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Think tank researchers, lawmakers and high-ranking Trump administration officials in Washington have talked about resuming negotiations to cool off the festering trade tensions between the world's top two economies, which are embroiled in a dispute intensified by a fresh round of tariff threats from the US.  
But Chinese commerce officials have made it clear that trust is the precondition for such talks.  
The impact of US President Donald Trump's trade policies was a key topic during a hearing in Washington on Thursday, two days after the Trump administration announced a second possible round of tariff hikes targeting a wider range of $200 billion of Chinese goods, after imposing hefty tariffs on $34 billion of goods last Friday.  
In answering a question from US Representative Nydia M. Velázquez if high-level talks between Beijing and Washington on tariffs and trade will be reopened and if he would participate, US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said, "Yes, I plan to participate."  
"I would say to the extent that the Chinese want to make serious efforts to make structural changes, I and the administration are available anytime to discuss those," he said.  
Mnuchin said, "I don't think we're in a trade war, we're in a situation of trade disputes," adding that his department is "very much monitoring the impact on the economy" from tariffs and the resulting retaliation.  
Earlier on Thursday in Beijing, Chinese Ministry of Commerce spokesman Gao Feng said, "China has said many times, the precondition for talks is trust. Both sides have not had contact on restarting the talks."  
The ministry said in a statement on Thursday that from February to June alone, China engaged in four rounds of high-level economic talks with the US, and has announced the China-US Joint Statement with important consensus reached on strengthening trade and economic cooperation and avoiding a trade war.  
"But due to domestic politics, the United States has gone back on its words, brazenly abandoned the bilateral consensus, and insisted on fighting a trade war with China," the statement said.  
Both Mnuchin and US Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross were participants in the talks.  
On June 20, Ross, in addressing a China Daily question regarding trade talks, said, "I know that you're carefully watching the trade discussions between our two nations."  
"We are hopeful that we can make progress and come to mutually beneficial solutions that help both of our economies grow," Ross said.  
In Geneva on Thursday, Vice-Minister of Commerce Wang Shouwen said the two sides had produced "good progress" in their previous talks but said that was ignored by the US side, which went ahead with a trade war.  
Wang, who is attending a China policy review at the headquarters of the World Trade Organization, told reporters, "For any talk to be successful, one party needs to take the gun off the head of the other party.  
"For any talk to be useful, one party needs to be keeping its words. If one side keeps chopping and changing all the time the talk would be pointless," the vice-minister was quoted by the Agence France-Presse as saying.  
Hours after Trump administration Tuesday's announcement of new tariffs, US House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady noted that despite the serious economic consequences of ever-increasing tariffs, there are no serious trade discussions occurring between the US and China.  
"It's time to take the first step into a new era of fair and free trade," Brady, a prominent member of Trump's Republican Party said in a statement. He urged top leaders of the two countries to meet soon to craft a solution to establish "fair and lasting trade" between the two countries.  
Michael Green, senior vice-president for Asia and Japan Chair of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said he believed tension between the world's top two economies would arise no matter who is US president.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201807/13/WS5b48b9f2a310796df4df6638.html