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# US, China start trade talks in Kuala Lumpur

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

China and the United States began their latest round of trade talks in Malaysia on Saturday, a US Treasury spokesman and Beijing's state media said, ahead of a highly anticipated meeting of their leaders in South Korea next week.

Beijing's commerce ministry previously said Vice Premier He Lifeng would lead a delegation to Malaysia until Monday for talks with the United States.

AFP journalists on Saturday saw He Lifeng and his entourage entering Merdeka 118 -- the world's second-tallest building -- where the talks are being held.

They went through the lobby and did not speak to reporters.

The US delegation used a separate entrance.

Building staff told AFP the delegations were meeting on the 92nd floor.

The world's two biggest economies are seeking to avoid further escalating a damaging tit-for-tat tariff war, with US President Donald Trump expected to meet his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping in South Korea next Thursday.

The US president has made it clear he hopes to seal a "good" deal with China and end the trade war, even though he previously threatened to cancel the meeting, happening on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, starting October 31.

A US Treasury spokesman said Saturday that the talks in Kuala Lumpur had begun.

China's official Xinhua news agency also reported that the Chinese and US delegations had "convened".

Beijing announced this month sweeping controls on the critical rare earths industry, prompting Trump to threaten 100 percent tariffs on imports from China in retaliation.

The two countries also began charging arrival fees on each other's ships, sparked by a US "Section 301" investigation that found Beijing's dominance in the industry was unreasonable.

