# Russia and North Korea Sign Mutual Defense Pact Amid Geopolitical Tensions



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On June 19, 2024, Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Pyongyang, where he signed a mutual defense pact with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. The agreement commits both nations to provide immediate military assistance to each other in the event of an attack.

Putin warned South Korea that supplying arms to Ukraine would be a significant error, though he assured Seoul that they had "nothing to worry about" regarding the new strategic partnership. Putin stated the military cooperation with North Korea triggered only if one of the signatories faced aggression.

The pact is seen as a revival of the 1961 Cold War-era mutual defense pledge between Russia and North Korea. South Korea expressed grave concern over the treaty, with National Security Director Chang Ho-jin condemning it as "sophistry and absurdity." Chang emphasized the need to strengthen the South Korea-US alliance and the South Korea-US-Japan security cooperation system.

The United States and South Korea regularly hold exercises around the Korean Peninsula. Reports suggest South Korea may have supplied artillery shells to the US, which were subsequently sent to Ukraine. A recent CSIS report highlighted the potential impact if South Korea released its stockpile of 105mm howitzer rounds to Ukraine.

Japan also voiced strong concern, with Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi emphasizing the potential violations of UN Security Council resolutions.

The agreement marks a significant geopolitical development amid Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine and the heightened tensions on the Korean Peninsula.