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'Conflict Analysis:' Exploring the Role of Kuwait in Mediation in the Middle East

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'CONFLICT ANALYSIS:'

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF KUWAIT IN MEDIATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

by

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DEDICATION

To my beloved parents and family who were always there for me, and

to Sheikh Dr. Ahmed NaserAl-Mohammed Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, who made me believe

in myself.

Introduction

We hope that all our sincere efforts are dedicated to revising the economic, developmental and social issues and challenges that face our Arab countries and peoples, and resolving on realizing what it yearns for of strategic developmental projects and programmes the purpose of which is elevating life style, providing productive work opportunities for our peoples and advancing the economic performance of our countries to follow the suit of the International procession.
~His Highness, The Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

Background

The Middle East is a large geographical area, and while people think of it as a homogenous area in terms of language and culture, the region is actually more of a melting pot of ethnic, religious, racial and linguistic groups. Understanding the distinctions between these groups is of paramount importance to understanding the region. Historical rivalries between some groups, for example, Sunni and Shia Muslims, go back hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years. Yet, people continue with life. How do countries continue to deal with each other when there are open, unsettled questions, such as boundaries or control of islands? Is there a resolution method that will finalize these issues for once and ever?

Conflict is a part of daily life. Possibly this is because the urge toward violence is part of the human condition. Wars have been fought since before written history over territory, goods, or personal honor. The winner naturally gains control of the disputed items and has his honor vindicated, while the loser is either dead or slinks away in shame to fight another day. Certainly, he does not cheerfully say: You win; I was wrong, take the country. Usually, what the loser really says (under his breath) is:

1

They were bigger, stronger, had more guns, cheated, etc. Therefore, we lose right now, but the fight will continue on a different basis. Another option is to find a way to convince both sides that a fair agreement can be reached. This is part of mediation—looking for a fair settlement that both sides accept as being reasonable so that the fighting will stop.

In <u>Politics in the Middle East</u>, James A. Bill and Carl Leiden (1979) describe some of the uncertainties in the Arabian Gulf and other Middle Eastern countries that still exist, even though this book is relatively old. The authors argue that the political events in the region are intertwined. When violence breaks out in Afghanistan, for example, it affects policies and behavior in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the Persian Gulf sheikhdoms. Confining ourselves to the Middle East area, we can compile a long list of obvious problems over just the past few decades. Such a list would include (but is not limited to):

- border disputes between India and Pakistan (1947-present);

- Israeli-Palestinian conflict (1945-present);

- civil wars in Lebanon (1958 & 1975-1991), Algeria (1991-2002) and Afghanistan (1978-present);

- the invasion of Lebanon by Syria (1976);

- an eight-year war between Iran and Iraq (1980-1988);

- the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq (1990);

- border disputes dating back 200 years between Bahrain and Qatar (1991-2001);

- a bloodless coup in Qatar that brought the Crown Prince to power (1995);

- the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq by the U.S. (2001-present);

- and, current political unrest in Pakistan (2001-present).

Topic Choice

As a citizen of Kuwait pursuing a master's degree in conflict resolution, I am particularly interested in the historic and current role that Kuwait has played in resolution of conflicts between different factions and/or countries in the Arab world. Only in the core countries, primarily Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Yemen, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Syria, which share a common religion and language, would Kuwait have any serious role as a mediator because almost 90 percent of the people of this area are Muslims, although around 7 percent are Christians and there is a two percent Jewish population (Held, 2006). To gain a sense of the role of Kuwait in mediation of Gulf area conflicts, we will examine:

1) The Lebanese Civil War (1975-1991).

2) The joining of North and South Yemen into the Republic of Yemen (1990).

3) The Arab League Economic Summit held in Kuwait (2009).

4) The role of the Gulf Co-operation Council (1981-present).

Chapter One will discuss methodology and research implementation. Chapter Two will review theories of conflict resolution as described in the literature. Chapter Three will review the historical background of conflict in the Middle East in general, these four conflicts in particular and the role that Kuwaiti diplomats played (to the limited extent that it can be determined). Chapter Four offers overall conclusions and suggestions.

Research Question

What skills and qualities qualify one to be a mediator in the Middle East? In what way has Kuwait been an effective participant in such processes? History is written by the winners, yet the losers retain their sense of what they believe happened and their feelings of right and wrong. Sometimes they hold grudges for generations based on different versions of the same event. How does a negotiator make sense of two very different meanings and interpretations, both of which may be true from that side's point of view? Can whole nations be convinced to put the past behind them and agree on a new interpretation in order to move forward? It seems that this has happened in Europe after centuries of conflict culminating in World War II. It has happened recently in Greece and Turkey in the aftermath of two devastating earthquakes. Is it possible for something similar to happen in the Middle East without the devastation of a World War? If so, how can a mediator assist this process in a positive way? Specifically, how can diplomats from Kuwait assist other governments in the Middle East in resolving national disputes? Even with significant financial resources, the amount of pressure they could apply to any situation would be small; therefore, their efforts must rely on the carrot rather than the stick. In the Gulf states, in most cases, the ruling families are intermarried and consider themselves cousins on some level. Even the Jews are considered distant cousins because of our common descent from the Patriarch Abraham, albeit rather hostile and disagreeable cousins. Often this relationship makes it easier to maintain contact and offer assistance, but it must be done gently while allowing the parties to maintain their pride and self-respect. Certainly, a resolution cannot be forced.

Chapter One: Methodology and Research Implementation

History [has] proven that dialogue, negotiations, understanding and respecting the signed commitments and International legitimate resolutions is the ideal approach to realize security, peace and stability. Whereas military power, aggression and policies of land seizure and displacement charge the souls, agitate hatred and feed extremism... but it goes beyond to reach the people of both the Arab and Islamic World and all the world countries which love peace and justice.
~His Highness, The Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

Choice of Methodology

The topic of this thesis is conflict resolution at the national level, and studies the role of Kuwait in such negotiations, specifically with other Middle Eastern nations. Data collection is based on secondary research of articles specifically regarding Kuwait's historic role as a peacemaker in Lebanon and Yemen and its role in the Arab League Economic Summit of 2009 and Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC). There will also be personal interviews with Kuwaiti diplomats at the Kuwaiti Embassy in Washington, D.C. and the United Nations in New York City regarding Kuwait's role as a mediator in the Middle East.

Conflict resolution theory supposes that individuals and societies seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. The causes of behavior in international conflict resolution are many and varied because we are dealing with individuals who have ethnic, religious and linguistic differences, just as a start. Conflicts include such issues as historical grievances, personal ambition and changes in the political, social, cultural and physical environment. The researcher must look for multiple answers, rather than trying to reduce the information to a few hypotheses. Much information in this kind of research is based on cultural beliefs and questions are open-

ended, leading to subjective answers. Researchers often address process and the context in which people live and work.

The actual context of any negotiation is rarely made public because of the confidential nature of the information. Therefore, this paper seeks to understand the historical reasons behind the specific conflict and consider appropriate conflict resolution theory. The success of many negotiation methods involves getting the parties to talk to a third person who can help them find creative solutions. This is the preferred and historical method in the Middle East. Sometimes the problem can be resolved and other times all the mediator can do is keep the lines of communication open and create the possibility of a future solution if the situation changes. Perhaps a solution will be discovered that was not considered by the parties entrenched in their own perspectives. The methods used for dealing with conflict are subjective, based on the observer's own cultural experience, the situation, the number of countries involved, and the positions of the parties.

This paper will be based on the qualitative method. The structure will proceed from broad questions about the use of mediation in Kuwait; i.e., how can Kuwaiti diplomats and mediators use their skills and abilities to help create a peaceful environment in the Middle East? To more focused and narrowly defined questions such as: What techniques do mediators use? Why are those techniques most useful?

This topic is personally important because I anticipate working in the Kuwaiti diplomatic corps. I have long been fascinated by the process of meeting with others who are essentially strangers and negotiating with them for whatever was needed, whether it was a political or business matter. Because negotiation with another culture is such a

complex matter of getting to know customs and convincing each other as to your trustworthiness, it is usually a long, slow process which involves time and starts with small agreements which are then tested to see who does what. If you fail in the small things, you will not be trusted in the large ones.

Because diplomatic efforts are usually in closed session, and the written records of the details are not released, possibly for years, possibly ever, and much of the work is informal anyway, I decided that I had two avenues open to me in terms of research: I could see what the library had to offer me in terms of specific situations where I knew that Kuwait was diplomatically involved in finding a resolution, and I could interview people who might have firsthand knowledge of some of these situations although I knew that what they could tell me would be limited to personal observation and general knowledge because of the secrecy of the specific content of most mediations. Personal interviews with Kuwaiti diplomats were helpful in confirming my hypothesis and focusing my research. However, they understandably had limited knowledge about the inner workings of the mediation process of the identified situations, since they were generally not present at the time the specific situations occurred. Therefore, the majority of my research was done from books and articles found in the Portland State University Library or over the Internet. I was careful to choose materials that had been peer-reviewed or could be verified through other sources, although many of the historical details—names, dates and places-- were also within my personal knowledge of Middle Eastern History.

Reading, interviews and discussions of the topic prompted a focus on the Lebanese Civil War, the joining of North and South Yemen, the Arab League and the

Gulf Co-operation Council as four clear-cut examples where Kuwait was specifically involved in mediation of various issues. Yet, in the majority of situations, this was a rather informal process where His Highness, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah shuttled back and forth between different parties, keeping the lines of communications open and exploring options with them. It was informal in the sense that there was no declared intent to sit down as a group and mediate a specific question, even though everyone knew that this was the basis for the visit. The problem was like an elephant in the room, even though it is not the declared reason for the visit, it is impossible to completely ignore unless the host refuses to open the subject. If so, good manners prohibits one from remarking on the elephant, as he would have mentioned the elephant if he were ready and willing to talk about it.

History of the Methodology

According to Creswell (2009), qualitative methodologies are relatively new in the field of research. Because they are based on more subjective processes, there has been some concern that they are not as reliable and verifiable as the traditional quantitative types of research. Qualitative researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behavior, or interviewing participants. They may use a formal instrument for collection of information, but the researcher himself is the collector of the data and the filter through which the data is sifted and categorized into important and unimportant categories. Wherever possible, multiple sources of data are used.

Qualitative research uses an emergent design. In other words, the design of the research and the need to add material or subjects, or even change the research question,

8

emerges as one does the research. I found as I researched that my research question was refined and that I needed to add mediation through the Gulf Co-operative Council to the content of my paper along with the Lebanese Civil War, Unification of Yemen and the Arab League Economic Summit of 2009.

The initial plan for this paper was to interview subjects on the topic of Kuwait's role as a mediator in the Middle East but it was quickly discovered that as the number of subjects available in the US was very limited. Further, although the two diplomats in question generously granted me interviews, that their ability to discuss Kuwait's historical role in Lebanon and Kuwait was limited. Most of their personal knowledge was confined to the January 2009 Arab League Economic Summit. They do know Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah personally and are well aware of his wisdom, graciousness and social skills, which are a large part of his ability to be a mediator. In his years as the Foreign Minister and then the Amir, Sheikh Sabah has been the leading mediator and diplomat for Kuwait. His skills are the ultimate expression of our Arab culture and he is the one whose experience will be the focus of this research.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Methodology

The typical methods of data collection in qualitative research are observation, interviews, documents and audio-visual materials. Unfortunately, there was no situation available here where a mediation in process could be observed, nor were documents on the specifics of prior mediations available. I had to rely on personal interviews, library research and watching the Arab League sessions on Al-Arabia and Al-Jazeera TV to observe His Highness Amir Sabah's behavior in the sessions. Nevertheless, the

9

interviews confirmed my expectation that in Arab culture a third party mediation is the typical method of resolution of problems between countries as well as individuals. Kuwait is frequently heavily involved in this process among other countries in the Gulf and with its allies throughout the greater Middle East because of the Kuwait Fund and its leadership involvement in the Arab League and the Gulf Co-operative Council due to the Amir's experience and his reputation for wisdom.

