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Opinion

The Russia-North Korea pact bolsters a growing 'alignment of evil'

The democratic world needs increased solidarity to counter Russia, China, Iran and North Korea.

By Max Boot, Columnist| / June 20, 2024

JERUSALEM — The "comprehensive strategic partnership" treaty signed on Wednesday by Russian dictator Vladimir Putin and North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un is only the latest manifestation of one of the most sinister and troubling trends in world affairs today: Russia, Iran, North Korea and China are all working together, to a greater or lesser degree, to challenge the U.S.-led, rules-based international order.

This isn't quite an "axis of evil," the unfortunate term President George W. Bush applied to Iran, Iraq and North Korea to justify his invasion of Iraq. Those states had little to do with one another; far from being allies, Iran and Iraq were enemies that had fought a bloody war in the 1980s. A more apt way to describe the current situation was **suggested by Yoel Guzansky, a senior researcher at Israel's Institute for National Security Studies, when I met him Thursday. He calls it an "alignment of evil," a phrase that accurately captured the dynamic.**

The four dictatorships in question — Russia, Iran, North Korea and China — do not constitute a formal security alliance akin to NATO or the old Warsaw Pact, but they are broadly united in their desire to challenge the United States and its allies, ranging from Ukraine to Israel to South Korea.

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