral dissertation approaches the process of diplomatic negotiation from different angles, while applying a multi-faceted qualitative analysis of case studies from the past and present. It is hoped that a better understanding of negotiation as one of the main tools of diplomacy will help to enhance the effectiveness of this process as an alternative to warfare. Still, negotiation is basically a struggle in the promotion and defence of state interests. It is war by peaceful means.

The central proposition of this book is that negotiations between states can only be a viable replacement of the use of violence if they are conducted within a framework of international regimes that set the rules and procedures for negotiation behaviour and mitigate lack of trust. International regimes may take the shape of international organizations, which can force countries to live up to their agreements. Diplomats and political leaders have come to recognize this, as the evolution of diplomacy in the last 400 years testifies. Diplomatic negotiation may be taken as a ceaseless series of attempts to bring more order to the international system. The current demise of the negotiation processes in the Middle East thus demonstrates the failure of the international community to build overarching negotiation structures.