Substantial library literature referenced Kuwait's role in the chosen historical periods but more specific detail would have been helpful. Had the time and the funding been available, a trip to Kuwait to interview additional subjects would have provided this detail. Details about the Sheikh's personal style and approach in these situations would have made the paper more interesting. Nevertheless, all the information found has confirmed that in many cases, nations do not formally ask a third nation to mediate a dispute but they will accept informal intervention, which allows officials to speak discreetly but openly in closed session while maintaining their public reputation. If this party maintains contact with the opponent, thoughts, feelings, attitudes and suggestions can be passed on without direct contact and a potential for either an escalation or a loss of face. At that level, informal mediation becomes a matter of keeping the lines of communication open through leadership, wisdom and personal reputation applied with discretion, advice offered at an appropriate moment, and maintenance of each party's honor and face in the process.

Research Limitations

Because mediation is such a secretive process in terms of content, it is difficult to assess except in terms of success or failure. Apparently, it is a long-term process in most Middle Eastern situations, frequently dealing with issues which may be centuries old and rooted in tradition and history. Finding a solution is not easy and sometimes the best that can be done is keep the lines of communication open, hoping for a change in the situation, which will lead to a renewed determination and willingness to find an answer. As a result of the secrecy and the on again, off again, informal nature of the process, it has been difficult to find relevant material for examples. Additional research would be helpful to find more specific details, but it probably would simply confirm that the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry has been actively pursuing efforts to mediate relevant issues throughout the Middle East, using the knowledge and contacts of His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Sabah. Because of his reputation, his wisdom and his position, he is welcomed everywhere as a senior statesman and his suggestions are treated with the greatest respect.

Interviews

Shaikh Salem Al-Sabah is the Kuwaiti Ambassador to the United States, based in Washington DC. He previously served as the Ambassador to South Korea. He is a cousin to the Amir and, of course, knows him personally. He meets with both the Amir and the Minister of Finance regularly. His position is considered one of the highest in the Kuwaiti Diplomatic Corps and he and his wife have been described by *Diplomatic*

11

Connections Magazine as one of the "power couples" in the Washington DC Embassy scene. The strength, speed and fluency of his English was impressive.

Ambassador Abdullah Al Murad is the Ambassador from Kuwait to the United Nations. This is also a very high post and although he is not a member of the royal family, he has served Kuwait well for many years and also consults frequently with the Amir and other high members of the government. He reports to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. His interview responses were in Arabic, which were translated for the purposes of this paper.

In both interviews, the emphasis was placed on the reputation and wisdom of the leaders who are called upon to act as mediators. While the Middle East is full of leaders, it is His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Amir of Kuwait, Saudi King Abdullah, and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarek who are most often honored for their wisdom, gained through years of experience and strong but positive leadership, and who take the lead in the mediation process. Both interviews also briefly mentioned the Amir's experience and wisdom regarding mediation in the cases we will be discussing.

Chapter Two: Conflict Resolution Theory

We supplicate to the Creator the Almighty to correct our steps and guide us to the welfare and service of our Arab Ummah (community). Due to wisdom and good-offices, we managed with Almighty Allah's success to reach these blessed results. ~His Highness, The Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

Understanding theory provides us with a framework for interpreting the present and assists us in making predictions regarding the future. Different viewpoints allow us to assess what has enabled approaches/strategies to succeed or fail, and the circumstances under which a model does or does not work. Augsburger (1992) speaks of mediation as one of: "stepping between two colliding forces, competing wills, and clashing temperaments. It requires the ability to define and clarify, to separate and discern, to link and reconcile opposites; it is also the capacity to absorb tension, to suffer misunderstanding, to accept rejection, and to bear the pain of others' estrangement. The position of in-between is vulnerable yet vital; it is a precarious yet crucial and necessary human service" (393).

In traditional societies, mediation of disputes by trusted third parties is the most frequently used method of dispute settlement. In Western culture, a codified legal system had replaced that process to a great degree, but such a system often does not satisfy the parties, leaving anger and frustration in its wake. The wide variety of mediation options in traditional cultures is more satisfying and creates better outcomes for the individual and the society (Augsburger, 1992).

Needs Related Issues

It is part of human nature that every person in this world has needs. Needs reflect universal motivations and are part of every human being. Some of these needs vary with each person; others are pretty much standardized. Burton (1990) points out that it is reasonable to assume that some human motivations are required for the development of the species. These are considered needs in comparison to culturally specific motivations, called values and transitory motivations referred to as interests.

Individual identities are important but most of us believe that all humans share basic physical and emotional needs. For example, everyone needs food, water, and shelter but there are also needs for more abstract concerns such as security, recognition, acknowledgement, respect, affiliation, connection, identity, independence, freedom, autonomy, self-determination, love and human dignity. Maslow (1943) claims that food, shelter and physical safety are basic needs and that people only concern themselves with the higher level needs once those are essentially satisfied. However, some people will pick dignity or love over safety; for example, they may have such a strong need for love that they will let someone abuse them if they think they are loved. Here are those who have stronger needs than others do and those who try to detach from all human needs as a matter of personal growth or religious practice. However, human needs are part of our human nature.

Humans are relational. Most of us depend on others to meet our needs to some extent. According to Burrows (1996), people are so driven that if their needs are not met they will do whatever is necessary to have them met. Burrows cites Coate and

Rosati, who believe that individuals have no real choice and therefore will attempt to meet their needs even at the cost of personal disorientation and social disruption. An example of this might be people who are dissatisfied in their marriages and meet their emotional and sexual needs through adultery. They may or may not suffer divorce and scandal, even punishment, in some cases, but their needs are so strong that they are willing to take the chance. This would agree with Burton (1990), who argues that human beings are driven to satisfy their needs regardless of the consequences and even if this violates social norms and laws. Values and interests play a lesser part although they should also be considered. So one concludes that needs do drive human behavior. People act as they do in stressful situations because they feel they have no other choice. This is an important observation from the perspective of conflict management.

In modern society, people try to meet their personal needs by attempting to control their environment but they also attempt to control their behavior because of the controls imposed by the legal and social system. For example, in America, one might be late to work and decide to speed to get there on time, thus meeting a need. At the same time, speeding is illegal and possibly dangerous. The law imposes speed limits so that we will be safe and to protect other drivers at the same time. Most people will nevertheless ignore the speed limit in order to get to work on time and meet their personal need to keep their job and support their family.

Relationship of Needs to Social/Political Structure

This emphasis on the importance of the individual is not intended to mean that individuals should be isolated from the larger society. Family, work and other social groups are how most of us meet our individual needs. In a larger sense, these groups provide the framework in which we meet our needs for power, learn values and pursue interests. Azar (1990) suggests that a decentralized political structure is a good way of satisfying those needs through local participation and self-reliance. This process gives each person in the group a feeling of control over their own affairs; however, it may also lead to conflict if the overall government disagrees with the small group decisions or if this allows for division of the country into factions that want more power or separation from the larger governmental structure (Augsburger, 1992).

Most countries, particularly smaller ones like most of the gulf nations, use a centralized form of government because the geographic area and the number of people involved does not justify decentralization. Saudi Arabia is the exception in the Gulf because of its size. It is, in fact, divided into smaller governmental segments, which then report to the central government. Those who are in control of the country, whether elected or hereditary, must take some notice of human needs to remain in office. In the U.S, some politicians base their decisions on the needs of those they represent, while others use their position to meet their own needs or the needs of their major financial supporters. It depends on the country and the ruler. For example, Kuwait, Qatar and UAE are said to be welfare states because the oil money provides many benefits for their citizens including free education and health care, homes for newly married couples, and assistance with marriage costs. Alternatively, in Syria,

16

which is ruled by the BATH party, the politicians do their decision-making according to what will help their party survive and maintain power because it is in their personal best interest. That is part of why their country is in constant turmoil.

In Saudi Arabia, although it is a monarchy, the military and the religious fundamentalists must be appeased if the monarchy is to stay in power. In each country, there are similar pressures on the ruling class. Some sort of coalition must be formed or other interest groups played off against each other in order to keep the elite in power (Augsberger, 1992).

Politicians all swing between their own best interest and what might be fair and reasonable for the people. It can be as simple as who gets the biggest slice of cake or as complex as who gets control of the country and its resources. Everyone has their own version of what is best, sometimes thinly veiling his or her personal needs, values and interests. In conflict management, the object is to see beyond individual needs, values and interests of the moment and find a long-term resolution that works at some level for everyone. It may be impossible to convince some of the participants that this is in their best interests, but at least an effort should be made to meet some needs on all sides and find an agreeable position (Augsburger, 1992).

Mediation Based on Needs

This is where mediation becomes critical. Augsburger (1992) speaks of a Conflict Triangle where the three equal points are attitudes, behaviors and conflict situations. Each point is interrelated to the others. The mediator develops the skills of breaking open the conflict situation and examining the dynamics in order to untangle

17

attitudes and behaviors. He should introduce clarity by concentrating on common interests and separating the people (attitudes and behaviors) from the conflict situations. This allows everyone to be supportive of individuals while confronting the conflict situation.

The naturally occurring negative spiral of most conflicts can be halted by setting mutually agreed limits on the conflict process. A positive cycle can be started by cleaning up behavior and clarifying attitudes so that trust increases and a productive negotiation is allowed. Augsburger (1992) refers to this process as "conflict transformation." It is characterized by:

1. Transforming attitudes through a commitment to see the other with goodwill, mutual respect and intent to collaborate and cooperate.

2. Transforming behavior by limiting all action to collaborative acts in order to interrupt the negative cycle. This includes noncoercive processes of communication, negotiation, and dispute resolution even when there has been intense provocation. A commitment on both sides to act with restraint and mutual respect can change the dynamics of the negotiation.

3. Transforming conflict is the creative part. We must discover, define and remove incompatibilities in order to invent options for mutual gain. When conflicts are negative, these incompatibilities encourage negative attitudes, which lead to divisive and alienating behavior. These negative attitudes and behaviors are present in most people starting in early childhood but can be reframed positively.

According to Augsburger (1992), most of our weaknesses and fears are common to us all, and therefore conflict can be used as a unifying experience by linking the similarities of our attitudes. This allows conflict to be transformed with altered attitudes to seek mutual outcomes. When you can define mutually satisfactory outcomes, then it becomes easier to find creative solutions with collaborative values and cooperative goals. The process may even encourage respect or "face."

The Importance of Face and Cultural Context

"Face" refers to a psychological public image of or righteousness that each person wants to have for him or herself. This identity is defined by how others see you and how you see yourself. Face can be lost by public shaming or by personal guilt. In low-context Western cultures it is more commonly discussed as a loss of self-esteem or the esteem of others, related to pride and social significance. In high-context Eastern cultures, it is a critical element of relationships between members of the family and/or the community because the multiple faces of relatives, friends and family members are closely linked to the individual. It is reflected in one's honor in the community by status hierarchy, role position, and power resource. The more power you have, the more you can affect face in all those connected with you. For this reason, the behavior of family members reflects honorably or dishonorably on the whole family and shaming or dishonoring the family can be a reason for exile, suicide or even murder of a family member, as this will restore the family honor.

This is the difference between a low and high-context culture. Americans are low-context, prefer directness, specificity, frankness, confrontation, and open self-

disclosure (Augsburger, 1992). In Arab terms, direct confrontation is generally unacceptable. Tactfulness and indirect speech are valued in high-context cultures. In Arab culture, requests should be stated in a calm, non-challenging way that is indirect so that the other person can save face if he wants to say no. A direct confrontation leaves no room for flexibility.

