

29/06/2008 Agency blasts US for blaming China, shirking responsibility for climate change

Text of report by official Chinese news agency Xinhua (New China News Agency)

["Xinhua International Commentary" by staff reporter Lin Xiaochun: "Do Not Shirk Responsibility"]

Climate change is the topic that parliamentarians and political dignitaries from a number of countries will be discussing in Tokyo on 29 June. It is also on the agenda of the upcoming G8 summit. But just before these discussions are about to take place, agencies of some developed countries have dished out reports that put an unbalanced spin on China's "high carbon emissions." These reports make an issue of China regarding climate change in a big way. They use their own "numbers" to obscure the basic facts of China and mix up total emissions with such important factors as per-capita emissions. In effect, they ignore the tremendous efforts that China has been making and shirk the developed countries' bounden duty.

A report published by the Office of Intelligence under the US Department of Energy [DOE] the other day claims: "From 2005 to 2030, worldwide carbon dioxide [CO₂] emissions will increase by 51 per cent. Because of strong economic growth and continued serious dependence on fossil fuels, a large part of the emissions growth comes from developing countries, especially Asian countries. China alone accounts for 71 per cent of the increase in world coal consumption." Besides, Reuters quoted the DOE Office of Intelligence as saying: "By 2030, China's annual carbon emissions will exceed 12 billion tons," almost double the United States' figure.

Such reports obscure the basic facts of China with one-sided "numbers." Given that the Chinese population takes up 21 per cent of the world population, the per-capita CO₂ emissions in China are still on the low side; commodities produced by China are enjoyed across the world, but China is under mounting pressure from "transferred emissions." The British weekly, *New Scientist*, saw the hypocrisy in this type of reports from developed countries and referred to it as "blame-China syndrome." It pointed out: "Please remember that one in five people on this planet is Chinese. China's per-capita CO₂ emissions are half of those in Europe and a quarter of those in the United States or Australia. China's per-capita ecological footprint is below the world average."

Such reports turn a blind eye to the major efforts that China has been making in responding to climate change. China has persisted in following the path of new-type industrialization with Chinese characteristics; combined response to climate change with implementing the sustainable development strategy, accelerating the construction of a resource-efficient and environment-friendly society, and building an innovation-oriented country; announced the national climate change response plan; and set the explicit targets of lowering energy consumption per unit of gross domestic product by approximately 20 per cent from 2005 to 2010 and raising the weight of renewable energy in the primary energy supply mix to 10 per cent. These are concrete and important initiatives for climate change response.

Such reports aim to shirk the developed countries' bounden duty while unduly pointing the finger at others. In the course of their industrialization and modernization, developed countries have emitted large amounts of greenhouse gases, mainly CO₂, without restraint and aggravated climate change.

Take the United States for example. Its population is less than 5 per cent of the world's total population, but it consumes 25 per cent of the world's oil. Former UN Secretary General [Kofi] Annan pointed out the other day that as far as per-capita emissions are concerned, the most developed and the richest countries should obviously take the main blame for the ever increasing greenhouse gases. Therefore, they should take the lead in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Response to climate change requires the international community working hand in hand. Therefore, it is imperative to adhere to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities as defined in the "United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change" and its "Kyoto Protocol": Developed countries should be the first to undertake the obligation of emissions reduction and provide financial aid and technology transfer to developing countries; developing countries should also do their part for the response to climate change by promoting sustainable development. This and this alone is the right approach to meeting the challenge. Unduly pointing the finger at others and taking the opportunity to shirk responsibility does nothing to help solve the problem.

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