

Contrasting Dynamics of Crisis Negotiations: Barricade versus Kidnapping Incidents

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Abstract. Over the past several decades, crisis negotiation has become the primary method of dealing with hostage incidents in many countries of the world. This article uses the analytical framework of interest-based negotiation to provide a comparative analysis of the negotiation dynamics involved in barricade versus kidnapping incidents. The primary difference between the two scenarios is that the location of the victim(s) as well as that of the perpetrator(s) is unknown in kidnappings. As a result, many of the components of crisis negotiation that have been so successful in resolving barricade situations are inapplicable to kidnappings. This article should help the reader understand the critical differences between the two scenarios, and the implications of those differences for the likelihood of success of different crisis negotiation strategies. Central focus is devoted to premeditated incidents perpetrated by organized groups with a political, criminal, or religious motivation.

Keywords: negotiation, hostage, terrorist, kidnapping, crisis, barricade, criminal.

Introduction

In the past thirty years, negotiation has become the primary method of dealing with hostage incidents in many countries of the world. A wealth of literature has been published about the strategies, techniques, and dynamics involved in the process of crisis negotiations. However, most of the available accounts concentrate mainly on barricade situations, devoting minimal attention to kidnappings.¹ The primary difference between the two scenarios is that the location of the victim(s) as well as that of the perpetrator(s) is unknown in kidnappings, giving the terrorist more flexibility. As a result, many of the

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components of crisis negotiation that have been so successful in resolving barricade hostage incidents are inapplicable to kidnapping scenarios. In order to determine whether negotiation is the right approach to resolve a hostage crisis, FBI specialists have developed a list of conditions that must be present in order for an incident to be negotiable (McMains and Mullins 2001: 50). These criteria are summarized in Figure 1. It is interesting to note that at least 50 percent of the listed conditions are not satisfied in most kidnapping situations, implying that the negotiability of such incidents via traditional means is low. Yet, most kidnappings have been successfully resolved by crisis negotiations.²

This article seeks to provide a comparative analysis of the negotiation dynamics involved in barricade versus kidnapping incidents. This analysis should help the reader understand the differences between the two scenarios, and the implications of these differences for developing appropriate negotiation strategies. The question of a suitable response is increasingly important as the Bush administration continues to develop a new strategy for dealing with international hostage incidents (Miller 2002).

This article will utilize the analytical framework of interest-based negotiation developed by specialists at Harvard University. Both negotiation scenarios will be analyzed in terms of the people, interests, options, best alternatives to a negotiated agreement (BATNA), and objective criteria involved in the negotiations. Historical examples will be used to demonstrate the differing dynamics involved in both negotiation settings. Emphasis will be placed on

Figure 1. Characteristics of a negotiable hostage incident (FBI)

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1. The desire to live on the part of the hostage-taker.
 2. The threat of force by the police.*
 3. The hostage-taker must present demands for release of hostages.
 4. The negotiator must be viewed by the hostage-taker as someone who can hurt but desires to help.*
 5. The negotiator needs time to develop trust with hostage-takers.*
 6. The location must be contained and stabilized to support negotiations.*
 7. The hostage-taker and negotiator must have a reliable means of communication, either by phone or face to face.
 8. The negotiator must be able to “deal” with the hostage-taker who controls the hostages and makes the decisions.*
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* *Condition not satisfied in most contemporary kidnapping incidents*

(Added by author)

premeditated incidents perpetrated by organized groups with a political, criminal, or religious motivation.

This article draws primarily on open source literature devoted to the topic of hostage-taking, kidnapping, terrorism, crisis negotiations, and negotiation theory in general. The greatest limitation of this analysis is its abstract nature. Since every negotiation is a unique and complex process, it is practically impossible to provide a universally applicable negotiation strategy. Consequently, this paper attempts to outline only the most significant differences in the two crisis scenarios and provide an assessment of how these differences are likely to influence the negotiations.

The first part of this study will provide an overview of trends, characteristics, and the evolution of kidnapping and barricade hostage-taking. The second part will focus on the five elements of negotiation. Typologies of kidnappers and hostage-takers will be provided with a special focus on their apparent and hidden interests, options, BATNAs and objective criteria, which can be exploited during the negotiation process. The third part will focus on other factors that influence the different dynamics of barricade and kidnap negotiations. In this part, the analysis will stress the contrasts between the two types of incidents with regard to time, duration, deadlines, demands, media, means of communication, tactics and psychological processes. The conclusion will provide a summary of findings and recommendations.

Overview

Unlike in barricade incidents, in kidnappings the location of the hostages and their captors is unknown. However, it is possible for either scenario to transform into the other, as a kidnapping incident may turn into a barricade situation if the location of kidnappers is discovered, and vice versa, if a hostage-taker manages to escape from the scene along with a hostage to an unknown location. Alternatively, a combination of the two scenarios can occur in the case of an airliner hijacking, in which the terrorists have a mobile platform.

Development of specialized hostage response teams dates back to an incident known as the 1972 Olympics “Munich Massacre”, in which members of the Palestine Liberation Organization’s (PLO) Black September Organization killed eleven Israeli athletes (Hoffman 1998: 72). A failed rescue operation underscored the need to investigate options for peaceful resolution of hostage incidents. However, even though barricade events are spectacular in terms of attracting media attention, for terrorists they remain a rarely used tool. Consequently, the emphasis among negotiation teams has gradually shifted from terrorists to emotionally disturbed individuals, trapped criminals, and domestic

violence cases (McMains and Mullins 2001: 36). Very few of these incidents are actually pre-meditated, which seems to be the primary reason behind the staggering success rates of the negotiation approach. According to FBI's Hostage Barricade Database System (HOBAS), about 80 percent of incidents are resolved peacefully with no injuries to hostages or perpetrators (McMains and Mullins 2001: 5).

Unlike barricade incidents, kidnappings are used much more frequently by organizations with a political or criminal intent. There seems to be, in fact, a convergence of ideological and criminal motivations, resulting from the decline of state sponsorship of terrorism following the end of the Cold War. Many organizations with a political agenda have been forced to find new sources of financing, and kidnappings for ransom have become a major source of income for many ideologically motivated groups. This explains why worldwide reported kidnappings have risen by 70 percent over the last 10 years (Royal and Sun Alliance Insurance Group 2002). It is estimated that annually between 10,000–15,000 kidnapping incidents occur worldwide, 80 percent of them in Latin America (Hardgrove 1998). Only about 35 annual cases occur in the US, possibly due to the FBI's high success rate at uncovering and arresting the perpetrators – 95 percent of kidnappers in the US are caught, compared to only 1 percent in Colombia (Bolz, Dudonis and Schultz 2002: 118).

A disturbing trend in international kidnapping is its increasing sophistication. Kidnappers often research the financial capabilities of the victims by studying their bank information and tax returns. The ransom demand is then designed to be high enough to be profitable, but reasonable enough to be affordable.

Elements of Negotiation: Kidnappings vs. Barricade Situations

Crisis negotiations differ from other negotiations in that the stakes are extremely high. With the life of at least one person in immediate danger, tension and stress is high for all parties. Such an environment impairs the rational decision-making ability of the actors and introduces perhaps more extreme positions than any other type of negotiation. As a result, the negotiation approach on the part of the hostage-taker is positional bargaining at its worst. It is the negotiator's task to break through these extreme positions and to facilitate a peaceful resolution of the incident. A particularly useful method of dealing with positional bargaining is the concept of interest-based negotiation. In this approach, the negotiator attempts to identify interests that lie behind the counterpart's positions and seeks to satisfy those interests by introducing new options (Fisher and Ury 1991). There are five basic elements of interest-based negotiation: people, interests, options, BATNA, and objective criteria.

People

a) *Perpetrators in Barricade Situations.* It has been estimated that between 52 to 85 percent of barricade hostage-takers are mentally disturbed individuals. Between 20 to 25 percent of barricade situations involve domestic violence (McMains and Mullins 1991: 231). Such a situation usually arises from an argument to which the police are called; the hostage-taker then tries to keep the police away by threatening to hurt his or her spouse. Criminals trapped by the police during a robbery make up the other major portion of barricade incidents. The crucial element that these incidents have in common is the low level of preparation on the part of the hostage-taker. This works in favor of the negotiator, as an unprepared counterpart is more likely to question his or her decision to have taken hostages as time passes.