Augsburger (1992) suggests that teaching people to value each other's welfare creates cooperation and mutuality. Learning reciprocity with the goal of ultimate cooperation means that reinforcing the positive may eventually build unconditional trust and cooperativeness, according to Augsburger. Further, agreeing to transform behavior so that both sides act with restraint and mutual respect changes the dynamics of the situation from mistrust to trust. Conflict can be transformed by discovering, defining, and removing incompatible behavior through creative design. Attitudes learned in childhood can be relearned and reframed in positive ways to create mutuality.

The importance of this concept in Eastern cultures such as the Middle East, a mediator must be especially careful that efforts to negotiate preserve face of both sides (Augsburger 1992). For this reason, it is often preferable to meet with each party privately because they can be more open about their situation with a third party when the party who would perceive any admission as a loss of face is not present. Negotiations must be subtle and indirect in these situations and are difficult to manage unless one is very knowledgeable about the standards of the culture(s) involved. This is part of the reason that the U.S. has had limited success in attempting to resolve problems in the Middle East. Western cultures are blunt, outspoken and confrontive.

20

Such a process simply does not work in a culture where it is critical that face be preserved and supported on both sides for the negotiation to have a positive outcome.

In many ways, high and low context cultures are opposites. Individualistic low-context cultures emphasize privacy and autonomy of the individual, where high-context cultures emphasize interdependence and inclusion in the group. For the individualist, the greatest threat will be the loss of autonomy and the loss of self-control. For the collectivist, the worst outcome will be the loss of inclusion, approval and association with the group. Therefore, in high-context Asian cultures, the avoidance of direct conflict becomes an art. It is not so much an issue of kindness or consideration, but a way of keeping conflict under the surface and maintaining harmony in interpersonal relations (Augsburger, 1992).

In low-context societies, when there is a conflict that must be resolved, secret negotiations can save face for both sides by keeping the details from groups who are not directly involved but will still affect the face of the parties. Since the negotiations are not face-to-face, at least initially, the parties also do not lose face with one another. If a resolution is reached, a public announcement can then be made in terms which show a balanced result, even if, in reality, one side did gain an advantage. Augsburger (1992) points out that it is critical not to push one party to the point where there is nothing left to lose because you leave them no alternative but to attack. On the other hand, when face saving in negotiations, it is common that the actual conflict is avoided so no genuine resolution is found. It is critical that the mediation process be used for problem solving, not just saving of face. If the conflict is simply covered up, it is likely to be violent when it does come into the open.

Some societies emphasize harmony and others competitiveness. Nevertheless, each has conflict in roughly the same proportion. The main difference is that in the harmony-reinforcing society, conflicts are likely to be based on a need for joint decision- making and greater inclusion in process and consequences. Dore (1959) points out that if the group is serious about practicing harmony, conflicts will be internalized. He states: "Competition within a group which is in theory harmoniously united tends to become fiercer and more emotionally involved than in one where competition is accepted as normal. As such it leaves scars after the event in the resentful humiliation of the defeated" (Dore, 1959, p. 73). Therefore, a community or nation which buries its competitive urges for the supposed benefit of the group may see that those buried hostilities are still very much alive among those who perceive themselves as the losers even after decades.

Approaches to Mediation

Typically, conflicts are approached on either an either-or approach or a both-and approach. An either-or approach insists that there is one truth. Both sides, therefore, cannot be equally true. If one is true, the other is false. There is an objective and absolute value of truth and the decision must conform to it. In contrast, the both-and approach assumes that both sides contain part of the truth. There are no absolute, clear-cut, totally right choices so both sides must be considered carefully. In the eastern viewpoint, appearances are always deceiving. Harmony, unity and balance are more important than truth, perfection and absolute answers. The wise man will

look for agreements that are possible and workable, even if they are partial as long as both sides can agree without alienation or exclusion (Augsburger, 1992).

One method of resolving conflicts in a harmony-oriented society is to use patience, forbearance, and the passage of time, allowing the disagreement to resolve itself as the parties go on with their lives and time makes the issue less important. When both parties are respected and have face, this may work. Alternatively, mediation may be used. Augsburger (1992) points out that there is a difference between Western and Asian conflict and dispute. Meeting individually with a third party allows both sides to save face because they can be honest without directly shaming the other party. This third party "has face" with both sides and his objective is to find an acceptable resolution for both parties that will restore friendly relations. He does not concentrate on right or wrong, or being reasonable, only on restoring harmony. The participants may not be totally satisfied with the results, but, at some point, they must agree in order to save the third party's "face."

Necessity of a third Party

Not unreasonably, parties in a dispute are hostile, suspicious, secretive and lacking in trust. While they may want to settle their own disputes—after all, it is their business—they are generally too entrenched in their own negotiating position to design a creative solution. If they use a power play to force a resolution in their own favor, it will probably come back to haunt them. According to Augsburger (1992), there are at least two reasons that a third party is usually more successful in finding a solution:

1. The parties are usually bogged down in their habitual positions from years of arguing and assumptions about how things "ought" to be. They lack experience in lateral thinking and solution design.

2. Regardless of their desire to find a solution, the parties in an entrenched argument are emotionally and intellectually unable to think in ways that are distinct from their positions in the conflict.

Practically and logically, a third party makes sense if we are to arrive at a solution. A third party may function in a variety of ways—introducing new information or offering an intervention—which allows the parties to look at the problems in different ways than they are accustomed to. Richard Walton (1960) suggests that the third party performs a series of strategically important functions:

- A third party can assess the motivation to achieve a resolution on each side. For success, both sides must be motivated. If this is not the case, then the mediator can use delaying tactics and limit the investment of the more committed party while he works to increase the commitment on the other side.

- A third party can help to balance the power relationship within the conflict. If one party is significantly more powerful it will be difficult to establish trust and create a meaningful dialogue. Balance can be achieved by carefully structuring the mediation arrangements or bringing in more allies for the weaker party.

- A third party can help to balance the moves by each side to interpret the interactions more accurately. The goal is symmetry in the process so that

neither side moves too quickly or misinterprets the moves of the other side.

- A third party can provide progress reports and define the stages of the negotiation so that the parties see progress. It is important that the parties agree on a problem definition and the perspectives. A clear statement on the range of issues to be negotiated must be clearly stated and recognized by all parties before they can move on to actual negotiation.

- A third party can assess the openness of the dialogue and introduce helpful processes that can improve clear expression of differences, provide support that allows expression of threatening feelings and draw out data needed for the negotiation process. All information must be authentic, culturally congruent, and socially and organizationally appropriate.

- A third party can facilitate communication by improving interpretation on both sides. This can be done by restating messages and interpreting statements until the intent of the sender and the impact on the receiver are as close as possible. We need to require responses that are not protective of the individual but responsive to the original message

- A third party can maintain tension in the negotiation process. The tension level can be raised if the participants need a push, or lowered, if they are feeling threatened or defensive.

In short, it is the mediator's job to keep the parties motivated, on track and making progress toward a successful result. Augsburger (1992) summarizes that the

mediator should be "hard on process, soft on content" (p. 159). The third party sets boundaries for the negotiation but has should have little power over the outcome. He has control over steps and schedule but should be neutral over the results. Otherwise, he will inhibit honest exchanges, bias the choice of strategies and gradually create distrust in the process and the mediator himself. If the parties do not feel that the outcome is their own, but somehow imposed upon them by an outsider, one or both of them will eventually disown the outcome and the whole thing will fall apart, perhaps resulting in violence.

Third-Party Skills and Functions

According to Augsburger (1992), in any conflict the mediator/negotiator needs to be mindful of the following methods:

1. His job is to search for a solution rather than analyze blame or responsibility. He can refuse to allow discussions of who did what to whom. He may need to repetitively state that the purpose of the forum is to seek creative discussions, not to assign blame.

2. The negotiator should set the agenda and assign stages. Any agenda should cut across the lines of argument. Stages might be exploration, designing, narrowing options, evaluating outcomes, and defining agreements. It is his job to maintain stage clarity.

3. Requiring specific exercises, experiences and thought processes can help to focus the agenda and move the process towards creative design.

4. Linking and focusing the principals helps to maintain the agenda, offer equal opportunity for expression and recognize insights and possible changes in

position. It also allows the mediator to cut off discussion if the situation seems to be deteriorating; introduce methods to unstuck progress; refocus in times of drift; and notice, improve and store ideas that do develop.

5. Be creative about offering observations, questions, proverbs and quotes. Provoke discussion through reversals, exaggeration, paradox, contradiction or polarity. Utilize stories, metaphors, cases, images. Repeat principles and values both parties have affirmed and goals they share.

6. Pirate ideas from any useful source using redesign. It can then be presented as one's own idea so that none of the parties has to deal with it as a suggestion from one side or the other (even though that may be the case).

7. Review issues at an abstract level to broaden perspectives and help participants see the overall picture.

Chapter Three: Historical and Cultural Context

Introduction

In conflict resolution between nations, it is critical to be aware of the history and culture among and between the countries and consider these aspects when dealing with the parties and making suggestions for negotiated terms. For example, one should always consider the issues discussed in the theory section of high versus low context culture and issues of "face." Within the boundaries set for this paper, conflict resolution between Middle Eastern nations is explored. These nations are primarily Arab and have some cultural and religious commonality. Even so, assuming commonality is a very broad assumption and generalizations are always dangerous.

Each of the regions outside the Arabian Peninsula were not originally Arabian in culture and even though there have been many intermarriages and mingling of the Arabic culture (primarily based on the Islamic religion) over the decades, there are still elements of the original culture which come into play. For example, ancient Egypt was not Arabic. Their culture and religion were probably as different from Islam as one could imagine and it is unclear what their ethnic heritage may have been. Even though Islamic armies conquered the area hundreds of years ago and the two populations have intermingled to the point where Egyptians are generally considered Arabs, with Arabic the primary language and Islam the majority religion, the culture is more liberal and different in many ways from that of the Gulf.

In comparison, Iranians are a totally different ethnic group from Arabs even though they are fellow Muslims. Arabs and Jews are Semitic. Persians are part of an Indo-European genetic group and Farsi, the majority language, is also Indo-European.

Even though there is a large pocket of Arabs on the Coast of Iran and many Persians immigrated to the Arab side of the Gulf generations ago and have been assimilated into the Arab population, awareness is still high that there are huge differences in the culture. There is also a certain amount of hostility between the two groups because of major differences in Sunni and Shi'a Islam and a sense that Iran would like to control, if not absorb, the Gulf states. The majority in the Gulf states are Sunni Islam and the majority in Iran are Shi'a. There are broad differences in interpretation between the two and many Sunni go so far as to say that Shi'a are not really Muslim. As one can imagine, an awareness of such potential differences must be kept in mind when considering mediation issues. Additionally, the leader of each nation has his or her own agenda for their country and their people and personal power and plans often play a large part in their demands.

Because it is tradition and because it seems to work well in Middle Eastern culture, the standard for mediation in the Middle East, as mentioned by both the Ambassadors, is to accept advice from a third party, preferably, but not always, one who is far enough away from the conflict to be neutral. Ambassador Salem Al-Sabah stated:

> Mediation is an art of finding common ground and then starting to build confidence and trust between the parties. I think this confidence is often what is missing in the Arab world. King Abdullah tried to address this [at the recent Arab League summit] by saying that if the Arab world is not unified we will never be secure. That we need to recognize the common ground between us so that we can achieve our common objectives. In mediation we look for building blocks to build confidence and I think that's exactly what happened in the summit.

Ambassador Al-Murad had similar thoughts:

Mediation is defined as one country with goodwill trying to help two other countries with a problem settle their issues before their problems cause damage in international relationships and possibly lead to war. The two countries have to choose a third person who is well-respected and accepted because of his strong reputation as a wise man and peacemaker.

