Beijing Pursues Historic Diplomatic Gathering Between China, US and Russia

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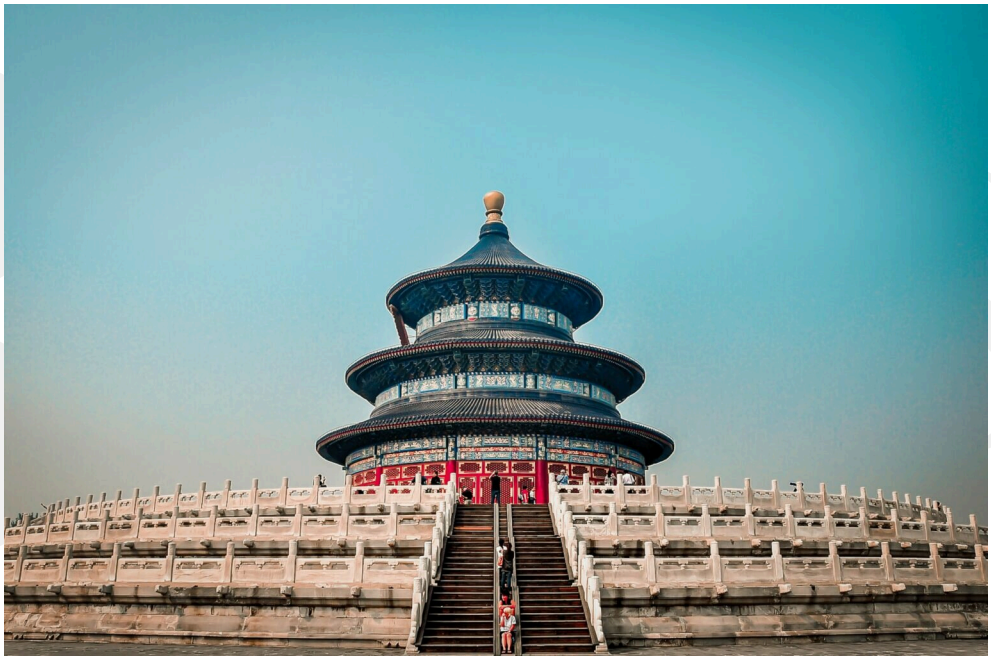


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Beijing has confirmed that it is discussing a historic meeting between Chinese leader Xi Jinping, U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said at a press briefing this week in Beijing that China "is in communication with relevant parties regarding a potential meeting between the three heads of state". Nothing is agreed upon yet, but the three-leader gathering would take place this month on the sidelines of a regional summit in the southern Chinese city of Shenzhen.

The possible meeting comes as Trump prepares to travel to China for another round of talks with Xi, with both countries seeking to maintain a fragile trade truce set to expire in January.

China Strengthens Its Role as a Centre for Great-Power Diplomacy

A meeting between Xi, Trump and Putin would give China an opportunity to demonstrate its position as an important centre for international diplomacy. At a time when relations between major powers remain strained, bringing the three leaders together would itself carry diplomatic significance. Beijing also has an interest in maintaining stable relations with both Washington and Moscow, even when their priorities differ considerably.

There are, of course, limits to what such a gathering could achieve. Disagreements over Ukraine and nuclear arms control are unlikely to disappear simply because the three leaders meet. Nevertheless, the potential value of the meeting should not be measured exclusively by whether it produces immediate agreements. By providing a platform for dialogue, China can strengthen its diplomatic standing and demonstrate its ability to maintain relations with competing global powers. Even a meeting without major breakthroughs would underline Beijing's growing importance in international affairs.

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