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Putin Greets North Korean Officers After May 9 Military Parade

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Vladimir Putin and North Korean military personnel. **Gavrill Grigorov / TASS**

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday greeted a delegation of North Korean officers after hosting a military parade marking the 80th anniversary of the Soviet victory in World War II.

The Victory Day celebration came a week after Putin thanked North Korean leader Kim Jong Un for sending his troops to support Russian forces in the Kursk region — the first official confirmation of such a deployment.

"Thank you very much to all your fighters, your heroes. Best wishes," Putin was overheard telling members of the North Korean delegation on Red Square.

The Russian president was also seen embracing a North Korean lieutenant general adorned with medals.

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Servicemen from 13 “friendly nations” marched in the Victory Day parade alongside Russian military personnel, but North Korean soldiers were not among them. Kim was also absent from the more than two dozen foreign leaders who attended the event in Moscow.

North Korean state media reported that Kim visited the Russian Embassy in Pyongyang to extend congratulations and hailed an “invincible alliance” between the two countries. “Pyongyang and Moscow will always be together,” he was quoted as saying.

Russia and North Korea have deepened political, military and cultural ties since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

In January, Japanese media cited unnamed Russian sources as saying North Korean troops were expected to take part in World War II commemorations in Russia for the first time.

Russian Defense Minister Andrei Belousov extended an official invitation for North Korean military personnel to participate during his visit to Pyongyang last November.

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