# President Putin Seeks to Strengthen Military Ties with Vietnam Amid Shifting Alliances



#### President Putin Travels to Vietnam Amid Strengthening US-Vietnam Relations

**Hanoi, June 19, 2024** - President Vladimir Putin of Russia arrived in Hanoi, Vietnam, early Thursday, aiming to bolster longstanding military ties amid evolving geopolitics in Southeast Asia. This visit follows a recent trip to North Korea, where Putin and Kim Jong-un reaffirmed a Cold War-era mutual defense pledge.

In Vietnam, Putin seeks to preserve Russia's position as Hanoi's primary arms supplier. Despite Vietnam's growing ties with Washington, approximately 60-70% of Vietnam’s defense arsenal remains Russian-made, including coastal defense missile systems and Kilo-class submarines.

Vietnam's deeper engagement with the US has included attempts to balance its defense purchases. However, Hanoi continues leveraging its historical relationship with Moscow, shown by its covert maneuvers to procure Russian military equipment against American sanctions.

Russia also holds significant economic stakes in Vietnam’s oil and gas sector through ventures like Vietsovpetro, jointly managed with PetroVietnam. These partnerships remain crucial as Russian energy exports to Europe decline due to EU sanctions.

Meanwhile, the health of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un surfaced as a topic of interest during Putin’s recent visit to Pyongyang. Experts and intelligence agencies, particularly South Korea’s National Intelligence Service, have noted Kim's fluctuating weight and health conditions, which could impact North Korea's political stability.

Putin’s engagements in Asia underscore his efforts to maintain strategic alliances as Russia faces global isolation over the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.