Although marginal in number, premeditated incidents perpetrated by organized groups with a political or religious motivation are far more interesting from a negotiations perspective. Since the terrorists' have planned in advance, and since they typically do not have the authority to make autonomous decisions, it is a much more difficult task to convince the hostage-takers to release the hostages and surrender. The people involved in organized hostage incidents tend to be fairly low in the organization's ranks, since death or arrest of the perpetrators is a likely outcome and organized groups are reluctant to risk senior operatives for such high-risk operations. For the same reason, the hostage-takers are usually heavily indoctrinated and very determined, while at the same time rather inexperienced and inadequately trained for negotiating during a high pressure standoff.³ This condition plays an important role is the hostage-takers' ideology. It not only influences target selection, but also lays the grounds for victim dehumanization – a necessary component of killing someone in cold blood (Bandura 1998: 163). The process of dehumanization causes a psychological transformation wherein the civilian hostage is perceived by the hostage-taker as a party in the conflict. Different ideological motivations enable different degrees of dehumanization. If forced to kill hostages, ethnic and nationalist groups are likely to pick a hostage of the ethnicity or nationality that matches that of their enemy. This phenomenon was demonstrated during the 1976 hijacking of Air France Flight 139 by members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) in conjunction with the Baader-Meinhof gang. Soon after the plane landed in Kampala, Uganda, Israeli citizens were separated from other passengers and demands were issued. Similarly, leftist revolutionary groups will most likely pick persons that they can identify as wealthy or as employees of large corporations. Religiously motivated terrorists, on the other hand, are likely to have the ability to successfully dehumanize the victims indiscriminately, based on the perceived divine sanction of their

actions. Understanding the role of ideology in dehumanization of victims is crucial, as it makes it possible to identify the hostages who face the greatest risk of being selected for execution. Negotiators should concentrate on developing justifications for demanding the release of these hostages early, without attracting attention to their common identity.

b) *Perpetrators of Kidnapping Incidents.* Perpetrators of kidnapping incidents differ significantly from barricade hostage-takers due to the fact that kidnappings almost always constitute a pre-meditated act. Kidnapping cases include child abductions by parents for the purpose of gaining custody, by pedophiles for sexual reasons, and by emotionally disturbed persons for adoption purposes. Such cases, however, will not be discussed in this study, as few are resolved through crisis negotiations.⁴

Most kidnappings involve well-organized groups. While guards and snatch operation participants are fairly low in the organization's ranks, negotiators are usually experienced and employ a business-like approach (Auerbach 1998). Victims are typically selected on basis of their family's or employer's willingness and ability to pay a large ransom, as well as on the basis of ease of abduction. For politically motivated groups, ideology and the victim's symbolic importance in terms of generating wide media coverage are other important factors influencing target selection.

c) *Negotiators in Barricade Situations.* The initial negotiators in hostage situations are usually the first-responders who try to control the situation until the arrival of a special crisis unit. Upon arrival, a trained police negotiator takes over the situation. The principal negotiator is usually supported by a backup who acts as an advisor and note-taker, and who also monitors the psychological state of the primary negotiator. An important factor is the existence of a triad between the negotiator, the tactical assault team and the command post. The negotiator should never be the same person as the commander of the operation, as the possibility of deferring demands onto a higher authority is one of the most important tools in the negotiator's toolbox (Fisher and Ury 1991). In incidents that are under the jurisdiction of state or federal authorities, local police negotiators are sometimes exchanged for a state or a federal level representative. In incidents with international implications, government officials are also involved in the negotiations.

d) *Negotiators in Kidnap Situations.* Since most Western governments refuse to "negotiate with terrorists", the majority of kidnapping situations are handled by experienced negotiators from the private sector. An important moment in kidnapping negotiations is the response to the initial contact with the kidnap-

pers. If conducted through a telephone, the initial reaction to the notification can set the tone for future negotiations (Clutterbuck 1978: 76).

Once the initial contact has been made the situation is usually handed over to a professional negotiator. In contrast to barricade situations, where the negotiator handles the communication personally, kidnap negotiators usually act as advisers to the “voice”, typically a person who is familiar with the local language and culture, and who is also sufficiently emotionally detached from the victim and his or her family (Hardgrove 2002).

Interests

When discussing interests in negotiations, it is important to keep in mind that interests are the underlying factors behind positions, and that every party has multiple interests.

a) *Perpetrators in Barricade Situations.* Interests of hostage-takers vary greatly and are contingent on the perpetrators’ motivations. Suicidal individuals may be motivated by the desire to provoke a confrontation with the armed forces in order to commit “suicide by cop”. At the same time, the decision to publicly commit suicide is influenced by hidden interests, such as the unsatisfied need for self-actualization or the desire to feel needed. Trapped criminals may be motivated by the prospect of financial gain and by the desire to avoid a prison sentence.

Interests of organized hostage-takers with a political or religious motivation also vary. These can be separated into two categories: interests of the organization and interests of the actual perpetrators.

The organization’s decision to publicly take hostages is usually motivated by the desire to attract media coverage in order to bring worldwide attention to their struggle. Traditionally, organizations also attempt to use hostages as leverage in gaining the release of imprisoned comrades. Other interests include the desire to demonstrate capability and to spark fear and a sense of vulnerability in a broader audience. At the same time, the organization is usually concerned with gaining a favorable public image for its “freedom fighters”, as opposed to the pejorative label of “terrorists”. An organization’s campaign of public hostage-taking is usually also directed inwards, often designed to reinforce group cohesion. This helps to explain why many terrorist organizations sometimes conduct operations of minimal strategic value. Such operations are designed to raise morale within the organization and to preserve or improve self-perception.

The actual perpetrators of organized barricade incidents also have different motives. Some may try to avenge the deaths of their friends and relatives;

others may be influenced by propaganda or by psychological idiosyncrasies. A common denominator seems to be the desire to risk one's own life in the name of a "greater good". An evident hidden interest is to be admired by others, especially within the organization and its support group, and to demonstrate commitment to the cause. This has important implications for crisis negotiators – the terrorists are likely to view a negotiated solution mainly in light of how their performance will be judged by their peers, and not necessarily on the objective level of how much benefit the settlement actually brings to their cause. For this reason it is desirable to gain access to the terrorist hostage-taker as an individual, even though as Zartman notes, in terrorist cases such access is usually denied (Zartman 1990: 173).

In relation to the outcome of the standoff, perpetrators will also be concerned with avoiding capture. Escape is usually the preferable option, as one has to stay alive in order to further participate in the struggle for the cause, even though some individuals may prefer to die and become martyrs. In such cases, however, it is essential to make the distinction between the *willingness* to die and the *desire* to die. Most terrorists are willing to die for their cause; but only a few see their death as the preferred outcome. According to Corsi's statistical analysis of hostage incidents recorded in the ITERATE database, terrorists engaged in barricade hostage incidents were suicidal in only 1 percent of the cases, while in 94 percent of incidents they were willing to give up their lives, but preferred not to (Corsi 1981). This implies that even when terrorists repeatedly express their determination to die during the incident, this claim alone should not be understood as an insurmountable barrier to the negotiability of the incident. In most instances, this is a rather rational course of action aimed at denying the counterpart threat level: the proclamation of the desire to die weakens the deterrent value of threats by the government to resolve the situation forcefully (Zartman 1990: 170).

b) *Perpetrators in Kidnapping Incidents.* The primary goal for most organizations that utilize kidnappings is to make financial profit. Other organizational interests similar to those described above may also be present, at least in terms of the message directed to group members. While the goal of gaining wide media coverage may be important in some cases, most profit-oriented organizations will prefer to extract a quick ransom payment without attracting too much attention – as the kidnapping becoming public knowledge the chances of being located by security forces increase.

When assessing the interests of kidnappers, a crucial factor to consider is the initial investment made into the operation. More than twenty years ago, an attempt was made to calculate the cost of a kidnapping operation in Italy (Clutterbuck 1978: 66). The study computed the costs associated with abduct-

ing the victim and laundering the payment, and found that the net gain of a million dollar ransom was only about US\$250,000.⁵ While the fact that most contemporary kidnappings occur in a territory friendly to the abductors presumably makes the costs of launching an operation significantly lower, this financial breakdown is still useful in demonstrating why it is in the kidnappers' best interest to keep the hostage alive in order to receive a ransom payment. As one kidnapping negotiator puts it "if you are running a china shop, you don't break the china" (Peter Dobbs quoted in Prochnau 1998). At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that if the kidnappers conclude that they cannot extract a large enough payment to make a sufficient profit, they may decide to kill the hostage as an "investment" – death of a hostage can set a precedent for other related negotiations and is likely to raise the willingness to comply in order to secure the release of other hostages held by the same group. In some cases, the bodies of murdered hostages have also been offered to their family for a payment (Prochnau 1998).

