The Lengths and Limits of Mediation   rough draft

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Much has been written about mediation, so that seemingly the field has been well covered. Yet analysis and practice still leave holes in the cover, to provide more challenges. This paper addresses further aspects of the mediator's work, as a ripener, and also as a coordinator of "circum-" or "multi-"mediation. But it also highlights the notion of mediability, where the conditions for mediation are sorely lacking despite the heightened need for it..

Ripening

To begin with the very basics, it is important to recognize that while conflicts are ordinary occurrences, conflicts pushed to violence are the symptom of a problem. The rebelling party may not be right in its demands but it does represent a grievance that calls for attention, and it resorts to violence because it feels that that is what it takes to get attention to its situation. That attention can come early, preventively, as part of normal politics pushed to its limits, or it can come as an answer to the violence (Zartman 2015). Yet violence creates its own defensive response, which pushes aside attention to the original problem or grievance. So parties in conflict need help. It is hard to look for solutions when one is caught in the offense-defense confrontation; it is hard to ponder compromise when one is building support for defeating the opponent. That is where mediation finds its calling.

It is well recognized by now that conflicting parties are impervious to suggestions of compromise if they do not first feel frustrated in their own efforts to find a solution that is favorable to them, and are hurting from that blockage. "I saw no point in trying to impose a diplomatic ceasefire that neither side wanted or could be expected to observe," wrote President Richard Nixon (1978, 921) about the October War in the Mideast. "I believed that only a battlefield stalemate would provide the foundation on which fruitful negotiations might begin." The necessary if insufficient condition for parties to consider acceptance of a mediator is their recognition of being in a mutually hurting stalemate (MHS) and of sharing a willingness to look for a joint way out (WO), a situation defined as ripeness (Zartman 1989, 2000, 2009). The most important characteristic of ripeness, often misunderstood, is the pain that marks the mutually hurting stalemate. Pain is a subjective nature; even if there are plenty of objective elements suggesting that the parties *should* be aware of their painful impasse, as long as they both do not, it does not exist. Each party must feel this way about the conflict,

although not necessarily for the same reason nor to the same degree. Thus, ripeness is not self-implementing; it is a necessary but insufficient condition for the opening of negotiations and must be seized, by the parties or by a third party.

Objective conditions do not translate directly into subjective perceptions. Human beings have countless ways of ignoring the obvious. One is so firm a commitment to a goal that it hides all pain—"absolute commitment." (Elster 2000, 57-62). Blockage on the way to the goal only induces greater determination. "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." "No gain without pain." The discussion will return to this at the end. Another is the incorporation of the goal with the collective myth, as an existential ingredient. "Buckle your belt, our very life is at stake." "They're out to get us, so we better get them first, no matter what the cost." A third is sunk costs, entrapment. "We've put so much into this, just a little bit more will take us over the top." There are other defenses and insulations against feeling ripeness that harden its ingredients.

A fourth blockage to ripeness comes when parties recognize that they are in a stalemate but one of a different kind. One variation may be termed the Default Impasse, where the stalemate is not unbearable simply because the alternative is much worse, a true Prisoners' Dilemma. Unfortunately, this stalemate is unstable since the parties are tempted to try to revert to escalation if the occasion were to present itself, but they fear more the attempt of the other side to do so than they do the continuing, bearable impasse, thus keeping them unstably stalemated. In this situation, the best prevention is not to disturb the delicate instability, lest it lead one of the parties to fear a tip away from their interests and try to escalate for advantage. Another is the S5 situation—soft, stable, self-serving stalemate (Z 08; Kress & Szechtman 2009). In an S5, a rebellion seeking to overthrow the state achieves control of a part of its territory, comfortable in its pseudo-governmental role yet blocked from its ultimate goal, while the government is comfortably in control of the rest of the territory and busy doing all the other things a state does. The continued civil wars after independence between the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (Renamo) and the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (Frelimo) government and between and the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) government and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) gradually developed an ethnic nature between northern and southern tribes, respectively in each case. The radical rebellion of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) has ended in control of large tracts in eastern Colombia, which it governs as a pseudo-state, frustrated in its goal of governing the whole Colombian state. Often in such cases, the rebellion, in search of resources to keep itself alive, becomes

hooked on its sources, which then become its ends rather than its means (Arnson & Zartman 2005). The FARC's drugs, Savimbi's UNITA's gold in Angola, Foday Sanko's drugs and diamonds in Sierra Leone were all resources that kept their S5 situations alive.

