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Putin to Visit North Korea, Vietnam – Report

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President Vladimir Putin will travel to North Korea and Vietnam in the coming weeks, the business newspaper Vedomosti reported Monday, citing Russian diplomats familiar with the matter.

Russia's Ambassador to North Korea Alexander Matsegora told the newspaper that he is "actively preparing" for the Kremlin leader's visit to Pyongyang but otherwise did not specify an exact date for the trip or the purpose.

According to an unnamed diplomat cited by Vedomosti, Putin will first travel to North Korea before traveling further to Vietnam.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov declined to comment on the report when answering journalists' questions on Monday, saying only that "when the time comes, we will make appropriate announcements."

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Last month, Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Rudenko told journalists that preparations were underway for the Kremlin leader to visit North Korea and Vietnam.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un invited Putin to visit his country in September as he wrapped up a rare trip to Russia's Far East. Moscow at the time promised to help with North Korea's fledgling space program, while Putin told reporters he saw "possibilities" for military cooperation with Pyongyang.

Since that visit, Western governments have accused North Korea of unlawfully supplying weapons to Russia for use on the battlefield in Ukraine.

Putin's last and only trip to North Korea took place in 2000, when he met with Kim's father and former North Korean leader Kim Jong Il.

Meanwhile, Vietnamese media previously reported that the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, Nguyen Phu Trong, invited Putin to visit the country this year. The Russian leader last traveled to the Southeast Asian country in 2017.

Since assuming his fifth term as president in early May, Putin has made trips to China, Belarus and Uzbekistan.

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