The Art of Negotiation

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1. The crisis of Yemen has grown into an international conflict between various states. The issue has been continuously negotiated over all the years since it arose. In northern Yemen, close to the border of Saudi Arabia, the Houthi movement emerged as a rebellious group that became a major threat to the peace of the region. The Houthi group has its agenda against Saudi Arabia and it intends to strike various parts of Saudi Arabia with terrorist attacks. Saudi Arabia, in response to this rebellious movement, created a coalition with other countries in the Middle East. This coalition was backed by the US, and it aims to subdue the insurgent activities of the Houthis.

The influence of the Houthis have grown since the time they began their operations in 2004. During the tenure of the former Yemeni President, Ali Abdullah Saleh, they got stronger. Later, they got hold on the capital of that time, Sana’a. They also captured vast lands in the north of Yemen (Porter, 2016). It is generally believed that the Houthis are backed by Iran, and they have been getting much of the support from Iran in terms of financial support, arms, and weapons. However, some seasoned researchers claim that Iranian involvement in the Houthis cause is not supported by any solid evidence.

The Houthis consist of a range of armed forces that have given enough strength to the movement to pursue its mission. The sixty percent of the former Yemeni army has also been integrated with the group and pledged loyalty for them. A report submitted in September 2019 stated that the Houthis comprise around two hundred thousand soldiers who are trained in every respect, and they have access to the latest warfare technology. They can use long-range missiles, tanks, vehicles, and other weapons. The Houthis, though, do not have the strength, resources, and political power as do their rivals, Saudi Arabia, possess. Yet, they have successfully managed to capture more than one-third of the Yemeni territories.

2. The Yemeni dispute has caused different states to stick to their particular interest, as the historical account of the movement suggests. The US intervention in the issue has been described as to support one of its strong alliances, Saudi Arabia, against the militant attacks by the Houthis. Being the most influential and developed country, the US finds it inevitable to play a vital role in the most sensitive issue of the world. Iran is not at good terms with Saudi Arabia. It has religious as well as political conflicts with the latter. Therefore, it is quite possible that Iran has been supporting the Houthis in their revolt against the Saudi regime. Saudi Arabia is acting as a respondent to the rebellious activities of the Yemeni insurgents. It has a sound political, religious, and diplomatic power in the region. It is a highly resourceful country, and it has to protect its boundaries and assets from the enemy. Some sources indicate that the Houthis have been provided with supplies from Oman. They have presented evidence that Oman sent weapons and arms to Yemen through secret channels of distribution.

The Houthis are generally believed to take the rebellious initiatives for political purposes, and they want to take hold of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the sake of power. However, several other factors need to be considered as well to understand the Houthis’ conviction in this regard. The Houthis have evolved from Zaydism that is a branch of Shia Islam. The Houthis have, therefore, arisen as an opposition to the Sunni Islam, more specifically termed as Salafism, in Saudi Arabia. However, it should be noted that Zaydism does not provoke its followers to be as fanatic as other branches of Shia Islam do. Another significant contributor to their rise is reported to be the economic discrimination of northern Yemen carried out by President Saleh.

3. The negotiation being carried out on the issue has taken serious dimensions due to the tactics used by different sides. All parties involved in the negotiation have their particular interests and they have all been pursuing their specific objectives. The ethical behaviors depicted by these parties are also worth analyzing. The first and foremost aspect of the issue is to consider the high number of casualties that have occurred during recent years. The statistical figures reported in this scenario are pretty alarming and disappointing. More than twenty-two million Yemeni people are in urgent need of basic human necessities. More than nine million people have expired during the militant activities. It seems that none of the parties involved in the negotiation has concern regarding the infinite loss of lives of the Yemeni people. The Houthis began with fighting against local armies led by President Saleh because of his economically discriminative policies. They kept on fighting against their government for several years until 2010. The national dialogue failed and the Houthis raised insurgency against the Saudi government and overthrew Mansour Hadi, who was supported by the Saudi government. Later, Saleh made an alliance with the Houthis and came to their side. The alliance became a threat to the opposite alliance. Therefore, Saudi Arabia and the UAE initiated war against them, backed by the US (Popp, 2015).

The Houthis have indulged in war due to their specific ideology and the injustice observed by them in the country. Their purpose is not imperialistic, as some authentic researches have stated. They have arisen for war out of their enmity for Israel, the US, and Saudi Arabia. This enmity is deep-rooted and has its historical grounds (Ahmed, 2019). However, mostly, the thinkers relate their efforts to achieve their particular political and strategic goals.

The US has played an ethical role by supporting a country that has been its alliance since long. The intervention of the US has proved a great support to the Saudi government in dealing with the rising tides of Yemeni insurgents. Saudi Arabian government has also tried much to settle the issue on fairgrounds. The tactics used by Iran, however, are not encouraging at all. Iran has acted as a catalyst to invoke the animosity between the rival countries. The country has exploited the situation for its own advantages.

