

Negotiation: A New Idea

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It has recently come to the attention of the *Berkeley Beacon* that a work of political philosophy has been presented in and around the Boston area. This work is based on mass media negotiation in a public forum between, among, and within societies. The plan, created by philosopher John Connolly, was presented to several major news outlets in the city.

The basic premise of the proposal is that, by putting an Independent Media Communication into newspapers and internationally read magazines such as *Time* and *Newsweek*, a country or a faction within the country could express their dissatisfaction with existing policies. Connolly stresses that this proposal is not to be used instead of the present negotiation processes, but rather, when these processes have failed.

Not only does Connolly intend for this communicating strategy to aid the two, three or more opposing factions or countries in being made aware of each other's complaints, but to also bring world awareness to their differences. He believes such an awareness would increase each party's desire to come to agreeable terms. In all probability the oppressed party would begin such an exchange of ideas. Hence, the oppressing party

would feel an outside pressure forcing them to consider the situation, evaluate it, and begin plans toward improving it.

Connolly has been presented with several objections to his proposal, and attacks them all in the proposal. After his stay in Boston, Connolly plans to head to Washington to get his proposal off the ground. He expressed an intense desire that the plan be made available to Emerson, because of the school's unique

communications concentration. Anyone wishing a copy of the complete proposal is welcome to one at the *Beacon* office.

After the established negotiating process between societies has failed or stalled, an alternative would be for one side to publish their detailed negotiating position in a widely distributed document. At the same time they could request a similar public response from their adversary.

When leaders meet face to face, these talks are judged by the concluding statements of the participating negotiators.

If a society seeking changes were to put forth their negotiating position and principles in a public document, this communicate would be judged by its content and the request made. This medium of information, distributed in magazines and newspapers, is commonly called an advertising supplement. Here it is called an Independent Media Communication (IMC).

A Negotiating Idea

Why would a government be compelled to respond to an IMC?

They would realize that if the challenge of information laid out for all to see went unmet, world sympathy might shift to those who made the public "peace plan". Also, if they rejected such a non-violent request for action, the responsibility for future violence would fall increasingly on them.

What could an IMC achieve if there was no response?

A society could still accomplish a number of its goals; bringing world attention to the problems in their region, rallying support among their members and others, structuring a constitution and possibly suggesting sanctions.



"The medium is the message."

Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980) Canada.

McLuhan observed that the Reformation took place when the invention of the printing press made the Bible available to the masses. The advent of television and instant, world-wide communications has brought about another revolution by bringing the world closer together in a "Global Village." He said that the medium of information has changed human history more profoundly than politics, economics, religion or anything else.

Why can't TV, newspapers or magazines deliver the same message?

All those media can report about such a written peace plan but with TV, newspapers and magazines a newsmaker is dependent on the news people themselves because they're going to take the newsmaker's message and edit or interpret it to the world. IMC's are crucially different because the sender creates the exact message desired and can then rely on its delivery inside a newspaper or magazine like any other advertiser.

Would an IMC take the place of face-to-face meetings between leaders?

No. It is an alternative that could be used when such direct talks break down as has often occurred. Over a period of time when two groups find themselves in dispute it is expected that the focus would shift back and forth between these two negotiating strategies.

Since many parties are already purchasing full page ads for political purposes in both newspapers and magazines, why couldn't that medium be used by societies to negotiate?

Although full page ads could be used for this purpose, the quantity of pages needed to transmit such a comprehensive communicate suggests that it would be preferable for a society to control the totality of their message. This can best be accomplished in the printed form with an independent document.



"Study history to prepare for the future. One ought to read history into the artifacts and the news of the moment. Then the domains of past and present unite."

Michel Foucault (1926-1984) France.

Foucault taught that one should search for what is strong and good and beautiful in a society. He believed that a superior course of action was to create from what already exists rather than tearing down and beginning anew.

What would an IMC contain?

It might begin with the history of that region and why these people are seeking change. It could propose how such change would happen. It could also include their exact negotiating position, given point by point, so that all could understand these issues.

THE INDEPENDENT MEDIA COMMUNICATION CAN BE USED AS A MECHANISM TO ADDRESS DISPUTES BETWEEN SOCIETIES

Who would pay for an IMC and how much would it cost?

Sympathetic individuals, organizations, businesses and nations could be requested to contribute to such a task and might then be recognized in the IMC. Most IMC's would cost between one and five million dollars including both printing and substantial logistical expenses when distributed in a major news magazine(s). It would be expected that the U.S. Congress would become a significant contributor of funds for societies attempting to negotiate with the Independent Media Communication.

"... Thus, there is no need for war. It does not have to be you or me ever again. It can be you and me."



Buckminster Fuller (1895-1983) United States.,

Fuller demonstrated that by applying scientific knowledge civilization can produce increasingly more output with less resources. He maintained that the opportunity exists, once political differences are resolved, for all of humanity to enjoy a sustained standard of living higher than any humans have previously experienced.

Since there is no certainty that this negotiating method will produce positive results, why bother to encourage it?

There is never certainty regardless of how one negotiates. The only certainty, in today's world is that the established negotiating process has failed repeatedly.

Why would this communication strategy be significantly different from existing strategies?

Remember that confidence is an important element in any agreement between societies. For example, in South Africa the black leaders have attempted to instill confidence that the rights of the white minority would be respected in a government controlled by the blacks. Declarations and guarantees made in a document distributed worldwide and signed by leaders of different factions of that society would tend to impart greater confidence to the whites (and others) than statements transmitted through news articles.

What can be done in South Africa?

Black leaders in South Africa seeking changes could attempt to negotiate with the government in control by creating an Independent Media Communication. By making a public statement of their goals and overall plan, they could create a framework for an agreement. By then sending the same message to the World Public, the government in South Africa, and many in their own society, these leaders will be focusing their efforts in a form and manner more powerful than any other communication strategy available to them because ... the world wide media will report about what they do in this medium.



"I have learned through bitter experience the one supreme lesson: to conserve my anger, and as heat conserved is transmuted into energy, even so our anger controlled can be transmuted into a power which can move the world."

Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869-1948) India.

Mahatma Gandhi created a philosophy called Satyagraha that he used first in South Africa and later in India. Negotiating with the IMC allows a society to follow Gandhi's plan of non-violent action by announcing to the world what they are doing and what they are requesting.

Among two adversaries which party (society) would decide to initiate this public negotiating alternative?

It is anticipated that it would be the party most dissatisfied with the status quo.

Whether a society negotiates in private or public wouldn't the expected result be the same?

The phrase, "The medium is the message" suggests that the form of a message impacts its substance. The argument made here is that the form of the negotiating process will also have a qualitative impact on its substance. Thus ... the inherent characteristics of an IMC would tend to create a momentum for the government in control to modify the request of a society seeking change rather than rejecting it outright as has often occurred in face-to-face meetings.

Any newspaper or magazine has permission to publish this Negotiating idea.

John Connolly