Although it identifies a major obstacle to mediation and resolution, it is the very perceptional nature of ripeness that makes the job of a mediator possible. S/He does not have to put the parties into a stalemate, objectively; "all" it has to do is to help the parties feel that they are stuck and it hurts. Ripeness opens the door to the major challenge for a mediator: to ripen a conflict, i e to cultivate the parties' awareness of their stalemate and of its pain to them. Although the job may involve "muscle" and tangible inducements, it is above all a task of persuasion. Only when this is accomplished can the actual mediation or negotiation begin.

The first job of the mediator as ripener is crucial, and emphasis on it is a new—if obvious—aspect in discussions of mediation. As often occurs, the role has been highlighted in accounts before it has been identified in concept. Henry Kissinger spent a moving session with Gold Meir and colleagues taking on his role as a famous historian and recounting how—despite his understanding of their current thinking—he felt the Israelis looking back some years hence and recognizing that they had missed a crucial opportunity in refusing negotiations with Anwar Sadat; he was persuading the Israeli cabinet that the stalemate would be later recognized as hurting and that a way out would have been passed by. His ripening was successful (Golan1975).

Assistant Secretary Chester Crocker is well remembered for having pulled off an agreement for the paired withdrawal of Cuban Troops from Angola and South African troops from Southwest Africa (and Angola to produce the independence of Namibia in 1988. Less frequently is credit given for his seven years previous working to ripen the perceptions of the two sides of the inability of either side to win and the cost that efforts to break out of the stalemate were imposing on them. Beneath his detailed account of the diplomatic dance between the two parties to work out terms of an agreement lie references to the persistent efforts at ripening. ""The only way that SADF military action could be restrained was in the context of a credible regional peace process. Neither SWAPO, nor the MPLA and the Cubans, nor UN Resolutions would get the SADF out of Namibia in the absence of a regional settlement…. [W]e would remind the Angolans of the pressures they faced. The situation on the ground in Southern Africa contained the strongest practical pressures for a settlement. It was a simple fact that the SADF's support for UNITA and its periodic anti-SWAPO operations in Southern Angolan would only end of a settlement were achieved." (Crocker 1993, 141, 143). Similar depictions of the hurting stalemate were played to the South

Africans. It was not a message that was welcome to people who felt they were destined and able to win. Finally it was events on the ground that turned the perceptions; "The second half of 1987 was the great turning point in the long history of the Namibian and Angolan conflicts. This was the moment when the situation 'ripened." (Crocker 1993, 363; Zartman 1995).

The same situation has obtained in the Syrian mediation. In a phrase frequently cited and frequently misunderstood, Kofi Annan said, "As an envoy, I cannot want peace more than the protagonists." Of course in the beginning the proposed mediator will want a compromise solution more than the parties fighting for a victory, except in those cases where the parties have already felt a hurting stalemate; it is the mediator's challenge to make them realize the heavy costs associated with their fight and to want a compromise instead. Secretary-General Annan went on, "Political process is difficult if not impossible while all the sides see an opportunity to advance their narrow agenda by military means." (Annan 2012). In the clear absence of a ripe situation, Annan focused on devising a set of principles to guide an outcome, discussed in the 2012 Geneva I conference. With the process guidelines in place, his successor, Lakhdar Brahimi, spent his time trying to cultivate a sense of ripeness among the parties. The challenge was rendered even more difficult after the government's May 2013 capture of Qusair, which left government forces more confident of victory and the Free Syrian Army weakened by the defeat. When the new UN Envoy, Staffan deMistura, began soundings to revive talks in mid-June 20015, he was primarily seeking to ascertain and enhance the degree of ripeness (Sengupta 2015).

In the summer of 2015, a small group of interested foreign policy specialists attacked the situation in South Sudan, where Salva Kiir had just had his term extended for an additional three years as president of the bankrupt state and his opponent, vice president Riek Machar, continued his resistance. The mediating Intergovernment Agency for Development (IGAD), the subregional organization, was itself deadlocked over its proposal for power-sharing, and in the absence of any foreseeable victory, both sides clung to their stalemate despite the cost to the impoverished country. The mediating group pressed for US action to convey the sense of the costly stalemate as the first step in preparing the partyies' willingness to entertain a search for a substantive solution, in this case a transition administration.