Another important concern of the kidnappers is to prevent other groups from extracting the ransom fee for their hostage. This explains why it is in the interest of kidnappers to provide "proof-of-life" and to establish a contact codename. As the expression suggests, "proof-of-life" is designed to provide evidence that the kidnappers actually hold the hostage and that he or she is alive. This can take the form of direct contact with the hostage, a tape recording of the hostage's voice reading a section of the morning newspaper, or a photograph of the hostage holding the newspaper. Another commonly used tool is proof-of-life questions, or questions to which only the hostage is able to provide the correct answer, such as the hostage's mother's birth date or the nickname of a childhood friend (Prochnau 1998). Unfortunately, proof-of-life can sometimes take a more gruesome form, as it did in the 1973 Gene Paul Getty II kidnapping, in which the perpetrators sent Getty's right ear to a Rome newspaper to establish proof that were actually holding the victim (Mickolus 1980: 393).

c) *Negotiators of Barricade Situations.* The primary concern of the negotiator is the safe release of hostages. A related interest is the minimization of danger to the hostages' physical or mental health during the negotiation process. For the negotiator, it is also important to ensure a peaceful surrender of the hostage-taker, while keeping substantive concessions to a minimum. Last but not least, the negotiator tries to preserve a good reputation by projecting confidence and control.

Some of the negotiator's interests differ sharply from those of the tactical unit, whose instinct is to go in and "take care of the hostage-taker". Other conflicts can occur between the negotiator and city officials, who press for

a quick resolution to bring the city's life back to normal. Finally, the negotiator's interest in reaching a peaceful settlement through negotiation is usually in direct opposition to official government policy of "no negotiations with terrorists".⁶

d) *Negotiators of Kidnap Situations*. As in the case of barricade situations, the principal goal of preserving the life and health of the hostage applies to kidnapping negotiations as well. Another important goal is to lower substantive concessions, such as the ransom payment, to a minimum. Further noteworthy interests occur in relation to the constituency. The negotiator has an interest in retaining psychological balance and a professional image during the negotiations. He or she also needs to be honest with the constituency about the victim's chances of being released – nothing will hurt the victim's family as much as false hope. Despite the need to project confidence and control, the negotiator has to also be prepared for failure. Another concern worth mentioning is the avoidance of prosecution when negotiating in countries where ransom payments are illegal by keeping a low profile. Even though paid on a daily basis, the negotiator also has an interest in resolving the situation in the shortest possible amount of time, as being on the job means spending 24 hours per day with the victim's family (Auerbach 1998).

Options

a) *Perpetrators in Barricade Situations*. The options of barricade hostage-takers are rather limited. While the perceived position of power allows them to dictate demands and deadlines, very few tools are at hand for the hostage-takers to enforce the prompt fulfillment of these demands. Once the deadline approaches, the perpetrators have only two options: let the deadline pass or carry out their threat and kill a hostage. This is a no-win situation, as passing of the deadline weakens the perpetrators' negotiating position by exposing their reluctance to kill, while killing of a hostage is likely to trigger a forceful resolution of the incident. Another important factor to take into consideration is the nature of the demand. Politically motivated groups will most likely make demands such as publication of the group's manifestos in mainstream media or the release of imprisoned members of their group. Criminal hostage-takers are likely to demand money, a get-away vehicle, and free passage.

A possibly good strategy for the hostage-taker might be to release some hostages at the beginning of the standoff to demonstrate good will. This leaves the negotiator in a weakened position, based on the rule of reciprocity. This rule states that if someone does a favor for us, we feel obligated to repay it in the future (McMains and Mullins 2001: 207). The release of hostages on

“humanitarian grounds” can also be a useful way of influencing public opinion. For instance, the 1974 Moslem International Guerillas who hijacked the Greek freighter *Vori* and threatened to explode it along with themselves and their hostages, later claimed that they would have “rather killed [themselves] then harm [the hostages]” (Mickolus 1980: 433). Such expressed “humanitarian concerns” are designed to portray the involved terrorists as resorting to hostage-taking with “good intentions” and only out of desperation, mitigating the public opinion backlash deriving from the fact that lives of civilians are at stake.

Barricade hostage-takers also have the option of countering the threat of a forceful resolution by employing deliberate deception tactics, either in the form of the aforementioned strategy of expressing desire to die, or by portraying themselves as stronger or more prepared to deal with the assault than they actually are. For instance, when David Protter seized hostages at the Israeli consulate in Johannesburg in April 1975, he used various voices and accents in his talks with the police in order to give the impression that he had many accomplices (Mickolus 1980: 520). Deception can also be employed for other purposes, such as in the example of the 1975 takeover of the Saudi Arabian embassy in Paris. At one point one of the Palestinian commandos, describing himself as a doctor, radioed for an ambulance, claiming that one of the hostages had been shot in the leg (Mickolus 1980: 407). This bluff was designed to put additional pressure on the authorities without the risk of a negative public reaction associated with deliberate harming of hostages.

Another option available to barricade hostage-takers is to attempt to relocate with the hostages to an unknown location. This alternative, however, leaves the perpetrators vulnerable to sniper fire. It is unadvisable for the security forces to allow the hostage-takers to change location, since the situation would change from a barricade scenario to a kidnapping, significantly weakening the bargaining position of the authorities. The final option is the BATNA, which in this case consists of a shootout with the security forces. The BATNA will be discussed later in more detail.

b) *Perpetrators of Kidnapping Incidents.* Like other hostage-takers, kidnapers can also put forward all sorts of demands. These can range anywhere from purely profit-oriented demands to altruistic claims designed to spread a positive image of the organization. For instance, many groups in South America and Africa in the 1970s have successfully demanded things like medication, rehire of laid-off workers, improvement of working conditions, and investments into poverty-ridden regions, in exchange for the release of kidnapped officials and business executives. In many instances the demands were of a combined nature, such as in the case in the 1974 kidnapping of a co-proprietor

of the largest company in Argentina. In this instance, the Montoneros demanded US\$60 million (the record for a political kidnapping at the time), as well as distribution of US\$1.2 million worth of food and clothing to various parts of the country, in exchange for the safe release of their hostage (Mickolus 1980: 479).

The range of options available for the kidnappers to enforce the fulfillment of their demands is much broader due to the fact that they are not faced with an immediate threat of a forceful resolution of the incident. Kidnappers have the option of countering the negotiator's tactics through indirect communication. In the event of an impasse, the kidnappers can apply additional pressure by cutting off negotiations for an extended period of time or by sending the victim's finger or ear to his or her family. The abductors can also lower their demands in order to make the ransom payment more affordable. Alternatively, they can release the hostage on "humanitarian grounds", as the Armed Forces of Liberation (FAL) did in the 1970 kidnapping of the Paraguayan consul Joaquin Waldemar Sanchez when the Argentinean government became the first Latin American country to successfully refuse to deal in a political kidnapping case (Mickolus 1980: 166–167). Another option available to kidnappers is the BATNA, which in this case, is killing and abandoning the hostage.

c) *Negotiators of Barricade Situations.* The options of hostage negotiators are extensive, as the crisis negotiation practice for barricade situations has become very well developed over the past thirty years. The negotiators use a variety of tools that work to their advantage. Figure 2 summarizes the FBI guidelines for crisis negotiations.

Figure 2. FBI Guidelines for Crisis Negotiations

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1. The use of time to increase basic needs, making it more likely that the subject will exchange a hostage for some basic need.
 2. The use of time to collect intelligence on the subject that will help develop a trade.
 3. The use of time to reduce the subject's expectation of getting what he wants.
 4. Trades can be made for food, drink, transportation, and money.
 5. Trades cannot be made for weapons or the exchange of hostages.
 6. The boss does not negotiate.
 7. Start bidding high to give yourself room to negotiate (ask for all the hostages).
 8. *Quid pro quo*: get something for everything.
 9. Never draw attention to the hostages; it gives the subject too much bargaining power.
 10. Manipulate anxiety levels by cutting off power, gas, water, etc.
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Source: McMains and Mullins. (2001) *Crisis Negotiations: Managing Critical Incidents and Hostage Situations in Law Enforcement and Corrections*. Anderson Publishing, 2nd edition: 37.

