A Guide to the AF Interest-Based Negotiations (IBN) Worksheet

Introduction

   Throughout this elective, the negotiations concept has been developed from several perspectives. From establishing the relationship between positions and interests, understanding the power of a BATNA, and realizing the potential gains associated with understanding areas for mutual gain, the goal was to introduce the concepts behind Interest-Based Negotiations. The treatment also included processes; how to extract interests from positions, how to develop a BATNA and how to adjust these during planning and execution. Tools to aid in this process were also discussed, especially the Interest Map (IM). The IM may prove a powerful tool to develop, integrate and support multiple interests across the span of the negotiating process. From this, the context in which negotiations occur was discussed. Ethics, culture, communications, translators, and mediators, are all contextual elements worthy of consideration in the planning and execution of negotiations.

   The final two elective lessons allows you to apply many of the presented concepts. The Air Force went beyond just identifying negotiations as a core competency in its doctrine documents; it also developed a negotiations worksheet; useful as a planning and execution reference when leaders engage in negotiations. This worksheet is a streamlined version of the IM. In complex situations (many parties/many stakeholders), one could use the IM or simply use multiple worksheets.

   This lesson will walk you through the AF IBN worksheet, describing what you might consider when completing each worksheet section. There will be no "new news" in this lesson, but this lesson helps you further "organize" the "news" you may have picked up in the preceding lessons.

   Also, to complement the AF IBN worksheet, a cross-cultural worksheet will help you organize your thoughts when it comes to considering the context of the negotiations. The cross-cultural worksheet may be used in almost any setting – from across service cultures to across international cultures. The worksheet is flexible and adaptive, and the questions can be omitted if the context of your particular situation doesn't require an answerer.

   Every day Air Force personnel negotiate with co-workers, supervisors, subordinates, business partners, coalition warfighters, non-governmental organizations, etc. The AF IBN worksheet should help increase the chances for success by organizing the thinking / preparation processes as well helping to guide the thought process during the execution. Anecdotally, if you ask a DOD professional to describe his/her theory on negotiations, they will usually tell you a "war story." This is instructive, because the response highlights a fundamental assumption made about negotiations; that negotiations is highly dependent on context and very individual in nature. In fact, so situation unique, that it can't be planned in advance. For example, the approach one person may take when "negotiating" with a spouse, you will likely receive a different answer than if you asked the same person about negotiating a similar situation in a professional context. However, many leaders in negotiation (academicians and practitioners) agree that well-defined negotiation tools and methods can be built into all negotiation processes regardless of context, thereby improving and

systematizing one's ability to negotiate in a variety of situations. Instead of viewing negotiations as highly idiosyncratic and situational, a more useful approach is to treat negotiations as a learned competence capable of systematic application and knowledge management. Hence, the AF IBN worksheet serves as a tool to advance this idea and develop this skill set.

Quick Perspectives on IBN

During the 1970s and 1980s, Professors Robert Ury and Roger Fisher set out to understand the methodologies employed by highly effective negotiators. After years of research by a multidisciplinary team, they developed an Interest-Based Negotiations (IBN) model focusing on developing win/win solutions. This approach stands in stark contrast to the positional negotiation typically employed by many – a model that encourages win/lose outcomes.

While the IBN approach is extremely valuable, it is not without its critics. Many have commented on the need for both sides to agree to follow the IBN approach. However, experience demonstrates that while this is not necessarily so, a good negotiator needs to be skilled in using both IBN and positional negotiation techniques, and adapt to the environment as needed. In short, IBN can help a skilled negotiator "expand the pie" to be divided, but the pie will still ultimately need to be divided.

This model has become an effective tool that permits users to break down complex negotiations into a distinct and manageable set of separately identifiable components. It helps people organize their thinking about negotiations in a structured manner, and allows them to better understand, prepare, conduct, and evaluate negotiations of *all types*.

A recent White Paper entitled "Negotiation as a Business Process," published by Vantage Partners, a leading provider of negotiation training, states:

> Most experienced negotiators affirm that the quality of preparation directly translates into both the quality of the ultimate deal as well as the efficiency of the overall negotiation process. Leaving negotiators to determine for themselves how to prepare is usually ineffective - most will default to simply thinking about what they want to get and what they are willing to give up. In the face of many pressing priorities, negotiators often do not devote sufficient time to preparation, and even if they do, most focus on one or two elements of the negotiation, losing sight of the many elements that need consideration, if not investigation.

