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Exploring the Role of Negotiators in Crisis Situations in the Context of Pakistan With an Insight from Islamic Teachings

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Abstract



This research study explores the role of negotiators in crises within the context of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Crisis negotiators must establish contact with subjects, identify their demands, and work to resolve tense and often volatile standoffs without loss of life. Tactical teams must prepare to neutralize subjects through swift tactical means. For a coordinated response to be successful, each component of the crisis negotiation team needs to understand clearly the functions of the others. This research clarifies the role of crisis negotiators who find themselves in command of hostage or other critical incidents. Such understanding has taken on particular importance in recent years. Negotiators have become very active due partly to the reputations they have established for the successful, peaceful resolution of various types of critical incidents. The research study also addresses mishandled crises in Pakistan and the essential role and need of negotiators on the spot for Pakistan's law enforcement agencies. Crisis Negotiation, if appropriately utilized, can be highly effective and greatly enhance the range of situations a negotiator will be prepared to handle. This foundation in relationship and communication is essential in crises for negotiations to progress to the point where conflict between the parties is mitigated and agreements can be made. This study also addresses the psychological impact of hostage



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crises combined with elements of suicidal despair and homicidal rage, often aggravated by a severe mental disorder and fueled by drugs or by certain ideologists. Furthermore, the study also explains the victim's syndrome within the crisis and its effects on their mental health after any crisis. For example, Stockholm syndrome is an emotional response. This study also includes the Islamic perspective on the role of negotiators, crisis management in Islam, and conflict resolution in the Islamic perspective. That gave guidelines to Pakistan's law enforcement agencies to develop a crisis negotiation module.

Keywords:

Negotiation, Negotiators, Crisis management, Conflict Resolution, Mental Health Professional, Suicide-By-Cop, Coach, Intelligence Coordinator, Islam and Conflict Resolution.

1. Introduction

In the current scenario of Pakistan, terrorism, extremism, and criminal groups are a threat to internal security. Law enforcement agencies have been fighting a war against it for the last twenty years. As technology and conflict tactics change over time, tackling any crisis is far better than the kinetic approach, where massive collateral damage has already been faced, so tactics should also be changed. Crisis negotiators can control the damage and save people's lives. Crises, characterized by their sudden onset and potential for severe consequences, demand swift and strategic responses from law enforcement. In Pakistan, traditional methods often rely on force, which can result in unintended harm and escalation. Crisis negotiation offers an alternative approach focused on communication and resolution without violence. This research highlights the critical role of negotiators in resolving crises and emphasizes the specialized skills and knowledge required to support law enforcement agencies in Pakistan.

1.1 Statement of Problem

In the recent past, developing countries that share information on media have seen severe, brutal, and mismanaged incidents of terrorism, suicide attempts, and hostile situations. It raises the dire need for professionally trained negotiators who can communicate with offenders and the damage and save a maximum of lives. Unfortunately, there aren't any qualified crisis negotiators in law enforcement, particularly in the police and other law enforcement organizations that stand equipped to handle such circumstances initially.

Developing countries like Pakistan, where terrorism now has deep roots within the society. Cases like public suicide or hostage situation cases were tried to be kept suppressed or not brought into the limelight because kinetic operations were preferred rather than going for negotiation with the hostile party. However, crisis and hostage negotiation skills will be more demanding in law enforcement agencies as we enter fifth-generation warfare globally. Fifth-generation warfare is simply a 'war of ideology' where new trends like lone wolf attacks were used to create devastating impacts by creating damage to lives and infrastructure and creating fear in the minds of people.

1.2 Significance of the Study

The present study provides a baseline for the need for negotiators to resolve crises in real-time. The research is based on Pakistan's most media-highlighted cases of hostage and publically suicidal situations, which created panic and fear among citizens that also fulfilled the motive of miscreants and criminals. These cases were a menace and mishandled by law enforcement agencies. The study also introduces the positive and justified role of negotiators in any crisis, the tactics of negotiation, and the skills and knowledge they need to resolve even the most volatile incidents peacefully. Since every second counts in crisis negotiation, it is imperative to comprehend the effects and efficacy of crisis negotiation to improve public safety and minimize collateral damage during critical crises in Pakistan. One mistake can have disastrous results. The study emphasizes investing in the training and support of negotiators and how highly skilled they must be.

