

Getting It Done

Getting It Done

*Postagreement Negotiation
and International Regimes*

edited by Bertram I. Spector and I. William Zartman



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*To our parents, Samuel and Rose, and Ira and Edythe,
who taught us to get it done,
and to our wives, Judith and Danièle,
who helped us to see it through*

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Foreword

Getting It Done is a theoretically ambitious volume whose conclusions have a very practical import. At the conceptual level, the editors and authors explore the intersection of negotiation theory and regime theory so as to explain how international regimes—multilateral entities such as NAFTA and NATO that abide by a particular set of rules and principles—evolve through a process of continual negotiation. This is an exploration into uncharted territory. Previously, most scholars have assumed that once the ink was dry on an agreement to set up a regime, the signatories would comply with its terms and the regime would prosper—or they would not comply and the regime would likely founder. Betram Spector, William Zartman, and their fellow authors, however, make the important point that reaching an agreement is a stage in a negotiation, not the end of the process. A regime, they argue, is in a constant process of renegotiation throughout its life as the interests and power of its members shift and as changes occur in the nature of the problem—pollution or the practice of torture, for instance—that the regime addresses.

The theoretical implications of this novel approach are substantial, and should stimulate rich discussion among academics who specialize in the inner workings of international organizations. But the implications have a practical relevance, too. After all, if Spector, Zartman, and the contributors are right, then those who work in the trenches of international regimes should view their activities in a new light. They are not just administrators—trying to ensure that the members comply with the regime's rules—and not just representatives—trying to find a way to work within the regime's constraints while promoting the interests of the member-states. They are also negotiators, working to redefine

both goals and the means to achieve those goals. Moreover, their negotiations are likely to take place on at least two different levels: at the level of the regime itself, and at the national level, where different groups compete to set the agenda for participation in the regime. The number of people affected is by no means negligible. In addition to those who staff the hundreds of different international organizations, there are the national representatives who fill the standing committees and general assemblies, the policymakers who establish the guidelines within which the representatives operate, the nongovernmental organizations and industry groups that press for stricter and better enforced rules, or who argue for exemptions from those rules, and the media that can turn an issue into national and international headlines or bury it in the back pages.

This practical aspect of Spector and Zartman's analysis means that, although *Getting It Done's* readership may be drawn chiefly from the worlds of academe and scholarship, its ultimate influence should extend more widely. The transmission of ideas between the academic and the practitioner and policymaking communities is seldom straightforward and rarely instantaneous. Yet new ideas and approaches do move from one community to the other, and can do so surprisingly quickly, especially in the United States, where scholars often enlist in the service of one or another administration, and where policymakers frequently retire to the sylvan shades of academe to heal bureaucratic wounds or compose their memoirs.

Throughout its existence, the United States Institute of Peace has sought to facilitate the flow of important new insights about international conflict from one community to the other. To borrow the title of a book published by the Institute and written by former Institute fellow Alexander George (himself both a distinguished scholar and an influential adviser to policymakers), much of our work involves *bridging the gap* between these worlds. Some work sponsored by the Institute has flowed swiftly into the deliberations of official Washington; the influence of other Institute-supported studies has percolated more slowly and subtly. The single most important criterion from the Institute's

point of view is not the speed of transmission but the value placed by one or both communities on the ideas conveyed.

In addition to meeting the high standards of quality that the Institute demands, *Getting It Done* offers a new perspective on a subject to which the Institute has appropriately devoted significant attention: negotiation. The range of books published by the Institute on negotiation is considerable, extending from broad conceptual analyses such as Raymond Cohen's *Negotiating Across Cultures* and John Paul Lederach's *Building Peace*, to assessments of particular negotiations such as Helena Cobban's *Israeli-Syrian Peace Talks* and my own *Exiting Indochina*, to explorations of the negotiating style of individual nations. In this latter category, the Institute has published or is about to publish book-length analyses of the negotiating behavior of China, Russia, Japan, North Korea, Germany, France, and the United States. These volumes are part of the Institute's ongoing Cross-Cultural Negotiation Project, which aims to reduce conflict by making negotiations more productive through enhancing awareness of the impact of culture on negotiating styles.

Getting it Done differs from these other volumes in several respects, especially in its conceptual ambition and in focusing attention not on bilateral encounters between nation-states but on multilateral arenas in which states are by no means the only players. That said, *Getting It Done* is published by the Institute for the same overarching reason as its other titles on negotiating theory and practice: to contribute first-rate research and generate potentially valuable ideas on how best to make international negotiation more productive in the service of fostering collaboration and conflict resolution among nations and communities

Richard H. Solomon, President
United States Institute of Peace

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Contributors

Bertram I. Spector is executive director of the Center for Negotiation Analysis, technical director of Management Systems International, Inc., and editor-in-chief of *International Negotiation: A Journal of Theory and Practice*. From 1993 to 1995, he was a fellow at the Foreign Policy Institute, Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, the Johns Hopkins University. Spector served as leader of the Processes of International Negotiation (PIN) Project at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Austria from 1990 to 1993. He is coeditor of *Negotiating International Regimes* and has published articles on negotiating with villains, negotiation readiness, water diplomacy and environmental security, and corruption in developing countries in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Negotiation Journal*, *American Behavioral Scientist*, and the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. He consults with governments and civil society organizations in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and Africa on governance, democracy, and conflict issues and has conducted studies for the U.S. government, the United States Institute of Peace, Battelle-Pacific Northwest Laboratories, the United Nations/New York, the Austrian government, and the Swedish Council on the Planning and Coordination of Research. Spector obtained his Ph.D. from New York University.

