



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Strategic Significance of President Putin's Visit to China and Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its Impact on Trilateral Relations

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ABSTRACT

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On May 16-17, 2024 President Vladimir Putin, at the invitation of President Xi Jinping, opened his first state visit after his new term of office. During the state visit to China, President Xi Jinping and President Putin exchanged views on bilateral relations against the backdrop of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Russia, cooperation in various fields as well as international and regional issues of common interest. From June 18th to 19th, President Putin visited DPRK for a state visit. This visit of President Putin to Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), with profound historical, strategic, and situational significance. This article aims to delve into the deep strategic significance of President Putin's visit to China and DPRK, as well as its potential impact on the regional landscape. Through a detailed analysis of the political, economic, and security relations between Russia, China, and DPRK, this article reveals the multiple motivations behind this historic visit, as well as how it reshapes the regional power balance, promotes regional cooperation and stability.

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INTRODUCTION

The international situation is unpredictable and treacherous, the Russia-Ukraine conflict is pending, the Middle East is in flames of war, and the inter-Korean relations are tense. In this uncertain era, the situation is full of both crisis and uncertainty. Russia, taking into account the situation, guides the situation according to the circumstances, actively adjusts the diplomatic strategic layout, and accelerates the "eastward to southward" movement to break through the United States' unjustified sanctions and western blockade. Recently, President Putin's consecutive visits to China and DPRK have been timely and fruitful, which has a positive significance for the stability and development of China Russia, China DPRK, and Russia DPRK relations. At the same time, it will have a profound impact on the international landscape and play a positive role in promoting the construction of a more fair and reasonable new international order.

I. Analysis of factors influencing Russia's adjustment of diplomatic strategy layout

a. The influence of the external political environment of the American Western expedition

Tracing back history, Russia and Ukraine have a profound ethnic, historical, and cultural connection. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the conflict between the two countries intensified, and the Ukrainian crisis and the Crimean incident led to a rupture in their relations. Therefore, the diplomatic direction of the two countries went against each other. Russia is attempting to promote the integration process of the Commonwealth of Independent States and restore its influence in the

Eurasian region, while Ukraine has been committed to joining NATO and the European Union to seek political asylum. The strong support from Western countries such as the United States and Europe, the G7, and NATO for Ukraine has intensified the geopolitical confrontation and camp division between Russia and Ukraine.

In particular, since the Russia-Ukraine conflict in February 2022, the United States has carried out comprehensive sanctions in Russia, which can be said to have gone from extreme to extreme, confiscating Russian assets in the United States, removing Russian banks from the international capital settlement system, targeted sanctions against key Russian individuals and entities, etc. The EU has imposed 13 rounds of sanctions on Russia by February 2024. Attempting to provide Ukraine, the war agent, with more strategic survival space through external pressure, and then consuming Russia through a tug of war, in order to curb Russia's development momentum and fail to shake its world hegemonic position. Despite numerous bottomless sanctions and military aid, the Russian economy has not been dragged down. Under heavy pressure, Russia's economy has achieved astonishing stability and resilience, demonstrating extraordinary resilience and tension.

In addition to sanctions and the cultivation of war agents, Western countries continue to woo neighboring countries of Russia through ideological infiltration, NATO eastward expansion, and the application of favors. NATO joint military exercises continue to pressure Russia, attempting to create a situation of containment. The United States and the five Central Asian countries have established a "G5+1" mechanism to intervene in Central Asian affairs, implement "long arm jurisdiction", and force some neighboring countries to stand with the United States and deviate from Russia. This has made Russia face a more complex surrounding environment and increased regional risks.

b. Geopolitical considerations

Russia is located in the core area of the Eurasian continent, with vast territory and abundant resources. In order to protect its national interests and geopolitical status, Russia tends to establish close relationships with neighboring countries to ensure its own security and influence. This geopolitical consideration has prompted Russia to adjust its diplomatic strategic layout to better safeguard its interests and influence in the region.

c. Historical and cultural factors

Russia has a long history and unique cultural traditions, and has a deep emotional attachment to its national identity and traditional values. This historical and cultural identity makes Russia more inclined to establish close relationships with countries with similar historical and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, when adjusting its diplomatic strategic layout, Russia will consider cooperation and exchanges with these countries to strengthen their connections and understanding.