Since the hostage-taker is surrounded by security forces and cannot escape, negotiators use time both to calm down the perpetrator and to wait for his primary needs, such as the need for food, water, and sleep to become more pressing, thereby drawing attention away from the original demands. The negotiator first has to develop an effective line of communication with the hostage-taker, and then use active listening skills to build rapport and gather intelligence. Through rapport, the negotiator tries to influence and later change the hostage-taker's behavior. It is the task of the negotiator to persuade the captor that he is in a no-win situation.

The challenge of negotiating with politically or religiously motivated organized hostage-takers is the fact that they have prepared their actions in advance and the individuals involved have actually chosen to be in the situation. Another factor working against the negotiator is the frequent availability of more than one individual to handle the communications, which makes the rapport-building process much more complex (Strentz 1991). A successful way to deal with politically motivated incidents has been for the negotiator to stress the attention that the perpetrators' cause has already received. Since publicity is usually one of the main goals in these incidents, the captors can sometimes be persuaded that they have succeeded in their mission, and that killing hostages will only hurt their cause in the eyes of the public (Fuselier and Noesner 1990). Since most organized movements use the rhetoric of liberation from oppression and inhumane treatment, the same language can be used in reference to the hostages to appeal to the moral beliefs of the captors. Other, more risky moral appeals can also be used, such as the following plea employed by the negotiators of the 1973 hijacking of Japan Airline Flight 404. At one point, the control tower at the Dubai airport relayed the following message: "If you intend to kill the passengers on board ... do it at once. Otherwise be human enough to release them ... Please give up your intentions. There are other means of unbloody possibilities to reach your political aims" (Mickolus 1980: 399). The use of this technique in combination with the guarantee of a free passage for the terrorists has historically been the most frequent formula for peaceful resolution of politically motivated barricade incidents. Such an outcome is sometimes labeled as the "Bangkok Solution", referring to the 1972 incident in which members of the Black September group took over the Israeli embassy in Thailand, but after 19 hours of negotiations agreed to release their hostages and drop all other demands in return for safe passage out of the country (Mickolus 1980: 367). Zartman notes that despite falling short of punishing the terrorists for their crime, such a solution is balanced – it uses a concession only to restore the original situation, which the government found acceptable but the terrorists did not (Zartman 1990: 164). This assertion seems to be supported by the fact that following the Bangkok incident Black September

strongly criticized their operatives for backing down and losing face for the organization. At the same time, it should be pointed out that despite the factual return of the situation to the pre-incident status, the terrorists managed to gain publicity and therefore did succeed in fulfilling one of their main objectives.

Another useful tool in the negotiator's toolbox is the categorization of victims into groups (i.e. women, children, employees, injured, elderly etc.) and pressing for simultaneous release of a whole group of hostages. This technique enables the negotiator to use one, principle-based line of reasoning for the release of multiple hostages, which is more productive than negotiating by sheer numbers or having to develop persuasive justifications for the release of individual hostages.

The next important task for the negotiator is to humanize the victims to their captors as much as possible by promoting maximum interaction among them. The importance of this was demonstrated during a 1975 incident, in which the South Maluccan Independence Movement took over a train in the Netherlands. In order to prove their seriousness, the terrorists chose one of the passengers for execution. Just prior to the act, the victim was allowed to talk to his family on the phone to deliver his farewell message. After hearing the emotional conversation, the terrorists were no longer able to execute the man and chose another passenger, whom they killed on the spot (McMains and Mullins 2001: 18). The personalization of hostages to their captors also serves to activate the so-called Stockholm Syndrome, a positive relationship between the hostage-taker and the hostage. This phenomenon is named after a 1973 bank robbery incident that occurred in Sweden, in which the hostages protected their captor with their own bodies during surrender. One of the victims later even married the hostage-taker while he was in prison (Antokol and Nudell 1990). The importance of this phenomenon will be discussed later.

One of the negotiator's main tasks is to deal with the question of demands. It should be borne in mind that all demands have an *instrumental*, as well as an *expressive* value. In other words, each material-type demand, such as money, food, media attention, or a getaway vehicle (instrumental), also constitutes an expression of a certain type of emotion or a psychological need (expressive) (Antokol and Nudell 1990: 36). It is especially the expressive value of the demand that the negotiator should concentrate on, as this provides insight into the captor's hidden interests. The negotiator then should work to satisfy these interests in alternative ways, sometimes by recognizing the validity of the terrorists' grievance or, in the case of individuals, even by simply listening and showing that he or she cares.

The negotiator's position in hostage situations is strong, as he or she is backed up by security forces that can go in and attempt to rescue the hostages. This is the negotiator's BATNA.

d) *Negotiators of Kidnap Situations*. The options in kidnapping negotiations are limited due to the negotiator's much weaker bargaining position. It is possible to use the same type of moral appeal as mentioned in the previous case, but this has limited chances of success with abductors that have other goals than gaining publicity. Still, the negotiator is not completely helpless. He or she can work to humanize the victim to the captors and can use a wide scope of objective criteria to point out obstacles to meeting the ransom demand (discussed below). When facing an experienced counterpart, it is also important to demonstrate to the kidnappers an understanding of the game and to illustrate that they are not making all the rules (i.e. payment will only be made in local currency). It is also important to stall for time and to refrain from making a payment too quickly. Otherwise the captors are likely to respond by accepting the sum as a "fee" for the hostage's internment and by making another demand, as was the case in the 1995 kidnapping of Thomas R. Hardgrove by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) (Hardgrove 1998). While stalling for time, the negotiator can also cooperate with local authorities and attempt to locate the hostage. This however has little chance of success, especially in Latin American countries where the hostages are usually held in areas militarily controlled by the abductors. Sometimes the location of the victim can be detected and a rescue operation can be launched, but this is an extremely risky proposition. It is advisable to lower the demand through negotiations and to make the ransom payment. Another option is to give up on the release of the victim, which is something that few families are willing to accept.

BATNA

The purpose of a BATNA is to formulate the likely outcome of the situation should negotiations fail. This should be done beforehand in order to determine whether it is advisable to even start negotiating. During the negotiations, it is desirable to strengthen one's own BATNA, while making the counterpart's BATNA appear as weak as possible (Fisher and Ury 1991).

a) *Perpetrators in Barricade Situations*. The obvious BATNA of a hostage-taker is to begin killing hostages. This, nevertheless, will in most cases trigger a rescue attempt by the tactical unit, which the hostage-takers are not likely to withstand. Historically, with the exception of a very few notable incidents, such as the 1995 hostage crises in Kizlyar and Budyonovsk,⁷ hostage-takers in general have not been able to withstand armed rescue operations. Few hostage-takers realize this; in the beginning of the standoff they hold a firm belief that they are the ones with the most power in the negotiations. After

rapport with the captors has been established, it is the negotiator's task to point out the hostage-takers' weak BATNA in a non-threatening manner.

b) *Perpetrators of Kidnapping Incidents*. The BATNA of kidnappers is much stronger, due to the fact that their location is unknown. They can always kill the victim without sanction, should they decide that negotiations are no longer advantageous. It is important to keep in mind, however, that launching the kidnapping operation was not cheap and that the abductors are likely to settle for a much lower payment than the original demand. An alternative BATNA is to attempt to sell the victim's body back to his or her family, but as has been pointed out by some authors, "the discount is large" (Prochnau 1998).

c) *Negotiators of Hostage Situations*. The negotiator's BATNA in a barricade incident is a rescue operation. The longer the duration of the standoff, the more time the tactical team has to collect intelligence, study blueprints, and practice storming the location where the hostages are being held. While seemingly attractive, the BATNA is certainly not to be preferred over negotiations. Statistics show that an armed assault results in a 78 percent injury or death rate, sniper-fire in a 100 percent injury or death rate, while containment and negotiation have had a 95 percent success rate (McMains and Mullins 2001: 33). Furthermore, 75 percent of all casualties in hostage incidents arise from a rescue attempt (Poland and McCrystle 2000: 48).

d) *Negotiators of Kidnap Situations*. The negotiator's position in kidnapping situations is much weaker than in the case of a barricade incident, precisely because of the absence of a good BATNA. The negotiator can only work to bring down the ransom demand and make a payment, or to give up on the negotiations. Paying the ransom is usually the preferred option.

