Bay Area businesses seek calm

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Business leaders in the Bay Area gathered on Wednesday to raise their voices and articulate a clear message to the Trump administration: adding trade friction to the bilateral relationship between the US and China won't help either one grow; the two sides should engage in conversation instead of confrontation.  
At a reception jointly sponsored by the Chinese Consulate General in San Francisco, the Asia Society and ChinaSF at the residence of Luo Linquan, China's consul general in San Francisco, around 100 representatives from US companies, think tanks and research organizations voiced their concerns over Trump initiating a trade war with China.  
The US' most important foreign relationship right now is with China, Thilo Hanemann, research director at the Rhodium Group, said at a panel discussion at the reception. To alleviate tensions, the world's two largest economies need to strengthen communication, he added.  
Total trade volume between China and the US reached $580 billion last year, according to the Ministry of Commerce, which called the two countries highly complementary, as China is the biggest trading partner of the US.  
China's top leaders have reiterated the nation's willingness and commitment to open even wider its door for imports and foreign investment, said Luo, adding that Premier Li Keqiang announced at the recent annual session of the 13th National People's Congress that China will fully open the manufacturing sector to international competitors and cut tariffs on imported goods, including cancer drugs.  
"The mandatory requirement for tech transfer will be removed, and the government vows to better protect intellectual property," Luo said.  
Xia Diya, deputy director-general of the Ministry of Commerce, was in San Francisco on an international road-show to promote the first of its kind China International Import Expo (CIIE) to be held in Shanghai from Nov 5 to 10.  
Holding the CIIE demonstrates China's commitment to further opening up, said Xia. "No other country has ever, like China, invited other countries to join the process of development. This signifies our commitment to welcoming foreign trade."  
Meanwhile, China will treat all businesses equally, ease market access for all and protect the rights and interests of all business partners, said Yang Yihang, commercial counselor at the consulate general.  
Sean O'Hollaren, senior vice-president of the sports gear manufacturer Nike, which is headquartered in Beaverton, Oregon, said his state is "very trade-dependent", exporting agriculture products, electronics components and spirits and wines to the outside world.

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