In summary, Russia will continue its pragmatic and flexible diplomatic style: adopting different attitudes towards the United States, NATO, and European countries to ease the isolation situation; Faced with the appeasement of external forces by the Commonwealth of Independent States, adopting different strategies and striving to defend the defense line; Adapt to the situation, accelerate the strategic shift, and develop relations with Asia Pacific countries and countries in the "global south"; Continue to deepen the comprehensive strategic partnership with China in the new era; Establish a comprehensive strategic partnership with DPRK.^[1]

II. The strategic significance of president Putin's visit to China

In 2024, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Russia, President Putin was invited to visit China. The two heads of state jointly signed and issued the Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on Deepening the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of Cooperation in the New Era on the Occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the Two Countries. Country which states: "Practical cooperation between China and Russia is an important factor in promoting economic and social development and common prosperity, safeguarding technological progress and national economic sovereignty, realizing national modernization, improving people's well-being, and maintaining the stability and sustainability of the world economy. "The two sides are willing to continue to deepen cooperation in various fields on the basis of the principle of mutual benefit and win-win, cooperate closely, jointly overcome external challenges and unfavorable factors, improve

the efficiency of cooperation, and realize "high-quality and stable development of cooperation," they concluded. The two sides agreed on many points, including "actively supporting local cooperation and border cooperation and expanding comprehensive exchanges between the two countries." Within the framework of preferential policies in the Russian Far East region, we will strengthen investment cooperation and realize cooperative industrial and high-tech production in accordance with the principles of commercialization and marketing. Following the principles of good-neighborliness and respect for national sovereignty, we will jointly develop Heixiazi Island (Da Ussuri Island). Accelerate negotiations on the draft intergovernmental agreement between China and Russia on the navigation of ships in the waters around the Black Blind Island (Tarabarov Island and Bolysoy Ussuriysky Island). The two sides will engage in constructive dialogue with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the navigation of Chinese ships in the lower reaches of the Tumen River. [2]

The location of Heixiazi Island is extremely important, it is not just an island, but a small river archipelago consisting of 73 islands of different sizes and 14 sandbanks. The two largest islands are Heixiazi Island and Yinlong Island, with a total area of 355 square kilometers. According to the agreement reached between China and Russia in 2004, China reclaimed 171 square kilometers of land in the western part of Heixiazi Island, including Yinlong Island, while Russia retained its eastern half. In 2018, China officially established Heixiazi Island City in Fuyuan City based on several villages and towns in the western half, while the eastern half of Russia includes counties such as Chumka Village. For China and Russia, the joint development and operation of Heixiazi Island can enable the Maritime Silk Road to unfold at sea, forming a multinational economic cycle in the Northeast Asian economic circle. The island is located at the junction of the Heilongjiang and Ussuri Rivers, and if properly developed, it will further promote the transportation and trade between China and Russia. Container transportation in Heilongjiang Province can be further channeled to the sea through the main waterway, which will greatly promote the economic development of Heilongjiang Province. Heixiazi Island is also envisioned as a free trade and ecological protection zone, which will greatly increase its economic potential in the future, making the economic value of the region extremely significant. Geographically speaking, Heixiazi Island is indeed very suitable for the construction of a China-Russia border trade port. Due to its crucial geographical location, both China and Russia have built bridges connecting the islands. The bridge on the Russian side directly connects the city of Khabarovsk in the Russian Far East, which is the transport artery of the Russian Far East - the Trans-Siberian Railway. In theory, starting from Heixiazi Island, goods can directly reach major cities in western Russia such as Moscow and St. Petersburg. In addition, Heixiazi Island is located at the confluence of the Heilongjiang and Wusuli rivers, making it suitable for building a water port. The river has abundant water resources and also has the ability to dock 5000-10000 tons of cargo ships. In the future, it is also possible for the island to develop rail water intermodal transportation and become a large waterway terminal.

