
CHINA'S FOREIGN MINISTER ARRIVES IN NORTH KOREA

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China's foreign minister arrived in Pyongyang on Wednesday (May 2), the highest-ranking Chinese official to visit North Korea in years as Beijing tries to mend fences with its nuclear-armed neighbour.

The two-day visit by Wang Yi follows a landmark inter-Korean summit and precedes a meeting between the North's leader Kim Jong Un and US President Donald Trump in coming weeks.

Wang, who will meet his North Korean counterpart Ri Yong Ho during his stay, was greeted by vice foreign minister Ri Kil Song and other officials at Pyongyang airport.

The two top diplomats met in Beijing last month, days after Kim travelled to China for talks with President Xi Jinping.

It was Kim's first overseas trip since he took power in 2011 and came amid signs of a diplomatic thaw.

Wang is the first Chinese foreign minister to visit the North since 2007, a lapse that highlights the rough patch that relations between the allies have gone through in recent years.

China - North Korea's sole diplomatic ally and economic benefactor - has supported a series of United Nations sanctions against the North over its nuclear and missile programmes.

Last year the North staged its most powerful nuclear test to date and launched missiles capable of reaching the US mainland as Kim and Trump traded threats of war and personal insults, sparking global security fears.

Experts say China is now likely eager to avoid being marginalised in the wave of diplomacy that led to last Friday's historic summit between Kim and the South's President Moon Jae-in.

Kim is expected to meet Trump in the coming weeks at a time and place yet to be announced.

The North Korean leader has also invited Xi to visit Pyongyang but no date has been set.

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