

Trump says China tariffs will come down from 145%

By **Andrea Shalal** and **Jeff Mason**

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U.S. President Donald Trump attends a bilateral meeting with China's President Xi Jinping during the G20 leaders summit in Osaka, Japan, June 29, 2019. REUTERS/Kevin Lamarque [Purchase Licensing Rights](#)

Summary

Trump knocks China trade surplus

Says he might speak to Xi Jinping

Trump says about China tariff rate: "We know it's coming down"

WASHINGTON, May 8 (Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump said on Thursday he expects there to be substantive negotiations between the United States and China on trade this weekend and predicted that punitive U.S. tariffs on Beiiina of 145% would likely come down.

Trump's comments, made at the White House while unveiling the details of a new trade agreement between the United States and Britain, represent the latest sign of a softening tone between the world's two biggest economies, which have been locked in a standoff over tariffs and trade. After more than two months of no movement toward a rapprochement, the two sides this week announced they were sending top officials to Switzerland for talks this weekend.

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Trump's team meanwhile has been working on multiple trade deals after the president paused reciprocal tariffs for most nations to ease a trade war that upended financial markets and U.S. relationships with friends and foes.

He did not pause tariffs on China, however, and terse comments from Washington and Beijing about their dispute have raised questions about the economic ramifications of a long trade war between them.

Trump on Thursday indicated the United States could make a move to ease those tensions by reducing the levies, saying "it could be" when asked whether he would consider lowering the rate if talks went well.

"You can't get any higher. It's at 145, so we know it's coming down," Trump said. "I think it's a very friendly meeting. They look forward to doing it in an elegant way."

This weekend's talks will involve U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and chief trade negotiator Jamieson Greer and China's economic tsar He Lifeng sitting down in neutral Switzerland and are seen as a first step toward resolving a trade war disrupting the global economy.

Trump said he believed China very much wanted to make a deal. He said he would like to see China open up its economy.

"I think we're going to have a good weekend with China. I think they have a lot to gain. I do think they have far more to gain than we do, in a sense," Trump said.

Asked if he would speak to Chinese President Xi Jinping after the talks, Trump said he might.

"I might, yeah, sure," Trump said.

The president has long expressed admiration of Xi while acknowledging differences on trade and placing blame on China for the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Trade has been a particular concern of the president's, however. Trump said China had a "tremendous trade surplus" with the United States and wanted that to change. "I would like to see China open," he said.

Trump set an optimistic tone going into the weekend talks.

"I think it's going to be substantive," he said. "China wants to do something, and look, they have to at this point."

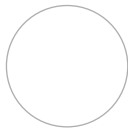
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