North Korean Leader Kim Jong Un Conducts Unexpected Visit to China

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The trip included visiting a Korean War memorial site and Kim's return via a newly opened bridge.

A visit symbolising reinforced ties between Beijing and Pyongyang

North Korean state media has announced that Kim Jong Un returned from a spontaneous one-day-visit to a Korean War memorial in the Chinese border city of Dandong on Sunday, 25th of October. Reuters reported that Kim was accompanied by an authoritative North Korean delegation, including his sister, Kim Yo Jong and Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui.

During his visit Kim was escorted by Wang Huning, Chairman of the Chinese Communist Parties's Political Consultative Conference and China's fourth-highest-ranking official. Wang, often considered the 'Grey Eminence' of the CCP, has been a leading ideologist in the country since the 1980s, guided by his proclaimed belief in neoauthoritarianism.

The visit placed a strong emphasis on the historical relationship between the two nations, stating that their cooperation during the Korean War created "generational gratitude" and an "unbreakable" bond- and signalling the aim to further strengthen their relationship in the future.

Beijing as North Korea's primary economic lifeline

The diplomatic meeting primarily served to consolidate the existing relationship between both countries, with Beijing remaining Pyongyang's primary trade partner and economic collaborator.

Furthermore, China and North Korea have been seeking to strengthen their shared relationship ahead of US President Donald Trump's visit to the region next month. Coupled with Pyongyang's increasing military ties with Russia over the past two years, their relationship contextualises how international diplomacy may be further reshaped in the future.

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