

China welcomes US offer of talks as tariffs loom on \$200 billion of goods

By Jethro Mullen

CNN, September 13, 2018

Hong Kong (CNN) — China has welcomed an offer from the Trump administration to talk trade despite a US threat to impose steep new tariffs on a huge range of Chinese goods.

Chinese Commerce Ministry spokesman Gao Feng said Thursday that the two governments were discussing details for a new round of negotiations.

"The escalation of trade conflicts doesn't benefit either side's interests," Gao said at the ministry's weekly news conference.

President Donald Trump may be expecting Chinese officials to be the ones to make a concession. Later on Thursday, Trump [tweeted](#) that the United States is "under no pressure to make a deal with China, they are under pressure to make a deal with us."

The possibility of renewed high-level talks comes as the trade war between the world's top two economies appears set to intensify. Trump [said last week](#) that new tariffs on \$200 billion of Chinese goods could go into effect "very soon" and warned that another, even bigger wave of measures is "ready to go on short notice if I want." Trump's top economic adviser, Larry Kudlow, said Wednesday [on Fox Business](#) that the US government had received information that "the top of the Chinese government wished to pursue talks." He said Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin had sent an invitation.

Kudlow declined to provide further details on the potential talks. [The Wall Street Journal](#) reported earlier Wednesday that Mnuchin had sent the offer to a group of Chinese officials led by Vice Premier Liu He, the top economic adviser to President Xi Jinping.

The Treasury Department didn't respond to a request for comment.

The two economic superpowers have already imposed tariffs of 25% on more than \$50 billion of each other's exports this year.

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The next round of US tariffs on Chinese goods is likely to make thousands of products — ranging from dishwashers to Fitbit fitness trackers and food seasonings — [more expensive for American consumers](#). China has vowed to retaliate with tariffs on [another \\$60 billion of US exports](#), including meat, coffee, furniture and auto parts. [Trade negotiations last month](#) involving lower level officials from the two countries ended without any breakthroughs. A previous series of negotiations that included

Mnuchin, Kudlow and other top economic officials fell apart as Trump pressed ahead with plans to impose tariffs.

With the \$200 billion round of tariffs looming, "this is probably the best time for the US to go back to the table with a 'take it or leave it' type of trade demand," Robert Carnell, chief Asia-Pacific economist at investment bank ING, said in a note to clients on Thursday.

China's economy is slowing down, and new waves of US tariffs threaten to hurt its huge export industry. The trade war has also weighed on Chinese financial markets.

But analysts have expressed skepticism that China will give ground on some of the Trump administration's key concerns, including Chinese efforts to get hold of US technology and Beijing's ambitious industrial policies.

-- Nanlin Fang, Katie Lobosco and Daniel Shane contributed to this report.