



Does It Pay to Appease an Evil Regime?

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Posted on August 8, 2017 15:16



The short answer is that it buys time, but doesn't always prevent eventual aggression.

North Korea now has up to 60 nuclear weapons, including a miniature nuclear warhead small enough to fit inside a missile.

The United Nations slapped the nuclear nation with tough new sanctions, hoping to pressure it into renewed negotiations. Kim Jong-un vowed to retaliate against the U.S. "thousands of times" over.

The U.S. could crush North Korea militarily, but it would cause hundreds of thousands of deaths both above and below the demilitarized zone. All of South Korea, which houses about 28,000 U.S. troops, is already in missile range. A military confrontation would have catastrophic consequences for the entire region.

President Trump is the fourth U.S. president to deal with a nuclearized North Korea, and he's stuck with the problem at its most critical. Experts believe its missiles could hit the U.S. by next year — and this comes after decades of negotiations and financial handouts to the brutal dictatorship.

In 1994, President Clinton signed an agreement with North Korea that was meant to freeze its nuclear production, offering it \$4 billion in energy aid. But when inspections showed storage of nuclear waste and undeclared production of plutonium, Kim Jong-il, the current leader's father, withdrew from further negotiations and continued his nuclear program.

Does appeasement work in world politics? The short answer is that it buys time, but doesn't always prevent eventual aggression.

Perhaps the best-known example of appeasement is Neville Chamberlain giving Adolph Hitler Czechoslovakia and the Sudetenland in 1938, in exchange for Hitler's promise to stop invading countries. The British prime minister returned triumphantly to London proclaiming "Peace in our time!" Within three years, most of Europe was under German occupation.

In his final days in office, President Obama signed an order lifting sanctions against Iran, and giving it \$1.7 billion in exchange for four American hostages. Iran promised to restrict its nuclear activities, but critics of the deal say there's no real mechanism for verification.

President Trump has called these tough newest sanctions on North Korea a foreign policy win. Even China signed on, making it a 15-0 U.N. vote to put export restrictions on the country's coal, iron, and seafood, and to limit its access to international trade and banking.

But even if this financial assault does force Pyongyang back to the negotiation table, what then? Kim Jong-un has declared that his nuclear weapons are not up for discussion. So what is there to talk about? I imagine a very awkward silence as the elephant sits in the corner. Maybe someone can come up with a new kind of carrot to offer. Anything is better than going to war, right?

But as Winston Churchill said, "An appeaser is one who feeds a crocodile, hoping it will eat him last."



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