



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on September 18, 2023

North Korea Deepens Ties With Russia and China

North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un and Russia's Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu discussed practical matters to enhance military collaboration, state media announced on September 17, in what Pyongyang hailed as a "fresh heyday" for bilateral ties.

Notably, the leader of the East Asian pariah nation promised his nation's support for Russia in its face-off with America and its allies.

"Russia has risen for a sacred fight to protect its national sovereignty and safety against hegemonic forces," Kim said prior to bilateral negotiations between Russian and North Korean entourages on September 13. "We will always stand together [with Russia] against imperialism."



AP Images
Russia's Sergei Shoigu (left) and Kim Jong Un

On September 13, Kim met Russian President Vladimir Putin to discuss military matters, the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, and enhancing cooperation. Kim also invited Putin to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), state media KCNA [indicated](#), stating that "Putin accepted the invitation with pleasure and reaffirmed his will to invariably carry forward the history and tradition of the Russia-DPRK friendship."

Nevertheless, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov maintained that Russia had no tangible plans yet for such a visit. "No, not planned yet. There are no such plans yet. But I repeat once again that this is our neighbor, it is in our interests to develop those relations that correspond to our interests," he [told reporters](#).

Kim and Shoigu [inspected Russian nuclear-capable strategic bombers, warships, and hypersonic missiles on September 16](#).

KCNA reported that the North Korean leader had voiced his admiration for Russia's aviation technology experiencing swift development and surpassing external potential threats, during his visit to a Russian fighter jet factory on September 15. The factory is currently under Western sanctions, and Kim's trip has raised eyebrows in Washington for fear that North Korea could boost Russia's military in Ukraine, while having its own missile program supported by Russia in turn.

Kim's trip comes as "a fresh heyday of friendship and solidarity and cooperation is being opened up in the history of the development of the relations between the DPRK and Russia," KCNA declared.

Furthermore, Kim and Shoigu "exchanged their constructive opinions on the practical issues arising in further strengthening the strategic and tactical coordination, cooperation and mutual exchange between the armed forces of the two countries and in the fields of their national defense and security," KCNA continued.



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Shoigu admitted to Russian media that Moscow is discussing joint military drills with North Korea, after visiting Pyongyang and touring a weapons exhibit with Kim, one of the key indicators of warming relations.

Kim also toured Russia's Pacific Sea Fleet, bedecked with strategic nuclear submarines among other military vessels, KCNA said, citing him as lauding the fleet for its contribution to peace in the region. Kim was photographed inspecting a warship.

Oleg Kozhemyako, governor of Russia's far-eastern Primorsky region, gave Kim a bulletproof vest and six drones manufactured in the region as he and Kim toured the Far East Street Exhibition on Russky Island in Vladivostok to inspect the hardware made in the region to contribute to Russia's military operation in Ukraine.

Kim received a complete set of body armor for assault operations, reported the press service of the Primorsky Region on September 17. The state-of-the-art gear offers defense to the chest, shoulders, throat, and groin, while being "much lighter than any known counterparts," the report elaborated.

Russia has actively promoted Kim's visit in the news, giving constant hints about the possibility of military cooperation with North Korea, a country set up in 1948 with the support of the erstwhile Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, China said on September 12 that it was, like Russia, hoping to enhance cooperation with North Korea in "various fields."

"China-North Korea relations are developing well," and the countries "are friendly neighbors connected by mountains and rivers," Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Mao Ning said in a regular briefing. "The two sides are implementing the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries."

Leaders are "deepening exchanges and cooperation between the two countries in various fields, and pushing for bilateral relations to continue to achieve even greater development," she continued.

The Chinese diplomat refused to comment on Kim's ongoing visit to Russia, saying that it is "an arrangement between the two countries."

The United States and its allies have been concerned about improving military ties between North Korea, Russia, and China as North Korea advances its provocative missile and nuclear development projects.

South Korea and the U.S. say military collaboration between North Korea and Russia would breach UN sanctions against Pyongyang and that the allies would make sure that there was a price to pay.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol lambasted such a military partnership as "illegal and unjust," proclaiming that the international community would "unite more tightly" to address warming ties between Moscow and Pyongyang, in written responses to the Associated Press on September 17.

Both Washington and South Korea have "reaffirmed that any nuclear attack by North Korea will be met with a swift, overwhelming and decisive response," Yoon declared, and a move by North Korea to mobilize nuclear weapons would "bring about the end of the regime" in Pyongyang.

Significantly, the "Mirotvorets" database, a Kyiv-regime-linked website, has included Kim on its list of supposed enemies of the state under the name "[Kim CHen Yn](#)," accusing Kim of being "an accomplice of Russian war criminals" and explaining that "civilized nations" had enforced sanctions on him for "human rights violations" and "nuclear blackmail."



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The only source quoted by the website depicting claims by the White House that North Korea was clandestinely providing artillery shells to Russia is a CNN report dated November 2022. Pyongyang and Moscow have both dismissed the claims.

Mirotvorets exposes the personal data of individuals whom anonymous moderators deem as hostile to Ukraine, while cheering the death of anyone on the list by writing “eliminated” in red across their photo. Having said that, Kyiv’s Western supporters have largely ignored the activities of Mirotvorets, which has been in operation since August 2014.



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