The Use of Negative Peace

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Timeline of Conflict in Yemen

2000: President Ali Abdullah Saleh seeks to disarm Rebellion group, Houthis led by Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi.

2004: Arrests of Houthis members begin, fighting leads to Al-Houthi's death

2005: Fighting continues between Houthis and government forces resulting in many fatalities. An agreement is reached at the surrender of top military commander of Houthis.

2006: Conflict continues, however Saleh releases 600 Houthi fighters and eventually wins the 2006 election.

Early 2007: Ceasefire agreement between Saleh and Al-Houthi.

2008: Fighting begins again between rebels and government powers.

2009-2010: Operation Scorched Earth is initiated by Yemeni military to end the Houthi rebellion in Saada. Saleh finally agrees to a ceasefire with the Houthi rebels. However, Yemeni military continues to execute Operation Blow to the Head against rebels and al-Qaeda.

2011 Arab Spring: Protests call for the resignation of Saleh. Saleh's military and supports fight back against rebels which leads to the death of 200-2000 people.

2011: Saleh is seriously injured in a bombing, he turns over his power to Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi.

2014: Plan for organizing Yemen into six regions is approved. Houthis over power the capital of Yemen and Hadi resigns while the Houthis take over the government. Hadi reclaims his presidency.

2015: Houthis continue to take over regions of southern Yemen.

Civil War 2015: A coalition between many MENA (Middle East and North Africa) countries is created to implement Operation Decisive Storm supporting Hadi. The United States supported this coalition.

2015-2017: Humanitarian ceasefire is agreed upon by Saudis and Houthis. Both parties eventually break the ceasefire while peace and political resolutions are provided.

2017: War escalates to many civilian deaths and deemed as one of the worst humanitarian crisis' in the world.

2018: Fighting in Aden leads to 22 million people needing aid. United States attempts to withdraws support after supplying military equipment and advice that killed almost 40 Yemeni children. Another ceasefire fails.

2019-2020: Agreements continue to fail while Houthis proceed to take over regions of Yemen.

2020: United Nations attempts to maintain ceasefire due to Covid-19. Houthis provide their willingness to sign a ceasefire in exchange for a buffer zone in their territory and Yemen borders. They allegedly break the this agreement in October.

2021: The Trump administration declares the Houthis as a terrorist organization. The Houthis hold power over 70-80 percent of the Yemeni population. The Biden administration revokes their support for the coalition while supporting a United Nation peace process. (Arab Center)

Abstract

My intended message of this project is to give insight into ways the theories of change can be implemented into regions and people groups that are in conflict. Exploring conflict in Yemen can provide insight to how conflicts have the potential to be resolved peacefully. In researching alternative peace strategies, I will provide ways negative peace can be transformed into a useful took to change the direction of on going conflict.

Peaceful Solutions

Yemen has gone through decades of conflict. This conflict has transformed and escalated over the years becoming one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world. Traditional peace processes have been attempted to be implemented but many have failed to bring about positive change. With intentions of supporting the Saudi and Yemeni forces, President Biden decided to withdraw support in worry of Houthis rebels obtaining the humanitarian aid. This action leaves MENA forces and civilians without the support and resources that were crucial to ending this war through militia. Ceasefires have also been implemented throughout this conflict which have all failed or eventually ended by either side with attacks and force.

While these ceasefires occur often in the history of this conflict, they were not used to their full potential. The United Nations and the Houthis both attempted to make peace agreements and treaties that failed due to a variety of reasons. Conflict transformation takes more than agreements and treaties. While compromising within government forces occurs rarely, in this conflict it will be crucial to ending this war. The Houthis are calling for the end of a corrupt and unaccountable government as well as equal rights and putting an end to Western influence. This conflict is fueled by the anger Houthis hold towards Yemeni government. Political and economic reform must take place to shape a peaceful end to this conflict.

A peaceful proposal is to implement different stages of transformation within a ceasefire. The first is to establish a government that can be used to be a transitional position. Expanding and restoring humanitarian aid and public sector salaries moves this process into the next phase of institution building. Changing the constitution and reconstructing financial structures will empower local governance structures. The final phase creates momentum to a sustainable government. Politically, supporting justice systems and creating connections in communities will fuel energy towards a transfer of power. Economically, implementing structural reforms will generate an expansion of economic power.

This proposal needs cooperation between both parties and support of surrounding regions as well as civilians. Though it will be difficult and take compromise, it is a transformative way to use negative peace to this conflicts benefit.

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Yemen: 6 powers' fight for influence, territory wreaks devastation

The division among various powers in Yemen – including the government led by Yemeni President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, which is recognized by the international community, plus Iranian-backed Houthis, the UAE-backed Southern Transitional Council, UAE-backed National Resistance Forces under Tariq Salih, and terrorist groups Al-Qaeda and Daesh/ISIS – has split the country into 6 regions