Objective Criteria

Objective criteria are a powerful tool in negotiations, as nothing facilitates an agreement better than the perception that a fair standard is being used. This is especially important in crisis negotiations, where developing trust with the hostage-taker is extremely challenging and can hardly be achieved without the use of neutral evidence to support the negotiator's claims. Objective criteria are defined as facts that are independent of the will of either party.

a) *Perpetrators in Hostage Situations*. Barricade hostage-takers are likely to point to a standard that could be described as "might makes right". In other words, the possession of hostages gives the captor the feeling of an absolute

leverage. Organized groups are also likely to incorporate other objective criteria such as their previous record of killing hostages at deadlines to prove their seriousness or the government's record of making concessions in hostage incidents. Sometimes the terrorists will also attempt to reverse government rhetoric and use it as objective criteria, as the PFLP did during the 1968 hijacking of El Al Boeing 707. When the organization's outrageous formula for the exchange of hostages for an unusually high number of imprisoned terrorists was challenged, the PFLP responded by arguing that because Israel had claimed that one Israeli life was worth one hundred Arab lives, the trade was fair (Mickolus 1980: 94).

Other, more appealing standards that can be used as objective criteria by the terrorists include factual evidence of the injustices that have been perpetrated against the people the group claims to represent, or the group's record of attempting to pursue their grievance by non-violent means. This has the power of giving the perpetrators an image of using violence only as a last resort. The hostage-takers can also point to previously successful terrorist campaigns, to explain why they have taken up arms. When demanding the release of their compatriots from prison, the hostage-takers might also point to the absence of a fair trial or to the mistreatment of the group's members while in prison.

b) *Perpetrators of Kidnapping Incidents.* Organized kidnapers with a political motivation are likely to use argumentation identical to the one described above. Groups whose only purpose is to extort money will probably use mainly the "might makes right" argument, in addition to the affected company's or family's financial capabilities and their past records of making concessions. Existence of a kidnap and ransom insurance premium could also be used, but it is unlikely that the kidnapers would have that kind of information; specialized insurance companies have very strict confidentiality standards, sometimes even including a clause that makes the policy invalid in the event of an information leak (Prochnau 1998). Extortionist groups also have the option of pointing to the poverty level of a particular region and stating that the money will go to the poor. While there have been numerous instances in Latin America and Africa in which hostages were exchanged for investments in a poverty-plagued region (Auerbach 1998), a political group can also use this argumentation to justify collecting money – an action otherwise harmful to the organization's popular image.

c) *Negotiators of Barricade Situations.* The hostage negotiator also has a wide range of objective criteria at which to point. The obvious ones are the innocence of the victim and the emotional suffering of his or her family. While these standards are likely to be deflected, it is still very important to pronounce

them in order to enhance formation of the Stockholm Syndrome, which serves to humanize the victims to their captors, making cold-blooded execution of hostages psychologically more difficult (Poland and McCrystle 2000: 26). Objective criteria such as a bank holiday, heavy traffic, or unavailability of a key person can also be a useful tool in talking through deadlines. The difficulty of transporting the demanded amount of money can be illustrated using historical examples, such as the 1972 hijacking of United Airlines Flight 239, in which the hijacker received a ransom payment of US\$200,000 but had to leave US\$40,000 on board because he was unable to transport the full amount (Mickolus 1980). Pointing to the crisis response unit's history of peaceful resolution of similar incidents can also help calm the captor down. If, on the other hand, the hostage-taker is too relaxed, reminding him of the tactical team's presence can help make his or her approach more serious. Most hostage-takers also become very concerned with the consequences of their behavior as the incident progresses. A very powerful tool is for the negotiator to point to the objective fact that in similar instances, hostage-takers are charged only with misdemeanor (assuming no hostages are harmed and there is no other violation of the law). From a legal standpoint, hostage-taking is not a serious crime and the sentence is likely to be reduced due to overcrowded prisons (McMains and Mullins 2001: 128).

d) *Negotiators of Kidnap Situations.* The kidnap negotiator also has the option of appealing to the moral values of kidnapers by talking about the victim's family duties and the values that he or she holds. A standard that is more likely to have an impact, however, are the payee's financial difficulties to meet the demand. It is also possible to refer to deals negotiated with the same organization for the same type of hostage. The difficulty of assembling large sums of money to pay the ransom without raising suspicion and risking intervention of the authorities is another good objective criterion.

Other Contrasting Negotiation Dynamics

In this section, additional contrasting dynamics of kidnap and barricade situations will be discussed.

Time-Element

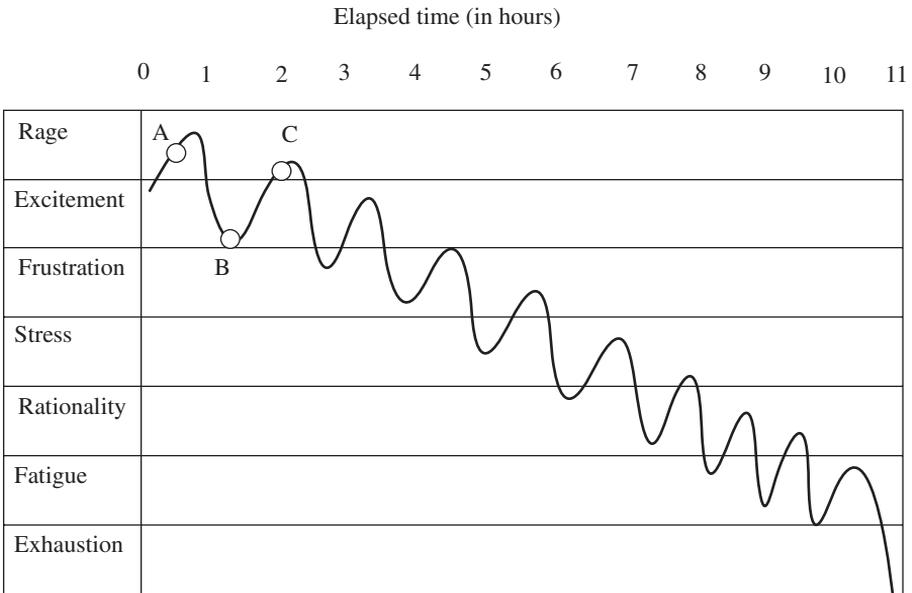
Time is an extremely important factor in crisis negotiations. It does, however, affect each of the two discussed scenarios in different ways. During barricade situations, time is clearly on the negotiators' side, since the hostage-taker is

tied to his or her location. As time elapses, the abductor's primary needs such as hunger or thirst tend to replace other, hierarchically higher sets of needs (McMains and Mullins 2001: 108). This opens up a wide range of opportunities for the negotiator to trade items such as food, water or tobacco for the release of a hostage or some other "favor" on part of the hostage-taker. Elapsing time also helps in reducing the subject's expectations of having his or her demands fulfilled. From a tactical perspective, prolonging the incident also provides more time to gather intelligence and to prepare for an assault.

Most of these time-related factors are not present in the kidnapping scenario, for obvious reasons. One of the few aspects that does remain similar is the favorable role of time in intelligence gathering, as modern technology can be used to detect the kidnapers' location. This option, however, should not be overestimated, as most kidnapers are well aware of the possibility of being traced. Furthermore, since most of today's kidnapers hold their victims in an area under their direct military control, even locating the kidnapers may not be too helpful, as a rescue operation would risk too many additional lives.

Another important distinction related to the time element is the duration of the incident. While barricade situations last on average between 8 and 10 hours (Poland and McCrystle 2000: 59), about one half of all kidnapping victims are held for 1–10 days, about a quarter from 11 to 50 days, and the rest from 50 to over 100 days (Royal and Sun Alliance Insurance Group). The differences in duration of an incident have important implications in terms of moments of greatest danger to the hostages' lives. While in most barricade situations the killing of hostages occurs at the beginning of the standoff as a result of initial panic, kidnapers kill their victims in cold blood later in the incident, either to make a statement or to terminate the situation after concluding that their interests can no longer be satisfied through negotiations. The psychological processes on part of the hostage-taker that make barricade negotiations so effective are also absent in kidnapping situations. In the barricade scenario, the location of the hostage-taker is contained and it is only a matter of time before the subject is worn out. Also, the hostage-taker is under extreme stress, and his or her ability to think rationally is often severely impaired or completely disabled. The high level of adrenalin in the suspect's blood often results in a quick transition between a wide range of human passions. According to research conducted by the German elite counterterrorism unit *Grenzschutzgruppe-9* (GSG-9), most barricade situations begin with the hostage-taker experiencing rage and making the decision to take hostages. This feeling is later replaced by excitement, as the hostage-taker becomes accustomed to the perceived position of absolute power. When the suspect discovers that not everything is going according to his or her initial plan, he or she becomes increasingly frustrated. Frustration then increases the already high level of stress, resulting in

Figure 3. Psychological progression in barricade situations.



