

In North Korea, Kim Jong Un aims to show strength | Aggies GO

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Kim Il-Sung Square in Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea.

Jonah Carlson - In his latest public outing, Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un of North Korea made visits to North Korean weapons factories, signaling military readiness to both North Korean and international observers as tensions between the state and its neighbors continue to rise. Kim Tong-Hyung explored the visits in an [article](#) with the Associated Press.

The visits to the weapons factories are an example of [ideological power](#), the keystone of the Kim dynasty in North Korea. Since the Korean War ceasefire of 1953, the Kim family has capitalized on shaping and reshaping North Korea's collective history to solidify its own interests and continually manipulate the state's politics. A constant focus on military preparedness assists Kim Jong Un in maintaining his grip. As Supreme Leader, he is not only the leader of the government but also of the military, which international observers assert is one of the [largest employers](#) in North Korea. From the outside, Kim Jong Un's military influence appears to make his regime relatively coup-proof, though it is unclear to what extent such coup-proofing has hampered military preparedness. With his factory visits, Kim aims to signal not only the state's military readiness but also his continued control over the military, demonstrating to the world that he maintains his position as Supreme Leader. His country's growing military capabilities, especially in the nuclear sphere, only contribute to the personal image he intends to craft.

Kim's ideological messages may be boosted by conflicting [territorial](#) claims on the Korean Peninsula. Both the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the north and the Republic of Korea to the south claim the entire peninsula as their territory, continuing claims made since the Korean War. In doing so, it is possible that both states contribute to the idea of the other being an existential threat, strengthening Kim Jong Un's ability to strongman his country's politics. Of course, North Korea's active nuclear weapons program continues to produce worrying tensions on the peninsula, slashing opportunities for productive diplomacy.

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