As one can see, both Ambassadors defined mediation as requiring a neutral third party. While it is the intention to resolve potential differences before they require mediation, they are both very clear that this is a different process from diplomacy and requires a mediator, not diplomacy. Both also speak of the reputation and wisdom of the Amir and King Abdullah as seasoned leaders who are willing to help reconcile differences. This confirms that reputation and wisdom is a primary factor in being accepted as a mediator in this culture, even informally.

The Gulf culture has historically been very contentious, with fighting between different tribes for scarce resources and a strong tradition of honor, or "face." Traditionally, when a disagreement occurred between two tribes, if it could not be resolved quickly, the sheikh of a neutral third tribe would be invited to step in to mediate differences and restore peace. This did not mean that the problem was necessarily resolved, but that a way was found for all parties to live with it in peace. Perhaps the choice would be to ignore the specific issue and choose to act in a peaceful manner and see if time could clear the antagonism. Perhaps they would put the issue on hold and work on other concerns to build trust and goodwill before tackling the major issue. Confrontation is not a preferred method of problem solving because as long as you do not directly confront the issue, you cannot lose and you retain pride, honor and self-respect.

The result is that many ancient enmities are still in play and grievances have accumulated under the surface over the years, which occasionally explode into open violence without any apparent large causal event. One example would be the recent invasion of the Gaza Strip by Israel. The daily lobbing of homemade rockets into Israel is the identified reason, but those rockets were not particularly dangerous and this had been going on for months. The real reason was the long-term hostility between Israel and Hamas. Israeli public opinion overwhelmingly supported invasion of Gaza, even though this was a disproportionate response, and the government felt compelled to act. They simply reached an accumulated tipping point.

There are still grievances created by the French and British during the historical Mandate period, which have caused difficulties between nations because of unresolved border disputes due to arbitrarily drawn borders. In modern days, as nation building has consolidated the tribes and created a more nationalistic agenda, the terms of any conflict have escalated from the concerns of two or three small tribes to the concerns of a nation. With the discovery of oil, the stakes in the outcome of many conflicts have also escalated seriously because of the value of such resources to the individual government. Therefore, the mediation process has become more difficult as the outcome has higher stakes.

Technically, most of the countries that we now broadly categorize as the Middle East were not separate countries until after World War I. Most, including Turkey, Iran, the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa were part of the Ottoman Empire, ruled from Istanbul. Some, like Lebanon, were already rather Europeanized due to strong trading relationships with European countries, but mostly not. At the

31

end of World War I, when the allies started to realize the strategic value of the Gulf, including the possibilities of oil, they decided to divide the region up into protectorates between themselves. Of course, this also precluded the reestablishment of something similar to the Ottoman Empire. Under the Treaty of Versailles (1918-1919), all countries formerly under Ottoman rule were considered nominally independent, subject to the assistance and advice of the country charged as mandating them. The area was divided primarily between the British and French.

This has resulted in a powerful history of European colonialism in the Middle East. Borders between tribes, which had been hazy, were drawn without much regard for history or ethnicity, perhaps with a deliberate intent to divide powerful tribes or just for the convenience of the European powers. Some of these arbitrarily drawn borders have been contested ever since. For example, Kuwait was historically a protectorate of the Ottoman Empire, just as Iraq was, and there were no clear borders at that time. This was the justification that Iraq used for invading Kuwait in 1990. Lebanon was a tiny city-state until the French decided to move the border by adding a section of Muslim Syria to Christian Lebanon. Syria would still like to reacquire that territory. The lines of disagreement, as in most areas of the Middle East, are consistently drawn on the basis of religious, ethnic or tribal values (Bill and Leiden, 1979).

The European Mandates

Under the terms of the mandates granted by the League of Nations in 1922, Britain would be responsible for Iraq, Kuwait, Jordan, Palestine and Egypt and France

for Syria, Lebanon, Algeria, Morocco and some other parts of North Africa. Yemen and Saudi Arabia were initially considered independent, but surrounded by mandated countries, which limited their independence in reality. The *Maghrib* was important to France because it provided labor for the French army as well as minerals and materials for industry. It was the home of over 1,000,000 French citizens. Routes from Asia to French possessions in central and West Africa (as well as Europe) passed through it. By 1939, France was getting more than half of its oil from Iraq via pipelines through Syria and Lebanon, and there was a moral commitment to the Christians in the mandated areas (Hourani, 1991). French interests were protected by the French army and navy.

During the period 1918-1939, Britain and France consolidated their positions and expanded their control over the trade and production of the area. French capital improved the infrastructure—irrigation, railways, roads, electrical plants, and exploration of mineral resources in addition to building thriving ports at Beirut and Tripoli. British investment expanded the cultivation of high-quality cotton from Egypt and developed the Port of Haifa in Palestine. Both powers also invested in development of the oil fields, although they were very limited at this point. Pipelines from Iraq were built to Haifa and Tripoli where the oil and other exports, primarily raw materials, could be loaded on British and French ships. Refining and manufacturing was done in Europe and some finished goods were returned to the Middle East for consumers. All the Arab nations were dependent on Europe for manufactured goods, including fuels, metals and machinery (Hourani, 1991).

About 10-12 percent of the settlers in the mandated countries were European (Hourani, 1991, p. 323). They migrated for business purposes, frequently taking up citizenship as well as residence in the mandate country. Through migration and intermarriage with locals, an elite group was created. These people were educated and wealthy, middle and upper class, merchants and civil servants. They depended on their power to defend their own interests. They saw themselves as carrying out a civilizing mission in Arab countries through the creation of justice, order and prosperity as well as raising the level of society in general.

This elite eventually wanted legitimacy for their authority through independence from the mandate, but they also wanted the military protection of the European country. Achieving both at the same time was a tricky balancing act. At the same time, France at least, was questioning the costs of maintaining the mandate, especially in Syria. However, no one in France was suggesting withdrawal since the mandate had come to be seen as an extended part of the French homeland. Nevertheless, the educated elite gradually increased the pressure for autonomy and presented a Europeanized version of local government which both France and Britain found very persuasive. Nationalism became more and more of an issue in all of the Mandate states (Hourani, 1991).

World War II changed the structure of power in the world. The destruction of Europe, the financial burdens of the war, and the emergence of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. as superpowers, eventually led to an end of British and French control of the Middle East over the next two decades. In 1940, when France was defeated by Germany and Italy occupied Yugoslavia and Greece, there were fears that the German

army would move further east and occupy Syria, Lebanon and Iraq. The British army immediately occupied these areas and stopped the advance of the German army. By 1943, the war in the *Maghrib* was essentially over and the area was being used to reform the French army so it could rejoin the allies in the last part of the war in Europe. The changes in world power made many Arabs believe that a better life was possible. The pressure for independence increased (Hourani, 1991).

The circumstances of the war led to a desire on the part of Arab countries for closer unity among themselves. This movement centered in Cairo, primarily because it was a center of economic and military decision-making and the home of the charismatic Gamal Abdul Nasser, President of Egypt, who was generally regarded as the leader, and the idea was well received by many those who remembered the days under Ottoman rule. Lebanon was on a tightrope between those who thought of themselves as Arabs and therefore part of the Arab Unity movement, and Lebanese Christians, who thought of themselves as closer to Europeans. Most other Middle Eastern countries thought of themselves as Arab, but maintained their own national interests as primary (Hourani, 1991).

One result of this desire for a closer relationship and the problems within the Arab world was the 1945 creation of the League of Arab States. It began with Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Syria and Yemen joined shortly thereafter. When the League was formed, its stated aims were to strengthen and coordinate the political, cultural, economic and social programs of its members and to mediate disputes among them and or between them and third parties. In addition, an agreement of joint defense and economic cooperation, committing the members to

coordination of military defense measures was signed in 1950. The headquarters were in Cairo and over the years the membership increased to 22 members.

In the meantime, France continued to deliberate about its interests in the Middle East. One reason they hesitated to grant these countries autonomy was that this was seen as releasing them to British influence, which was unacceptable to most French. After separate violent outbreaks in both Lebanon and Syria in attempts to limit French authority, resulting in British intervention from Palestine to restore peace, an agreement was reached that both Britain and France would withdraw from the whole area in 1945, handing over control to local authorities (Hourani, 1991).

However, there was an ongoing European legacy in languages, educational systems, governmental structure and business and trading relationships that had been established for decades. These continued and this cultural and economic legacy must be considered when dealing with countries in the Middle East (Hourani, 1991). For example, Lebanese people spoke French, Arabic, English and a smattering of other languages. Their legal and school systems were set up on the French model.

Lebanon

Although Muslims conquered the area now referred to as Lebanon around 636 CE, resulting in an alteration of the religious and linguistic balance of the region, the dominance of Christianity in Mount Lebanon persisted through 13 centuries under the Umayyads, Abbasids, Crusaders, Mamluks and Ottomans. The area around Mount Lebanon essentially enjoyed autonomy from 1600 CE onward. There was fighting between Christians and Muslim Druze in 1860 and the result was the creation of a

special Christian city-state status for Beirut and Mount Lebanon that continued until after World War I, when Lebanon emerged as a separate nation with a French mandate under the League of Nations.

Because the French felt the area around Mount Lebanon was too small to be a viable state, and they desired to further limit the power of Syria, it was decided to detach a section of coastal plain, the Bekaa and the Anti-Lebanese mountain range from Syria to make Lebanon longer and wider to increase its economic viability. Nevertheless, it is a small country and can be traversed by car, even lengthwise, in a few hours. It lies along the Mediterranean Sea surrounded by Syria on its north and east and Israel to the south. This inclusion of additional Sunni Muslims, Shi'a Muslims, Druze and non-Maronite Christians, without their consent, increased the political instability of the country and gave Syria claims for ongoing border disputes. Many of the included Sunnis, Shi'a and Druze were not happy to be separated from Muslim Syria and included in Christian Lebanon (Held, 2006).

Since it is on the Mediterranean, Beirut, lying in the shadow of Mount Lebanon and almost in the center of the Lebanese coastline, was a highly prized port for shipment of goods from Asia and the Middle East to Turkey, Cyprus and Europe. In addition, because it was controlled by Christians, Beirut became very culturally diverse, with elements of virtually every major ethnic or religious group in the Fertile Crescent. We can say that the major antagonisms are between Christians and Muslims, but that would neglect the antagonisms between more than a dozen Christian subgroups and half a dozen Muslim subgroups. These interreligious tensions are so high that many Christian groups have opposed a census to determine the current

population balance since 1932. At that time, Christians were still the majority. They feared that a new census would most certainly reveal that Muslims are now the majority and this would endanger the delicate balance in the government (Held, 2006).

Because Lebanon has a large number of Christians, it was closer to being European than other Middle Eastern countries. Beirut became one of the commercial and intellectual capitals of the Arab world. The French presence was not only a matter of armies and the large French community, who controlled the economy and held most positions in the government, but also that French and Lebanese political and economic interests were very intertwined and dissolution required greater effort. The idea of separation met with strong resistance in both France and Lebanon for many years, but in the end, Lebanon was given independence in 1941 by the Free French, and that independence was confirmed in 1943. French troops left the area in 1946 (Held, 2006: Hourani, 1991).

At the time of Independence, Lebanese territory included three regions with different kinds of population and traditions of government. The region of Mount Lebanon, with a population of mainly Maronite Christians in the north and mixed Druze and Christian in the south had a long history of separate rule under its own administrators. The other coastal cities with a mixed Muslim and Christian population, and certain rural areas to the east and south of Mount Lebanon, had both been part of the Ottoman Empire, but were considered part of Greater Syria until incorporated into Lebanon by the French mandate. The new state had a constitutional government and an informal "Gentlemen's Agreement" that the President of the Republic should always be a Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister should always be

a Sunni Muslim, the President of the Parliament should be Shi'a, Druze and other groups would be represented in cabinet posts, and a Maronite would command the armed forces. Other posts of government should be distributed among the different religious communities, but the overall balance of power should remain in Christian hands because they were in the majority (Held, 2006: Hourani. 1991).

