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Putin Meets With North Korea's Kim Jong Un After Military Parade in Beijing

September 03, 2025



Kim Jong Un and Vladimir Putin. **kremlin.ru**

President Vladimir Putin met with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Wednesday following a huge military parade in Beijing, where the Russian leader thanked Kim for his country's help in driving out Ukrainian forces from the Kursk region.

The parade, which commemorated 80 years since Japan surrendered in World War II, brought together more than two dozen heads of state, a motley crew of countries that have challenged or questioned U.S. dominance in global affairs. Chinese President Xi Jinping presided over the grand military display, which featured fighter jets, tanks, missiles and columns of goose-stepping troops.

After the parade, Putin and Kim held a bilateral meeting, their first in-person talks since the Kremlin leader made a rare visit to North Korea last summer, during which the two countries signed a strategic partnership agreement that includes a mutual defense clause.

"On your initiative, as is well known, your special forces took part in the liberation of the

Kursk region," Putin told Kim in televised remarks. "This was in full accordance with our new agreement. I would like to note that your soldiers fought courageously and heroically."

"We will never forget the sacrifices made by your armed forces and the families of your servicemen," he added.

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Kim, referring to Putin as "comrade," thanked the Kremlin leader for his praise of North Korean soldiers, adding that relations between the two countries have been "developing in every dimension" since they signed the strategic partnership agreement.

"If there is anything we can do to help Russia, then we will definitely do it, and we will consider it a fraternal duty, and we will do everything to help Russia," Kim said, according to a Kremlin readout of the meeting.

"I think we need to make great strides so that all this meets the demands of the times, and also so that it helps to improve the well-being of our peoples," the North Korean leader added.

At the end of the meeting, which lasted nearly three hours, Putin invited Kim to visit Moscow.

Pyongyang only confirmed its troop deployment to Russia in April, acknowledging that some had been killed in combat. The United States, meanwhile, has accused the Kremlin of offering North Korea advanced space and satellite technology in return for its military support.

On Tuesday, South Korean intelligence officials claimed that around 2,000 North Korean soldiers deployed to help Russia fight against Ukrainian forces are believed to have been killed. They said Pyongyang plans to deploy another 6,000 soldiers and engineers, with about 1,000 combat engineers already in Russia.

The military parade in Beijing, as well as the preceding annual summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Tianjin over the weekend, has been viewed by many observers as a show of defiance against U.S. President Donald Trump's disruptive "America First" foreign policy.

On Truth Social, Trump accused China, Russia and North Korea of "conspiring" against the United States. Russian officials brushed off the accusations, suggesting the American president was being "ironic."

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