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Lavrov Meets Kim Jong Un in North Korea, Invites Him to Moscow

By Reuters

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Russian Foreign Ministry / Flickr

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov met North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Pyongyang on Thursday, the Russian foreign ministry said, and invited him to visit Russia.

Lavrov visited the secretive state ahead of a possible landmark summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and the North Korean leader in June.

Russia has appeared to be on the fringes of a flurry of international diplomacy as North Korea and the United States have taken steps to set up talks aimed at ending years of tension over Pyongyang's nuclear program.

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Lavrov on Thursday passed on good wishes to Kim from Russian President Vladimir Putin and

invited him to visit Moscow, TV footage showed.

"Come to Russia. We would be very happy to see you," Lavrov, seated across a table from Kim, said. He expressed Moscow's support for the declaration between North and South Korea last month in which they agreed to work for the denuclearization of the peninsula.

Lavrov also held talks with his North Korean counterpart, Ri Yong Ho, in what was his first trip to North Korea since 2009, Russian news agencies said.

Lavrov said Moscow hoped all sides would take a delicate approach to possible forthcoming talks on a nuclear settlement on the peninsula and not try to rush the process.

"This will allow for the realization not only of the denuclearization of the whole Korean peninsula but also to provide sustainable peace and stability across north-east Asia," Lavrov was quoted as saying by his ministry.

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