

# Putin meets North Korea's Kim for summit as US, NATO threats of global war grow

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Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un held a summit Wednesday in Pyongyang. Driven together by the pressure and aggression of US imperialism and its NATO allies, the two pledged to step up military cooperation. The danger of the US-instigated war in Ukraine growing into open armed conflict in the Indo-Pacific region is therefore growing sharply.

Putin, in his first visit to North Korea since 2000, led a high-level delegation that included Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Defense Minister Andrey Belousov. They held discussions with Kim and other senior North Korean officials including Prime Minister Kim Tok Hun and Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui. Kim previously met Putin last September at the Vostochny Cosmodrome, a spaceport in Amur Oblast in the Russian Far East.

At Wednesday's meeting, the two sides agreed to sign a "comprehensive strategic partnership" that Kim hailed as a "very robust treaty." According to Putin, the deal provides for "mutual assistance in the event of aggression against one of the parties."

The treaty reads, "If one of the two sides is placed under war situations due to an armed invasion from an individual country or several nations, the other side provides military and other assistance without delay by mobilizing all means in its possession in line with Article 51 of the UN Charter and the laws of the DPRK (North Korea) and the Russian Federation." Article 51 deals with self-defense if attacked.

The two also discussed future military technology cooperation, which is likely to include Moscow's assistance in the development of Pyongyang's missile and rocket programs. They also noted that trade between the two had grown ninefold in 2023 and by an additional 54 percent in the first five months of this year. Putin added, "Our countries are sincerely interested in further active development of cooperation, which is conducted both through the leadership of economic departments, parliaments, law enforcement, security and foreign policy structures, as well as between public organizations and citizens."

The partnership replaces previous agreements between Moscow and Pyongyang including the 1961 treaty of mutual assistance, which ended after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the 2000 agreement on bilateral ties, which focused more on economic rather than military cooperation. Russia's TASS news agency wrote that, according to Russian Presidential Aide Yury Ushakov, "The new document is needed because of profound changes in the geopolitical situation in the region and worldwide and in bilateral ties between Russia and North Korea."

In fact, the treaty is a result of Washington and NATO's plans for direct military intervention against Russia in the Ukraine war, instigated by Washington in 2022 as a means of trapping Moscow in a conflict and bleeding the Russian military white in the hopes it would lead regime change and ultimately the subjugation of the country to US imperialism.

Putin and Kim discussed NATO countries' provision of long-range missiles to Ukraine and Washington's green light for the Volodymyr Zelensky regime in Kiev to use the weapons to strike Russian territory, which could result in nuclear war. Referencing these threats, Putin stated, "This is not just talk, it is already happening, and all this is a gross violation of the restrictions accepted by Western countries within the framework of various international commitments."

A NATO attack on Russia therefore could make North Korea a direct participant in the war that would potentially engulf the Korean Peninsula, and raise the issue of Chinese involvement.

None of this will give Washington pause as it not only leads the expansion of the war in Eastern Europe, but threatens open conflict in the Indo-Pacific to further isolate Russia and eliminate other barriers to its global hegemony including North Korea and ultimately China. The strategists of American imperialism have repeatedly depicted their confrontation with Russia as a stepping stone to conflict with China, which they view as the chief threat to US capitalism's global dominance.

Less than a month ago, Zelensky made an unannounced

appearance at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore to berate China for refusing to line up behind the war against Russia and providing propaganda to justify the system of overlapping military alliances that Washington has constructed directed at Beijing. This demonstrates that the conflicts with Russia and China are increasingly linked.

The US has been attempting to goad Beijing into a war over Taiwan in the same manner it provoked Russia into the war in Ukraine, by upending the One China policy, which effectively acknowledges that the island is a part of China. Washington has de facto recognized this since 1979 when it established formal diplomatic relations with Beijing and cut them off with Taipei.

Washington's alliances include AUKUS (Australia, the United Kingdom, and the US) and the growing trilateral bond between the US, Japan, and South Korea, which the three sides are moving to formalize following talks between US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and his South Korean and Japanese counterparts at Shangri-La. Both Seoul and Tokyo are actively working to join Tier II of the anti-China AUKUS alliance, dealing with military technology cooperation.

Moscow and Pyongyang's latest agreement provides Washington with an excuse to further strengthen its alliance with Seoul and Tokyo, which now includes a new, large-scale trilateral military exercise, Freedom Edge, likely to take place this month.

Highlighting the spread of war to the Indo-Pacific, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said shortly before the Russia-North Korea summit, "We'll continue to do everything we can to cut off the support (to Russia) that countries, like Iran and North Korea, are providing." Blinken delivered this veiled threat at a press conference after meeting with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in Washington.

Echoing Blinken, Stoltenberg stated, "What happens in Europe matters for Asia. What happens in Asia matters for us. And this is clearly demonstrated in Ukraine, where Iran, North Korea, and China are propping up, fueling Russia's war aggression against Ukraine."

These comments are dripping with hypocrisy. The US and NATO have relied on countries like South Korea and Japan to provide huge amounts of weaponry to prop up Kiev. A report at the end of last year revealed that Seoul is a major supplier of 155mm shells to Ukraine, all while falsely maintaining the public position that it only provides "non-lethal" aid. Tokyo, in violation of its constitution, is shipping Patriot missiles to the US to be sent on to Ukraine.

However, neither Putin nor the Stalinist Kim Jong Un regime, which has nothing to do with socialism or communism, is leading any sort of struggle against US

imperialism.

Putin's reactionary invasion of Ukraine was carried out in the hopes of bringing Washington to the bargaining table to win concessions from US imperialism and create conditions more conducive for the Russian bourgeoisie. The Kim regime has long sought to turn the North Korean working class into an ultra-cheap labor platform for big business globally.

The two leaders, however, attempted to dress up their cooperation as some sort of struggle against imperialism, hailing the supposed friendship between the two nations and making references to their "common history." This included the Red Army's role in ending Japanese colonialism in Korea in 1945 as well as the Soviet Union's participation in the Korean War.

These events were mass struggles against colonialism and imperialism. The attempt to appropriate them by Putin and Kim involves a falsification of history.

While the Red Army defeated Japan's Kwantung Army in Manchuria and began liberating Korean cities in August 1945, Stalin and the bureaucracy in Moscow quickly accepted Washington's demands to divide Korea to give the US a foothold on the Asian continent. In the years following, Stalin effectively withdrew support for Korea's anti-colonial struggle against the US, only providing aid during the Korean war when the breadth of American imperialist ferocity and barbarism became a threat to the Soviet bureaucracy's national interests.

The regimes in Moscow and Pyongyang, moreover, have nothing to do with the heroic struggles of an earlier period. Putin heads a regime spawned by the Stalinist bureaucracy's liquidation of the Soviet Union and the plundering of its assets by a rapacious oligarchy, while Kim heads a dynastic autocracy desperate for foreign capitalist investment.

They are driven by nationalist concerns that have nothing to do with the interests of the working class in either country or internationally. Given the opportunity, either one would cut a deal with US imperialism at the expense of the other and further contribute to regional and global destabilization and the expansion of war.



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