NEW YORK - The Chinese and U.S. business communities should have more direct contact to start off trade talks that have become more tense, the top Chinese commerce official said on Thursday.

Robert Lighthizer, U.S. TRADE REPRESENTATIVE, said the calls are a "very positive" sign of an improved relationship with China.

The United States has raised its tariffs on a $34 billion list of imports from China.

"We actually want to see whether we can improve the relationship on trade and investment," Gu said, who is also an experienced attorney and a certified public accountant.

"Such communications would promote mutual understanding and trust. Businesses of the two sides can proceed through consultation," said Gu, who is also an experienced attorney and a certified public accountant.

Washington Greenlights Military Sales to Pakistan & India, Months after Air Skirmish

WASHINGTON - The State Department has approved $25 million worth of support for Pakistan's F-16 fighter jets as well as $60 million of support for India's C-130 transport planes and the two countries' joint anti-terrorism training program. This comes after the US government announced a long-term defense cooperation agreement, which includes F-16s, C-130s and other equipment.

Bucharest - The Russian Defense Ministry has dismissed reports claiming that a Russian arms shipment destined for Serbia has run into problems.

"All reports about the alleged Russian arms shipment to Serbia have been unfounded," the ministry's spokesman said.

"We have no reason to think that there has been any delay in the delivery of arms to Serbia," he added.

"It's essential to hold more direct exchanges between the countries," said the spokesman.

"We should hear more rational voices on bilateral relations," he added.

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Neighborhood News

I ran, Oman FM Holds Talks on Bilateral, Regional Issues

MUSCAT - Foreign Minister for Oman Ahmed Almussawi held talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in the capital Muscat, reporting questions about the beginning of bilateral, regional and international developments.

"We discussed the issue of the situation in the Persian Gulf region, as well as the situation in Afghanistan," Almussawi said.

"We also talked about the situation in the Indian Ocean region, as well as the situation in the Middle East," he added.

Time for World to Facilitate Regional Peace: Pakistan Army Chief

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa on Sunday said that the world community should play a facilitative role in fostering peace in the region.

"We are ready to work with the international community to achieve peace in the region," Bajwa said.

"The world community should play a facilitative role in fostering peace in the region," Bajwa said. "We are ready to work with the international community to achieve peace in the region," he added.

Turkmenistan, Russia to Hold Business Negotiations at Regional Level

NECHAINA - An agreement supporting the Turkmenistan-Astrakhan Caspian Sea Marine Forum, scheduled for August 11-12, was signed in Moscow on Tuesday.

Russia's President Vladimir Putin has said that the Caspian Sea is a region of great geostrategic significance.

"We are glad to host this event," Putin said.

"We are glad to host this event," Putin said. "The Caspian Sea is a region of great geostrategic significance.

Turkmenistan's President Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov said that the project is an important step in the development of regional cooperation.

Along with fostering the development of the region, the project will also help to diversify the economy of the Caspian countries.

"This will be an important step in the development of regional cooperation," Berdymukhamedov said.

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Swiss Company Official: Barriers Impeding Uzbek Business Being Removed

TASHKENT - Uzbek President Islam Karimov has promised to remove barriers impeding foreign business in the country, a Swiss official said.

"Uzbekistan has a huge potential for foreign investment, but it faces some obstacles," said a representative of the Swiss embassy in Tashkent.

"Uzbekistan has a huge potential for foreign investment, but it faces some obstacles," said a representative of the Swiss embassy in Tashkent. "We are working to remove these barriers."