Source: Strentz, Thomas (1995). “The Cyclic Crisis Negotiations Time Line”. *Law and Order*, March.

a more rational approach to the situation. At this point, the level of the captor’s adrenalin drops and he or she begins to feel the signs of fatigue, which later turn into complete exhaustion (Strentz 1995). It is vitally important to note, however, that this emotional decline is a cyclical, rather than a linear process. As a result, the gradual de-escalation usually appears in a very confusing pattern, which has many peaks and valleys, especially at the end when the hostage-taker is about to surrender (Strentz 1995). The key implication of this is that the frequent changes in mood are a natural and an uncontrollable occurrence, and can be overcome only with passing time (See Figure 3).

In kidnapping incidents, the aforementioned psychological processes do not occur, as the abductors are not exposed to a long period of continuous stress, since they are not confined to a particular area and are not under the immediate threat of a tactical resolution. For this reason, kidnappers are able to think and act much more rationally than barricade hostage-takers, and consequently do not lower their demands as easily. This does not mean however, that no change in demands takes place. The longer the abductors hold their victim, the greater burden the victim becomes. Besides having to worry about the health of the hostage, prolonging the incident also increases the chance of being

detected by the security forces. The willingness to lower demands with time is therefore usually present in kidnapping incidents as well, even though the hypothesis that the duration of the incident is positively correlated with chances for a successful resolution has yet to be conformed by statistical data analysis (Hayes 2001: 423).

Means of Communication

Effective means of communication are the precondition of any successful negotiation. In barricade incidents, establishment of a communication line is the first action that takes place after the perpetrator's location has been secured. In most incidents, negotiations are usually conducted through a direct phone line or via a field "throw telephone". The direct communication setting helps the negotiator in building rapport and is also useful in providing critical intelligence. In cases when the perpetrator refuses to communicate, prompt answering of the telephone is going to be the first concession the negotiator will seek in exchange for minor favors such as food, drink, or turning the air conditioner back on (McMains and Mullins 2001: 108).

In kidnapping situations, communication is much more problematic from the negotiator's standpoint. In the best case scenario negotiations take the form of radio transmissions. Frequently, communication is only one sided, taking the form of a short phone call stating demands. Such phone calls usually last no longer than two minutes in order to avoid detection of the caller's location (Clutterbuck 1978: 64). Alternatively, the abductors can communicate through letters, e-mail, audiotapes sent to radio stations, or newspaper advertisements. Such one sided communication puts kidnapers in a position of considerable advantage, as it eliminates the crisis negotiator's ability to employ appropriate negotiation tactics.

Demands and Deadlines

Demands are an indispensable part of any crisis negotiation. In barricade situations, the hostage-taker is likely to issue a set of extreme demands at the beginning of the incident. These should become more realistic throughout the course of negotiation, as the perpetrator's approach becomes more rational due to the cyclical psychological processes described earlier. The negotiator can help in reducing the quantity of demands by focusing on a particular demand and by asking clarifying questions. If, for example, the hostage-taker asks for a getaway vehicle, the negotiator can focus the discussion on the characteristics of the vehicle, such as model, make, color, interior design, etc. Such conversation has the potential of occupying the perpetrator's mind to the point that

he or she simply forgets about the other demands made earlier (McMains and Mullins 2001: 142).

In kidnapping cases, demands are also typically extreme in the beginning and slowly become more realistic as the incident progresses. In this scenario, however, such adjustment is not caused by the psychological forces described above, but by the abductors' positional approach to negotiations – the demands are high because the hostage-taker aims to leave room for compromise. In Colombia, for instance, kidnapped businessmen are usually released for an average of about US\$2 million, even though the initial demands are as high as US\$100 million (Royal and Sun Alliance Insurance Group 2002).

In both barricade and kidnapping cases, a strict deadline will usually be attached to the fulfillment of demands, accompanied by a threat to start killing hostages. It is the negotiator's job to make these deadlines pass while keeping the hostages alive. This is usually achieved by introducing some of the "objective" obstacles to meeting the deadline that were described earlier, and by reminding abductors that if anyone is hurt the negotiations end and BATNA is employed. The key is to provide a credible justification for not being able to meet the time limit, helping the hostage-taker to save face. The nature of the demand that is attached to the deadline plays an important role in assessing its credibility and urgency. Some demands are simply too unrealistic to be credibly backed by the threat of killing hostages. Murdering someone in cold blood is an extreme measure that most hostage-takers are not eager to resort to, unless they feel that no other option exists. Based on the theory of cognitive dissonance, which states that we are more likely to accept arguments that support our position, the reluctance to kill enables the negotiators to talk through deadlines as long as they provide a believable explanation for not being able to fulfill them.

In kidnapping incidents, the absence of ongoing direct contact makes the passing of a deadline a much more volatile moment. Still, based on empirical evidence, meeting the opening demands at the initial deadline clearly is not an advisable option – as the aforementioned Hardgrove kidnapping case demonstrates, immediate compliance invites further claims (Hardgrove 1998). Since most contemporary kidnappings are conducted by organized groups experienced in negotiations, the "objective" explanations for not being able to meet a deadline are not likely to have much persuasive power. Still, it is probably better to provide some explanation for not meeting the deadline, than to simply ignore it. This point will allow the negotiator to make it clear that he or she understands the game, without unnecessarily provoking the kidnappers.

Non-Negotiable Demands

Some demands in crisis negotiations are referred to as non-negotiable, either because of official policy or because of the potential of making the situation more volatile.

In barricade situations for instance, additional weapons will not be given to the hostage-taker under any circumstances, as the suspect might be using a fake or a non-functional weapon. Satisfying his or her demand would only provide the tools necessary for a violent exchange. Another example of a non-negotiable demand is the exchange of hostages (McMains and Mullins 2001: 117–118). The desire to bring a specific person to the scene may indicate the hostage-taker's intent to hurt this person. Further, introducing new individuals to the situation disrupts the formation of the Stockholm Syndrome and raises overall tensions (Fuselier 1986). Other non-negotiable demands in a barricade situation also include supplying the hostage-taker with alcohol or drugs, as these substances have the potential of escalating the suspect's violent behavior (McMains and Mullins 2001: 117).

It is the negotiator's responsibility to handle non-negotiable demands. This is usually done by the deflection of the focus toward a different demand or by introducing issues pertaining to primary needs, such as hunger or thirst.⁸ If these attempts fail and the hostage-taker is insistent, the negotiator should carefully explain why the demand is not going to be fulfilled. It will be crucial to emphasize in a non-threatening manner that the non-negotiability of the entire package does not mean that individual demands cannot be discussed (McMains and Mullins 2001: 107).

In politically motivated kidnapping incidents, most non-negotiable demands are related to government policy, such as exchange of prisoners, withdrawal of military forces, or an alteration of policies toward a certain country. In profit motivated incidents, non-negotiable demands are not likely to be an important part of the negotiation, with a possible exception of a demand for a particular person to handle negotiations. Such a demand provides an opportunity for the negotiator to swing momentum to his or her side by simply refusing – the issue of who does the talking is unlikely to be important enough for the kidnappers to actually carry out their threats of killing the hostage.

Deliberate Deception

Despite the existence of legal precedents in the US determining that promises made to hostage-takers during hostage negotiations are not legally binding contracts,⁹ the use of deliberate deception during barricade negotiations is generally not a good idea. While Hayes' analysis shows that bluffing, even if

detected, does not reduce the likelihood of a negotiated solution (Hayes 2001: 422), several other factors should be taken into consideration. First of all, the effort invested into building rapport with the hostage-taker could be jeopardized and the difficulties of reestablishing credibility with the suspect are usually not worth the risk. Secondly, the wide media coverage barricade situations receive can make bluffing costly in the long run, as public familiarity with deceptive police tactics will make establishing credibility in future hostage negotiations even more challenging. An exception to this general rule can be made in cases involving emotionally disturbed persons. In one case for instance, the negotiator was able to successfully resolve the incident by dressing in a white robe and a white headdress posing as God and instructing the hostage-taker to surrender (Poland and McCrystle 2000: 47). Still, deception should only be used after the traditional approaches have failed.

