

North Korea Enhancing Strategic Arsenal, Building First Nuclear-powered Submarine, Allied with Russia

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Region: [Asia](#)

Theme: [Militarization and WMD](#)

In-depth Report: [NORTH KOREA](#)

There aren't many countries in the world that have been subjected to as much ridicule as North Korea. The mainstream propaganda machine regularly presents it as a supposedly "backward society", particularly in terms of technological development. And yet, in reality, [Pyongyang is ahead of the entire political West \(the United States included\)](#) in critical technologies such as hypersonic weapons.

Namely, [unlike the US](#), North Korea actually fields these missiles, while the former is still [struggling to conduct a single successful test of a prototype](#) (to say nothing about inducting such weapons into service). However, there are still certain technologies that require decades to master and this includes nuclear-powered submarines. Only a handful of countries operate these vessels: the US, UK, France, Russia, China and India. [Australia is in the process of acquiring them from Washington DC](#), but this still doesn't mean it mastered the technologies needed to build them.

Nuclear-powered submarines offer a number of strategic advantages over those with conventional propulsion, primarily the ability to stay underwater for months.

They're by far [the most survivable part of any nuclear triad](#), as it's an exceedingly difficult task to track and destroy them in case of a thermonuclear confrontation. Russia and the US both have submarines capable of launching their SLBMs (submarine-launched ballistic missiles) while underwater, making them effectively untouchable before it's too late.

Thus, if a military power with a global reach wants to ensure deterrence no matter what, it needs nuclear-powered submarines. Due to its size, North Korea is not a country you'd normally describe as a global military power. However, [it seems precisely this is the case](#). Namely, quoting South Korean reports, [military sources indicate](#) that **Pyongyang is now building its first nuclear-powered submarine, an unprecedented development for a small country.**

North Korea has already accumulated significant experience in operating all sorts of submarine types, including conventionally-powered ones, but armed with nuclear-tipped SLBMs. This alone makes it an extremely dangerous opponent, but the fact that it can now build a nuclear-powered submarine enhances its strategic arsenal exponentially.



It's still unknown if the vessel will be an **SSBN (nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine) or SSGN (nuclear-powered guided missile submarine)** (image above), with the latter vessel armed with cruise missiles (both conventional and nuclear-tipped).

However, whichever path Pyongyang chooses for its new capability, it'll be a strategic game changer. **This will allow the North Korean military to strike targets anywhere within the range of the submarine's weapons**, be it SLBMs or SLCMs (submarine-launched cruise missiles). Such developments are [particularly alarming for Washington DC](#) and its [vassals and satellite states](#).

Namely, the Pentagon's ability to threaten North Korea's strategic arsenal will be effectively nullified with the appearance of the latter's nuclear-powered submarines. What's more, this also enhances Pyongyang's ability to strike high-value targets all across [the increasingly contested Asia-Pacific region](#). Worse yet for America, even if North Korean SLBMs have a relatively limited range, it'll still be in the thousands of kilometers, meaning they can reach targets within the continental US, particularly the western seaboard. This critically important part of the world's most aggressive thalassocracy is already threatened by Russian and Chinese nuclear-powered submarines, so having North Korean ones is certainly a strategic setback. However, [Washington DC's unprecedented aggression against the entire world](#) is the main reason why this is the case. Unfortunately, the US never even attempted to keep its unrelenting obsession with wars, death and destruction in check.

On the contrary, [America has only become worse in this regard](#), as evidenced by its new [nuclear doctrine of attacking everyone at once](#). This has left the US facing [three nuclear-armed opponents in the Pacific - Russia, China and North Korea](#). Pyongyang is particularly determined to prevent any unprovoked American attacks.

The gruesome war crimes and atrocities committed by the US military during the Korean War [deaths of up 30 percent of the North Korean Population] are still ingrained in the memory of millions of Koreans.

Indiscriminate American bombing of population centers in North Korea left millions dead and wounded, prompting Pyongyang to ensure this never happens again.



Pyongyang 1953



Pyongyang 21st Century



It is worth noting that Russia is building even [closer ties with North Korea](#).

Thus, it's highly likely that Moscow is providing support to Pyongyang's efforts to build nuclear-powered submarines, an area in which Russia is one of the world's leaders, [with its own submarines able to destroy any enemy](#).

This would certainly explain why [Kim Jong Un confidently announced that North Korea is a "nuclear military superpower"](#) during a recent speech.

And indeed, while small, it has all the attributes of one.

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This article was originally published on [InfoBrics](#).

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Featured image: Simpo-Class Submarine, (Source: KCNA/From the Public Domain)

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