1.3 Rationale for Study

1. Alignment with International Best Practices: worldwide Leading law enforcement agencies, such as the FBI and Scotland Yard, prioritize crisis negotiation as a vital skill for resolving critical incidents. By establishing crisis negotiation units, Pakistani agencies can align with these international best practices.
2. Enhanced Public Safety: Crisis negotiation units are specially trained in these methods, which lowers the opportunity of violence and ensures safety for everyone. His expertise can be instrumental in a high-stress region
3. Improved Incident Resolution: Negotiation is often the most effective way to resolve critical incidents peacefully. Dedicated crisis negotiation units can focus on developing the advanced skills needed for successful negotiation outcomes.

4. Interagency Collaboration: crisis negotiation units can facilitate cooperation among law enforcement agencies, ensuring a unified response to critical incidents.

1.4 Scope of Study

Pakistan has become a BMW (blast and massacre weapon) of terrorism, which is now a part integrated into indigenous society in quite an intricate way. In such a situation, cases of publically committed suicide and hostage-type cases were tried to be suppressed or not brought into the limelight if they could have been solved with kinetic operation rather than negotiation. Nevertheless, soon, essential police functions will not be different but where the rubber meets the road—a crisis and hostage negotiation like law enforcement agencies globally. Pakistan has jumped into fifth-gen from fourth-gen warfare. As far as he was concerned, in Fifth-generation warfare, the War of Ideology is using new trends like lone-wolf attacks for leverage, causing massive destruction to lives and infrastructure and indulging civilian minds into a wave of disaster.

This study aims to specialize as society moves continuously from one end to another side of crime with no limitations and boundaries. In order to handle it, law enforcement agencies must upgrade their training and implement techniques physically and chronologically to ensure a check in the cross-verification¹. It is one of the skills used in practice to tackle these issues: being a well-trained negotiator, as international standards for all carrying agency law enforcement ratios, and being with each crisis team onsite. The second objective is to minimize losses or damage after the priority of a safe life (life interpretation; keep saving a life). The third said current objectivism from lunatic/contact homers whose surrenders catch up by law are acting groups. This knowledge has added significance now. In part, this may be attributable to the high profile these negotiators have because of their track record for resolving many different types of critical incidents both successfully and without violence².

1.5 Theoretical Framework

Crisis Theory

Crisis theory, developed by Naomi Golan (1978), describes a crisis as a temporary state of disequilibrium where typical coping mechanisms fail. This theory outlines individuals' psychological stages during a crisis, emphasizing the need for timely and effective interventions to restore stability.³

Negotiation Theory

Negotiation theory, particularly the frameworks proposed by Zartman and Druckman, views negotiation as a structured conflict resolution process through dialogue and mutual understanding. The stages of negotiation include preparation, engagement, bargaining, and implementation, each requiring specific skills and strategies to achieve successful outcomes.

1.6 Objectives of the Study

The research has the following objectives:

- To develop the importance and need of negotiators for law enforcement agencies.
- To analyze past cases, failure as a negotiator was not a crises situation.
- To justify the need for crises negotiator on hostage, suicidal, or other crises situations.
- To study the characteristics of negotiators in the context of Pakistani society.
- To develop the understanding of the psychological traits of crises creators
- To highlight Islamic Perspective on Conflict Resolution, Crisis Management and Negotiation.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

With limited resources and constraints of standard tactical handling of law enforcement agencies, the current study will be delimited to media highlighted cases of crisis situation in which police adopted or ignored the negotiation process. Unfortunately in Pakistan the role and importance of crisis negotiator is still not considered as a first option by situation commander. The lack of awareness about negotiators and their role are avoided by law enforcement specially police to tackle the crisis.