The AF IBN worksheet is designed to do exactly what these authors suggest – give DOD professionals a reference / baseline for negotiation preparation. The model simplifies and adopts what is regarded as the most common elements of the IBN approach. Below are several ways in which using the IBN worksheet approach helps set the stage for a successful negotiation assessment. To recap, key IBN features are:

o ***IBN Changes Negotiation from a Contest to a Search for Solutions***.
IBN, also called Problem-Solving Negotiation, requires negotiators to treat disputes and issues as problems to be solved rather than a contest of wills between the parties and their positions. It shifts the negotiation dynamic away from the primary focus on making

concessions, often the hallmark of distributive bargaining, to a genuine search for win/win solutions.

- o ***IBN Focuses on Underlying Interests***.
  IBN is an approach to resolving disputes that recognizes that parties' underlying interests are at the heart of their dispute. Interests are the desires, values, concerns, fears and limitations that motivate the parties and stand behind their posturing about their positions. IBN gets at the "why" behind the positions and posturing. It requires each party to focus on their own interests AND to focus on uncovering and understanding the opposing party's interests.
- o ***IBN Searches for Solutions Based on Differences***.
  IBN recognizes that parties have differing interests, priorities, preferences, and organizational needs. By uncovering these varying interests and preferences, parties can better search for solutions that satisfy the priority needs of each party. The search for options changes negotiation from a pattern of concessions to a genuine search to solve the problem and find the best solution to meet the parties' differing interests.
- o ***IBN Recognizes that Information Sharing and Communication Are at the Heart of Problem Solving***.
  IBN rests on a foundation that includes communication skills and information sharing regarding perceptions of events, interests, priorities and possible options to enhance the parties' search for viable solutions. It requires clear and determined efforts to express views, perceptions and interests, and to also actively listen and attend to what the other party has to say regarding their views and interests. IBN information sharing is in sharp contrast to the tendency to withhold and manipulate information that characterizes positional negotiation.
- o ***IBN Focuses on Expanding Solution Options (Expanding the "Pie").***
  A positional negotiation strategy conceives of negotiation as a football game and seeks a win-lose outcome ("what I gain on the field, you lose.") Such conception creates a battle of wills and strategy. In contrast, IBN allows parties to conceptually sit side-by-side to search for value-creating opportunities based on their differences. By focusing on expanding the solution field and creating as much value as possible, the division of the expanded pie becomes more reasoned and logical, rather than simply being a result of manipulation and hard-ball negotiation tactics.
- o ***IBN Focuses on Using Objective Standards and Legitimate Reasons for Selecting the Solution.***
  However, once parties have expanded possible solutions, the pie must still be divided. Where positional bargaining relies on posturing on many fronts to divide the proceeds, IBN asks negotiators to find objective and neutral standards to justify the division that is inevitable in negotiation.

    The Air Force is not alone in developing tools to help the leader. Major corporations, other government agencies, NGOs, and others are all energetically teaching and modeling negotiations behavior to their employees. A quick check of the electronic Rolodex offers over 500 firms and associations dealing with consulting/teaching negotiations skills. Additionally, over 300 colleges and universities feature programs specifically addressing research. Finally, every business school in the US has at least one course on negotiations.

	Air Force Interest-Based Negotiations Worksheet	
Assessing the Negotiation Context	**Your Side**	**Other Party**

AF IBN Worksheet

       Below is a sample IBN worksheet. Within the worksheet, each major event (Position, Interests, BATNA), is followed by a series of critical thinking questions that you need to consider when planning to negotiate. Not all the questions must be answered, not can be answered, since the situation will vary from one negotiation to the next. However, there are some overarching themes. First, after reading each question, evaluate if it is of value to your situation. If it is, the second question should be "Do I have the time, resources, and ability to gather an answer that may improve my negotiations planning?" If the answer is yes, then the question should be answered. Third, not only should you be planning for your side, but you should also devote serious effort to planning "their side". You may be making informed guesses, but it will help you anticipate potential issues and plan for action that will either turn it to an advantage to your side or at least minimize its affect on your side. Finally, the questions about stakeholder and power are modeled after Cohen's Interest Map (IM) concept presented in Lesson 3. Understanding that you may be the only representative at the table does not mean that you are the only party potentially impacted by an outcome from these negotiations. Understanding how and why stakeholders might act is very instructive in understanding the power dynamics of negotiations. Additionally, having these considerations in mind, and communicating the plan with the stakeholder, will help consolidate your position and lessen the chances that stakeholders might use their power to weaken you.

