

NORTH KOREA 2024-2025: STRENGTHENING TIES WITH RUSSIA AMID CONTINUED ISOLATION

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Amid the Russia-Ukraine War, North Korea's foreign policy has shifted towards Russia to secure economic and military benefits and gain Vladimir Putin's support for Kim Jong-un's regime. Notably, in June 2024, Putin and Kim established a comprehensive strategic partnership, reviving the 1961 automatic military intervention clause. Despite this, North Korea remains heavily reliant on China on the economic front. China has been its primary trade partner, accounting for over 95% of trade since 2018, and is the most likely source of large-scale assistance through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative. Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump is signalling interest in talks with Kim Jong-un. A potential deal could see North Korea limiting nuclear expansion in exchange for partial US sanctions relief. Such an agreement would effectively recognise Pyongyang as a nuclear power, similar to the case of India, Pakistan and Israel.

(Click on the link to read the above in [Chinese](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#))

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Chinese:

朝鲜 2024-2025: 在持续孤立的情况下加强与俄罗斯的关系

俄乌战争期间，朝鲜的外交政策转向俄罗斯，以获取经济和军事利益，并赢得普京对金正恩政权的支持。值得注意的是，2024 年 6 月，普京和金正恩建立了全面战略伙伴关系，恢复了 1961 年的自动军事干预条款。尽管如此，朝鲜在经济方面仍然严重依赖中国。中国一直是其主要贸易伙伴，自 2018 年以来占贸易额的 95% 以上，也是最有可能通过“一带一路”等倡议获得大规模援助的来源国。与此同时，美国总统唐纳德·特朗普表示有兴趣与金正恩进行会谈。一项潜在的协议可能会导致朝鲜限制核扩张，以换取美国部分制裁的缓解。这样的协议将有效地承认平壤是一个核国家，类似于印度、巴基斯坦和以色列的情况。

French:

CORÉE DU NORD 2024-2025: RENFORCEMENT DES LIENS AVEC LA RUSSIE DANS UN CONTEXTE D'ISOLEMENT CONTINU

En pleine guerre entre la Russie et l'Ukraine, la politique étrangère de la Corée du Nord s'est orientée vers la Russie pour obtenir des avantages économiques et militaires, ainsi que le soutien de Vladimir Poutine envers le régime de Kim Jong-un. Fait notable, en juin 2024, Poutine et Kim ont établi un partenariat stratégique global, ravivant la clause d'intervention militaire automatique de 1961. Malgré cela, la Corée du Nord reste fortement dépendante de la Chine sur le plan économique. La Chine est son principal partenaire commercial, représentant plus de 95 % des échanges depuis 2018, et la source la plus probable d'assistance à grande échelle à travers des initiatives comme les Nouvelles routes de la soie. Pendant ce temps, le président américain Donald Trump manifeste son intérêt pour des discussions avec Kim Jong-un. Un accord potentiel pourrait voir la Corée du Nord limiter son expansion nucléaire en échange d'un allègement partiel des sanctions américaines. Un tel accord reconnaîtrait de facto Pyongyang comme puissance nucléaire, une situation similaire à celle de l'Inde, du Pakistan et d'Israël.

Spanish:

COREA DEL NORTE 2024-2025: FORTALECER LAZOS CON RUSIA EN MEDIO DEL AISLAMIENTO CONTINUO

En medio de la guerra entre Rusia y Ucrania, la política exterior de Corea del Norte se ha desplazado hacia Rusia para asegurar beneficios económicos y militares y lograr el apoyo de Vladimir Putin al régimen de Kim Jong-un. En particular, en junio de 2024, Putin y Kim establecieron una asociación estratégica integral, reviviendo la cláusula de intervención militar automática de 1961. A pesar de esto, Corea del Norte sigue dependiendo en gran medida de China en el frente económico. China ha sido su principal socio comercial, representando más del 95% del comercio desde 2018, y es la fuente más probable de

asistencia a gran escala a través de iniciativas como la Iniciativa de la Franja y la Ruta. Mientras tanto, el presidente estadounidense, Donald Trump, está mostrando interés en conversar con Kim Jong-un. Un posible acuerdo podría permitir que Corea del Norte limite su expansión nuclear a cambio de un alivio parcial de las sanciones de Estados Unidos. Un acuerdo de este tipo reconocería efectivamente a Pyongyang como una potencia nuclear, similar al caso de India, Pakistán e Israel.

Executive Summary

1. North Korea's (the Democratic People's Republic of Korea: DPRK) external relations are skewed towards Russia amid the Russia-Ukraine War. This alignment is aimed at (i) gaining economic benefits through troop deployment and weapons sales, as well as acquiring advanced military technology and (ii) securing Moscow's support for the survival of the Kim Jong-un regime.
2. In 2024, North Korea strengthened its ties with Russia in three ways. First, the two countries established a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP), which revived the automatic military intervention clause of the 1961 treaty.
3. Second, following the CSP's automatic intervention clause, North Korea deployed 10,000 to 12,000 troops to the Kursk region battlefield. Third, North Korea supplied weapons to Russia, which were crucial for sustaining Russia's war efforts in Ukraine.
4. The growing Russia-DPRK ties have encroached upon a sensitive area of China's interests. In its Arctic policy pursuit, China has sought to use the 17-kilometre lower stretch of the Tumen River—marking the Russia-DPRK border—as a shipping route to access the sea. However, this request remains unheeded by both Russia and North Korea.
5. Despite its strengthened ties with Russia, North Korea ultimately remains reliant on China for economic benefits. China has been North Korea's primary trade partner, accounting for over 95% of its trade since 2018, and the most likely source of large-scale assistance through the Belt and Road Initiative.
6. North Korea's Russia-centric foreign policy is problematic. In the post-pandemic era, the delayed reopening of embassies of Western powers, such as Germany and the United Kingdom, highlights North Korea's ongoing international isolation. Kim Jong-un's policy towards South Korea reflects fear and hostility, as demonstrated by the "Garbage Balloons" incident.

7. US President Donald Trump has indicated interest in talks with Kim Jong-un, potentially leading to a deal where North Korea agrees to limit nuclear expansion in exchange for partial US sanctions relief. This would effectively recognise Pyongyang as a nuclear power, akin to Israel, India and Pakistan.
8. The Trump-Kim talks are likely to coincide with the armistice in the Russia-Ukraine War and take place before the US midterm elections in 2026. Trump is unlikely to bear the cost of North Korea's withdrawal from the war in the deal.