The development of Heixiazi Island is also a manifestation of the continuous deepening of economic cooperation between China and Russia. By jointly developing this region, China and Russia can further strengthen cooperation and exchanges in the economic field, thereby promoting the further development of bilateral relations. As can be seen from the statement, President Putin's visit to China is of great significance, mainly manifested in: first, continuing to deepen the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership in the new era. President Putin's visit to China has further consolidated the foundation of China-Russia cooperation in political, economic, cultural and other fields. It not only helps to enhance political mutual trust between the two countries, but also provides broader space for cooperation in economic, cultural and other fields. By deepening the comprehensive strategic partnership in the new era, China and Russia can better respond to changes in the international situation and jointly maintain regional and world peace and stability. Secondly, promote the diversification of the international political landscape. Currently, the international political landscape is undergoing profound changes. Unilateralism and hegemonism are becoming increasingly prominent, posing serious challenges to the international order. The development of the relationship between China and Russia, as important international forces, is of great significance in promoting the diversification of the international political landscape. President Putin's visit to China not only helps to strengthen cooperation between China and Russia, but also provides important opportunities for cooperation with other countries. By strengthening cooperation with other

countries, China and Russia can jointly promote the diversification of the international political landscape and contribute to the construction of a more just and reasonable international order.

Thirdly, maintain regional and global peace and stability. China and Russia, as important neighboring countries and strategic partners, play an important role in maintaining regional and global peace and stability. President Putin's visit to China not only helps to strengthen cooperation between the two countries, but also provides important opportunities for addressing regional hot issues. By strengthening coordination and cooperation in regional affairs, China and Russia can jointly promote political solutions to regional hot issues and contribute to maintaining peace and stability in the region and the world.

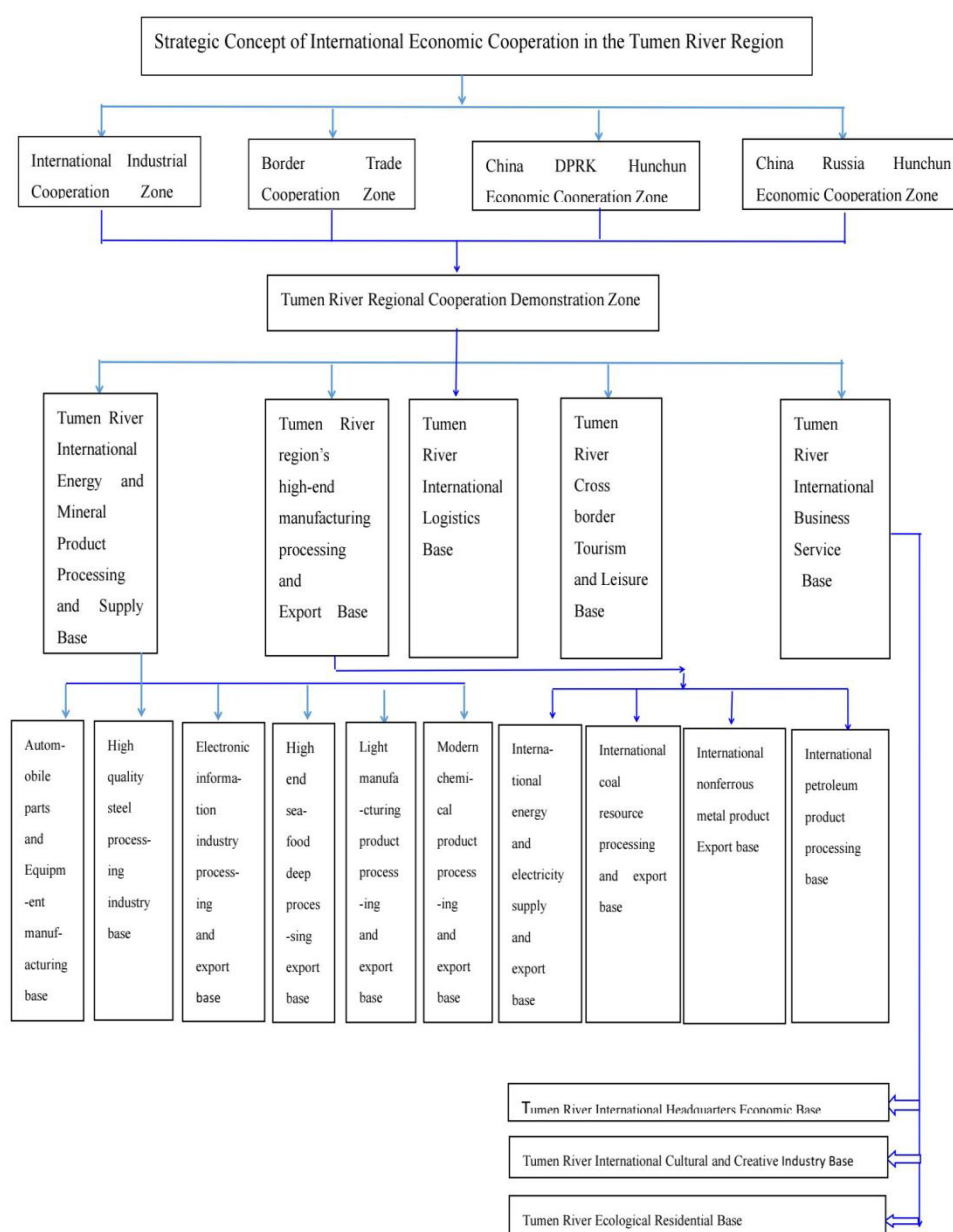
III. The strategic significance of president Putin's visit to DPRK