Position (Assumed best outcome/solution)	*- What is "our" position?* *-- Is the position unique to a single organization, or must the scope of the position include other organizations (other stakeholders)?* *- Is this a new situation or the continuation of another situation?* *- Are there any "in force" agreements?* *- What does your organization / chain of command / team want to have happen?* *- What is the rationale for this position?*	*- What is the other party's position(s)?* *- Do they present any "in-force" agreement to support their position?* *-Do they see it as a new situation or the continuation of another situation?* *- Is there precedent / tradition?* *- What does the other party's chain of authority look like? What do you think they will desire as their "best position"?* *- What might be the rationale for this position?*
Interests & Priorities (Why do I want outcome above? How important is the interest?)	*- List (and prioritize) what the your interests are in this case (and what is the context / situation / conditions / environment BEHIND the position that creates the position)* *1. From a your perspective, what are the overarching issues? What are other stakeholders' (if any) overarching issues?* *2. From a your perspective, what are issues specific to this region outside of this individual case (economic, political, cultural, etc.)?*	*List (and prioritize) what the other party's interests are in this case (what is the context / situation / conditions / environment BEHIND the position that creates the position)* *1. From a their perspective, what are the overarching issues? What do they think ours might be?(avoid mirror imaging, strive to put issues in their context)* *2. From their perspective, what are issues specific to the other main party to the negotiations (and / or other interested parties with power) outside of this individual case (economic, political, cultural, etc.)? What are their issues? Why might they be interested in the negotiations?*

Interests & Priorities *(continued)*	*3. From a your perspective, what are issues specific to this individual case (for example: SOFA, laws, existing contracts / agreements, maximize a gain or minimize a loss, political issues, economics, tradition, etc.)? Do you see this as an individual case or part of a larger situation?*	*3. From their perspective, what are issues specific to this individual case (for example: SOFA, laws, existing contracts / agreements, maximize a gain or minimize a loss, political issues, economics, tradition, etc.)? What might their perceptions be of ours? Does the other party see this as an individual case or part of a larger situation?*
	4. Identify your stakeholders. What are the stakeholder's positions and interests? What are their relationships with the other parties and with each other? Who has power, why and how can it be affected?	*4. Identify their potential stakeholders. What are their positions and interests? What are their relationships with your parties and with each other? Who has power, why and how can it be affected?*
	5. Are there any interrelations between issues? (For example, if I execute an economic policy in response to this case, what will the effect be on other elements of my relationship with their government? Might other parties (i.e. stakeholders) relationships change (how and why?)	*5. What does the other party see as the interrelations between issues? (For example, if they execute an action within their legal system, what might be the effect be on other elements of their relationship with your stakeholders?)*
	6. What does your side want the situation to be AFTER the negotiations conclude (what is/are the long-term interest(s))? Do all stakeholders share the same long-term goal?	*6. What do you think they want the situation to be AFTER the negotiations conclude (what is/are their perceptions of long-term interest(s))?*

BATNAs (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement) (What can I do if I don't reach an agreement with the other party?)	*BATNA: an action that may be pursued by your side without any consultation or agreement by the other party.* *- Determine your options if you "leave the table" that you can execute unilaterally?* *- Within each option, what is /are the desired response(s) from the other party?* *- Within each option, what action by the other party might trigger this event?* *- Within each option, how might your stakeholders respond?* *- Within each option, what are some possible 2nd, 3rd order effects that are undesirable to your position?* *- Within each option, how will executing the option affect your long-term relationship with the other party? With*	*A BATNA may be pursued by the other party without any consultation or agreement by you.* *- Determine the other party's options if they "leave the table" that they can execute unilaterally?* *- Within each option, what is /are the desired response(s) they might desire from you* *- Can they impact a stakeholder that can exert influence on your BATNA?* *- Within each option, what action by you might trigger this event?* *- Within each option, how might their stakeholders respond? How might your stakeholders respond?* *- Within each option, what are some*

your stakeholders? *- Within each option, how much does the other party know about the option? How much power / ability do they have to weaken your BATNA options?*	*possible 2nd, 3rd order effects that are undesirable to their position? To their stakeholder's position? To your position? To your stakeholder's position?* *- Within each option, how will executing the option affect their long-term relationship with you? With your stakeholders?* *- Within each option, how much do you know of the details? How much power / ability do you have to weaken their BATNA options?*

AGENDA
What might the most appropriate approach? Going beyond "full proposal" or "issue at a time", consider:
-- Broaden/Narrow – Should you add or subtract issues from the table help to create a common interest?
-- Are there automatic de-railers? How might you avoid them?
-- What will you opening statement e (the "first 90 seconds"? What do you expect the other party's "first 90 seconds" to be?
-- Who should go first? What should go first? An easy issue (trust building?) or a hard issue?