I. William Zartman is Jacob Blaustein Distinguished Professor of International Organization and Conflict Resolution at the School of Advanced International Studies of the Johns Hopkins University, where he directs the Conflict Management Program. He holds a doctorate from Yale University and an honorary doctorate from the Catholic University of Louvain. He is a former distinguished fellow of the United

States Institute of Peace, an Olin Professor at the U.S. Naval Academy, and Halévy Professor at the Institute of Political Studies in Paris. He is editor of *Peacemaking in International Conflict, Preventive Negotiations, Power and Negotiation*, and *The 50% Solution*, among others, and author of *Cowardly Lions: Missed Opportunities to Prevent Deadly Conflict and State Collapse* and *Ripe for Resolution*, among others. He is a member of the Carter Center's International Council for Conflict Resolution and of the Processes of International Negotiation (PIN) Project of the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Austria.



Pamela S. Chasek is an assistant professor of government and director of international studies at Manhattan College in New York City. She is also cofounder and editor of the International Institute for Sustainable Development's *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, a reporting service on UN environment and development negotiations. She has been a consultant to the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, and the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs. Chasek is the author of numerous articles and publications on international environmental politics and negotiation, including *Earth Negotiations: Analyzing Thirty Years of Environmental Diplomacy; Global Environmental Politics*, 3d edition, with Gareth Porter and Janet Welsh Brown; and *The Global Environment in the Twenty-first Century: Prospects for International Cooperation*. She holds a Ph.D. from the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at the Johns Hopkins University and was a Young Scientist at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Austria.

Anna Korula has fifteen years' experience in the area of human rights, including several years as an active negotiator and mediator. She is currently in Liberia, where she is consulting on human rights implementation, as well as on reintegration and reconciliation, especially

with reference to the protection of child soldiers. Korula has previously worked for the United Nations as a human rights officer and civil affairs officer in peacebuilding missions in Croatia, Bosnia, and East Timor. She has also served as a research scholar at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Austria and has conducted research at universities in the United Kingdom, Germany, and the United States. She received her M.A. from Webster University, St. Louis.

Janie Leatherman is associate professor of international relations in the Department of Politics and Government at Illinois State University and codirector of Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies. She has written extensively on early warning and conflict prevention and the OSCE, including the books *Breaking Cycles of Violence* (lead author) and *From Cold War to Democratic Peace*, as well as a number of articles and book chapters. Leatherman has consulted with national and international organizations on conflict early warning and prevention, including the South Balkans Working Group (the Council on Foreign Relations, New York), Catholic Relief Services, Search for Common Ground, the U.S. War Crimes Ambassador, United States Agency for International Development, and the United Nations University. She has received grants and fellowships from the Social Science Research Council, the United States Institute of Peace, the Swedish government, the International Studies Association, Fulbright-Hayes, and the American Scandinavian Foundation. Leatherman has previously held appointments at the University of Notre Dame and Macalester College. She received her Ph.D. from the Graduate School of International Studies, University of Denver, in 1991.

Gunnar Sjöstedt is a senior research fellow at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, where he directs programs on international environmental and trade regimes, international negotiations, and psychological operations and strategic intelligence. He has conducted extensive analysis of the transformation of the GATT into the WTO and the postagreement negotiations that sustain that trade regime. As a member of the Processes of International Negotiation (PIN) Project

at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (Austria), Sjöstedt has edited several books, including *International Economic Negotiation* (2000), *International Environmental Negotiation* (1993), *Containing the Atom: International Negotiations on Nuclear Security and Safety* (2002), *Negotiating International Regimes: Lessons Learned from the UN Conference on Environment and Development* (1994), and *Transboundary Risk Management* (2001).

Lynn Wagner is currently serving as an issue cluster expert for sustainable development, forests, and deserts on the International Institute for Sustainable Development's linkages website. Eight years of watching UN environmental negotiations as a writer for the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* have led her to apply her primary research interest—the relationship between negotiation process and outcome—to the expanding field of international environmental negotiations. She has written and coauthored several articles, including “Negotiations in the UN Commission on Sustainable Development: Coalitions, Processes, and Outcomes” and the forthcoming “A Commission Will Lead Them? The UN Commission on Sustainable Development and UNCED Follow-Up.” Wagner received her Ph.D. from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and was a Young Scientist at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Austria.

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