1.8 Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions:

- In case studies, did any negotiator present to develop communication with criminals?

- If, in any case, the negotiation had concluded. What type and category of negotiator handled the crisis?
- How have past cases demonstrated the importance of skilled negotiation in de-escalating crises and preventing tragic outcomes?
- What are the specific challenges and considerations that arise when conducting negotiations in the context of Pakistani society and culture?
- What psychological traits and profiles are commonly associated with individuals who create crises that require negotiation, such as hostage-takers or those threatening self-harm?
- How do Islamic teachings and principles inform approaches to conflict resolution, crisis management, and negotiation, and what insights can these offer for practitioners in law enforcement and other fields?

1.9 Methodology

This study utilizes a qualitative approach, examining eleven case studies of crises in Pakistan that received extensive media coverage. Data was sourced from archival research, media reports, and interviews with law enforcement officials who were involved in these incidents. Few case study summaries are as follow.

1.10 Literature Review

Historical Context and Evolution of Crisis Negotiation

The research includes relevant books published internationally on negotiation, the psychological aspects of criminals, crisis negotiation, victim's syndrome, and negotiation theories. Besides books, research articles published in national and internationally recognized journals are also part of thesis research. All citations, original online books, cyberspace information, and literature will also be reviewed during research. Crisis negotiation has evolved significantly since its formal inception in the 1970s. Coombs (2014) documented that early models focused on basic communication strategies, while contemporary approaches incorporate psychological insights and advanced communication techniques⁴. However, in Pakistan, the evolution and formalization of crisis negotiation practices are still developing. Crisis negotiation has evolved significantly over the years due to advances in psychology, shifts in societal values, and the nature of various crises. Here is a brief historical overview of its evolution:

Early Years: In the early 20th century, crisis negotiation was often viewed as a confrontational process. Authorities relied heavily on aggressive tactics, threats, and ultimatums to resolve situations. This approach was often ineffective, leading to tragic outcomes.

1970s-1980s: The Munich Olympics massacre in 1972 and other high-profile incidents led to a shift in crisis negotiation strategies. Law enforcement began adopting more behavioral science-informed approaches. The FBI established its Behavioral Science Unit, focusing on understanding perpetrators' motivations and psychology. Negotiators started employing active listening, empathy, and problem-solving to de-escalate situations.

1990s-2000s: Advances in psychology and neuroscience deepened our understanding of human behavior under stress. Negotiators began using techniques like mirroring and anchoring to build rapport. The concept of emotional intelligence became crucial in effective negotiation. There was also greater recognition of the importance of pre-incident prevention and post-incident trauma support.

Present Day: Modern crisis negotiation emphasizes collaboration, flexibility, and adaptability. Negotiators are trained to quickly assess situations, remain calm under pressure, and think creatively. Technology plays a larger role, with crisis teams using social media monitoring, data analytics, and virtual reality training. There's increased focus on negotiating with individuals in mental health crises, reflecting growing societal awareness of mental health issues.

Future: The future of crisis negotiation will likely involve even greater integration of technology, such as AI-powered negotiation support tools. There will be an increased emphasis on cultural competency, given increasingly diverse populations. Negotiators will need to stay abreast of emerging trends like the potential for extremist groups to use social media to instigate crises.

1.11 Psychological Aspects of Crisis Negotiation

Understanding the psychological states of both negotiators and subjects is crucial for effective crisis management. Noesner (2007) highlights the importance of empathy, active listening, and rapport-building in de-escalating tense situations.⁵ Studies

highlight the importance of negotiators managing stress and maintaining clear thinking under pressure. In the context of Pakistan, where cultural sensitivities and societal norms play a significant role, a deeper understanding of these psychological principles is even more crucial.

2. Conflict Resolution and Crisis Management in Islam

Crisis resolution and negotiation have an important place in Islamic teachings. The Quran and Sunnah have provided principles that strengthen human society through peace, justice and reconciliation. Islam has presented negotiation as an effective means to resolve crises, whether political, social or economic.

