

**Praise for**  
*The Go-Between:*  
*Jan Eliasson and the Styles of Mediation*

“Peter Wallensteen and Isak Svensson open a window into the practice of uber diplomat Jan Eliasson, whose rich experiences in Africa, the Middle East, Central and Southeast Asia are the basis for case studies to test, illustrate, and expand our knowledge about the practice of mediation. The book belongs on the desk of any practitioner, scholar, or student who is serious about international conflict management.”

—**Chester A. Crocker**, James R. Schlesinger Professor of Strategic Studies, Georgetown University

“The great strength of this book is its mapping of the conditions under which a go-between can most successfully define, enter, shape—and eventually exit—a principled mediation process. The cases are fascinating, ranging from the Iran-Iraq War, to a Burmese refugee crisis, to the Darfur mediation. Jan Eliasson, the main focus of the book, has earned his spot in the pantheon of international mediators, and his experiences are deeply informative.”

—**Melanie Greenberg**, president, Cypress Fund for Peace and Security

“Focusing on the intermediary experiences of the renowned Swedish diplomat Jan Eliasson, this important book draws key lessons for the study and practice of diplomacy and the successful management of today’s conflicts. Written in a clear, highly accessible, and engaging style, this book is a must read for any serious student or practitioner of international mediation. It is chock full of insights and wisdom that are drawn from a careful analysis of the deft diplomatic hand of its main protagonist.”

—**Fen Osler Hampson**, director, The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University

“This volume is a valuable contribution to the literature on mediation and conflict resolution. The authors successfully bridge the gap between theory and practice, drawing heavily on Ambassador Eliasson’s diaries in describing his actions in six major mediation exercises over twenty-eight years, and drawing on their own academic and more theoretical background in relating the exercises to one another.”

—**Teresita C. Schaffer**, director, South Asia Program, CSIS and former U.S. ambassador to Sri Lanka

“A remarkable book . . . This well-organized, insightful volume will be of great interest to practitioners and scholars. The focus on one mediator and his significant work, indeed, his life achievements across numerous cases, functions, and types of conflict, is an excellent way to derive lessons.”

—**Anthony Wanis-St. John**, American University and author of *Back Channel Negotiation: Secrecy in Middle East Peacemaking*



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## The Go-Between



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The  
**GO-  
BETWEEN**

Jan Eliasson and the Styles of Mediation

Isak Svensson and Peter Wallensteen

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# Preface

Over the last two decades more wars have ended through mediation than in the previous two centuries. This is in large part because the United Nations has provided leadership, opportunities for negotiation, strategic coordination, and appropriate tools to implement peace agreements, but it is also due to the growing determination and efforts of states, regional organizations, and civil society to end the scourge of conflict.

This determination has sprung from the realization that our world has changed. While it has changed in many ways, among the most profound is our growing interdependence. We now live in a world where fragile states in the heart of Asia or Africa can come back to haunt us as safe havens for terrorists; a world where diseases like swine flu can be carried across oceans in a matter of hours; a world where a sub-prime crisis in the U.S. can lead to the worst global recession in decades; a world where a changing climate can affect global food security, increase pressures on fresh water supplies, and trigger mass movement of people. Against such threats, no nation can hope to make itself secure by seeking exclusive security. We all share responsibility for each other's security, and only by working to make each other secure can we hope to achieve lasting peace and security for ourselves.

This realization has done much to strengthen support for the idea of collective security. It has also provided a new, and powerful, rationale for peacemaking, including through mediation. As a result, the early years of the twenty-first century have seen mediation help end conflict in places such as Aceh, Northern Ireland, the Ivory Coast, Kenya, and Nepal.

Yet clearly, our scorecard is mixed. As the latest numbers from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program show, the world is far from pacific. In recent years, there were over seventy active violent conflicts, thirty-five of which involved one or more state actors. Tens of thousands of our fellow human beings are killed or maimed in war every year. And millions still have to flee their homes in search of a better life. So it is worth considering why some mediation efforts succeed and others fail. This book does so by skillfully drawing on the experiences of my dear friend and

colleague, Ambassador Jan Eliasson, who was deeply involved in many mediation attempts ranging from the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s to the ongoing conflict in Darfur.

The task of a mediator is seemingly straightforward. It is to help parties develop a shared understanding of the conflict at hand and work toward building a practical and lasting solution. Successful mediation, however, depends on many factors over which the mediator has little control, such as the geostrategic framework, the comparative strengths of the parties to the conflict, their perception of the way the conflict is moving, their state of exhaustion or fresh hope, the support they are getting from various external forces, the personalities of those involved, and just plain luck.

But as Jan has proven over and over again, a skillful mediator can make a crucial difference. It is with this difference in mind that Professors Peter Wallensteen and Isak Svensson have distilled his experience into a fascinating journey through the process and styles of mediation. Ending in ten practical conclusions, this journey is bound to be of great interest to practitioners and academics alike.

—KOFI A. ANNAN  
UN SECRETARY-GENERAL, 1997–2006

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