In kidnapping incidents, “bluffing” can be utilized more extensively for several reasons. First, fulfillment of the demands could be impossible and deceit may be the only chance left for saving the life of a hostage. Secondly, most kidnapping negotiations are covert, limiting the negative repercussions arising from wide media coverage. On the other hand, experienced kidnapers may monitor the location of the victim’s family to detect any inconsistencies (Bolz, Dudonis and Schultz 2000: 120). In addition, the abductors are also likely to have developed sophisticated handover techniques that eliminate the possibility of a successful “con”.

Face-Saving

Assisting the counterpart in developing an effective face-saving mechanism in order to help justify the concessions that have been made despite the original hard line position is an important element of most negotiations. This is especially true in barricade situations, since the standoff begins with the hostage-taker perceiving his or her position to be one of absolute power, but ends with the suspect’s embarrassing surrender. In order to facilitate the hostage-taker’s decision to capitulate, it is extremely important to prevent the feeling of humiliation by providing reasoning support and by stressing the hostage-taker’s “admirable display of courage and humanity” by not hurting anyone and peacefully surrendering. This is going to be more difficult if the abductor has locked himself in his position by making public statements. It is therefore important to limit spectators of the standoff, especially during the concluding stage (McMains and Mullins 2001: 77).

Resulting from a lack of direct contact, kidnapping negotiations do not rely as heavily on face saving as barricade situations, even though this technique can still be useful. In this scenario it is the negotiator’s task to supply feasible

argumentation for his counterpart to use in “selling” the negotiated deal to his or her constituents, who may disagree with conditions of the settlement.

Role of Media

Media coverage of hostage crises has been the topic of many heated debates, with one side arguing for the right to free speech and the other drawing a link between media coverage and the contagion of hostage-taking tactics (Wardlaw 1982: 77).

In barricade situations, the sensational nature of the incident always succeeds in attracting wide media attention, which can have both positive and negative effects. On the negative side, an irresponsible approach by the media can directly affect the outcome of the incident. In several instances, the media has provided the hostage-takers with critical intelligence, putting the hostages in grave risk. During the 1977 hijacking of a Lufthansa aircraft to Mogadishu, for example, a radio report revealed that one of the pilots on the airplane was secretly passing information to the authorities during routine transitions to the ground. The hijackers heard the broadcast and reacted by executing the German Captain. In another incident in Cleveland, Ohio, the local television station transmitted footage showing police snipers moving into position just as the incident was about to conclude. Having seen the report, the perpetrator thought he was about to be attacked by the tactical team, resulting in prolongation of the incident by an additional 24 hours. Another possible damaging effect of media inquiry is the establishment of direct contact with the hostage-takers. During the 1977 Hanafi Muslim takeover of three buildings in Washington DC, a reporter asked one of the terrorists whether a deadline had been set. The police who saw the lack of a deadline as one of few positive aspects of the situation were outraged (Wardlaw 1982: 79).

Despite the great potential for making things more difficult for the responders, the media can also be very helpful. In politically motivated barricade situations, which are usually designed to attract wide attention in order to convey a message, it is not uncommon for the captors to demand media coverage or publication of a group manifesto. In such instances the cooperation of media is critical. For instance, the 1972 Frontier Airlines Flight 91 hijacking was successfully resolved after several television and radio stations agreed to air the hijacker’s two and a half hour speech, in which he asked for world peace and better educational opportunities for poor Mexican children (Mickolus 1980: 309).

In kidnapping incidents, a possible negative effect of media inquiry consists of increasing the perceived importance of individual hostages as a result of wide media focus on the victims. Such perception by the kidnappers can

result in increased demands, hindering the negotiator's efforts to make terms of the settlement more favorable. On the other hand, the media can also play a very positive role in kidnapping incidents as they can provide a platform for effective communication between the kidnapers and the negotiator.

Stockholm Syndrome

As mentioned earlier, the Stockholm Syndrome is an important factor in crisis negotiations. In most general terms, this phenomenon transpires by the formation of mutually positive feelings between the hostage-taker and the hostages. The Stockholm Syndrome provides another good example of the differing dynamics in various negotiation scenarios.

In barricade situations, the syndrome is comprised of a four way process. The first relationship is based on the dependency of the victim on the abductor – the latter decides when the former will eat, sleep, go to the bathroom, live, or die. The bond of dependency is not dissimilar to the relationship between a mother and a child (Poland and McCrystle 2000: 24). This dynamic is strengthened by the hostage's instinct to do everything necessary in order to survive. The victim's humbleness and obedience helps to reduce anger of the hostage-taker, who in turn reciprocates by a more humane treatment of the hostage. This reciprocation only reinforces the positive feelings on behalf of the victim. Another dependency bond is formed between the hostage-taker and the negotiator, who projects the image of someone who can hurt but desires to help (McMains and Mullins 2001: 167). The third relationship that helps to reinforce the positive mutual feelings between the hostage and the abductor is the perception of a common enemy: the tactical unit. The hostage-taker feels threatened by the police for obvious reasons. The victims also perceive the authorities negatively, as they feel that not enough is being done to secure their release. Moreover, the security forces represent an apparent threat to the hostages as well, due to their uncertain ability to distinguish between the hostage-takers and the hostages. The shared negative relationship toward a third party makes the Stockholm Syndrome even stronger. In the words of a released hostage of the PAL BAC 111, which was hijacked in 1976 by members of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in the Philippines: "We all became sort of one unit, the passengers, the hijackers, the pilot, against the outside world. We found ourselves wanting to explain the cause of the hijackers" (Mickolus 1980: 608–609).

Besides providing a more favorable environment for Stockholm Syndrome formation, barricade situations present the negotiator with an array of options for its encouragement. The negotiator can promote the positive relationship by forcing as much interaction between the hostage-taker and the victims as

possible. Feasible techniques include the delivery of food in large portions requiring cooperation between the captor and the captives, asking the hostage-taker to check on the health of hostages, discussing family responsibilities and requesting information about the treatment of hostages, and asking to deliver messages from family members (Clutterbuck 1978: 62). Introduction of joint problem solving by referring to all parties involved as “us” is another strong tool.

In kidnapping incidents, formation of the Stockholm Syndrome is much more difficult. First, the mutual negative relationship toward a third party is absent. Second, kidnappers have the possibility of eliminating the factors that contribute to the syndrome’s formation by rotating guards and by continual blindfolding and ear plugging of the victim. Hostages can also be harshly interrogated, humiliated by degradation, denied sleep or food, and be exposed to periods of noise and light alerted by periods of total silence and darkness. Since formation of the Stockholm Syndrome is dependent on absence of negative experiences with bad treatment, such measures can effectively eliminate its formation (Poland and McCrystle 2000: 25).

Encouragement of the syndrome’s development is also a much more difficult task in kidnapping incidents. Similar techniques as those used in barricade situations can be employed, but their effect will be limited due to the absence of ongoing contact of the victims with their captors.

Conclusions

Negotiations in general are not possible unless there is an overlapping point of reference in the range of expectations of both parties (Zartman 1990: 173). At the initial phase of hostage incidents, such overlap rarely exists, and changing the hostage-takers’ expectations is precisely the most important task facing the negotiator. At the same time, barricade and kidnapping situations differ significantly in most aspects of the negotiation process, resulting in the need to employ varying approaches. Nevertheless, the interest-based negotiation framework used in this article provides a useful analytical tool for identifying the key differences between the two scenarios. This type of analysis can then be used as a guide for modifying successful barricade-hostage negotiation strategies, in order to apply them to kidnapping incidents. By analyzing each hostage crisis with regard to the people, interests, options, BATNA’s, and objective criteria involved, it is possible to identify opportunities for expanding the range of options and introducing alternative solutions that may succeed in bringing about a peaceful resolution. Further, the interest-based negotiation framework provides a helpful instrument to analyze the negotiability of each

type of incident. This is especially important, as an understanding of the negotiating positions of all parties needs to precede the selection of an overall negotiation strategy. The negotiability guidelines for individual scenarios are presented below.