2.1 Importance of Crisis Resolution

The main objective of Islamic law is to provide a peaceful and just solution to the problems facing humanity. Allah Almighty says:

"And if two groups of believers fight, then make peace between them."⁶

This verse highlights the importance of mediation and reconciliation for Muslims in resolving crises. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"Whoever makes peace between people and speaks good words or gives good advice, he is not a liar."⁷

2.2 The Role of Negotiation

Negotiation is seen as an essential element of conflict resolution in Islam. This principle is evident from the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), where he resorted to negotiation at the Treaty of Hudaibiya to accept a seemingly unpalatable agreement in order to establish long-term peace.

2.3 Islamic Principles of Negotiation

1- Consultation:

Islamic law considers consultation to be an essential part of decision-making.

"And their affairs are decided by mutual consultation."⁸

2- Justice and Impartiality:

Allah Almighty says:

“And when you judge between people, judge with justice.”⁹

3- Patience and Wisdom:

It is important to maintain patience and wisdom during negotiations. Allah Almighty commanded Moses and Aaron to speak to Pharaoh gently:

“Speak to him gently, perhaps he will take heed.”¹⁰

4- Prioritizing Peace:

Islam prioritizes peace as a means of resolving conflicts. Allah Almighty says:

“And peace is better.”¹¹

2.4 Practical Examples

There are many practical examples of negotiation to resolve crises in Islamic history:

- 1- The Pact of Medina: The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) established the Covenant of Medina with the tribes of Medina, which was an agreement between different religions and cultures.
- 2- The negotiations between Hazrat Ali (RA) and Hazrat Muawiyah (RA): These negotiations attempted to save the Muslims from division, although they were not completely successful.
- 3- Similarly, during the caliphate of Hazrat Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), agreements with non-Muslims and the protection of their rights were also based on negotiations.

2.5 The Importance of Islamic Principles in the Contemporary World

In today’s global and regional crises, Islamic principles of negotiation and peace can provide a viable model. Adopting these principles in international relations, political conflicts, and internal social issues can potentially promote peace and justice.

3. Case Studies and Practical Applications

Examining case studies provides valuable lessons on the application and outcomes of crisis negotiation. These case studies illustrate the diverse challenges and strategies employed in crises. Analysing these cases helps identify gaps in current practices and the potential for improvement through better training and integration of negotiators. Main case studies are as followed:

- Karachi factory worker surrenders to police after holding colleagues hostage at gunpoint for hours¹²
- Canadian Hostage Freed in Pakistan Says Captors Killed Their Infant.¹³
- Up to 15 security officers in Pakistan held hostage after attack on army HQ Associated Press.¹⁴
- Taliban Gunmen Killed More Than 100 Students and Are Holding Others Hostage At A Pakistan School.¹⁵
- Saga ends: Armed man in Islamabad arrested.¹⁶

4. Conclusion

Crisis negotiators are essential in managing high-stakes incidents, offering a humane and effective alternative to force. By integrating negotiation strategies into law enforcement practices, agencies in Pakistan can enhance their ability to resolve crises peacefully, protecting both lives and property. This research underscores the need for investment in training and policy development to support the critical work of crisis negotiators.

Joint training sessions are essential for the negotiating team, tactical team, and command to handle hostage situations effectively. These sessions enable professionals to assess the failures and successes of previous hostage situations, which help develop new and effective rules and guidelines for future negotiations. Additionally, joint training sessions assist negotiators in honing their communication skills and applying them effectively during negotiations. While this study may not cover all aspects of communication skills, it is essential to note that they will be addressed in subsequent research projects.

