

# Putin and Kim Jong Un Shake Hands

*Kim Jong Un and Vladimir Putin held their first-ever meeting in the far-eastern Russian city of Vladivostok.*

The summit comes two months after talks between US President Donald Trump and Kim in Hanoi ended abruptly without an agreement. Some analysts believe that Putin's meeting with Kim is something of a coup, following the collapse of the Hanoi summit and the current tenuous status of North Korea-US talks.

"Putin has been trying to get the North Korean leader to Russia for a long time," said Andrey Kortunov of the Russian International Affairs Council.

But Robert Kelly, a professor of international relations at South Korea's Pusan National University, thinks Kim is "shopping around for a deal – playing the various actors off each other, looking for wins and bargains along the way."

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## North Korea and Russia: stronger ties?

North Korea's Kim Jong-un and Russia's Vladimir Putin have pledged to boost ties at their first ever summit. The pair greeted each other warmly ahead of the talks, near the port city of Vladivostok in Russia's far east. The leaders reportedly discussed denuclearisation, with Mr Putin offering to support efforts to normalise North Korean-US relations.

Talks between those two powers stalled following a February summit between Mr Kim and US President Donald Trump.

Speaking after the meeting with Mr Putin, Mr Kim said the two leaders had a “very meaningful one-on-one exchange of opinions on issues of mutual interest and current issues”.

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## Will President Trump react?



The Kremlin has set limited expectations for the summit, which will include one-on-one talks between the two leaders. In advance of the meeting, Kremlin aide Yury Ushakov said Putin and Kim do not plan to sign any agreements or come out with a joint statement. But it is important the summit is happening at all.

Earlier this year President Donald Trump’s Hanoi summit with Kim ended with no agreement after the North Korean leader insisted all US sanctions be lifted on his country. That failure followed the historic first summit in Singapore between the American and North Korean leaders, where Trump portrayed himself as a dealmaker. Putin’s meeting, then, is something of a coup.

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## Checking the past... Did we win?

Trump has received considerable criticism for the bold rhetoric that he has used against the North Korean Dictator, with politicians and pundits on the political left declaring that he was leading Kim Jong-un into a nuclear war. But it looks like his actions might have worked. Every president before him has treated the Kim dynasty with kid gloves, trying appeasement to get the hermit kingdom to back off on their aggressiveness and threats, but none of that has worked.

In contrast, Trump's direct challenge of the North Korean dictator seems to have finally brought him to the bargaining table, and without a list of demands that he expects to be met. President Moon gives much of the credit for this historic meeting to President Trump and the pressure that he has been putting on the North Korean dictator since coming into office.

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