Contrary to popular belief, the negotiator's position in most barricade incidents is quite strong. In an absolute majority of barricade situations the hostage-takers do not place themselves into the situation voluntarily. Under the condition that the hostage-taker desires to live, the threat of force by the tactical unit in combination with the suspect's inexperience, reluctance to kill, and inability to depart freely, constitute a no-win situation for the hostage-taker. This scenario provides a framework in which the well-defined crisis negotiation strategies have the potential of reaching a peaceful resolution without granting substantive concessions.

In politically or religiously motivated barricade incidents, the dynamic changes significantly due to the premeditated nature of the act, along with the voluntary character of the perpetrators' involvement. In this relatively infrequent scenario, the negotiator's position is considerably weakened by the perpetrators' lack of authority to make any important decisions, including the decision to surrender without reaching all formulated objectives of the operation. For members of terrorist organizations, in which great emphasis is placed on discipline and commitment, the prospect of surviving and being labeled a traitor is far less attractive than an "honorable death for the cause". However, in most such incidents, the traditional crisis negotiation approach still applies, with the key difference that since the perpetrators' objectives have been formulated with some thought in advance, their expectations of the outcome will not be easily modifiable. Consequently, the duration of the incident may be significantly longer than in *ad hoc* hostage-taking cases, and patience is therefore imperative. The hostage-takers' behavior will sometimes be unbalanced and the demands and conditions are likely to change rapidly, especially as the incident progresses. This may lead many members of the hostage rescue team to the conclusion that the terrorists' approach is not serious and that the only option remaining is a rescue operation. However, the hostage-takers' erratic behavior should be understood as a sign that is essentially *positive* in nature – it signals a frustration associated with an unanticipated development of events, an important component in bringing about a change of expectations.

Another difficulty in politically motivated barricade incidents is the reluctance of most governments to grant any concessions, under the rationale that doing so would only invite further acts of terrorism. Since the negotiator's position in premeditated incidents is relatively weak, the lack of substantive incentives for the release of hostages reduces the chances of peaceful resolu-

tion. While Hayes presents evidence that governments with a history of substantive concessions during hostage incidents are likely to experience an increase in terrorist activity, he also documents that minor, instrumental concessions¹⁰ are not associated with such an increase. Further, even if substantive concessions are made, their effect on future terrorist activities can be minimized by denial and secrecy (Hayes 2001: 425).

Unlike in the kidnapping scenario, where some concessions will be necessary, in barricade incidents the authorities at least have a strong BATNA in the form of a rescue operation. It is perhaps the historical frequency of using this option that has nearly erased barricade hostage-taking from the repertoire of most terrorist organizations. The probable non-compliance of future hostages resulting from the outcomes of the 11th September hijackings is likely to reinforce this trend.

As in the case of ideologically motivated barricade incidents, negotiations of kidnappings are also complicated by the pre-meditated and voluntary character of perpetrators' involvement. In addition, the hostages in kidnapping incidents are likely to be carefully selected from a larger pool of candidates, making it more difficult for the negotiator to plead for the release on humanitarian grounds or to convince the hostage-takers about insufficient availability of funds to pay the ransom. In criminally motivated cases, the negotiator's counterpart is also likely to be experienced, possibly gaining the ability to identify and eliminate many of the tricks the negotiator may attempt to employ. At the same time, the kidnappers' negotiating know-how has the potential of increasing the predictability of their actions while also reducing the volatile aspects of hostage negotiations resulting from inexperience and panic. Further, a business-like approach employed by the abductors paves the road for a negotiated settlement. Such an agreement, however, will inevitably include a ransom payment, the sum of which will be determined by the negotiator's ability to introduce a balanced combination of patience, firmness, and willingness to identify a "fair offer". In early stages of the incident, the negotiator should buy time by disputing the very principle of a ransom payment itself. During this stage, the negotiator should also introduce a firm position on minor demands that are unlikely to be important enough for the kidnappers to justify "breaking their goods", such as ignoring orders on who should represent the victim's family during negotiations. Firmness in this early stage is critical for reducing the kidnappers' hopes for extorting a quick and large ransom payment. In the second stage, which follows after the principle of a ransom payment has been established, the negotiators should use their experience from previous incidents to identify a reasonable counteroffer and then try to bring the final settlement as close to this number as possible. From the beginning of this second

stage of negotiations, time is no longer purely on the side of the negotiator. He or she should bargain, but should also seek closure of the deal relatively soon after the “terms of trade” have been agreed upon.

Purely politically or religiously motivated kidnappings are by far the most difficult hostage crisis scenarios to resolve. The definition of demands will provide invaluable insight into the negotiability of the incident. In cases where the perpetrator’s sole purpose is generating publicity, the demands are likely to be defined in a vague and declaratory manner, leaving room for any necessary adjustments that will “justify” the refusal to release the hostages. In such incidents, the perpetrators are not interested in a serious negotiation; the operation is rather designed to generate wide public attention, before killing the hostage and attempting to blame his or her death on government inaction. The options available to negotiators in such incidents are very limited; they can only attempt to prolong the talks in order to gain clues that might help in locating the victim, or at least in tracking down the perpetrators.

In political incidents where goals are defined more tangibly, negotiation is possible, but still extremely challenging. The kidnappers’ negotiating position is so strong that it provides little incentive to settle for anything less than the original demand. At the same time, this demand is likely to be unacceptable for the government. However, unless the negotiator is given something to work with, the chances of the hostage’s survival are minimal. The only way to negotiate such incidents is to provide something for the terrorists to gain. Since minor concessions such as food or safe passage are inapplicable to kidnapping scenarios, governments should be prepared to make some substantive concessions, with the option of mitigating the negative effects of the deal by secrecy or subsequent denial.

Overall, there are several important implications of the findings presented in this paper for government policy on international hostage-taking. First, an *a priori* exclusion of negotiations from the list of responses is not a useful idea, since such position eliminates the most effective resolution tool available. Further, since some form of negotiation is going to take place in barricade situations regardless of the official government policy, any benefit of the hard-line rhetoric in terms of deterring further acts of hostage-taking will be lost.

Secondly, an *a priori* exclusion of substantive concessions from the negotiators’ arsenal effectively eliminates the possibility of a successful resolution of an absolute majority of kidnapping incidents. Even though the government’s hard line approach of “no negotiations with terrorists” is based on logical argumentation, a policy of flexible response seems to be a more useful approach to international hostage-taking. Such policy would allow the evaluation of negotiability of each specific incident, and subsequent issuance of the

appropriate response. This approach would enable an application of the hard-line policy in some cases while not being an obstacle to a negotiated settlement in others.

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Notes

1. In fact, most crisis negotiation manuals say little about kidnappings except that they are different from barricade situations due to the fact that the location of the victim(s) as well as that of the perpetrator(s) is unknown in kidnappings.
2. According to Royal and Sun Alliance Insurance Group, 67 percent of victims are released with a ransom paid and 15 percent without a ransom paid. Up to 10 percent of kidnapping victims are killed and the remaining 7 percent are rescued.
3. Perpetrator interviews and victim debriefings show that most of the hostage-takers of the 1980s were provided with a list of demands, but only minimal instruction on how to proceed during the standoff with the security forces (Fuselier and Noesner 1990).
4. Parents will most likely use the legal process to gain custody of their children after fleeing to another country, while pedophiles and emotionally disturbed persons are not likely to initiate contact and issue demands, making any negotiation impossible.
5. The target study of a victim and the scouting costs were estimated to be around US\$30,000; members of the snatch group received US\$10,000–15,000 each adding up to about US\$60,000 total; guards were paid roughly US\$2000 per month plus a percentage of the final ransom payment. Money could be laundered at about a 30–40 percent charge (Clutterbuck 1978: 66).
6. This policy has sometimes been rephrased as “no concessions policy” – the refusal to make concessions does not eliminate the option of negotiations.
7. Both of these incidents, however, involved more than 100 very well armed and well organized Chechen terrorists.
8. McMains and Mullins describe how the negotiator can suggest taking a lunch break and continuing the discussion later. The mentioning of food has the potential of reminding the hostage-taker of his primary needs.
9. United States vs. Crosby, 1983; State vs. Sands, 1985.
10. For example, providing food, safe surrender or even safe passage when hostages are released unharmed.

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