

FEATURE

WHY DID STEVE BANNON GO TO CHINA FOR A SECRET MEETING?

BY GREG PRICE ON 9/23/17 AT 12:53 PM

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Former chief White House political strategist Steve Bannon reportedly met with a top official from the country he's long accused of contesting the United States in a vicious trade and economic war: China.

Bannon, who left the West Wing last month after helping President Donald Trump claim office, secretly sat down with a top leader of China's ruling Communist Party, Wang Qishan, for 90 minutes last week to discuss economics and populism, Financial Times reported citing two people familiar with the meeting.

While serving as China's top fighter against corruption, Wang is also the second most powerful member of the party, behind only President Xi Jinping, and the meeting was set up through an "intermediary" following Bannon's private speech before a Chinese state-run brokerage firm.

"The Chinese reached out to Bannon before his Hong Kong speech because they wanted to ask him about economic nationalism and populist movements which was the subject of his speech," one source told FT.

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Yet, such a high-ranking Chinese official meeting with Bannon, who Trump considers a friend and reportedly the two still speak often, could lead to further speculation of the current



Breitbart News chief's power outside of Washington.

The meeting came just days after Bannon's first major interview aired on CBS News magazine 60 Minutes, during which Bannon stated: "The elites in this country have got us in a situation - we're not at economic war with China, China is at economic war with us."

The significant discrepancy between U.S. and Chinese imports and exports, or trade deficit, has long been a hot topic across the country and in economic circles. As of July, the deficit has stood at \$25 billion, triggering fears of a costly trade war.

Earlier this month it was revealed Trump will visit China in November, according to Bloomberg, about seven months after Xi went to the president's Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida.

Editor's Note: It was reported in the *New York Times* that the meeting was asked by Wang Qishan and arranged by John Thornton, former president of **Goldman Sachs**.