



U.S.-CHINA ECONOMIC AND SECURITY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Hearing on China's Energy Policies and Their Environmental Impacts
August 13, 2008

Opening Statement of Daniel M. Slane, Commissioner

Thank you, Commissioner Reinsch, and thank you to our expert witnesses and members of the public for attending today's hearing. This hearing will address a wide range of topics, from China's domestic energy and environmental policies, to China's participation in international climate change agreements, to the opportunities and challenges of civil nuclear cooperation between China and the United States.

The fact that we're covering so much ground today reflects the complexity of energy and environmental issues and of the challenges these issues pose to the U.S.-China relationship. China and the United States face similar problems; the two countries are the world's leading polluters and the leading global consumers of energy. These similar challenges create opportunities for cooperation between the U.S. and China, and some of these opportunities have been embraced. For example, under the leadership of the United Nations Development Program, California has begun to serve as a model for Chinese provinces as they seek to implement more robust climate change mitigation strategies.

Unfortunately, political stalemates undermine other opportunities for cooperation. China continues to insist that because developed countries have produced the bulk of cumulative pollution emissions, they must take primary responsibility for combating climate change. The United States claims that efforts at climate change mitigation by the developed world will accomplish little if China and India do not participate as well. In order to make progress on mitigating the effects of global climate change, it is essential that the U.S. and China find a way to move beyond this impasse. Some of our witnesses today are experts in global climate change and in international climate change policymaking structures, and we hope that they will help us find ways to move forward on these issues.

Civil nuclear cooperation between the U.S. and China provides another promising avenue of cooperation between the two countries. Technology transfers related to civil nuclear energy can benefit U.S. companies and aid China in its quest for sources of clean energy. However, it would be dangerous to ignore the potential security implications of nuclear cooperation with China. We look forward to learning more about these important issues over the course of the day.

We thank all of you for participating in this hearing. Let's begin with today's first panel.