

US doesn't seek trade war, high official says

Treasury secretary calls relationship with Beijing 'important' and 'complex'

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Washington wants to reduce its trade deficit with China by raising US exports rather than seeking a confrontation, United States Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin told a group of US governors who were in Washington on Tuesday to discuss foreign investment.

"Our objective is not to get into a trade war. This is an

important relationship. It's a complex relationship, and it's a big market," he said.

Six governors traveled to the US capital to discuss their experiences with foreign companies in their states; four of them talked about Chinese investment specifically.

"I do trade missions on a regular basis to China, to Asia and to Europe," said Michigan Governor Rick Snyder, who has led seven trade missions to China. "It is not about transac-

tions. Good trade is about win-win. It's not about win-lose.

"We just got a great company, J-Star from China, looking to set up a manufacturing operation in office furniture," he said.

Jiechang Linear Motion Technology Co, based in Xinchang, Zhejiang province, operates in the US as J-Star Motion Corp. The maker of office furniture components is planning to build a \$4.9 million manufacturing plant that will employ 122 workers in western Michigan.

Michigan attracted \$4.3 billion in Chinese investment last year, according to Rhodium Group. At the end of 2016,

the state had 123 Chinese operations providing more than 10,100 jobs.

"The Chinese companies brought jobs to Michigan, but also it's about building strong relationships between our two countries. I think that makes the world a better place, by doing business together," Snyder said.

The state of Maine is boosting efforts to lure Chinese investors.

Seeing an opportunity to target investment in specific areas like food processing, aerospace and renewable energy, the Maine International Trade Center opened an office in

Shanghai in 2015.

Maine Governor Paul LePage's second trip to China in 2014 helped attract an investor in the state's paper industry and has continued to increase investment volume in Maine.

"I went to China (with) the intent of getting one investor to put a paper machine in one of our mills. I came back and I have two paper machines. Now we are talking about two more," LePage said.

The state used to woo investment from Western Europe. Now it is turning to Asia, especially China.

"It's a relationship. You have to build it. You have to go and

not be afraid to travel and sit down and do the things you need to do," LePage said.

Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper said his trip to China in 2015 left a deep impression.

"The pace of innovation in China is breathtaking," he said. "China is becoming, or already is, one of the global forces in the global economy. We are always trying to refine how we relate to outside investors, especially large investors. So I think China, Japan and India are three major targets that we're trying to talk with all the time," Hickenlooper said.

Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin has warmly welcomed Chinese investment. Kentucky attracted \$9.3 billion in Chinese investment in 2017, according to Rhodium Group. There were 28 Chinese operations that employed almost 10,000 people by the end of 2016.

"When the company comes, they invest in us and we invest in them. We help them and partner with them. When they create jobs, that is good for our people," he said.

Cai Chungying and Yian Ke in Washington contributed to this story.

Party: Leadership enhanced in all works

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Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, the statement said.

The Political Bureau has comprehensively enhanced the Party's leadership in all works, stuck to the general tone of seeking progress while maintaining stability, innovating and working diligently, the statement said.

It has united and led the people of all ethnicities to boost confidence, deepen overall reform, keep steady economic growth, advance the rule of law, make efforts to engage in preventing and resolving major risks, target poverty reduction, prevent pollution, govern the Party with strict discipline, improve work style and push socialist building in economic, political, cultural, social and ecological areas as well as in building of the Party, the statement said.

The statement also highlighted the importance of the upcoming two sessions, saying they are of great significance to motivate the whole Party and nation to strive for the decisive victory in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and the great success of socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era.

Deepening institutional reform of the Party and the country will be a big step to modernize the country's governance system and capacity, the statement said.

Since the Party's 18th National Congress, the CPC Central Committee with Xi as the core has focused on the general goal of improving and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics and modernizing the country's governance system and capacity, deepened overall reform, enhanced the Party's leadership, deepened institutional reform of the Party and the country and made great progress in other important areas, the statement said.

Facing the requirements of a new era and new tasks, the current institutional setting of the Party and country could not fully adapt to the need to modernize the country's governance system and capacity, and the whole Party must unite the thoughts, boost confidence and seize opportunities to address obstacles and advantages in the Party's and country's institutional setting system, the statement said.

The institutional reform must fully implement the spirit of the Party's 19th National Congress and follow the guide of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, The Thought of Three Represents, Scientific Outlook on Development, and Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, the statement said.

The institutional reform should meet the need of

developing socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era, stick to correct direction, put people at the center and advance rule of law, the statement said.

The goal of the institutional reform is to build complete, scientific and efficient institutional systems for the Party and the country, with a Party leadership system to take overall management and coordinate all sides, a government system to have clear duties and govern in line with the laws, an armed force system with Chinese characteristics and of world class, a society work system to connect the people in a wide range, the statement said.

The people's congresses, governments, political advisory bodies, supervision agencies, justice agencies, procuratorate agencies, people's societies, enterprises and social organizations will be pushed to act coordinately under the unified leadership of the Party to fully improve the governing capacity, the statement said.

The top task of the institutional reform is to improve and uphold the system of the Party's overall leadership, enhance the Party's leadership in all areas and all works, ensure the full coverage of the Party and ensure the Party's leadership to be stronger, the statement said.

The reform of the Party's disciplinary inspection system and the country's supervision system should be pushed, the statement said.

It's an important task to transfer the government's function and streamline the setting governmental departments. The institutional reform will focus on high-quality development, building modern economic system, streamlining the function of government agencies, improving market supervision and law-enforcement system, reforming management system on national resources and ecological environment, improving governing efficiency, and building a government that satisfies the people, the statement said.