Between 1945 and 1958 a balance was maintained and there was general cooperation between the different factions; however, as the demographics changed towards a Muslim majority, it became harder and harder to keep the status quo. A large contingent of Shi'a Muslims was extremely economically depressed compared to other ethnic groups. In 1958, the system broke down into civil war between Muslims and Christians. After a few months the system was reestablished but the underlying conditions were not modified. The government was fragile and powerful interests did not want any changes that would disturb the balance (Hourani, 1991). By the 1970s, the combination of Sunni, Shi'a and Druze Muslims were clearly in the majority. They were not happy with a situation that left the Christians in complete control of the government. They also wanted a redistribution of wealth through taxation and social services (Held, 2006).

Since 1948, Lebanon has had problems with Palestinian refugees from Israel in its southern areas. Many of the more educated Palestinians had moved to Beirut and created lives but there were still refugee camps, which have created an economic and political burden for Lebanon. After the Jordanian army forcibly ejected Palestinian refugees who tried to set up a state-within-a-state in Jordan, the size of the refugee camps in Lebanon increased and the situation in Lebanon became more critical. The

Lebanese government staggered in 1958. It broke down again in 1968-69 and once again in 1973 due to Palestinian-Lebanese army firefights (Held 2006).

Additionally, rapid economic changes had encouraged a dramatic growth pattern in Beirut. The city had expanded to take in more than half of the total population and provided more than half of the total jobs. It had become an extended city-state and needed a stronger, more effective government (Hourani, 1991). It was a Maronite-Palestinian battle in Beirut that triggered the full-scale fighting in Lebanon in 1975 and the politically fragmented Lebanese government was powerless to stop them (Held, 2006).

Lebanon has always had a limited population, small geographical area, and no mineral or oil resources. As a result, these enterprising people had relied on their skills as traders and intermediaries. Their service economy was based on financial services and consultative expertise, making them the financial Switzerland of the Middle East. Their top-notch educational facilities and medical services, a modern port and airport, five-star hotels, recreation areas and other services made them very popular during a period when these services were inadequate in most of the Middle East. Many European companies and embassies based their people in the "Paris of the East" and it was a highly desirable vacation spot as the oil wealth of the Gulf grew and tourism became popular (Held, 2006).

Before the 1975-1991 civil war, tourism was a leading economic activity in Lebanon. During the fighting, Lebanon lost its economic and tourist role as wealthy Middle East Arabs avoided the country. Most of the oil-rich Gulf States have now developed equal or better facilities in education and medical care and although

Lebanon has rebuilt its tourist attractions there is much competition from other attractive areas in Egypt, Morocco and the United Arab Emirates. It will probably never truly regain the position and wealth that it lost through the years of fighting (Held, 2006).

To further complicate the problem, there are large numbers of Palestinian refugees who have lived in absolute poverty in crowded camps near the Lebanon/Israel border since the 1948 civil war in Palestine, which resulted in the establishment of Israel as a country. Since then, the number of refugees in Lebanon has increased due to a high birthrate within the camps and with each additional Arab-Israeli conflict. These people had few job skills and no political rights. They tried to create their own country-within-a-country and encouraged, even created, conflict with Israel in an attempt to regain their own homeland. Their problems, while technically separate from those of the Lebanese citizens, create constant internal problems for the Lebanese government and problems between Lebanon and Syria and/or Lebanon and Israel, which simply increase the nature and scope of the already difficult situation and strain the resources of all the countries involved. Finally, both Christian and Muslim have a variety of different subsects, each with their own agenda for their people and each willing to kill their neighbors to get what they regard as a fair share of the control and resources. So we have Christians arguing with Christians and Muslims arguing with both Muslims and Christians trying to hold on to power in a country that has now become a Muslim majority but is still controlled by Christians.

For sixteen years after 1975, Lebanon suffered periods of killing and destruction of its infrastructure that alternated with uncertain cease-fires. More than a

dozen factions fielded heavily armed militias. Palestinian Fatah guerrillas in the south made strikes into Israel, leading to reprisals and Israeli invasions in 1978 and 1982. Israeli assaults on Lebanon in 1982 killed more than 17,000 civilians and destroyed hundreds of structures (Held, 2006). Syria invaded Lebanon at the same time, with the expressed intention of helping the Lebanese against the Israelis but fierce attacks by the Israelis forced sea evacuation of thousands of PLO and Syrian troops. A multi-national force restored order temporarily; however, once order appeared to be restored and that force was removed, a Maronite Phalange, apparently with indirect Israeli support, massacred more than 900 civilians in the Sabra-Shatila Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut (Held, 2006).

This infamous action was condemned internationally and the multi-national force was returned. However, newly recruited Muslim soldiers took the place of the PLO anti-Israel and anti-Western forces and both Israelis and Westerners took heavy losses due to new guerilla tactics. Truck bombs destroyed four major sites, including the American Embassy, the U.S. marine barracks, the French barracks and the Israeli military headquarters near Tyre. The Shi'a Hizballah moved to continue attacks on Israel from Southern Lebanon and they, as well as Druze fighters, particularly targeted U.S. Marines. In response, U.S. aircraft and battleships targeted Syrian, Druze and Hizballah positions (Held, 2006).

His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah had been the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister since 1963. He was also the chair of the six party committee of the Arab League. Because of his many years of service he was often referred to as "*Sheikh al Diplomaseen*," (roughly, Prince of the Diplomats) a title

honoring his many years of service as a minister, diplomat and mediator. He worked with the different Lebanese factions regularly, through the Arab League, trying to mediate a solution to this war. Although he was initially unsuccessful, he kept trying, pointing out that if peace could be reached, Kuwait would be willing to help rebuild the infrastructure using grants and low-interest loans from the Kuwait Fund. It is believed that his efforts played a long-term role in reaching the eventual settlement. Unfortunately, the Lebanese government and military were simply not strong enough to resolve their internal problems until the toll of death and destruction had played itself out (Al-Murad, 2009; Al-Sabah, 2009).

The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) is Kuwait's agency for the provision and administration of financial and technical assistance to developing countries. It was funded in 1961 by Sheikh Jaber Al-Sabah, who was then Minister of Finance, to ensure that a share of Kuwait's oil wealth would benefit Kuwait's neighbors and friends. The fund is used at the discretion of the Foreign Affairs Minister, but it is somewhat limited in application to infrastructure projects, schools, hospitals, water development, etc. The original endowment for the fund was KD 50 million (US$170,352,000). It was funded with an additional KD 200 million in 1966 and is presently at KD 2000 million even though there have been many donations to other Gulf countries where it was thought that such an investment would enhance the prospects of peace and prosperity (Al-Murad, 2009; Kuwait Fund, 2009).

Lebanon and the Lebanese suffered greatly during this civil war. By early 1991, it was estimated that about 140,000 people had been killed and as many more wounded (Held, 2006). Two presidents had been assassinated and the cities and

public services lay in shambles with approximately $50 billion in structural losses (Held, 2006, p. 306). Syria had sent soldiers into eastern Lebanon, ostensibly to help maintain the peace, but in reality hoping to reattach this area to Syria, while maintaining a balance against Israel (Held, 2006).

Sometimes the conflict has to be so terrible that the parties are desperate to find a peaceful solution before they will accept official and public help. We believe that this was the case with Lebanon and when the situation came to that point, Saudi Arabia provided a neutral space and the Arab League (including Kuwait) was able to help them work out an acceptable solution through a formal process of discovery and negotiation.

Finally, weary of death and destruction, and under constant pressure from the Arab League (especially Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait) as well as the Western powers, and with many promises of economic support, a majority of the surviving 1972 Lebanese parliament met in Taif, Saudi Arabia, in 1989 and signed a Document of National Understanding, generally referred to as the Taif Agreement. All militias were disarmed and a more representative government was put into place. The Maronite president, the Sunni prime minister and the Shi'a speaker of parliament had their powers changed to be more in balance with the actual population and the parliament was made 50 percent Christian and 50 percent Muslim. While this was still short of what the presumed Muslim majority had hoped for, the terms were within an acceptable range (Al- Murad, 2008; Al-Sabah, 2009; Held, 2006).

Analysis of Mediation in Lebanon

Most certainly, Augsberger's (1992) definition of mediation as "stepping between two colliding forces" fits the situation in Lebanon. Because of the long history of Christianity in the Mount Lebanon area and the strong European culture that developed in that area, compared with the attached sections of primarily Arab Muslims, which were simply shifted from Syria to Lebanon without any democratic process, there is naturally conflict in terms of culture, religion, and expectations.

If we apply Maslow's needs hierarchy to this situation we can quickly see that only peace will provide the necessary basics of food, water, shelter and safety. The people in the camps or the more rural areas may feel that even these basic needs are tenuous, but still some of the abstract needs of recognition, acknowledgement, respect, affiliation, connection, identity, independence, freedom, autonomy, self-determination, love and human dignity come into play. For Arabs, respect, identity and affiliation are big issues no matter how rich or poor you may be. At some level every person wants these things.

As third-parties, Kuwaiti diplomats cannot interfere with the internal workings of the Lebanese government, but it can maintain contact with all parties, and promote peace through careful use of monies from the Kuwait Fund and encouragement towards equity for all citizens. Financial incentives cannot maintain peace where there are huge inequalities, but it can provide infrastructure to help make those at the lower end of the economic continuum feel that they are less disadvantaged. For example, provision of schools and medical clinics can help people live better even though it does not increase their actual income. Then, with health and an education, they have the opportunity to

make a better living. Provision of human services and infrastructure for less fortunate nations is the role that Kuwait has chosen to play through the Kuwait fund. While we cannot support every country in the Middle East, we can make careful investment in infrastructure and maintain relationships with all parties, helping them find alternatives and offering a good example of a peaceful transition to a democratic and constitutional government and acceptance of cultural and religious diversity as a means to building a stable country and maintaining peace.

Under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, with his experience as foreign minister and then Amir, Kuwait has had the benefit of years of experience in dealing with foreign governments. Of course, this experience has emphasized the Middle Eastern countries due to his position as the chair of the six party committee of the Arab League. He works especially hard at maintaining close contact with all of the members of the Arab League and trying to help smooth out problems among the members before they can become serious.

It was in this way that he continued contact with the members of the Lebanese government throughout the civil war period, even when they were temporarily unable to maintain control of the country. With the help and advice of the members of the Arab league, the legitimate government was eventually able to regain control and work out a solution, which, while not perfect, was sufficient to regain peace among the different factions. While control of the country may continue to be tenuous, as long as the government is not truly representative and there are groups that receive less than equal rights, at least during a period of peaceful relations they can work on the remaining problems, preventing future disintegration into war. Therefore, diplomacy continues

within the Arab League and mediation attempts to find solutions between those who disagree. While some solutions are seen as more productive than others, there is no assignment of "good" or "bad" in relationship to the different parties of the disagreement. In addition, there has been significant investment in the Lebanese infrastructure by the Kuwait Fund as well as private investment by Kuwaiti citizens in business, property, and non-profit foundations intended to help stabilize the country and return it to a safe and secure place to live. There are still many problems to be resolved, but we can only go one step at a time, building relationships of mutual cooperation and relying on the wisdom and experience of the Amir. He can do more than anyone else because of the respect for his age, wisdom and experience.

In any Middle Eastern country, all the parties are concerned with loss of face. Even within families it is not typical to confront others directly less the situation gets out of control.