	Cultural Perspectives *(continued)*
Cultural Perspectives	The questions below ask you to examine and consider both the other party's culture as well as yours. It is suggested that you answer these questions first on how you perceive the other party and then "mirror image" to see how the other party might perceive you. What is critical is not what you think you are culturally, but what the other party thinks you are – because that is what they will base their planning and action upon.
Cultural Architecture	*SECTION I: Cultural architecture* *This is a series that asks you to consider several general questions that help set the architecture of both your culture and the other party's culture* *Individualistic or communal culture (Proself or Prosocial)?* - *Individualistic / Egalitarian (Calvinism) sets value on what you do/individual achievement. Independence is valued and compartmentalization of life is accepted. Individual needs may take priority over group needs. Competitive and rewards based.* ***Mantra: Live to work*** - *Communal/ hierarchical sets value on who you are and where you come from. Lineage is valued as is association with groups. Groups' needs take a higher priority than individual needs. Life is not compartmentalized and is seen as a whole of interconnected parts – one affecting all and all affecting one. Cooperation is valued and rewarded with prestige.* ***Mantra: Work to Live*** *Purpose of the Negotiation. Is the priority on "sealing the deal" or to "cultivate / maintain and relationship"?* - *Proself see negotiations more as a problem solving method – process to achieve an end state. Problems are dissected and solutions offered. Usually Inductive reasoning is used (generalized conclusions from observing specific events / instances). May prefer specific legalistic documents (contract law)* - *Prosocial may see negotiations as a necessary evil as other lower processes to resolve issues have failed. May approach the process with Deductive reasoning (conclusion about a specific flows from general principles). May prefer general agreements without much detail* *Linear approach or relative approach to time?* - *Proself may emphasize punctuality and precise agendas. Time is to be spent "wisely" on the task at hand. Time is a resource to be marshaled – each second as valuable as the other.* - *Prosocial may emphasize time as a gift to be shared. Time with friends is more important than time spent in other manners. Punctuality is not critical, nor even desired.*

	Low or High Context communications? - *Proself emphasizes the meaning of words and precise choice of words. Little emphasis on non-verbal contexts. Direct, believes that the truth must be said, can be blunt, but always precise* - *Prosocial emphasizes the environment of the communication. Indirect meanings, hinting phrases are used so as to not offend either party (saving face). What is not said is often as important as what is said. Non-verbal contexts critical to understanding the message*
Org Culture	*SECTION II: Organizational Culture* *This series of questions looks at organizations. Gaining insight here is particularly useful for examining across US cultures such as DOD, federal agencies, state and local organization* *- What is the mission of the organization?* *- How are they organized to accomplish the mission?* *- How do they interact and function? Emphasis on hierarchy or egalitarianism?* *- Where are their allegiances? What are their relationships with other organizations?* *- What is their relationship with power organizations (Congress, etc?)* *- What are their priorities, what do they value the most?* *- Who do they normally cooperate with?* *- Who are their antagonists?* *- What is their planning process?* *- How do they garner resources? What is their budget process?* *- What is their history with your organization?*
Regional Culture	*SECTION III: Regional Culture* *This series of questions looks at regions from a macro, then micro, perspective.* *MACRO region* *- Physical geography / climate* *- Geo-strategic relation with its various neighbors* *- Members of a coalition?* *- Economy, Trade, Currency, Exchange* *GOVERNMENT – Distribution of power* *- Type of government* *- Nature of the executive system, b-bureaucracy, judicial system* *- Nature of commerce and trade* *- Nature of transportation and communications* *HISTORY* *- Development of land* *- Relationship with the US and other western countries?* *- Relationship with their neighbors?*