4. The negotiated argument between the rival parties has alternatives, both the best and the worst. BATNA in this scenario would be that the Saudi government would take an accommodating approach to the problem and strive for the settlement of the issue on an equitable basis. The Houthis have started rebellion due to certain reasons as the thinkers have pointed out. People in all the rival countries have faced harsh circumstances and have been fed up with the effects of war. The countries have borne the loss of many lives and the issue has grown to a maximum limit. The Saudi government can play the role of a compromising party that deals with the enemy to resolve the issue for the betterment of all.

WATNA for the current scenario would be a full impact intervention of the US in the conflict. The US can play the role of a strong defending force for Saudi Arabia against the Houthis and it can use power and arms to suppress the rebellion altogether. This is the last and worst solution to the issue. This initiative is only taken if the current issue does not tend to be settled in any way. The philosophical and political schools of thought do not recommend this approach as the consequences have to be borne by the people on the whole. Countless innocent individuals will have to bear the losses they would never be able to compensate for. Therefore, putting an end to the rebellion by using force is not a successful solution to the issue. It has worse effects more than the anticipated positive outcomes.

5. The distributive negotiation refers to the dialogues or talks between two parties having opposite priorities and interests, wherein each party shows concerns for its own particular interests and tries to get the best solution for its own sake. The distributive negotiation is best suitable in situations where the economic, political, and cultural effects are not adverse for any one of the parties involved. It ends up with the conquest of one party over the other. The rival is left with no benefits as much as the core of the issue is concerned. Moreover, this negotiation is recommended in case where the loss of a party is not as severe that it causes any further instigation among them.

The distributive negotiation strategy for the in this conflict would be that the Saudi government strives to take hold of the Yemeni territories by the support of the US and the UK. This is crucial in order to bring peace to the region. The Houthis have gained so much power that they will not surrender before the forces opposing them. They are fighting for an agenda. They have justified their war against Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the US, based on their political and religious ideologies (Perkins, 2017). They need to be subdued by collective efforts of the opposite alliances. The distributive negotiation implies also that the rival countries of the Houthis should not compromise with them on any grounds. They can threaten the Houthis by power or they can arrange a dialogue with them to ensure that the Houthis will not destroy the peace of the region.

The distributive bargaining though have not more chances of success, yet it can be employed to gain an advantage over the current situation. The Houthis have originated for the pursuit of their ideology and remove the discriminative behavior of the governing authorities toward their people. Therefore, it also seems appropriate to not compromise over the interests. The US and Saudi alliance has a competitive advantage over the Houthis in the sense that they are geographically located in safer and better regions than their rivals. They will not have to bear great losses in case of a Great War occurrence. The loss will be more likely borne by the Houthis. This suggests that the distributive negotiation should be projected in a way that strengthens the diplomatic argument of Saudi Arabia, and justifies clearly the support of the US for Saudi Arabia.

6. The integrative negotiation refers to the dialogue or talk between two parties having conflict on some grounds, wherein particular interests of one party are deliberately left unpursued for the collective betterment of all. It should be noted that there must be some common interests of all the involved parties in the negotiation. These common interests would be the basis for establishing a common goal for the sake of settlement. People have strived hard to reach the pinnacle of success in situations involving conflicts and their respective negotiations. The integrative bargaining offers the best possible solution to the issues of conflict provided that the common interests are addressed and utilized appropriately.

The conflict of the Yemeni insurgency has reached the point where the Saudi government has to take steps in this direction. The integrative bargaining has the potential of solving the issue efficiently. The proposal would suggest that Saudi Arabia should consider the interests of the Houthis also while looking into their own interests. Being the religious and political leader in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia can use influence for getting the issue solved. The Saudi government can use also the influence of the US to settle the issue. A long convincing dialogue between the rival countries can bring peace to the region. It is to be noted that no rebellious movement starts its activities for the sake of destruction and violence. There are always some political, economic, or ideological issues involved in an insurgency. People never want to become beasts of evildoing. They are provoked by others through some positive or negative motivation. Their basic needs remain the same in every region. Therefore, the integrative bargaining seems to result in hopeful solutions to the conflict.

The Houthis can be offered with their core demands so that they are convinced of the settlement. Their religious beliefs cannot be altered. However, they can be offered with the best possible political solutions. For instance, in Egypt, the main political positions are occupied by individuals belonging to different schools of religious thoughts. The distribution of power is equal in this regard in Egypt. A similar solution can be offered to the Houthis. They should be given their rights of religious observance. Their economic preferences are also plausible. The source of their animosity is that they have been overlooked by previous governments. They can be persuaded by a peaceful integrative negotiation, where Saudi Arabia sacrifices some of its interests for the sake of the collective welfare of the region.

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