On June 19th, Putin made a state visit to DPRK with the aim of strengthening cooperation between the two countries in areas such as security, economy, energy, transportation, and agriculture. During the visit, the leaders of both Russia and DPRK discussed the most important and sensitive issues in informal dialogue, and jointly signed the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The signing of this treaty was referred to by President Putin as "laying the foundation for years of future relations between the two countries." Article 4 of the treaty states: "When either party is in a state of war due to armed invasion by one or more countries, the other party shall provide all means of military and other assistance without delay in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter and the laws of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation." [3] In addition, there is an important agreement related to China, which signed the "Russia DPRK Cross Tumen River Highway Bridge" agreement, which means that the Tumen River Russia DPRK Friendship Bridge is likely to be demolished.

The Tumen River is a multinational river that serves as the boundary between China, DPRK, and Russia. It is an important international river in Northeast Asia, connecting China, Russia, and DPRK. To the east, it faces Japan and South Korea across the sea, while to the west, it can connect with Mongolia. Its enormous navigation potential and significance for the development of international cooperation in the Tumen River region are significant. In 1992, the United Nations Development Programme officially launched the Tumen River region development project, in 2005 when it was renamed "Tumen River Regional Development" as "Greater Tumen River Regional Cooperation". However, due to various historical and practical factors, the Tumen River International Navigation Project has been hindered for a long time, becoming a bottleneck problem that restricts the deep development of Greater Tumen River regional cooperation. For China and DPRK, the Tumen River Port is an important land transportation and trade channel. The port is located in Tumen City, Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, Jilin Province, facing South Korea's Nanyang International Port across the river, and is only 177 kilometers away from DPRK's Qingjin Port.

For China, if the Tumen River estuary can be truly opened up, it will be extremely beneficial for the economic revitalization of the Northeast region. The three provinces in the East are important production and reserve bases for energy, raw materials, and commodity grains in China. However, they suffer from transportation difficulties and insufficient transportation capacity, leading to development constraints. However, now this bottleneck has begun to loosen. Once the Tumen River estuary is reached, the three eastern provinces can continue to expand their external transportation through sea transportation.

It can be imagined that in the near future, the three countries will work together to build the China Russia DPRK Tumen River International Economic Cooperation Zone. The specific plan is as follows:



Of course, this matter also has extremely important significance for Russia and DPRK. After the Western countries imposed comprehensive sanctions on Russia, the focus of Russia's development shifted to the East. However, the infrastructure strength in the Far East region is limited, and Russia needs to attract more Chinese investment to help Russia achieve market transfer. At the same time, more cooperation with China will be reached, and the pressure of Western sanctions will undoubtedly decrease. The same applies to DPRK, which has always been sanctioned by the United States and the West. Opening the mouth of the Tumen River to the sea is beneficial for its own economic development.

