# Putin and Kim Jong-un Sign Mutual Assistance Agreement Amid Western Isolation



Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un solidified their partnership with a comprehensive agreement signed in Pyongyang on June 19, 2024. The deal emphasizes mutual support in the event of aggression against either country, a substantial step for both nations amid increasing isolation from Western powers.

The agreement outlines "all means at its disposal without delay" for mutual assistance, although the specifics remain vague. During the signing, Putin did not clarify what constitutes aggression or the nature of the assistance expected under the treaty.

Experts highlight significant military implications, with Western intelligence suggesting active arms trade between the two nations in exchange for basic supplies and technological knowhow. While the treaty bears similarity to mutual defense pacts like NATO, its credibility and durability are questioned due to the lack of shared institutions and interdependence between Russia and North Korea.

South Korea has expressed concern, considering the pact a direct threat and pledging to reconsider its stance on supplying arms to Ukraine. The region has seen increased military activity, including North Korean soldiers killed by landmines at the border and South Korea firing warning shots at border crossers.

Putin's visit to North Korea was part of a broader diplomatic push, including a subsequent visit to Vietnam. While in Hanoi on June 20, 2024, Putin signed numerous agreements with Vietnamese President To Lam, focusing on energy, technology, and education, without publicly addressing defense issues. The visits underscore Russia's effort to strengthen ties in Asia and break international isolation.

This enhanced bilateral cooperation, particularly with North Korea, is seen as Russia's strategy to help sustain its military operations and mend economic strains caused by ongoing sanctions. Despite these developments, experts believe that China's role remains crucial as the primary ally for both nations. Russia and North Korea's renewed partnership signals an evolving geopolitical landscape, potentially impacting regional stability and international relations.