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U.S.–China Trade Talks End Without Deal, but Officials Remain Optimistic

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Trade talks between the United States and China concluded this week in Stockholm without a formal agreement to extend the current pause on tariffs, raising the possibility of a return to steep duties on imports starting August 12. Despite the lack of resolution, officials from both sides described the discussions as “constructive,” suggesting that progress toward a deal is ongoing.

The two-day meeting brought together American trade representatives and their Chinese counterparts in an effort to prevent a renewed escalation of tariffs that had previously

disrupted global commerce. Without a new arrangement, both countries are poised to reimpose significant import taxes that could once again strain economic ties between the world's two largest economies.

Speaking from Stockholm, United States Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer expressed cautious optimism. “The meetings were very productive,” Bessent told reporters, while noting that the final decision rests with President Donald Trump. Greer added, “We’re going to head back to Washington, D.C., and talk to the president about whether is something that he wants to do.”

President Trump, addressing reporters on Tuesday, echoed the sentiment, indicating that discussions were moving in the right direction. While no definitive decision was reached, the tone from both American and Chinese officials suggested that a mutual interest in avoiding further economic disruption remains strong.

The outcome of these negotiations holds significant implications for manufacturers, exporters, and consumers in both countries. The reimposition of tariffs could reignite trade tensions that had cooled in recent months under a temporary suspension. The initial tariffs, implemented during earlier stages of the trade conflict, had impacted hundreds of billions of dollars in goods, with sectors such as agriculture, technology, and retail bearing the brunt of the costs.

As the August 12 deadline approaches, attention now shifts to Washington, where President Trump is expected to make a final determination on whether to extend the tariff freeze. Until then, businesses and markets on both sides of the Pacific remain in a state of uncertainty, awaiting clarity on the future of U.S.–China trade relations.