Therefore, developing the Tumen River Port will help strengthen economic ties and personnel exchanges between China, Russia, and DPRK, and promote economic development in border areas. Putin's visit to DPRK has profound significance, specifically manifested in:

Firstly, it marks a strategic upgrade in the relationship between the two countries. Since the end of the Cold War, Russia and DPRK have maintained close cooperative relations, especially in political, economic, military and other fields. However, due to changes in the international situation and differences between the two sides on some issues, the relationship between the two countries once faced challenges. Putin's visit to DPRK undoubtedly injected new impetus into the further development of bilateral relations.

During the visit, a broad consensus was reached on topics such as strengthening bilateral cooperation and promoting regional peace and stability. Both sides agree to further deepen cooperation in political, economic, military and other fields, and jointly address the challenges of the international situation. In addition, both sides also exchanged views on international and regional issues of common concern, further enhancing mutual understanding and trust.

Secondly, the ability to cope with international stress has been enhanced. In the current international situation, Russia is facing pressure and challenges from the West, and needs to find new partners and markets to cope with changes in the external environment. As an important country in Northeast Asia, DPRK's status and role cannot be ignored. By strengthening cooperation with DPRK, Russia can not only expand its influence in Northeast Asia, but also create more opportunities for its own development.

Putin's visit to DPRK also reflects Russia's independence and autonomy in international affairs. In the current international situation, Western countries such as the United States are attempting to contain Russia's development through sanctions and isolation. However, Putin did not succumb to this pressure, but persisted in following his own path and actively seeking opportunities to develop friendly relations with other countries. This visit to DPRK is an important opportunity for Russia to showcase its strength and influence on the international stage.

Thirdly, Putin's visit to DPRK also has profound regional security implications. As the core region of Northeast Asia, the stability of the Korean Peninsula is directly related to the peace and development of the entire region. For a long time, the situation on the peninsula has been of great concern, and various forces are intertwined and complex here. Putin's visit to DPRK undoubtedly injected new positive energy into the stability and security of the peninsula. Through in-depth exchanges and consultations with Kim Jong un, both sides are expected to reach more consensus and cooperation on the Korean Peninsula issue, and contribute more to regional peace and stability.

IV. The friendly international relations between China, Russia, and DPRK have a profound impact on building a new world order

The new type of international relations between China and Russia is a "stable anchor" for world peace and development.

As the two most important emerging economies in the world, China and Russia have a strong sense of participation in global governance issues and have similar value judgments in major international affairs. In the current complex international situation, the global governance of Western society, from concept to practice, from platform to mechanism, is far from keeping up with the development and changes of the international landscape. However, the active exploration of China and Russia is of great significance for reforming and improving the global governance system.

The world is currently undergoing major changes and adjustments. As major powers, neighboring countries, and permanent members of the Security Council, China and Russia face the primary task of domestic development and shoulder the historical mission of promoting world peace and development. Under the new situation, China Russia relations have stood at a new historical starting point and are facing new development opportunities. Establishing long-term goals for the development of China Russia relations is very important for promoting good and rapid development of bilateral relations. The unique neighborly and friendly relationship between the two countries will also make significant contributions to establishing a new international order, strengthening the trend of multipolarity, respecting the development model chosen by each country independently, and complying with international law.

China and Russia have continuously improved the level and positioning of bilateral relations, and the strategic partnership of cooperation has become a comprehensive cooperation, at the best level in history. In contrast, the United States is building "small courtyards and high walls", often "decoupling and breaking chains", bullying the weak, and seizing power, which is detrimental to itself and harmful to the world. Essentially, it is a Cold War mentality of zero sum game. Faced with the many risks in today's world, solving various difficulties in development, and facing the challenges brought by the rise of unilateralism and protectionism, as well as the rampant challenge of bullying to the international order, China, Russia, and the two countries working together are particularly important for world peace and stable development. Meanwhile, both China and Russia tend to resolve issues

related to the denuclearization of DPRK and the situation on the Korean Peninsula through peaceful, dialogue, and consultation. This position reflects the great power's responsibility and international responsibility, and is also conducive to promoting regional peace and stability. As long as China and Russia work back to back, there will be more peace, more security, and more stability in the world.

