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China's great wall to foreign green tech

**Protecting domestic firms from foreign competition in alternative energy
against global warming.**

By the Monitor's Editorial Board

When China's ruling Communist Party tells the energy industry in the west to "go green," the world can cheer. At last the largest emitter of heat-trapping greenhouse gases makes [a contribution toward curbs on global warming](#) – short of actually setting limits on its own emissions.

But the world should not cheer China as it tries to protect its domestic green-tech industry from foreign competition.

Foreign makers of solar panels and wind turbines are now often excluded from government projects in renewable energies. A recent "buy Chinese" policy favored local makers of wind turbines, for instance, in favor of local manufacturers.

In many other ways, China is putting up trade barriers in an attempt to protect its domestic green-tech industries. The strategy is modeled on Japan's success after World War II in pushing out competitors out of the domestic car and electronic markets while building up its own.

But with clean energy, China has a big role to play in solving a critical global problem. Green-tech industries should be treated differently from other industries.

Yes, the renewable-energy industry will likely be the next big jobs producer in the world. But because much of this industry still relies on subsidies to be profitable, it is still not a true free market. It will need the invisible hand of global competition and the free exchange of technical know-how (not a pirating of patents) to become a truly competitive industry.

And to reduce the use of coal and oil more quickly, every country, especially the best technology at the best price. Protectionism works against that.

Subsidies for renewables, while sometimes necessary to kick-start the market and create unexpected costs. A few European nations have industries at tremendous cost to consumers and taxpayers.

China must abandon its communist and mercantile approach to control other countries that are similarly tempted.

A global industry that sprang up to help solve a global problem should not be in.

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