In Libya in the impasse of the early 2015s, both the Dawn (Tripoli) and Dignity (Tobruk) "governments" feel they can and—more important—must prevail. The first challenge for UN Special Envoy Bernardino Leon has been to break through that perception; "We have spent the whole day in consultations with the parties and have been insisting there

is no military solution for Libya." (Leon 2015). The same situation prevailed in Yemen, both during the GCC and UN mediations over the replacement of Ali Ahmed Saleh in 2011-2012 and again over the seventh al-Huthi war in 2015. In the first mediations, eventual domestic violence, Saudi pressuring, and threatened UN Security Council sanction finally brought the idea of a hurting stalemate across to President Saleh; in the second , that perception has not yet taken hold, and the UN mediator could simply not bring the parties to focus on a mediated end to the war, despite continual work on ripening.

But finding a MHS is not all there is to ripening; the mediator also needs to cultivate perception in regard to a WO. If the parties are stuck in an impasse, even if it hurtd but there is no Way Out, the result is only more frustration and the pressure moves to costlyt escalation. It is this regard that ripening joins the more usually considered task of mediation, the identification of the possibility and then the shape of a mutually enticing opportunity (MEO), the mature form of the Way Out.

As these and many other illustrations show, unless the parties have concluded on their own that they are caught in a hurting stalemate, ripening is the first job of the mediator. Only when that action is accomplished can mediating efforts at devising an attractive proposal for agreement take hold. How does the mediator do this? The blanket answer is by persuasion, evoking the facts on the ground. This may take a selective evocation, but also highlighting of salient and supportive evidence: human and financial losses, opportunity costs, opponent's strengths, loss of friends' and allies' support, among other (Zartman & deSoto 2010). Such references need to be balanced, relating to the other side as well, to bring out the fact that the stalemate is mutual (stalemates are by definition mutual) and is mutually hurting. It can also take the form of future projections, referring to the likely evolution of the conflict if unresolved, the rising costs, and impossibility of escalation, or alternatively the possibility of opponent's escalation, albeit costly, and therefore the wisdom of seizing the present opportunity (in such an imbalanced stalemate, the opportunity can be appealed to in terms of costs saved and agreeable negotiated prospects).

In the next circle of arguments, the mediator can work on the objective components of ripeness, initially by calling on the friends and allies of the parties or other outside parties with interests and concerns in the conflict. Friends can be mobilized to back up the message of the mediators, or more strongly can add threats of loss of support if there is no movement, thus tightening the stalemate. (The threat of UN sanctions on Yemen in 2012 was a key move in ripening the conflict). Conflicting parties can be impelled to mediation or negotiation

when their interest in mediators' or other third parties' ties outweighs their interest in the conflict (Zartman 2010).

A further extension of the circle of methods involves an actual manipulation of the objective conditions to ripen, through actions by the mediator's home state. The mediator's state can strengthen the weaker side in a conflict through diplomatic, economic or military support to produce the stalemate. Such involvement is delicate: It is usually beyond the power of the mediator, and if undertaken can compromise the mediator's neutrality and effectiveness. However, it can be effective, under specific conditions. Manipulation can be applied to both parties, or when the mediator is show to be biased, when the action delivers the party toward whom the bias is shown. Furthermore, when one or both parties are above all motivated by their relations with the mediator, direct action to ripen can work.

In regard to ripening the Way Out, the usual challenges to a mediator's creative and persuasive skills appear. The mediator helps the parties see that there is a mutual willingness to seek individual benefits in a joint out and that such an outcome is possible, and then to help shape it into either the management or the resolution of the conflict.

In sum, the first extension of the usual considerations of mediation presented here concerns the preliminary challenge of the mediator as ripener. Both practitioners and analysts need to devote efforts to developing an understanding of the requirements and opportunities of this important role. It may stand alone as a prior requirement, but it may also be combined with the usual mediation of activity of finding an appropriate formula for agreement. When so combined, the prospect of a better outcome can be used to ripen the situation, showing its cost and pain in comparison with alternative possibilities. In any case, the conflicting parties feel a need to want to look for alternatives only when the present situation is perceived as blocked and costly. Only then can the mediator turn to helping the parties find their way out.

