

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Saturday, December 12, 2009 1:37 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: NYT Editorial

See below. Todd also wrote a short while ago to say the following:

From: Stern, Todd D (S/SECC)
To: Sullivan, Jacob J
Sent: Sat Dec 12 12:50:30 2009
Subject: Fw: NYT Editorial

By the way, see below. HRC should see. Thanks.

From: Ben Kobren [redacted]
To: Stern, Todd D (S/SECC); Todd Stern [redacted] Ogden, Peter R
Sent: Sat Dec 12 08:12:24 2009
Subject: NYT Editorial

B6

Really good editorial here. Really worth reading.

This Week in Copenhagen
 December 12, 2009
 Editorial

We didn't expect much from the first week of the global warming conference in Copenhagen. Countries need to do a little posturing before getting down to the hard work, which is supposed to start on Monday. But the belligerent talk from China seemed to go well beyond the usual positioning.

The best hope is that the talks will produce an interim understanding under which industrialized countries would commit to fairly precise targets for reduced emissions, and others, like China, to broader but measurable goals. The industrial countries would be expected to help poorer countries shift to less-polluting forms of energy.

That would set the stage for a legally binding deal in 2010. But there is no chance of even an interim agreement without the enthusiastic participation of China, the biggest emitter of greenhouse gases. China's absence would give other developing countries — and the United States Senate — an excuse to do less than needed.

Beijing's recent pledge to slow the growth in emissions seemed like a positive shift in attitude. Then on Tuesday, in a surprising show of defensiveness, China's top negotiator, Su Wei, said the greatest burden rested with the industrialized countries and jumped on the United States, Japan and the European Union for not being aggressive enough. Another Chinese official urged Washington to do "some deep soul-searching" and improve its proposal.

Todd Stern, the chief American negotiator, responded correctly: With emissions in many industrialized countries peaking or declining, just about all of the growth in greenhouse gases is expected to come from the developing world between now and 2030, half from China. Rich nations must still reduce emissions sharply, Mr. Stern said, but "there is no way to solve this problem by giving the major developing countries a pass."

China has also been demanding that rich nations contribute hundreds of millions of dollars a year to help poor countries address the threat of climate change. Again Mr. Stern was blunt. Washington is prepared to help those who need it, but given China's huge reserves and revved-up economy, he said he could not envision "public funds, certainly not from the United States, going to China."

The most positive development has been a pledge by the European Union to contribute \$10.5 billion over the next three years to help poorer countries deal with climate change. The United States has said that it will make a contribution but has not said how big it will be.

Transparency is another difficult issue that must be resolved, at least in principle, this week. There is no point in setting targets, or threatening penalties for noncompliance, unless countries are required to report emissions accurately. Transparency has never been one of Beijing's virtues, and emerging countries generally need aid to create sophisticated monitoring systems.

Copenhagen's broadest challenge is finding an equitable way to distribute the burden of confronting climate change. Despite some differences, the industrialized nations have pretty much agreed to trim their emissions by 15 percent to 20 percent from 2005 levels in the next 10 years, and by 80 percent by midcentury. And all seem to be willing to make expensive investments to get there. President Obama will need help from Congress, no sure thing.

A host of developing countries — including India, Brazil, Indonesia — have put broad goals on the table, though in some cases they seem more aspirational than real. But the bottom line is that the hope for a meaningful deal is vanishingly small if China doesn't sign on.