Conference Organisation:
Dr. Frans R.E. Blom - University of Amsterdam Centre for the Study of the Dutch Golden Age
Mr. P.W.A. Bas Backer - former Diplomat
Jaap van Straalen - Island Book Store Amsterdam
Inge Groenen - Ma University of Amsterdam
Anja Bas Backer
Session I: Dutch Peace Mediation in the War between Sweden and Russia 1615-1616
Chair: Prof. Dr. Lia van Gemert, Director of the Amsterdam Centre for the Study of the Dutch Golden Age.

10:00: Presentation by authors Peter W.A. Bas-Backer and Frans R.E. Blom of the publication Op Reis voor Vrede to H.E. Ambassador Håkan Emsgård of the Kingdom of Sweden in the Netherlands and H.E. Ambassador Dr. Philip de Heer, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Sweden.

Opening of the conference by the Ambassadors H.E. H. Emsgård and H.E. Ph. de Heer.


11.00: Coffee and tea break

11.30: Prof. Dr. Kristian Gerner, From Novgorod to St. Petersburg by way of Sweden: the Dutch Baltic trajectory. After four centuries of repeated backlashes, the Dutch-Swedish mission may be crowned with success if the successors of Vladimir Putin recognize that it was not the Devil that helped Peter build his city against the order of Nature, violating Russia. It was civilized Europe that greeted Russia welcome. Gerner is em. professor of History at Lund University.

12.00: Prof. Dr. J.S.A.M. van Koningsbrugge, The Russian perspective on Baltic affairs. What goals did the Russians diplomats set themselves in the peace negotiations? And how could it be that the Russian government accepted the Dutch envoya, while, only two years before, it had forbidden traveling Russian diplomats to have an audience in The Hague? This is a story of royal and republican pretences, illusions and Realpolitik.
Van Koningsbrugge is professor of Russian History at Rijksuniversity Groningen.

12:30: Debate

13:00 – 14:10: Lunch in adjacent restaurant La Place (same floor).

Session II: Early modern Peace Mediation from a modern Perspective
Chair: Prof. Dr. K. Colijn, General Director of the Clingendael Institute.

14:10: Mr. Juurd Eijsvoogel, Column. Eijsvoogel is Senior Editor for International Relations of NRC Handelsblad.

14:30: Mr. Pieter Feith, Four centuries later: Some observations on intervention in our times. We need to learn lessons from past experiences. Feith is former International Civilian Representative for Kosovo, former EU Special Representative in Kosovo, and former leading EU positions in monitoring and conflict management missions in Serbia, Macedonia and Darfur (Sudan).

15:00: Mr. Johan Molander, Sweden in the Baltic region, and how international mediation has evolved over time. International conflict and mediation from Abraham de Wicquefort to Lakdar Brahimi, from Ivan the Terrible to Vladimir Putin. ‘Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose.’ Molander is a Swedish former diplomat at the UN in Geneva and former Swedish Ambassador i.a. Moscow.

15:30: Dr. Paul Meerts, On the evolution in international negotiations and mediation. This intervention will postulate that the opportunities and obstacles of mediation did not essentially change over the centuries. This final speech will also briefly compare the peace efforts in the wars between Ukraine and Russia nowadays and between Sweden and Russia in the 17th century.
Meerts is Senior Researcher at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael in The Hague.

16:00: Debate

16:30: Drinks

This conference is sponsored by:


Van Bylandt Stichting
Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen: Amsterdam School for Culture and History (ASCH) en het Onderzoekszwaartepunt Cultural Heritage and Identity (OCHI)

ABN Amro Bank N.V.
De Stichting het Journaal van 1615/1616

English translations provided by Mr. A. Anikin, Mrs. M.H. Offerhaus-Bas Backer and Mr. D.F.Q. Bas Backer.