Rather, the unhappy person will go to a trusted family member, usually someone older, and ask them to intercede or at least ask for advice. For example, an unhappy husband will go to his father-in-law or brother-in-law for help in resolving a problem with his wife, assuming that they are trustworthy and wise. It is very important to proceed gently. There is very little to be done except encourage a commitment on each side to see the other with goodwill, mutual respect and intent to collaborate and cooperate.

Yemen

Yemen, along with Saudi Arabia, was less interesting to the colonial powers that exploited other Gulf countries after World War I. Perhaps this was because the

47

Yemeni economy was agricultural. Due to the mountainous terrain along the coast, everything was terraced to gain the maximum growing area. The area lends itself to growing premium coffees, rice and specialty grains as well as fruits and vegetables. However, the British became very involved with Yemen because they built a refueling depot at Aden, the coastal capital. Aden was declared a crown colony in 1837. This refueling station became extremely important in World War II. Their control gradually moved up the wadis and across the plateaus but was never extensive in the inland areas (Held, 2006).

From that point, the high (North) Yemen and the Southern coast and plateaus had entirely different experiences. Along the coast there was a three-sectored protectorate with the eastern and western sectors retaining their traditional sultanates. The British attempted to set up an independent state when they left the area in 1967, but the area was racked by violently radical groups seeking domination. Loyalties were based on centuries-old enmities between tribal leaders. The People's Republic of South Yemen eventually embraced a Communist ideology under Soviet and Chinese influence and was generally isolated for the next two decades (Held, 2006).

North Yemen followed a totally different path. Although both areas grew wealthy from early trade between Aden and the Levant, particularly in frankincense and myrrh, northern Yemen enjoyed a better climate and soil, therefore a more developed agriculture and a larger population. When it was part of the Ottoman Empire, it came under the control of Zayd, great grandson of the Califa Ali, one of the Prophet Mohammed's original companions. For the next 1,100 years, the Shi'a Zaydi ruled the area as *imams* although the area was divided into many tiny sultanates and

sheikhdoms. Until now, tribal disputes over lands, water and political influence continue (Held, 2006),

When the *Imam* died in 1958, his successor was quickly deposed by a coalition of educated liberals and the army. In 1962, it became the Yemen Arab Republic, also known as North Yemen (Held, 2006). They immediately asked for help from Egypt against the royalist troops supporting the *Imam*. Egypt sent army units, but the change proved too dramatic. Under the *imamate,* there had been one-man rule held together with a network of contacts. Without this network, the country quickly disintegrated into civil war, which lasted several years. Some groups were still committed to the *imamate*; others wanted a traditional monarchy. Neither the groups backed by the Egyptian army nor those supporting the *imamate* could prevail. The army managed to control the major cities and the roads between them, but had little luck in the countryside (Hourani, 1991).

The Arab League, via Kuwait's Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, was once again involved in mediating between the factions, including Egypt, to try and calm the region and create a stable government, which would allow the Egyptian troops to leave the area. Of course, these efforts were behind closed doors so our knowledge of the content is limited, but over time, and with repeated efforts, there was certainly some success (Al-Murad, 2009; Al-Sabah, 2009).

In 1967, Egyptian troops were withdrawn and the coalition power was replaced by a Marxist group. The civil war was halted by forming a government that merged the major power groups, but their relationships were undefined and it was not until 1974 that a more or less stable government was established in North Yemen with the

support of the army and several powerful tribal leaders. Democratic elections were held in 1971, which helped to heal some of the major problems. With infusions of capital and technical assistance from Saudi Arabia, the U.S., China, Britain, the former U.S.S.R., Kuwait and others, a basic infrastructure was created, including a highway net, which made internal economic development in the 1980s easier (Held, 2006).

In addition to the civil wars within both North and South Yemen, there were poor relations between the two countries. Although outwardly declaring their desire to join into one country, the two governments sparred for dominance. Brief, but savage, bilateral wars occurred in 1972 and 1976, further depleting resources already strained by internal decade-long civil wars, One huge problem was the "progressivism" encouraged by the Marxist-Leninist ideology of the South which had altered the traditional status of religion, social classes, women, education and government. The North preferred political non-alignment and accepted aid from a variety of sources. Although the new government and its economic progress had made sharp changes from *Imamism*, it was still an extremely conservative society (Held, 2006).

Despite the obvious advantages of unity, many practical obstacles remained, not the least of which was reconciling dozens of disparate elements with their own historic ambitions, ideologies, traditions, and other factors. There were years of discussion, once again fostered by the Arab league with Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah taking a leading role, followed by preparation of a draft constitution and votes in each parliament before Yemen was officially united on May 22, 1990. Although there have since been issues, compromises and adjustments, the union has held together as of this date (Al-Murad, 2009: Al-Sabah, 2009; Held, 2006).

As noted, North Yemen benefitted from infusions of cash and assistance from Kuwait, as well as other countries. During the period of nation building and attempts to create unity, South Yemen was encouraged to work out their differences with North Yemen by some infusions of cash for infrastructure purposes and the promise of more infusions if they would make a good faith effort to unify. Both the Kuwaiti Minister of Finance, and Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, had frequent conferences with Yemeni officials to help mediate disagreements and finance infrastructure, which would be of benefit to both sides. Although these conversations are closed door, and specific details of their recommendations and agreements are not available to the public, it is clear that millions of Kuwaiti dinar were invested in Yemen's infrastructure. Aid continues to flow for the building of roads, communication, dams, hospitals and schools, although that aid was discontinued for a time and has been less generous since the Yemeni support of Saddam Hussain during the Kuwaiti invasion by Iraq (Al-Murad, 2009).

Analysis of Mediation in Yemen

Yemen has quite a different situation than Lebanon, but perhaps the underlying issues are not so different. The people still want food, shelter and safety. True, most of the people are Arabs and Muslims, but this does not stop them from fighting among themselves for control of what resources there are in this rather poor country. The terrain is rough, yet the soil is productive and the climate lends itself to agriculture. Also, there is some oil on the border between Yemen and Saudi Arabia so for a time, the actual border was in contention. The major differences within Yemen have been

disagreements between different tribes about independence and sovereignty, and disagreements between the religious conservatives in the north and the more liberal Muslims along the southern coastline although the majority are all Shi'a Muslims. Because of the lack of jobs, many of the educated Yemenis immigrated to India or other Gulf countries to find work. Those that remained were insulated by the terrain, suspicious of outsiders and extremely protective of their tribal rights.

In North Yemen, once a secular government seized power from the *Imamate* in 1962, Egypt was asked to help settle the internal disputes. They brought in troops, which was a very limited solution. In mediation, it was necessary to convince the leaders of the different northern tribes that it was to their advantage to put aside their historic differences and join together to create a nation so that their people could have the benefits of modern education and health care. Careful use of the Kuwaiti Fund and regular communication with all tribal leaders gradually convinced them to try and the success of their efforts has encouraged continuing efforts. Once there was an agreement for peace among a majority of the tribes, the other members of the Arab League, including Kuwait, were able to persuade Egypt to pull her troops out.

Once internal peace was accomplished in North Yemen after the nationwide elections in 1971, work was gradually begun on the union of North and South. While there were many reasons that this was a good choice, there were also individual and tribal agendas, which made such a unification difficult, seeing this as a personal loss of power or face. It took until 1990 for the diplomats of the Arab League to aid North and South to informally sort through the different considerations, lay fears to rest and get the parties to build enough trust to experiment seriously with joining.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was highly trusted by the participants because of his age and experience. The fact that he had no personal stake in the outcome made him an ideal candidate. Egypt and Iraq also helped to apply gentle pressure on the parties to settle their differences. As can be seen, whenever possible, there is strong reliance on countries that are perceived as not having an internal interest in the outcome of the process. They may not be totally neutral, but it is better than your immediate neighbor, who probably does have a personal stake in the outcome. Further, the fact that these mediators come from countries that have internal stability and wealth in their own right gives them the ability to offer the advice of strong leaders who have achieved wisdom and have a reputation for honest and fair dealings within their own country.

We can see a recurring theme here of seeking and taking advise from other successful leaders who have a reputation for wisdom. Their success commands respect from their own people as well as from leaders of other countries who are trying to imitate that success. Leaders in most Gulf countries are relatively elderly men with long histories of public service, diplomacy and third-part mediation. They have also shown a history of learning to work within an organization such as the Arab League with different members to build stability thoughout the region through affiliation, mutual trust and communication without infringing on the rights of neighboring countries, which may have different needs and situations. This does not mean that they have resolved all the differences, but that they are working on them and attempt to use mediation as a first choice for finding a solution before going through the International Court of Justice or using force. We understand the solutions arrived at

by force generally come undone or require continuing confrontation to maintain them. A mediated settlement often provides a longer-lasting, more satisfactory solution, which meets more of the expressed needs of the parties. Third-party mediation is the preferred method among Arabs.

The Arab League Economic Summit of 2009

We have already mentioned the Arab League several times. Memories of a loosely unified Arabian empire under the various Muslim Caliphs, and the Ottoman Empire, were (and are) still strong in this region. Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser longed to lead a united group of Arab nations and made efforts in that direction until his death. Although he never achieved his dream, he did help create, lead and support the Arab League, which was started in 1945 by Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Saudi Arabia to promote the political, economic, cultural scientific and social programs of its member states. Now numbering 22 nations, it has been especially useful in economic issues and has been a platform for drafting of landmark documents such as the Joint Arab Economic Action Charter. There is a general movement towards an economic union similar to the EU; however, it must be remembered that getting diplomats to agree on something, for example, a common currency or elimination of import tariffs, is not the same as implementing it. Each member state has one vote in the League Council, but decisions are only binding on those states that voted for the measure, so there is a great deal of flexibility.

The League also plays an important, but less obvious, role in the day-to-day life of most Arab countries by shaping school curricula in Arabic; advancing the role

of women; promoting child welfare, youth and sports programs; encouraging measures against drugs and crime; preserving Arab cultural heritage; and, fostering cultural exchanges among member states. There is also an agreement to provide military support to other League members, which is sometimes honored.

Mediation of disputes among members and between members and other Arab states is one of their main functions. The League holds summit meetings every two years with the location rotating through the membership. The current one occurred in March, 2009 in Doha, Qatar. However, in addition, a 2009 Economic, Social and Development Summit Meeting occurred in January 2009 and was hosted by Kuwait. As it happened, just weeks before the Summit was to take place, Israel invaded the Gaza Strip. As one can imagine, this was very much on everyone's mind, even though it was not officially on the planned agenda.

Analysis of Mediation in the Arab League Summit of 2009

Even though there have been years of difficulty, errors on the part of some members, and reconsideration back and forth of the amount of participation and support some members were willing to give at specific times, the Arab League has evolved into a useful and mutually beneficial organization for most of the member states. In general, it serves as a forum, allowing member states to coordinate policy positions, to discuss matters of common concern, to settle disputes among members, and to limit time and area of regional conflicts. This limiting role is important, as it is always a concern that conflicts will escalate and spill over into neighboring countries.

The Palestinian Israeli question has been a lingering irritant among the Arab states ever since the Arab League was formed in 1945. It has been a problem not only

because of the ongoing human rights violations within Israel and the constant friction between Israel and its neighbors, but also that most of the Palestinian people were never able to return to their homeland. They have been a burden on almost every country in the Middle East as refugees who were, for the most part, unable or unwilling to move on and create new lives. Historically, Kuwait took in many of the refugees as guest workers and even offered them citizenship at one point. Most refused, even though many continued to live and work in Kuwait, maintaining a separate identity.

One of the less pleasant surprises of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was that the Palestinian immigrants (as well as some Yemeni nationals living in Kuwait) actually collaborated with the Iraqis. For this reason, relations between Kuwait and both Palestine and Yemen became strained and many workers were expelled from the country as undesirables once the Iraqis were gone. Kuwait, along with other Gulf states, has become less willing to provide military supportive of Palestinian demands than they once were although all Arabs still recognize a need for human rights and a fair settlement of the issues with Israel.

