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40 MINUTES AGO



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FEBRUARY 27, 2019 / 8:57 PM / UPDATED 2 YEARS AGO

Mirror image: Trump, Kim mind their body language with handshake of equals

By John Geddie, Miral Fahmy



SINGAPORE (Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korea's Kim Jong Un were at pains to show they were getting along in the well-choreographed first moments of their meeting in Hanoi on Wednesday, body language experts said.



Slideshow (4 images)

In images beamed across the globe from the Vietnamese capital, Trump walked towards Kim, palm upturned, against a backdrop of intertwined flags, before the two leaders clasped and turned in sync to face the cameras.

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Pease said “mirroring” was how people who want to show that they have a rapport imitate each other’s body language to put the other at ease.

Experts said the exchange contrasted with the pair’s historic first meeting in Singapore eight months ago when they sought to project a sense of command with “alpha male” handshakes.

The two leaders will hold a series of meetings on Thursday and try to make progress on a vague deal struck in Singapore to work towards the complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula that has produced few concrete results.

Since Singapore, Trump has declared he and Kim “fell in love” after exchanging letters, a far cry from when Trump in late 2017 called Kim “Little Rocket Man” and a “sick puppy” and Kim said Trump was a “dotard” - meaning a senile old person. Trump, 72, is more than twice the age of Kim, 35.

Kim looked far more confident compared to their Singapore meeting, while Trump welcomed Kim with his palm facing up - a sign, said body language expert Karen Leong, of a more open, conciliatory approach from the brash businessman.

“Trump wants the rapport. He is not here to become the bully, he is here to win Kim,” said Leong, managing director of Singapore-based Influence Solutions and author of the book “Win People Over”.

“Kim was walking towards Trump far more briskly with his hand extended. Previously in Singapore, Kim was far more hesitant. There is much more sense of familiarity.”

Kim Hyung-hee, director of the Korea Body Language Lab, said Trump seemed “to be taking a bit of extra care” in shaking Kim’s hand compared to other leaders.

There were signs of tension, however, when the two men sat down.

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“They both smiled only when they were expected to, and how they practised it,” he added.
“They were performing.”

Reporting by John Geddie, Miral Fahmy, Karishma Singh and Kevin Krolicki in SINGAPORE and Joyce Lee in SEOUL; Editing by Nick Macfie

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