Coordination

Analysts and practitioners frequently refer to the mediation as the work of a single or leading agent, yet that picture contains aspects that are both desirable and inaccurate. While there have been studies of others' roles in a negotiation process, there has been little comprehensive work on assessing the optimal distribution of activities around the lead mediator. Harold Saunders (199x) coined the term "circumnegotiation"—and quickly dropped it for its awkwardness—to describe Track 2 activities operating parallel to official negotiations and pacing them in an effort to open up informal thinking. The term applied to

mediation will also be dropped for the same reason, but not before it has been once used to attract attention to a whole range of mediatory support activities operating around the core process. Perhaps "multimediation" would be a better term, but it too raises conceptual distinctions. The relevant—and still unexplored—subject lies between these two notions.

In addition to the activities of the designated mediator, there are frequently other activities going on as part of the process, the matter of "circummediation." (For the notion of the designated mediator, see Zartman 2010) On one hand, numerous support efforts can be involved to cover aspects that could be distracting if assigned to the main mediator or fall better within the capabilities of another party. While the "third-and-a-half" party may not be designated by the international community to take the lead in the mediation effort, it can perform useful services in support. It may be closer to one of the conflicting parties than the mediator seeking neutrality, or may complement the mediator's "bias" toward one of the parties, or may be able to weigh in from a distinctly neutral position, or may have special activities in the conflict area. In sum, the principal mediation may benefit from the support of other parties through their particular relations either to the conflicting parties or to the conflict, separate from but complementary to the designated mediator.

Several illustrations show the variety of these support activities. In Yemen's version of the Arab Spring, the main mediation effort was led by the UN Special Envoy, Jamal Benomar, who devoted direct personal attention to the process of removing Saleh and then to the National Dialog until his resignation in the midst of the Huthi war in mid-2015. However, the first round was given muscle and guidance by Saudi Arabia in the GCC and by the US Embassy and the UN Security Council, weight that was distinctly unavailable to the designated mediator alone. At the other extreme, n the mediation to end the civil war and set ip a new political system in Nepal, the activities of Switzerland led by its Senior Advisor for Peace-Building in Nepal (SAPN) of the Foreign Ministry can be seen as the principal mediator among others from India, UK, US, EU and UN, "its longstanding activity in Nepal and its contacts with all parties to the conflict allowed the senior adviser to take on an important role as counselor and informal facilitator in the run-up to the 2006 comprehensive peace agreement." (CSS 2012). The complementing parties pursued their own contacts with special angles that their individual positions afforded. Again, in the Namibian mediation, while the 5-nation Contact Group inherited from the mediation demarche under President Carter was generally sidelined under President Reagan, its members were involved on occasion in support of the main effort led by Assistant Secretary Crocker (Crocker 1993).

The situation is especially complicated when the supporting parties include NGOs. If interstate relations are delicate by nature, relations between public and private agencies face an additional status problem that often interferes with cooperation and support. While studies focusing on NGO roles in mediation have become more numerous (Bartoli & Saunders 2009, Chigas and Aall 2007, Babbitt 2013), there has been little attempt to evaluate the entire process in which they are involved. NGOs generally play a supporting role, providing services that are beyond the state's scope. Informal contacts and neutral soundings, incidental occasions and sustained dialog have been identified as the main NGO supports for formal mediation (Saunders 2009). However, in some cases, NGOs are the lead mediators, and the need for support is on the other foot. In the Mozambique Peace Process of 1990-1992, the lead mediator was the Sant'Egidio Community, which as a catholic NGO enjoyed special access initially through the Mozambican archbishop and thence to the Mozambican government. As a "biased mediator," it was able to deliver the participation of the party toward which it was biased, the rebels, and develop an agreement. However, along the wall in the negotiating room sat representatives of the US, Italy, and other European countries, who at coffee breaks and other informal occasions were able to "twist arms" in support of the negotiations when they were slowing down (Hume 1994). The support role may also be merely an information channel, the mediator as communicator, as John Scali played in the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis (Kennedy) and Peter Castenfelt in the 1999 Kosovo negotiations; "Castenfelt succeeded in convincing the Yougoslav leadership of the need to end the war…'He explained to us what the truth was. We had never heard it before." (FT 1999). In a word, there are plenty of accounts, but little systematic analysis of support opportunities around the designated mediator.

