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## Gadhafi's fate only hardened Kim's resolve

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WASHINGTON – The Obama administration's success in negotiating a nuclear deal with Iran has led to hope that a similar agreement might be reached with North Korea. Halt your program, dismantle some of your capabilities and accept intrusive inspections in return for "coming in from the cold."

Unfortunately, there's virtually no chance of that happening. The North already has a nuclear capability and views preservation of a nuclear arsenal as critical for domestic politics as well as international policy. Moreover, the West's ouster of Libya's Moammar Gadhafi is seen in Pyongyang as proof that only a fool would negotiate away missile and nuclear capabilities.

In word and action, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has demonstrated its commitment to being a nuclear state. Moreover, even a good offer for denuclearization looks suspect in light of U.S. and European support for the ouster of Libya's Gadhafi. He negotiated with the West, sacrificing his nuclear, chemical and long-range missile programs.

President George W. Bush promised that Libya's "good faith will be returned." Gadhafi was feted in European capitals. Tripoli was cited as a model for Iran and North Korea to follow.

However, four years ago the U.S. and European governments saw their chance. Under the guise of humanitarianism, Washington and Brussels promoted low-cost (to them) regime change.

Alas, the self-satisfied celebration of Libya as a "good war" quickly dissipated after that nation suffered postwar atrocities, loosed weapons across the region, generated rogue militias, spawned two governments, descended into incipient civil war and became another battleground for Islamic State forces. A grand victory it turned out not to be.

Now Libya also stands as a stark warning against nonproliferation, at least for any government believing itself to be in Washington's gun sights. Had Gadhafi possessed nukes, chemical weapons and/or missiles, the allies almost certainly would have kept their planes and drones at home. And Gadhafi probably would still be in power.

The North Koreans took immediate note. The Foreign Ministry observed: "Libya's nuclear dismantlement much touted by the U.S. in the past turned out to be a mode of aggression whereby the latter coaxed the former with such sweet words as 'guarantee of security' and 'improvement of relations' to disarm and then swallowed it up by force." The ministry insisted that events demonstrated how the North's military first policy was "proper in a thousand ways."

Pyongyang was wrong to assume that the allies pursued denuclearization as part of a conscious plan of premeditated treachery to disarm and then oust the Libyan dictator. However, the effect was the same. And the North has no reason to believe that the allies would not take advantage of a similar opening against the Kim dynasty.

Nevertheless, the Iranian negotiations have revived hopes that North Korea might be enticed into following suit. U.S. Undersecretary of State Wendy Sherman suggested that implementation of the Iran agreement “might give North Korea second thoughts about the very dangerous path that it is pursuing.”

The Chinese also cited the underlying principle. Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that the Iranian deal is an “active model” for the North. In his words, it represents a “win-win” spirit and demonstrates that talks can solve an issue, “however difficult the problem.”

Alas, Kim Jong Un took power only a couple months after Gadhafi was killed in rather gruesome fashion. That event likely was imprinted on his consciousness. Since then he has demonstrated his determination to maintain power by executing some 400 Korean Workers Party officials. Kim isn't likely to give up his most important weapon to deter outside intervention.

After the Iranian agreement was announced, the North Korean Foreign Ministry issued a statement explaining that the situation of the North was “quite different” from that of Iran and that Pyongyang was “not interested at all” in dialogue to discuss the issue of making it freeze or dismantle its nukes unilaterally.

After all, the North is a nuclear state and faces ongoing threats from the U.S. Thus, its nuclear deterrent is not “a plaything to be put on the negotiating table.”

This should surprise no one. Author Mark Fitzpatrick contended that the Iranian deal shows that the U.S. “treated the Iranians as equal negotiating partners, according them respect and collegiality.” But Washington treated Libyans that way too, but it didn't stop the U.S. and its allies from ousting the same government a few years later.

It never was likely that the North would yield up its nuclear weapons. But the Western alliance's Libyan misadventure makes that prospect even less likely. The U.S. and Europe may rue this precedent for years to come.

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