

**Senate Foreign Relations Committee**  
**Hearing on Climate Change**  
**Opening Statement by Senator Richard G. Lugar**  
**April 22, 2009**

I join the Chairman in welcoming Mr. Todd Stern and our other distinguished witnesses. This hearing offers an opportunity for the Obama Administration to provide details on its intentions with regard to climate change policy and negotiations.

At the recent climate talks in Bonn, it was announced that four or more additional negotiating sessions are planned before the Copenhagen Conference of Parties. It is my understanding that the deadline for nations to submit negotiating text for Copenhagen is April 24, just two days from now. The United States may be able to delay its submission for a short period of time, but under the rules of the Framework Convention, the negotiating text must be agreed to by June 8. I am hopeful that Mr. Stern will shed light on when the Administration will make its submission and what it will contain.

I also hope that we will receive clear answers concerning the nature of the agreement we are negotiating. There is a great deal of discussion about a negotiated “architecture” in which various nations make new commitments to reduce emissions. Under this architecture, various funds are contemplated to help developing countries adapt to climate change and obtain clean technologies.

It is not apparent, however, how nations would be bound to these new commitments or what type of ratification would be required. I also understand that China and India have already declared that they will not make binding emissions reductions. Clearly, the absence of credible commitments from China, India, and other major developing countries would constitute a severe obstacle to climate change legislation in the United States and elsewhere.

More generally, the challenge for the Obama Administration is that the American political debate on this issue has not progressed on the same timetable as international negotiations. Although there is growing opinion in the United States that climate change is a problem that requires a response, most Americans don’t fully appreciate what this means or how such a response would affect their daily lives.

Results of opinion surveys indicating concern about climate change may bear little resemblance to public reaction to the specific steps required to implement an international agreement. Public response to sudden utility rate increases stemming from a cap and trade agreement, for example, is likely to be severely negative without an extraordinary education effort led by the President. Even with such an effort, the American people and their representatives in Congress will be skeptical of any agreement that is perceived as overly burdensome or unfair to the United States or even to the region of the country in which they live.

If the Administration intends to gain support this year for an international arrangement on climate change, which almost certainly will have far-reaching implications on the American people, it must vastly expand its efforts to explain what it is attempting to accomplish and how this will affect Americans. It also must recognize that steps that exacerbate the current recession or significantly expand the deficit will likely cause an erosion of support among the American people.

I am hopeful that the U.S. climate change response can be centered on steps that simultaneously reduce our reliance on foreign oil, promote soil and water conservation, contribute to rural development, leverage new energy technologies, and create jobs. Public support will be strongest for emissions-cutting measures that are seen as contributing to additional U.S. economic or national security priorities.

I applaud the Obama Administration for continuing the Bush Administration's initiative to hold forums on climate and energy with a smaller group of economic powers. These forums strike me as the best way to engage China and India, and I look forward to monitoring these discussions.

I also look forward to working with the Administration on how the United States can better assist developing countries to adopt low carbon economic growth strategies, and improve agricultural production. Senator Casey and I have authored legislation to elevate the priority of global food security in American foreign policy. Climate change will surely impact the most vulnerable regions of Africa and Asia, and biotechnology will have to play a role in developing seeds resistant to the affects of climate change.

I thank the witnesses for being with us today, and I look forward to their testimony.

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