

**U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**Senator Richard G. Lugar**  
**Opening Statement for Hearing on Climate Change**  
**June 4, 2009**

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**Opening Statement for Hearing on Climate Change**

*U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Republican leader Dick Lugar made the following statement at today's hearing:*

I join the Chairman in welcoming our distinguished panel. China's actions are critical to the success of any global effort to meaningfully reduce carbon emissions. Not only is China the largest source of greenhouse gases, its negotiating positions are influential on the G-77 developing nations and others.

Chinese responses to climate change and to global negotiations on the subject have been complex and contradictory. The words and actions of Chinese leaders indicate that they see climate change as a risk to the stability and development of their country. Yet this focus on stability also reduces Chinese willingness to limit carbon usage in ways that might impede economic growth. China has demonstrated a strong appetite for developing and deploying cleaner energy technologies, including solar and wind energy systems. Yet it continues to build coal-fired power plants at a rapid rate. It has issued forward-looking regulations and mileage standards designed to produce a greener economy. Yet it remains unclear whether China will develop the capacity to effectively implement its new regulations or even whether it can accurately measure their impact. China has productively discussed some climate change issues in bilateral negotiations. Yet in association with the G-77, it routinely engages in strident rhetoric that blames the West for climate change and supports counterproductive policy demands, such as having consumers in the West pay for the carbon content of products they buy from China.

China's position on climate change is more than a diplomatic problem for the United States. The American domestic debate on the issue will be profoundly influenced by perceptions of China's willingness to set aside doctrinaire positions and agree to verifiable steps to limit greenhouse gas emissions. China's status as a non-democratic nation, which lacks the checks and balances provided by a free press and other democratic institutions, will complicate the verification of any climate change agreement. Moreover, the fundamental trends in China toward industrialization, urbanization, and higher standards of living will have far more impact on the growth of emissions than government policy.

A starting point for our discussion is what can realistically be achieved through bilateral talks with the Chinese government. In my judgment, there is no doubt that such talks should be pursued, probably in a format that can include not just energy and climate, but also economic, security, and other issues. Even apart from climate change concerns, our nation has a strong interest in improving our communication with Beijing and making progress on common interests. I appreciate the diplomatic efforts already undertaken by the Obama Administration and others, including Chairman Kerry.

As I have mentioned in past hearings, it is critical that the American people have a much clearer picture of the overall elements of the climate change problem and the Administration's strategy in structuring a potential agreement. American participation in any global climate agreement is likely to bring profound changes to the American economy and culture that require the achievement of much greater consensus than we now have. Absent a reasonable consensus on how we structure our response and what sacrifices will have to be made by the American people, implementation of a climate change policy is far more likely to be ineffective, economically damaging, and divisive.

Part of this understanding involves how American efforts on climate change fit into global efforts. The overall volume of greenhouse gases released by China, India, and other rapidly developing nations is expected to continue to grow under almost any scenario. If this is the case, the American people will require much greater confidence that mitigation steps taken by the United States and other developed nations, combined with commitments by China and other developing nations to slow the growth of their greenhouse gases, will produce a meaningful result.

I thank the Chairman and look forward to the insights of our witnesses.

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