The negotiating team, tactical team, and command must engage in collaborative training sessions to manage hostage situations effectively. These training sessions allow professionals to evaluate the shortcomings and achievements of past hostage scenarios, leading to the formulation of new and efficient protocols for future negotiations. Moreover, joint training sessions aid negotiators in refining their communication abilities and utilizing them effectively during negotiations. Although this research may not encompass all facets of communication skills, it is crucial to acknowledge that it is being explored in forthcoming research endeavors. The study identifies four critical factors derived from practical analysis:

1. Communication skills
2. Negotiation techniques
3. Negotiation skills acquired through professional experience in negotiations
4. The situational characteristics of crisis incidents impacting negotiations

These four factors have been identified. Research has also indicated that negotiation strategies vary in instrumental and expressive situations. The negotiation strategy components differ based on whether the hostage situation is expressive or instrumental. The four components of the study involve a professional evaluation of the mental state of individuals to develop personal connections with the hostage-taker to gather information and make decisions. These components are more effective when dealing with instrumental hostage-takers than expressive ones.

It is essential to learn about personalities' negotiation and decision-making strategies and the psychological conditions of expressive hostage takers. When addressing behaviour based on significant and precise demands, we know these factors better than addressing emotion-based behaviour in instrumental hostage takers.

Moreover, we can get guidance from Islamic teachings as well. Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of negotiation and conflict resolution. These principles are based on justice, peace, and wisdom, which can be a source of peace and stability for any society. If these principles are adopted in the modern era, they will prove helpful in resolving crises not only in Islamic societies but also on a global scale.

5. Findings

Based on the study, following findings underscore the potential benefits of crisis negotiators in maintaining peace and resolving conflicts.

i. Specialized Training

In Pakistan, where their specialized training is crucial for preventing escalation and achieving peaceful resolutions in high-stress situations, the role and effectiveness of crisis negotiators cannot be overstated. By integrating negotiation strategies into their practices, law enforcement agencies can significantly enhance their conflict resolution capabilities and ensure public safety.

ii. Presence and Effectiveness of Negotiators

The analysis reveals a lack of trained negotiators in many critical incidents in Pakistan, resulting in a higher tendency to resort to force. Cases where negotiators were present often had more favourable outcomes, demonstrating the effectiveness of negotiation in de-escalating conflicts and protecting lives.

iii. **Skills and Training for Crisis Negotiators**

Effective crisis negotiators exhibit specific skills, including active listening, emotional intelligence, patience, and building trust with subjects. Training programs in Pakistan should focus on these skills, incorporating theoretical knowledge and practical exercises.

6. Recommendations

1. **Establishing Crisis Negotiation Units in Law Enforcement Agencies in Pakistan:** Crisis negotiation is a critical component of modern law enforcement, enabling the peaceful resolution of high-pressure situations involving hostages, barricaded subjects, and suicidal individuals. While crisis negotiation teams are joint in Western nations, their adoption in Pakistan has been limited. This document recommends the establishment of dedicated Crisis Negotiation Units (CNU) within Pakistani law enforcement agencies to enhance public safety and improve outcomes in critical incidents.
2. **Training and Capacity Building:** Collaborate with international experts to provide advanced training in crisis negotiation principles, active listening, emotional intelligence, and conflict resolution. Develop a core curriculum and regular refresher courses.
3. **Team Composition and Structure:** Each crisis negotiation units should comprise a team leader, negotiators, and support staff with mental health expertise. Ensure a diverse team composition to engage with a wide range of subjects effectively.
4. **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs):** Develop clear SOPs outlining the crisis negotiation units' role, activation protocols, communication strategies, and decision-making processes.
5. **Technology and Equipment:** Provide crisis negotiation units with state-of-the-art equipment, including audio/video surveillance, communication devices, and access to databases for real-time intelligence.

6. **Scenario-Based Drills and Exercises:** Regular scenario-based training prepares crisis negotiation units for high-pressure situations.
7. **Mental Health Support:** Ensure access to mental health professionals for post-incident debriefing and stress management.
8. **Case Review and Debriefing:** Implement a process for reviewing and debriefing incidents to improve strategies and outcomes continually.

Establishing dedicated Crisis Negotiation Units within Pakistani law enforcement agencies is critical to enhancing public safety and resolving high-stress incidents. CNU's can become vital in Pakistan's law enforcement toolkit by aligning with international best practices and prioritizing advanced training and collaboration.

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