# Russian-North Korean Military Pact and Putin’s Vietnam Visit



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**SEOUL, South Korea** — North Korean state media announced on Thursday a new strategic partnership between North Korea and Russia, agreed upon at a summit in Pyongyang. Leaders Kim Jong Un and Vladimir Putin emphasized an alliance that mandates immediate mutual military assistance in the event of war. This agreement marks a significant enhancement in bilateral relations, the strongest since the Cold War, covering security, trade, investment, cultural, and humanitarian aspects.

The Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) detailed that Article 4 of the agreement obliges each country to provide "all means at its disposal" for military support if the other is invaded. This summit, amidst Western concerns, hints at potential arms exchanges between the two nations, with North Korea possibly supplying munitions for Russia’s Ukraine conflict.

In **HANOI, Vietnam**, Putin’s state visit aimed to bolster ties with Vietnam, another long-time partner. He was greeted with formal ceremonies and met top officials including Communist Party General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong and President To Lam. The visit garnered criticism from the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi, which opposes giving Putin a platform due to Russia's actions in Ukraine and the subsequent international sanctions.

For Vietnam, Russia remains a crucial military equipment supplier and a partner in oil exploration technology. Despite its neutrality in the Ukraine conflict, Vietnam faces strategic balancing acts given its economic ambitions and diplomatic relationships with both the U.S. and China.

Bilateral trade with Russia stood at $3.6 billion in 2023, indicating significant, albeit declining, military and economic ties amid increasing diversification.