It is a systematic project to deepen institutional reform, and all Party committees and governments should unite their thoughts and actions to the decisions made by the CPC Central Committee, firmly maintain the authority of the CPC Central Committee with Xi as the core and its centralized, unified leadership, and completely implement the decisions and plans of the CPC Central Committee, the statement said.

The session calls on the whole Party and nation to closely unite around the CPC Central Committee with Xi as the core, unite their thoughts and actions, ensure the completion of all reform tasks, and strive for the fulfillment of the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation.



Craftsmen hammer out iron woks on Wednesday in Zhangqiu district, Jinan, Shandong province. The woks, which have boomed in popularity since they were featured on the TV show *A Bite of China* last month, are made using 12 steps. CHEN ZEBING / CHINA DAILY

A Bite of China forges new wok stars

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A handcrafted iron wok has become a must-have item for many people after it was featured in a popular TV documentary, sparking the industry to cultivate more young craftsmen to meet the booming demand.

A Bite of China, which shows the relationship between food and people in Chinese culture, returned for its third season on China Central Television on Feb 19 during Spring Festival.

The first episode focused on cookware and featured a brand of iron wok that is handmade in Zhangqiu district in Jinan, Shandong province. The show gave a detailed explanation of how a wok is made in 12 steps, including being hammered 36,000 times to make its bottom like a mirror.

Liu Zimu, 40, who runs the wok factory that appeared in the documentary, said that only 10 minutes after the first episode was broadcast, his business had sold its complete

stock of nearly 2,000 pans.

"In less than 10 days, hundreds of thousands of orders rolled in," he said. "Currently, we have about 50 craftsmen producing a little over 100 pans a day. It'd take us two years to fill the orders we've received."

Liu said iron woks normally run from 339 to 1,000 yuan (\$53.60 to \$158), while one made by a seasoned master is 1,299 yuan.

On the Tmall online marketplace, sales of Zhangqiu woks have increased by 6,000 times since the broadcast.

The overwhelming demand caused Liu to close his online store on Feb 23. "I'm glad to see our products are selling well, but I'm concerned about the irrational market," he said.

It's not easy to produce an iron wok, he said. A total of 18 levels of heat are used under strict quality controls, while the craftsmen must withstand high temperatures and lift heavy hammers weighing at least 7.5 kilograms.

"Fake products are inevitable when the market generates so much attention," Liu added. Zhangqiu pan-making cul-

In less than 10 days, hundreds of thousands of orders rolled in."

Liu Zimu, owner of wok factory that appeared in a China Central Television documentary

ture has a history of more than 1,000 years. But there has been a shortage of qualified craftsmen and the industry has been threatened by the development of modern machines.

The traditional craft was once close to vanishing. The demand for high-quality products stoked by *A Bite of China* has shored up confidence for them to save and redevelop the industry.

"The craftsmen realized that they once were only blacksmiths, but now they have more pride in what they

are doing," Liu said.

Liu and his two partners planned to recruit more young craftsmen as apprentices to enlarge the business and bring in fresh energy.

Wu Han, a 26-year-old native of Jining, said he was fortunate to join four years ago and become trained so he could earn a better living.

Authorities have stepped in to regulate the market by formulating an industry standard and branding the Zhangqiu iron wok. The district's market supervision bureau said on Tuesday that an industry association should be established.

The boom also brought new challenges to artisans who are in demand. Niu Qisheng, a 72-year-old hammersmith from Zhangqiu's village of Hezhuang, who has been pounding iron for more than 50 years, saw a flood of preorders for 2,000 woks, with some customers having to wait until March 2019.

"I treat it like artisan craftsmanship being passed down to keep the skill alive, not just striking iron," he said.

Economy: Growth trend 'stable'

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"Historical data show that PMI, in most cases, have (downward) adjustments in the month in which Spring Festival falls," Zhao said. "The easing of PMI in February is a normal change."

Zhang Liquan, an economist at the State Council's Development Research Center, said, "The stable economic growth trend has not changed."

Regarding China's achievements to global economic growth, the World Bank said China contributed 34 percent from 2012 to 2016, more than the United States, the European Union and Japan combined.

Sheng said the NBS communiqué highlighted the country's sound economic growth, greater overall national strength and international influence, better quality growth and new growth drivers.

China's year-on-year GDP growth was 6.9 percent in 2017 and consumption contributed to 58.8 percent of the growth, the communiqué said. The country's GDP scale reached \$12 trillion, accounting for 15 percent of the world's total. It increased by \$1.2 trillion in 2017, equivalent to the total GDP of Australia, Sheng said.

"The international influence (of the Chinese economy) has significantly improved," Sheng said.

The job market was stable in 2017, according to the communiqué. China created 13.51 million jobs in urban areas in 2017, 370,000 more than the previous year, marking the fifth year that it created more than 13 million jobs, it said.

By year's end, the country's surveyed urban unemployment rate and that in 31 major cities were below 5 percent, and its urban registered unemployment rate was 3.9 percent, 0.12 percentage point lower than a year earlier. It's the lowest since 2002, Sheng said.

China's consumer inflation growth was 1.6 percent in 2017, 0.4 percentage point down from the previous year and lower than the country's whole-year inflation control target of 3 percent.

"Economic growth of 6.9 percent, unemployment of less than 5 percent, and consumer inflation of 1.6 percent — such an economic operation scenario is rare and commendable, not seen in other countries," Sheng said.