Yang, Tillerson optimistic on meeting

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Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi met with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson in Washington on Thursday morning to discuss bilateral ties and issues of mutual concern.  
Before their talks at the State Department, Tillerson told the media, "We've had many, many good discussions, and we're going to continue these very important discussions about US-China relations."  
Yang said, "We will carry out the agreement between our two heads of state and push forward our very important relationship."  
Yang's two-day visit comes at a time when Beijing and Washington are experiencing a series of challenges since the end of last year, following steady progress in bilateral ties in most of 2017.  
The first national security strategy put forth by the Trump administration in December listed China, along with Russia, as a major "competitor" seeking to alter a status quo that favors the United States.  
Then the US National Defense Strategy, released on Jan 19, again brands China as a "strategic competitor", taking a more confrontational stance than the previous administrations.  
This was followed by a stricter tone toward Beijing, including a recent decision to impose steep tariffs on imported solar products and washing machines, a move that China called an "abuse" of trade remedies.  
While announcing Yang's US visit, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang said on Tuesday in Beijing that both China and the US have expressed a willingness to maintain and further strengthen contacts and exchanges in various aspects.  
Earlier on Jan 25, US State Department spokesperson Heather Nauert said the United States does not seek an adversarial relationship with China; the two countries have a broad relationship featuring both contention and cooperation.  
Countries like the US and China have to follow a positive cooperative and constructive approach even when they are dealing with differences, because a trade war or a currency war would hurt both countries, Cui Tiankai, China's ambassador to the US, said in an interview with CNN on Dec 20.  
Last year, in addition to multiple phone conversations, President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump met three times, including Trump's first state visit to China in November.  
As agreed to by the two presidents at their Florida meeting in April, the two countries conducted four cabinet-level dialogues in areas including the economy, diplomacy, security, social and cultural exchange, law enforcement and cybersecurity.

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