

Trump Officials to Meet With Chinese Counterparts Amid Trade Standoff

Scott Bessent, the Treasury secretary, and Jamieson Greer, the United States trade representative, will discuss trade and economic matters with the officials this week.



Listen to this article · 4:03 min [Learn more](#)



By Ana Swanson

May 6, 2025

Top officials from the Trump administration will meet with their Chinese counterparts in Switzerland this week, the first formal meeting about trade between the United States and China since President Trump raised tariffs on Chinese imports to triple-digit levels last month.

Scott Bessent, the Treasury secretary, and Jamieson Greer, the United States trade representative, plan to meet with Chinese officials during a trip to Geneva, where they will discuss trade and economic matters, according to separate announcements from the office of the trade representative and the Treasury Department.

A spokesperson for the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that He Lifeng, the vice premier for economic policy, would visit Switzerland from Friday to Monday and hold talks with Mr. Bessent. Mr. Bessent said on Fox News that the talks would be held on Saturday and Sunday.

The meeting could help to defuse an economically damaging trade standoff that has persisted between the world's largest economies for a month. In early April, Mr. Trump escalated tariffs on Chinese exports to a minimum of 145 percent, to punish Beijing for retaliating against his earlier levies.

While both sides appear to be interested in reducing those tariffs, neither has wanted to make the first move. It remains unclear how quickly the United States and China might strike any kind of agreement, or what its contents could be.

Want to stay updated on what's happening in China? [Sign up for Your Places: Global Update](#), and we'll send our latest coverage to your inbox.

The Trump administration has criticized China for its role in bringing fentanyl and ingredients to make the drug to the United States, as well as a bevy of unfair trade practices. Mr. Trump and his advisers have also censured China for failing to stick to the terms of a trade deal the president negotiated in his first term. China, in return, has called Mr. Trump's tariffs "illegal and unreasonable."



Ana Swanson
Times reporter covering the Trump tariffs

"I have been reporting on economics, trade and international relations for over a decade, from both China and the U.S. I aim to underpin my work with data and numbers, as well as give voice to the personal stories of people I encounter in my reporting."

Here's our latest reporting on economic policy and tariffs.

Businesses have complained that high tariffs on both sides of the Pacific have brought trade to a halt and threaten to put many American companies out of business. In the first quarter of this year, the U.S. share of imported goods from China fell to its lowest level in more than two decades, as trade ties between the countries became increasingly strained.

Speaking from the White House on Tuesday, during a visit by the Canadian prime minister, Mr. Trump said the Chinese were eager for a meeting. “They want to meet, and they’re doing no business right now,” he said.

Asked about the talks in Switzerland, a spokesperson for the Chinese Ministry of Commerce said that U.S. officials had “continuously leaked information about adjusting tariff measures and actively conveyed information to China through various channels, hoping to talk with China on tariffs and other issues.”

“China has carefully evaluated the U.S. information,” the spokesperson said. “On the basis of fully considering global expectations, China’s interests and the calls of the U.S. industry and consumers, China has decided to agree to engage with the U.S.”

“If the United States wants to resolve the issue through negotiations,” the spokesperson added, “it must face up to the serious negative impact of unilateral tariff measures on itself and the world, face up to international economic and trade rules, fairness and justice, and rational voices from all walks of life, show sincerity in talks, correct its wrong practices, meet China halfway and resolve the concerns of both sides through equal consultation.”

Mr. Bessent and Mr. Greer are also expected to meet with the Swiss president, Karin Keller-Sutter, to discuss a potential trade deal.

Eswar Prasad, a former official at the International Monetary Fund who is now an economics professor at Cornell University, said that it was a “hugely positive development that the two sides are finally setting aside their posturing and commencing negotiations.” He added that “even if a full-blown trade deal is unlikely, a de-escalation by itself would have both economic and political benefits for the two administrations.”

Alan Rappeport contributed reporting.

Ana Swanson covers trade and international economics for The Times and is based in Washington. She has been a journalist for more than a decade.