

Increasing Alignment Between Russia and North Korea: State Visit to DPRK in 24 Years

Russian President Vladimir Putin landed in North Korea's capital Pyongyang on 19 Jun, marking the first official visit to the country in 24 years. Kim Jong Un visited Russia in Sep 2023, accompanying Vladimir Putin at the Vostochny cosmodrome. The two countries have massively increased bilateral contacts over the past year. Putin and Kim Jong Un signed a comprehensive Bilateral strategic cooperation agreement that notably requires Moscow and Pyongyang to come to each other's aid in the event of "aggression" against either country.

President Putin's recent visit to Pyongyang and the signing of a new defense pact appear strategically designed to escalate concerns regarding potential conflict on the Korean Peninsula. This development could influence the United States and its regional allies to reconsider their level of support for Ukraine. On June 17, US State Department Spokesman Matthew Miller reported that North Korea had supplied hashtag#Russia with approximately 11,000 containers of munitions, including various types of artillery ammunition and missiles. Moscow likely perceives that heightened tensions between North and South Korea could be advantageous, similar to how the Israel-Hamas conflict in early Oct prompted discussions in the US Congress about reducing aid to Ukraine.