The other side of the situation—"multimediation"—refers to the situation when mediators find themselves in competition with others for the same job and the international community's designation is not clear (Lanz & Gasser 2013). Competitive mediation invites outbidding and is disastrous for a healthy process. The invasive involvement of the UN in the eventually abortive phrase of the Colombian Peace Process in the early 2000s—the special representative trying to emulate the UNSR's success in El Salvador in the previous decade, contributed to its failure. [Potential mediators stood in line offering to resolve the Sri Lanka conflict, allowing the parties to top the previous offers, and ending in the 2008 slaughter Source}. South Africa tried to sidestep the US-led mediation by seeking to use Zambia, a move whose failure sustained the original claim. It is important to effective mediation to be "the only game in town," a phrase that Crocker used in regard to the Namibian process. It is

important for would-be mediators to consort and under the aegis of the international community, establish primary, leadership, and helpful supportive roles, including a place for NGOs as well.

As these and many other illustrations show, the work of the designated mediator usually depends on support from other "third-and-a-half" parties. Only when such support is available can mediating efforts at devising an attractive proposal for agreement take hold. But the support must not rise to the level of competition. How does the mediator do this? The experts' panel at the Turkish opening conference of the Mediation Initiative in Istanbl in 2012 came to agreement of two qualities: respect and coordination. The first refers to a proper acknowledgement of status and capabilities, not only between state and private agencies but also among official parties. The second refers to the need for a single mediator in charge, even if the qualification involves sustained consultation among third and "third-and-a-half" parties.

For the practitioner, such effective use of parties involves open communication and information, regular consultation at both the operational and policy control levels, leadership and learned trust, and appreciation of capabilities. It is not enough for other third parties to desist in favor of the designated mediator; members of the international community, individually or collectively, can play a support role around the edges of the principal process, and the mediator, with their help, should take stock of functions that s/he cannot provide and are best left to other parties. For example, ICG recommendations for handling the Malian conflict emphasize the need to "revive a complementary phase of negotiations that brings in as many actors as possible in support of the peace agreement." (ICG 2015)

For the analyst, there is a need for a full analysis—beyond simply recounting—of mediation processes in an effort to identify the marginal support function that outsiders can best give, how they are recruited, how their operations work within the total process, what the limitations are of the principal role and what in that role needs supplementing. A collection and comparison of such studies would be useful as a template for practice, much as practice provides the raw data for the analysis.

Mediability

Mediation has its requirements and so its limits. Christophe Dupont (23006) raised the question of negotiability, and the question of mediability also needs to be posed: Are there conflict that are not mediable? Mediation is appropriate when there is a limited number of clear sides and when the interests of all need to be incorporated in ending violence and

remaking a functioning political system. Like any negotiation, mediation carries with it the implication of the parties' legitimacy and equality in standing (even if not in power), the legitimacy of their interests to be protected, a mutual sense of stalemate in unilateral attempts to win the conflict, and recognition that none of the parties is seeking suicide (Zartman 2005). It also means that no party is in charge and therefore none is able to convene a hierarchical negotiation between government and aggrieved petitioner. Indeed, the need for mediation indicates that the conflict can no longer be handled hierarchically as "normal politics" and that the only resolving outcome will be a new political system that accords the rebellion a place in legitimate politics.

A third ingredient to ripeness beyond MHS and WO/MEO, often omitted, is the presence of a valid spokesman (Zartman 1982). It is frequently omitted because it concerns the structure of the parties rather than the structure of their perceptions of the conflict, but it needs some attention. Mediated negotiations require authorized spokesmen for the various sides and a small number of parties. It may necessitate finding a single negotiating partner capable of making and holding agreements, a selection process that legitimizes one spokesman over others and may marginalize or exclude the rest. Selection of the parties to be dealt with in negotiation and mediation determines the content and possibility of the outcome (Zartman 2009). The mediator must take care not to exclude factions that are capable of upsetting the resulting agreement, but also not to include factions that will make agreement impossible. The road between these two conditions is sinuous and narrow, and can often only be navigated by a sequential, cumulative process, making an agreement among major factions under a strong spokesman or coalition, and then adding other factions, piece by piece.

