

# [***Chinese official talks with North Korean counterpart in the nations' highest-level meeting in years***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BSJ-37B1-JC5B-G0YT-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

SEOUL, South Korea — [*A top Chinese official*](https://apnews.com/article/china-north-korea-visit-zhao-leji-5199ebffdd5f00591c6ed8ac31018975) arrived in North Korea and held talks on how to boost their cooperation, North Korea’s state media reported Friday, in the counties’ highest-level meeting in about five years.

Zhao Leji, who is chairman of China’s National People’s Congress and considered the No. 3 official in the ruling Communist Party, arrived in North Korea on Thursday. China’s government earlier said he will stay in North Korea until Saturday.

Zhao met his North Korean counterpart Choe Ryong Hae later Thursday and discussed how to promote exchanges and cooperation on all areas such as ***politics***, economy and culture, the North’s official Korean Central News Agency reported.

The two also exchanged views on unspecified regional and international issues of mutual concerns, KCNA said.

Zhao is one of the seven members of the Politburo Standing Committee, the Communist Party’s top leadership body headed by Chinese leader Xi Jinping. Zhao's visit to North Korea marked the first bilateral exchange involving a Chinese Politburo Standing Committee member since the coronavirus pandemic started. In 2019, the two countries held [*two summit meetings*](https://apnews.com/article/8d5f00b17403495db198e993aeb1c73c) between Xi and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Observers say North Korea and China are expected to hold a number of exchanges this year to mark the 75th year since they established diplomatic ties.

North Korea has been seeking to boost its cooperation with China and Russia in the face of a standoff with the United States and South Korea over the North's advancing nuclear program.

China, North Korea’s biggest aid benefactor, is believed to have long provided clandestine assistance to North Korea in violation of international sanctions.

Kim traveled to Russia in September for a [*summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin*](https://apnews.com/article/north-korea-russia-kim-putin-summit-c44735b9903e6f30e7e8d673ef4c77f3). The U.S., South Korea and others accuse North Korea of supplying conventional weapons for Russia’s war in Ukraine in return for advanced weapons technologies and other support.

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