

Trump asks aides to press ahead with \$200 billion in tariffs on Chinese goods

(CNN) President Donald Trump is urging his administration to move ahead with slapping tariffs on \$200 billion of Chinese goods, according to a person familiar with the plans.

The timing of an announcement remains unclear.

Trump met with top aides earlier this week on the tariff issue and directed aides to proceed with plan.

“The President has been clear that he and his administration will continue to take action to address China’s unfair trade practices,” said Lindsay Walters, a White House spokeswoman. “We encourage China to address the long standing concerns raised by the United States.”

Representatives from Commerce and USTR could not be immediately reached for comment on the status of the administration’s plan.

The president took to Twitter on Thursday saying he had the upper hand in the trade war with China.

“We are under no pressure to make a deal with China, they are under pressure to make a deal with us,” Trump tweeted.

The threat came as Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin has been working to break a stalemate between the two countries in the hopes of ending the escalating trade war between the world’s biggest economies.

This week, Mnuchin extended an invitation to China to resume talks before the newest round of tariffs are imposed.

Trump’s top economic adviser, Larry Kudlow, said Wednesday on Fox Business that the US government had received information that “the top of the Chinese government wished to pursue talks” prompting Mnuchin to send an invitation.

China welcomed the offer, saying that both governments were discussing details

for a new round of negotiations.

“The escalation of trade conflicts doesn’t benefit either side’s interests,” Chinese Commerce Ministry spokesman Gao Feng said Thursday.

A Treasury spokesman declined to comment.

The next round of US tariffs on Chinese goods is likely to make thousands of products, including dishwashers, Fitbit fitness trackers and food seasonings, more expensive for American consumers.

The Trump administration has already imposed 25% tariffs on \$50 billion worth of Chinese goods. Trump has said the tariffs are necessary to punish Beijing for what he says are its unfair trade practices and intellectual property theft.

China, which has accused the United States of trade bullying, has matched the tariffs dollar for dollar. Beijing has pledged to hit back again with tariffs on another \$60 billion of US exports, including meat, coffee, furniture and auto parts.

Trade negotiations last month involving lower level officials from the two countries ended without any breakthroughs. A previous series of negotiations that included Mnuchin, Kudlow and other top economic officials fell apart as Trump pressed ahead with tariffs.

The comment period on the administration’s proposal to impose \$200 billion in tariffs ended earlier this month, and it’s been unclear what revisions to the plan will be made.

Trump has also threatened another round of tariffs on \$267 billion of Chinese goods. If imposed, those tariffs would bring the total imports from China subject to penalties to more than \$500 billion. That’s roughly the same as the \$505 billion in goods that the US imported from China last year.

— *CNN’s Jethro Mullen contributed to this report*

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