Kuwaitis, as a people, remain concerned about the welfare of those trapped on the Gaza Strip (as well as the refugee camps in Lebanon and Jordan) and their living conditions. This concern is shared by other members of the Arab league. We would all like to see the Palestinians have their rights as a matter of fairness, but we also recognize that many of them are difficult to live with. All of the Arab League members feel for them but also dislike that they by attempt to create pro-Palestinian

political movements within every other country in the Middle East, which creates internal problems for all the host countries.

This year, the problems in Gaza flared once again with homemade rockets being launched into Israel almost daily by Hamas supporters. The damage to property was annoying, and the rockets themselves were frightening, but very few people were injured because most of the rockets had very little power or payload and a limited range. However, after months of being fired upon daily, there was much pressure on the Israeli government to do *something*, so the Israeli military smashed into Gaza, indiscriminately killing hundreds of civilians. The Israeli response was overwhelmingly disproportionate, especially when you consider that Hamas, like any governmental structure, is not 100 percent in control of every person's actions, although they probably could have done something to stop, or at least minimize the attacks. However, their actions would have been unpopular with their own people, who do not really want peace with Israel unless it is on their own terms.

Unfortunately, this happened just days before the Arab League Economic Summit was scheduled to begin and there were concerns that the Palestinian-Israeli problem would once again explode throughout the region, displacing the planned agenda for the meeting. There were also concerns that some of the delegates, for example, King Abdullah of Jordan, President Hosni Mubarek of Egypt, President Bashar al Assad of Syria, and President Michel Suleiman of Lebanon, would feel a need to remain in their own countries, anticipating difficulties with their internal Palestinian populations or on their common borders with Israel or Gaza.

In fact, a one-day emergency meeting was held between the participants regarding the problems in Gaza, but the economic agenda was felt to be of equal importance in this era of world economic problems and underdevelopment in much of the Arab world. However, the League announced participation with the European Commission in meeting the UN-assessed needs of the people in Gaza for food, water, fuel and medicine. Kuwait alone pledged $US34 million to the UN fund for rebuilding of Gaza, along with a $500 million donation toward bankrolling Arab development projects in other countries (European 2009). Once again, these monies will come from the Kuwait Fund. Saudi King Abdullah announced a $1 billion pledge for Gaza and other countries added their contributions (Yeranian, 2009).

This Gaza problem, while important, is linked to many other problems in the region that emerged. One major concern is that Iran is encouraging political unrest throughout the Middle East by funneling weapons to Syria, Hamas and Hizballah. Syria by itself is not a strong state, but it does have pretensions of being a Middle Eastern leader in linking Arabs in some kind of integrated action against the Israelis. Iran also has intentions of regaining its historic role as a Middle Eastern power and its Shi'a controlled government would love to control, or at least influence, the oil-rich gulf states, drawing them into some sort of Islamic coalition against the West.

Some members of the Arab League, especially Syria, Yemen and the Palestinian supporters, see benefits to themselves in creating anti-western values and beliefs and are willing to have dealings with Iran to further that agenda. Many Iraqis also have anti-Western feelings and encourage Syria, but are unwilling to deal with their traditional enemy, Iran. Qatar has worried other members of the Arab League

with a seeming rapprochement to Iran. Kuwait, Saudi and the other Gulf states are very clear that they are reliant on the U.S. for their security and want to maintain neutrality; however, they all have large Shi'a populations that maintain some sympathy with Iran because of the religious issues, so this is a complicated matter.

As one can quickly see, life in the Middle East involves a recognition of diverse religious and ethnic elements, even in small countries which have generally cohesive populations. Some states swing one direction on some issues and another direction on others, depending on their own needs and expectations. Syria is particularly difficult to deal with at times because it sees potential advantages to keeping the Israel-Palestine situation stirred up but at the same time, the Palestinian element within Syria and Lebanon creates serious internal problems for these governments because they are out of government control. It was these issues and maintaining good relations between Syria, Saudi and Egypt that were of primary importance at the Summit, in order to minimize Iran's influence in the region through its support of Syria, Hamas and Hizballah. There were also concerns about Qatar, which was perceived as making overtures to Iran by inviting them to be a guest at the upcoming Doha session of the Arab League deliberations. Kuwait, Saudi and Egypt were attempting to emphasize Arab solidarity within the region and shut out influence by Iran, which is Muslim, but not Arab.

Mediation was a critical aspect of this summit and the location, as well as the Amir's personal reputation put Kuwait in a unique position at this time. Some of the sessions were televised on *Al-Arabie* and *Al-Jazerra* TV and you could see His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah leaving his seat to speak

privately to first one delegate and then another, attempting to calm tensions and keep the meeting on focus (Al-Murad, 2009). As guests, no one should be rude to him. Also because of his age and years of experience in ruling and in negotiating with other countries, everyone will respect his wisdom and listen to what he says.

As the host, it is part of his job to see that everyone's needs are met and that they have access to needed local resources—communication, appropriate accommodations, security, etc. As the senior diplomat, he should greet everyone and lead the way to accommodations on whatever the issues are. Doing this gives him "face" with the other participants and positions him to mediate on these issues in the future, if needed. As he has been a gracious host, listening to their concerns and doing what he can to arrange needed solutions, they cannot refuse to do the same without losing face. It is important to note that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarek and Saudi King Abdullah were also instrumental in the process of healing old wounds and trying to work out solutions among the membership (Al-Murad 2009; European 2009).

To the surprise of most onlookers, and primarily due to the Amir's role, this summit turned into a reconciliatory gathering for Saudi, Egyptian, Syrian and Qatari leaders, mostly regarding their individual relationships with Iran and the other members of the Arab League, but also regarding the difficulty of working out a livable solution between Israel and the Palestinians in order to maintain peace throughout the Middle East. Some Lebanese newspaper sources claimed that the success of this summit has provided support for the upcoming Lebanese elections and put Saudi Arabia back at the forefront of political confrontation with Israel (Arab 2009).

The Summit has also revived Kuwait's diplomatic role in the readjustment of inter-Arab disputes, invoking an immediate positive response from both Syrian President Bashiar Al-Assad and Qatari Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani. Kuwait's efforts were backed by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, however, the reconciliation was primarily due to the initiative of His Highness Sheikh Sabah followed by a very reconciliatory keynote speech by King Abdullah (Arab 2009). Several Kuwaiti newspapers ran editorials praising the roles of both leaders for their reconciliatory positions, including referring to the summit as an "unprecedented. . . opportunity [to lay] the cornerstone of Arab economic unity modeled on the European model" (Kuwait press, 2009, 1). Al-Anbaa newspaper's editorial, entitled "Prince of Diplomacy Land of Friendship and Peace," concludes that "His Highness the Amir's success in Arab reconciliation will be held to his credit forever" (Kuwait, 2009, 1). Madhi Al-Khamees, Secretary General of the Arab Media Forum, praised the outcomes of the summit and said that "Kuwait and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah will be remembered for playing a great role in reconciliation and bolstering unity among Arab leaders (Kuwait summit, 2009, 1).

The Gulf Co-operation Council

The idea of a unified Arabia has been suggested in various ways by the major powers in the Middle East for years. When the British and French withdrew from the Arab mandate states in 1971, these tiny states had reason to be apprehensive of their future. This withdrawal created a power vacuum. The majority of the other Arab

governments were hostile, referring to the former mandate states as "stooges of colonialism" (Heard-Bey, 2006). Being socialist and anti-west, they attempted to undermine some of the conservative, more democratic regimes of the Gulf. The Shah of Iran suggested some form of Gulf-wide co-operation but the Arab states of the Gulf hesitated, not wanting to be tied to a country that was aspiring to regional leadership and wary of provoking the hostility of Baghdad's declared (and opposing) ambitions to such a leadership role (Heard-Bey, 2006; Hourani, 1991)

The oil crisis of the late 1970s, resulting in a significant increase in wealth, gave the oil exporting countries the ability to hold the energy-hungry western world for ransom. They also had the money to provide generously for their own people and help their neighbors. Suddenly the "stooges" had become "Arab brothers." Of course, this comfortable position was not permanent. Supporting Iraq and the Palestinians against Israel and financing the majority of the effort soon became oppressive and it rankled that they were still treated as junior partners by the larger, more powerful Arab nations. The 1979 Iranian revolution added to the problem as the Ayatollahs threatened to incite the Shi'a populations of most of these nations and absorb them into a larger revolutionary state (Heard-Bey, 2006).

Such common concerns might have generated Gulf-wide cooperation, but previous attempts at unified action, even when limited to cultural or environmental issues, had only been successful under Iraqi leadership. The outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War in 1980 resulted in additional internal security issues and the Russian invasion of Afghanistan brought the Western powers into the problem. The Gulf countries feared that the Middle East would become an arena for the rivalry between the USSR and the

US. As events unfolded, it became clear to the Gulf counties that they needed to take the initiative to co-ordinate their own internal security needs (Heard-Bey, 2006).

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was founded in May 1981 by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. The GCC is a political, economic, social, and regional organization according to the principles and goals outlined in its founding Charter. Topics of discussion include legislative, administrative, and industrial affairs along with minerals, agriculture and water and animal resources. These states share geographic features, similar systems and social bonds, and the nature of challenges facing them. There seemed to be a willingness to address common problems even though the institutions were new but considering the differences between these mostly small states and the multiple dimensions of the problems that were facing them, in addition to the failure of several previous attempts at cooperative efforts between other Gulf States, it was not expected that there would be much future for the organization.

However, the political situation around them encouraged them to keep trying. Representatives of the member states met several times in the first year to iron out mutual positions on the problems facing them. In May of 1982, the ministers generated a three-point peace plan, hoping to find a way to settle the fighting between Iraq and Iran, which was destabilizing for the region. While there is no record that this plan was ever presented to either party, there are indications that various members made offers of compensation in the event of a truce (Heard-Bey, 2006). While these offers were not accepted by either side at this time, the lines of communication were kept open for mediation.

As feared, the Iran-Iraq war eventually spilled over into the waters of the Gulf. As the combatants destroyed each other's oil export facilities and ability to ship, the other countries around them were inevitably drawn into the conflict. The GCC countries watched as their oil exports dwindled. Even though not directly involved, they sustained heavy losses due to mines, rocket attacks and exclusions. Kuwaiti ships were targeted, forcing them to ask for US protection. Thereafter, Kuwaiti ships traveled flying the US flag and with the protection of the U.S. Navy, although there were still mines to contend with. The British, French and Italian navies also volunteered to help sweep the Gulf of mines and protect the shipping lanes, keeping oil production active. While the help was welcomed, the relief was mixed with misgivings about losing national integrity. Yet, they realized that the conflict had escalated to a point beyond their ability to control or modify it through their combined mediating capabilities (Heard-Bey, 2006).

When Iran started losing ground from 1988 onward, both sides seemed more likely to agree to an end to hostilities. The GCC members, along with representatives of the Islamic Conference Organization, were helpful in securing agreement within the UN Security Council and breaking the ground for a cease-fire (Heard-Bey, 2006). After the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq (1990-91) based on a false historical claim that Kuwait was separated illegally from Iraq during the British mandate, it was as if this claim brought to the surface all kinds of border disputes between member states. A few of these disputes deteriorated into serious conflicts. Of course, the question of possible oil or gas finds complicated the issue.

Analysis of Mediation within the Gulf Corporation Council

There are few nations in the world that do not harbor some kind of grievance against another nation, or covet a corner of land or a group of islands claimed by someone else. There is nothing unusual about conflicts and controversies between groups or countries for a variety of reasons. Examples would be battles between German and France over border areas that changed hands back and forth for generations, and battles between England and France over territories in coastal sections of France. Raids among the early Arab tribes were analogous to the raids between different Native American tribes. A successful raid showed a man's courage and resourcefulness. It made him a hero and leader to his own tribe and increased his assets. Nevertheless, at some point, it was necessary to stop the raids and resolve the hostility created by the theft of camels, horses, women and other assets.