I. Developing traditional friendship between China and DPRK benefits both the two countries and Globally

The United States, which regards itself as a "world leader," continues to interfere in the Korean Peninsula issue, ignoring the DPRK's legitimate concerns and the achievements of past dialogue, which has led to tensions on the Korean Peninsula. The United States has tried to pressure the DPRK through sanctions and military actions, cooperate with regional countries on nuclear submarines, develop hypersonic weapons, and sell cruise missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads to other countries, which could escalate tensions on the Korean Peninsula. The United States is trying to demand China to condemn the DPRK's cooperation with Russia through political manipulation, attempting to pressure the DPRK and influence military cooperation between the DPRK and Russia. "China, which is at a new historical starting point, will stick to the path of peaceful development and will always be a builder of world peace; will stick to the path of reform and opening up and always contribute to global development; we will follow the path of multilateralism and always be a defender of the international order." [4] China will always stand on the side of peace and stability, the side of fairness and justice, and will be a builder of world peace, a contributor to global development, and a defender of the international order. We will firmly follow the path of peaceful development, firmly uphold the authority and effectiveness of the multilateral system, oppose various forms of protectionism, deeply participate in the process of global governance, and guide economic globalization to a more inclusive, mutually beneficial, fair and reasonable direction. We will promote the construction of a generally stable and balanced framework for relations among major countries, strive to create a peripheral environment of good-neighborliness, mutual trust and common development, comprehensively improve cooperation with developing countries, and actively provide constructive solutions to global and regional problems. We will accelerate the improvement of overseas rights protection mechanisms and capacity building. We are ready to work with the international community to build a new type of international relations with mutually beneficial cooperation as the core, and make new contributions to building a community with a shared future for mankind. It can be said that the friendly relations between China and the DPRK, two important countries in Northeast Asia, are conducive to maintaining peace and stability in the region. Strengthening communication and cooperation can reduce misunderstandings and misjudgments, thereby reducing the risk of conflict. The friendly relations between China and the DPRK are a positive asset for promoting and consolidating peace and stability in Northeast Asia, and in particular continue to release positive momentum for resolving the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula. Therefore, maintaining, consolidating and developing China-DPRK relations has always been an unswerving policy of the two countries.

II. Relations between Russia and the DPRK are intensifying, some are happy while others are worried

The friendship between the DPRK and Russia has multiple positive implications for the world:

First, as neighboring countries, maintaining good-neighborly and friendly relations between the DPRK and Russia helps maintain stability and security in Northeast Asia. Such stability is not only in the interests of both countries, but also of great significance to the peace and prosperity of the entire region and even the world. By strengthening cooperation and exchanges, the DPRK and Russia can jointly address various challenges and threats, thereby ensuring regional security and stability. Second, the friendly relations between the DPRK and Russia have also played a crucial role in promoting the construction of a multipolar world. In the current international situation, the trend of multipolarity is becoming increasingly evident. The friendly relations between the DPRK and Russia have set an example for other countries and regions, encouraging countries to engage in exchanges and cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual benefit, and promoting world peace and development. In addition, the DPRK and Russia are both important geopolitical forces, and their friendly relations directly affect the geopolitical landscape of relevant regions, playing an important

role in maintaining international order and balancing various forces. Finally, the friendly relations between the DPRK and Russia also help promote exchanges and cooperation between the two countries in economic, cultural and other fields. With the deepening development of globalization, economic ties and cultural exchanges between countries are becoming increasingly close. By strengthening economic and trade cooperation and cultural exchanges, the DPRK and Russia can achieve complementary advantages and common development, contributing to the prosperity of the world economy.

In summary, the friendly relations between the DPRK and Russia have positive significance for the world. Peace and stability are the common goal of human society. To balance the interests of all parties, maintain stability in Northeast Asia and promote the healthy development of international relations, all parties should abide by international law and norms, exercise calm and restraint, and resolve disputes and problems through dialogue and consultation.

CONCLUSION

The United States is trapped in the Thucydidean trap, adheres to zero sum game thinking, pursues unilateral justice, hegemonism and power politics, while China, Russia and DPRK all advocate multilateralism and free trade, oppose hegemonism and power politics, which is in line with the global public opinion that "the world has been suffering for a long time." By strengthening cooperation and exchanges among the three countries, we can jointly maintain international fairness, justice and world peace and stability, which is conducive to promoting the establishment of a more just and reasonable international order and building a community with a shared future for mankind.

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