

Putin's Ministers Ejected From N. Korean Negotiation Room for Entering Before Kim Jong Un

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Russian-North Korean negotiations in Pyongyang. kremlin.ru

Russian ministers accompanying President Vladimir Putin on his visit to Pyongyang on Wednesday were forced to leave the negotiation room by a North Korean official who appeared to be angered that they had entered before leader Kim Jong Un.

The incident took place during the live broadcast of Putin's visit by North Korean state media.

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, the first to enter the room, can be seen sitting at the negotiation table and complaining that he had gotten dirty with something. First Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov and Deputy Prime Minister Vitaly Savelyev then sit next to him.

Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak, Defense Minister Andrei Belousov, Health Minister Mikhail Murashko and Roscosmos head Yuri Borisov are also seen entering the room.

“Stop,” a North Korean official off-screen can be heard telling them.

A representative of the Russian delegation asks in response: “Why did we come in, then?”

“No, we have a protocol,” the North Korean official says in Russian. “We invite you to the table. Our leaders will join us shortly.”

“You should have warned us right away,” the Russian representative says. “First, you tell us to run...”

The broadcast abruptly cuts to footage of the now-empty conference room where Putin and Kim would later lead bilateral negotiations.

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Following these talks, Russia and North Korea signed a strategic treaty — which includes a mutual defense clause — that Putin hailed as a “breakthrough.”

Putin said Russia “does not rule out military-technical cooperation with the DPRK in connection with the treaty that was signed today,” referring to North Korea by its official name.

Kim called Putin the “dearest friend of the Korean people” and said his country “expresses full support and solidarity to the Russian government” over the war in Ukraine, which has triggered rafts of UN sanctions on Moscow.

Putin, in turn, thanked his host Kim — whose country has been under a UN sanctions regime since 2006 over his banned weapons programs — saying Moscow appreciated the “consistent and unwavering” support and calling for a review of the UN sanctions regime that bans weapons supplies and purchases to and from Pyongyang.

AFP contributed reporting.

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