As nation states developed, it was necessary to find ways to solve problems between nations and develop skills at resolution, which gives an alternative to war. Dialogue, third-party mediation, economic compensation, future co-operation, peer-pressure, international pressure or a legal verdict in an international court are all methods that can be used. Reliance on mediation is a tradition in Arab countries since the days of independent tribes when leaders would call on the Sheikh of a neighboring tribe to settle a dispute. An Arab leader can demonstrate his political skill, wisdom and leadership in the choice of technique and timing to solve, or at least impact, the resolution of a controversy (Heard-Bey, 2006). What is of interest here is how these disputes were handled and whether GCC membership was helpful.

Participation in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and concentration on common goals could be one way to overcome differences. One test case for the GCC's preparedness and ability to resolve internal conflicts was the dispute between Qatar and Bahrain regarding Huwar Island and some low-lying islands and sand banks in the sea between the two states. This claim dated back two centuries. Saudi mediation efforts did not resolve the problem in 1991, so Qatar decided unilaterally to submit a claim to the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Bahrain, apparently believing that they would lose, stated that both countries should agree to abide by the decision of the court before using such a resolution method; however, the court indicated that it would not even rule on issues of jurisdiction until early 1994 so informal mediation efforts by members of the GCC continued. In July 1994, the ICJ ruled that the application had to be resubmitted jointly (or separately by each party) for a binding settlement. In further mediation with GCC members, the two nations failed to agree on a joint application so Qatar resubmitted its unilateral application, which was accepted by the Court in 1995.

Although there seemed little need, since the question was before the ICJ, attempts by GCC members to mediate continued. However, relations between Qatar and Bahrain continued to deteriorate and the GCC summit opened in Doha, Qatar in December of 1996 without Bahrain in attendance. GCC members felt they needed to do something. A four-country group was appointed to investigate the situation and try to find an acceptable solution. However, Bahrain was uncooperative and not much headway was made. The GCC, believing that Bahrain really did not want to reach a settlement, washed its hands of the case. Then the Ruler of Bahrain suddenly died

66

from a heart attack and his son, Sheikh Hamad Bin-Salman Al-Khalifah, succeeded him.

Shaikh Hamad turned out to be more reasonable than his father and relations between the two states warmed slightly. While no resolution on the island issues was reached immediately, both sides were extremely careful to avoid issues that might destroy improved relations and with the help of the GCC, small, joint agreements on a variety of subjects were reached, gradually building trust and cooperation. Finally, in 2000, the ICJ heard testimony on the matter from both sides. ICJ rulings are always final and there is no appeal. On 16 March 2001, the ruling came down. The Hawar Islands were apportioned to Bahrain and the other minor islands close to the mainland were to remain part of Qatar. Bahrain, which had feared a less positive outcome, was very satisfied, having been apportioned the important part of the real estate. Sheikh Hamad called the ruling "painful" but agreed to accept it. A decision having been made and accepted, both sides got on with improving relations and things have been more positive ever since.

This seemed to be a logical outcome from the beginning so why was mediation so unsuccessful? The answer may be that while GCC members celebrated the final decision and the end of hostilities, as neighbors and relatives of the disputants, they were not in a position to push too hard for a solution without upsetting other intra-group relationships. Ties in the Gulf are based on the affinities of ruling families and centuries-old tribal relationships. For example, the Al-Sabahs in Kuwait and the Al-Thanis in Qatar are cousins through frequent intermarriage. Many of their citizens are also related and some people claim dual citizenship because of tribal relationships in

both countries. The Al-Sabahs and the Al-Sauds of Saudi Arabia are also cousins, but at a further distance. Nevertheless, there is a definite relationship that is well understood. Each of the other Gulf countries have emotional relationships with one or both of the countries involved and arriving at an acceptable position without offending someone was simply difficult. This has been the case with most of the border disputes in this area. The GCC nations are a small, closely-knit group compared to the Arab League and members simply may not be not neutral enough to mediate effectively in some situations. However, efforts are certainly made and sometimes they do result in a resolution. Certainly, they do keep the lines of communication open between parties and limit the conflict so that it does not deteriorate into open warfare. Being neutral helps in suggesting and finding solutions, but being related gives one easier access to all the parties. One must be careful not to take sides just because they are relatives, so there are advantages and disadvantages to the situation as far as successful mediation is concerned.

Chapter Four: Conclusions and Recommendations

An onset of Arab economic, developmental and social [progress]. . . of regaining the Arab solidarity and reconciliation among members of the one Arab family and redirect it back to the right path in achieving further rapprochement between brothers, believing in the unity of destination and embodying the Arab consolidation spirit.
~His Highness, The Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

This paper has hypothesized that unless a person is specifically and formally invited to mediate a dispute then the process is more informal. As an informal process, diplomacy and mediation in the Middle East becomes a matter of leadership, wisdom and personal reputation applied with discretion, advice offered at an appropriate moment and maintaining everyone's honor in the process. Everything I have been able to discover about Kuwaiti diplomacy and His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, tells me that this is a correct conclusion. For all of his years as a diplomat and Amir, Sheikh Sabah has proven himself to be a capable leader who has carefully moved between the leaders in other countries to smooth feelings and defuse situations that could destabilize the region. Because of his maturity and his personal reputation for wisdom, which was confirmed over and over by not only my sources but also by his position as Emir, his experience as the Chair of the six country committee of the Arab League, and his many efforts to mediate specific situations between and among other Arab countries.

Both of the interviews confirmed the Amir's long experience with mediation and each subject mentioned the cases that we have been able to examine regarding Lebanon, Yemen, the Arab League and the GCC. The Amir's reputation is legendary

among the Kuwait Diplomatic Corps because of his exceptionally long service as Foreign Minister and his extraordinary skills at working with other heads of government in attempting to find solutions to current problems. He is incredibly patient and manages to keep the lines of communication open between the parties, even when no apparent solution is to be found. It is the assumption that if people continue to work together on any subject and build confidence and goodwill, that eventually a solution will be found to even apparently insoluble problems.

The situation in Lebanon would be one of those insoluble problems. The civil war went on for many years. The large and unstable number of factions involved made it very difficult to arrange any kind of an agreement to stop the shooting. The legitimate government was disbanded and incapable of controlling any significant number of the factions and some of the important members had been killed in the fighting. Yet, Sheikh Sabah continued to meet periodically with the leaders of various factions as well as members of the legitimate government. He constantly encouraged all the parties to find a peaceful solution to the problems they were facing by remodeling the representation of the government to be more reflective of the actual percentages of the population and to minimize the damage.

Of course, he also offered to help them rebuild the infrastructure with donations and low-interest loans from the Kuwait Fund. At the time, this incentive did not seem particularly useful, much as many of the Lebanese would have liked to stop the fighting. However, in the end, his continuing efforts, as well as those of other members of the Arab League, were to result in a successful agreement to reorganize the government and to rebuild the infrastructure. Although there have been problems

since the signing of the Taif Agreement and not long ago there was a brief period of fighting. In general, the mediated resolution has held and Lebanon has rebuilt successfully. Sheikh Sabah and the other members of the Arab League continue to maintain contact with the current government and leaders of the different factions. Once again, this confirms the ability of Sheikh Sabah to act as a mediator to keep problems under control and find resolutions which will keep the situation from exploding into violence using only his personal reputation, his discretion and his ability to find the right moment to plant a useful idea while keeping the lines of communication open between all of the parties.

The situation in Yemen provides reinforcement of the same idea. Sheikh Sabah was able to mediate informally between the Egyptians and the North Yemeni and between the different tribes of the North Yemeni, to encourage a unification between them which resulted in a stable government. It took time, dedication, use of the carrot of the Kuwait Fund and helping them to build an effective infrastructure and provide benefits for everyone. When the benefits were seen, it became easier to get the Yemenis to cooperate with each other and accept the mediation of the Arab League through Sheikh Sabah. Once again his dedication, wisdom, patience and reputation won the day.

Within the Arab League, Sheikh Sabah was a leader. Although Kuwait was not one of the founding members of the League in 1945 because it was still a British protectorate, membership was almost immediate in 1961 when it became independent. By then Sheikh Sabah already had a strong reputation among other Arab leaders. With the formation of the Arab League six country committee and his appointment as

71

Chair, his reputation and his ability to assist other governments in resolving problems increased. His judicious use of the Kuwait Fund to enhance the power and goals of the Arab League (and later the GCC) has made him a welcome visitor all over the Middle East and, of course, his promotion to Amir has only enhanced his position and reputation. Even thought Kuwait is a small country, it is one of the richest nations in the world and it is careful to use its wealth in ways that will benefit the region.

Once again this emphasizes Sheikh Sabah's reputation as a leader and his ability to keep the lines of communication open between different leaders. The current economic summit was very telling of his abilities and involvement even considering his duties as Amir. In the televised section of the Summit, His Highness stepped down from his chair and moved to first one leader and then another, he was obviously playing the good host and making sure that everyone was comfortable and receiving equal attention. Several leaders looked grim when he first approached them, but were smiling and in good spirits when he left. It is apparent that his skills at making others feel that their concerns are being recognized and that efforts will be made to find a solution are very strong. The attention of someone in his position and with his reputation is very flattering and he is known to be discrete and wise in what he says and does. Everyone would be happy to talk to him and would give his words great weight.

The situation of the GCC is somewhat different. While Kuwait's position is still one of leadership among equals, since His Highness is actually related to some of the other heads of state and these small countries have similar problems and concerns, in a way they are bound together by their similarities. Because of his maturity and

reputation for wisdom, His Highness may have more respect and therefore more ability to impact situations which occur between and among his neighbors that some of the other leaders, but it appears that this small group of very close and similar leaders are not as effective in resolving internal disputes as the larger venue of the Arab League.

In order for any mediation to be successful, both parties must be ready to find a solution and willing to compromise. Third party assistance in working out a solution is often helpful in finding unusual solutions or just helping the parties to air their differences and recognize the position of the other party as also having weight. People often recognize that the other side is making a fair enough demand, but they are afraid of the potential consequences. Mediation can help to calm these fears and build real trust and a willingness to recognize common interests. Historically, this has been the method used in the Middle East for resolution of almost any problem—individual or national. There are no easy solutions and sometimes you just have to live with the situation and agree to ignore it and get on with life until time or a change in the circumstances allows an actual solution. It is helpful for the mediator to be somewhat removed from both parties in the conflict. In a world of cell phones and jets, and a society of tribal relationships and intermarriages, it is sometimes difficult for a neighbor who is just minutes or hours away to be truly neutral in most cases.

In the four situations we have just reviewed—the Lebanese Civil War, unification of Yemen, the Arab League Economic Summit and the GCC--it appears that often, where mediation is offered, the parties are just not ready, so the mediation drags on without success while various parties try to provide suggestions and

alternatives. In some cases their efforts are successful and in others not. It appears that Kuwaiti diplomats have clout in that they are able of offer financial compensation for accepting a less than perfect solution using the Kuwait fund. His Highness the Amir also has personal clout because of his long years as a mediator and ruler and his personal skills and relationships with other Arab leaders. These skills have placed him in an enviable position of respect and appreciation, which are helpful in mediation, but problems such as wars and border disputes are complex and resist simple answers. My conclusion is that no one could do better at using the resources he has in the situations we have discussed. While sometimes a positive outcome can be slow in coming, the main thing is to keep the lines of communication open and the parties focused on the mutual benefits of finding a solution. In this aspect, His Highness, the Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has no equal.

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