Yet these very requirements pose limitations on the practice of mediation, especially where it is most needed. Current intrastate conflicts, the predominant type of contemporary conflict, involve fragmentation of the parties and as much internecine conflict as conflict against the state. The warring parties do not hold still, but continue dividing, allying, and reconfiguring, so that the conditions for effective mediation are absent. This characteristic is troublesome enough when the issue is ethnic identity; it is magnified when religious identity is involved. The two frequently overlap and reinforce each other, or, curiously, they do nbot, so that an intraethnic conflict concerns the appropriate religion or an intrareligious conflict challenges ethnic unity. The crowning obstacle to mediating intrastate conflicts, however, is Elster's absolute commitment signaled at the beginning of this paper. When one or more conflicting parties are operating on orders from on High, and are fighting to reach it as soon

as possible and to convert all around them to the same practice, the stage is barred to the mediator. These three characteristics of intrastate conflict are interrelated, compounding the challenge that each poses for mediation. Some of these obstacles are manageable in theory, some are not.

The problem of fragmentation has only recently become a subject of inquiry and its relation to mediation has hitherto received little attention (Lefkowitz 2015). Fragmentation has many causes, stemming—in broad categories—from preexisting fault lines within the movement, from tactical disputes within the movement, and from external situational dynamics. Mediation responses vary according to the cause of the fragmentation but they all are posited on the existence of a large body within the movement with which to deal, and thus on overcoming fragmentation as a precondition to mediation or on dealing directly with selected fragments on the assumption that they are large enough to isolate for incorporate the leftover who could act as spoilers. Both broad categories of tactical responses depend on the identification of a critical mass, either through the reunification of the fragments or through the selection of one or more of them capable of carrying the entire movement. In other terms, hardliners or potential spoilers are either included in the mediation process and won over to an agreement or are excluded on the assumption that they would prevent an agreement if included but cannot prevent one if isolated outside. Such considerations are not foreign to the dynamics of mediation but complicate its progress.

Similarly, mediation through the competition between ethnic and religious identities has been the subject of much analysis that tends to show in the end that the mediability of the conflict depends on overcoming its existential or zero-sum nature. As long as conflicting parties feel that they cannot be themselves without destroying the opponent or that their existence is threatened by the existence of the Other or that their religious or ethnic identity depends on a coincidence with their ethic or religious identity, there is a barrier to mediation that prevents initially any feeling of a mutually hurting stalemate and then any search for a mutually satisfactory outcome. As in the case of the first challenge, this element poses an additional and prior challenge to the mediator before s/he can tackle the business of mediation itself, that of ripening and then of helping find a solution.

However, it is the third challenge—not unrelated to the first two—that is the insurmountable barrier to mediability—the presence of a divine-sourced ideology of total commitment, in which the belief system provide both the need and the promise of invincibility. While it is tactically conceivable to convince them that the path to a negotiated outcome depends on their putting aside—even if only temporarily—the causes of their

fragmentation, and strategically conceivable to convince conflicting parties that their existence is not really endangered by the existence of the Other, it is difficult to conceive of a mediation strategy or tactic that can be used to break the bond between the divine source and earthly believer of a guarantee of victory—here or there—and a mandate to achieve it. The first two challenges are structural, the third is attitudinal and substantive. The only way to break that assurance is to show that it does not work, much as the only way to convince a Congolese Mai-Mai that he is not impervious to bullets is to shoot at him. Although such a demonstration is not impossible (especially if one is a true believer of its righteousness), it takes time and its runs against the values of conflict management that inspire mediators. It means taking a leave from the effort until conditions have changed.

The implications are practical. It means that there is a category of conflicts where attempting mediation is pointless. Obvious as this might sound, it runs counter to some practice and also to some literature, and also poses boundary transiting questions as to when the conflict leaves the non-mediable zone of motivations. Studies of negotiating with terrorists urge negotiations; they cite its usefulness for intelligence purposes, for shaping thought and sowing doubt, and for establishing terms of trade (Zartman & Faure, Faure & Zartman). It would be facile to extend this reasoning to broader inspired movements with broader aims, but negotiating with individuals for hostages or for self-government is on a different scale of ends and means from negotiating with millennial movements. The key lies in the notation "until conditions have changed." Inspired conflicts are likely to develop more manageable motivations over time, as the conflict and its fortunes go on. At some, yet undefinable point, other goals and condition are likely to render the conflict situation more complex and open up possibilities for negotiation and mediation. As commitment becomes less absolute, so do aims and conditions. But until they do, mediation has met its match.

This conclusion is a challenge for analysis since practice is blocked. Practitioners can work other fields, but analysts do not like to leave impossibilities unexplored. Even the literature on negotiating with terrorists has not fully coped with the situation posed by absolute commitment (Goerzig). For the moment it remains forbidding territory, awaiting explorers.

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