	Cultural Perspectives *(continued)*
	MICRO region *- Community layout / facilities* *- Meeting areas* *- Social opportunities* *- Organizational relationships* *- Local allegiances (tribal, hierarchy, government, etc.)* *LOCALITY* *- Is the "neighborhood" friendly or challenging?* *- What are the relationships between the major groups of people?* *- What is the nature of local power? Who answers to whom?* *- What are their priorities?* *SOCIAL ORDER* *- If something goes right, how do they distribute the credit?* *- If something goes wrong, how do they handle it? How do they save face?* *- Influence of Religion?* *-- Central and directive or secular and guiding?* *- Role of elders / children / women* *INDIVIDUALS TO THE NEGOTIATIONS* *-Individual's history /education /background /preferences*
Culture Summary	*Insights into BOTH your culture and the other party's can help guide your negotiations.* *Note: These are not the only possible outcomes, these exemplify the ends of a spectrum of cultural contexts, your situation may lie at one or the other end, or somewhere in between.* *Summative items:* *- Individualistic or communitarian?* *- Context/Communications: high context (indirect) or low context (direct)?* *- Time perspective: linear or circular?* *- Relationships: formal or informal?* *- Agenda: full proposal or approaching the negotiations an issue at a time?* *- Are trust-building measures in order?* *- Language: what language? Theirs / yours / an interpreter?* *- Outcome: Is the relationship more important as the outcome or the agreement?* *- Impasse: how might they respond to an impasse?*

	Execution Processes
ZOPA	*- Identify your Zone of Possible Agreement (ZOPA). From the least you'll accept to the best you can possibly hope to get, this establishes your ZOPA. How does this change during your negotiations?* *-- Gather information & identify the ZOPA* *-- Test assumptions and motives* *-- Learn from your counterpart. Listen carefully* *-- Be prepared to learn/modify as facts are unveiled.* *-- Understanding priorities and why the priorities are they way they are* *-- Brainstorming – is the other party amenable to brainstorming?*
Options for Mutual Gain	*- Satisfying as many interests of both parties as possible* *- Where might your interests and the interests of the other side coincide?* *- Are there areas of mutual agreement?* *- What actions (or combination of actions) might support the attainment of these mutual interests?* *- How might these actions be coordinated? Verified?*
At the Table	*- Managing the process at the table* *-- Managing your team – who will lead the discussion (one or many)? Who do you think will lead their discussion (one or many on their party?)* *-- Sequencing – How do you want to sequentially organize your negotiation?* *-- Who records the proceedings? In what language (both)? Written record or audio/video?* *-- Shaping perceptions* *-- Structuring the deal – is there a need for interim summaries / agreements?* *-- Closure*
Away from the Table	*- Managing the process away from the table* *- How do you call an "intermission"?* *- How do you manage communication with the stakeholders during negotiations?*
Impasse	*- Overcoming Impasse* *-- Cause of impasse? Positions? No ability to see common ground?* *-- Need to move to* distributive style? -- Influence of third party power -- Mediation? -- Change negotiator(s)? -- Change location (perception of time court advantage?) - Change timing of certain events? -- Take a recess -- Defer issues that don't require agreement now -- Build incentives -- Reframe issues to play to interests

	Objective Criteria

What criteria can parties agree to as objective measures of merit for each option?
 	
Industry standards, historical data, etc.
	Where are possible sources for objective criteria?
	    a. Within the respective parties' constructs (civil, criminal, social, political, economic, etc)? – What is the relevant law
	    b. Within the region? – might there be regional criteria to consider? Other examples within the region (especially if the example is of a regional power that the countries both respect)
	    c. Within bilateral documents / agreements? (SOFA, etc.)
	    d. Within regional documents / agreements?(Might there be a regional / coalition agreement?
	    e. Within international agreements / agreements?
	    f. Is there any precedent?(Where has this happened before?)
	    g. Does the culture consider "golden rule" type criteria "do unto others…."? Is there other "quid pro quo" criteria that is part of the social fabric and / or custom? How is it enforced?

	Post-Negotiations Evaluation
Goal is to self-assess for future skills improvement	- *Outcomes: Compare against entire range of outcomes – What is the best you can hope to achieve vs. What is your "walk away" point?* - *Compare outcome to BATNA* - *What transpired during the negotiations that followed the plan? Were the initial assessments / perceptions accurate?* - *What changes were you able to accommodate and why?* - What changes were unanticipated? Could they have been foreseen with a modification in the planning process? - Do you anticipate a good basis for follow-on negotiations should problems arise in execution? If so why, If not, why not?
Can also act as a tool for mentoring others on negotiations	- What lessons can you extract from this negotiation to help mentor others? Successes failures, insights, etc.