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## U.S.-China seen needing close climate partnership now

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Thu Feb 5, 2009 10:17pm EST

By Emma Graham-Harrison and Deborah Zabarenko

BEIJING/WASHINGTON (Reuters) - China and the United States must act fast and in unison on global warming if the world is to be saved from devastating change, a report drawn up in part by the new U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu warned.

The two top emitters must bring their leaders together for a climate summit, to overcome protectionist fears and speed up research and roll-out of clean technology, the "Roadmap for U.S.-China Cooperation on Energy and Climate Change" said.

"If these two countries cannot find ways to bridge the long-standing divide on this issue, there will literally be no solution," the report said.

"That our planet is now approaching a point of no return on the question of global warming is increasingly self-evident."

Chu was Co-Chair of the project -- a joint effort by the Pew Center on Global Climate Change and the Asia Society Center on U.S.-China relations -- until his nomination as Barack Obama's Energy Secretary. It had been largely completed when he withdrew, another senior manager told Reuters.

"He dropped out only after his surprise nomination ... it had really been finished," Asia Society Center Director Orville Schell said in a telephone interview.

Chu, a Nobel Prize-winning physicist, said last month the administration would seek a cap-and-trade system to cut emissions and head off the threat of "dramatic, disruptive changes to our climate in the lifetimes of our children and grandchildren."

But the new roadmap went further, calling for a top level strategic partnership with rising giant and sometime competitor China, to heal long-standing disputes over who should cut emissions, by how much, and where the cash should come from.

About 190 countries are trying to craft a broader climate treaty by December to replace the Kyoto Protocol that only binds wealthy nations to emissions targets between 2008 and 2012, but the report suggested a bilateral push should come first.

"The United States and China need to immediately begin acting in concert, without awaiting new domestic legislation or multilateral agreements," it said.

### PROTECTIONIST FEARS

The global economic crisis has undercut both high oil prices and the willingness to spend that had fueled a boom in renewable energy technology

and a rash of projects to cut emissions.

There are now fears that governments focused on reviving their swooning economies will put "green" projects on one side.

"It is all up for grabs with this economic collapse ... I think it's going to be very, very difficult," Schell said.

But there are hopes that the shared threat of climate change might help bring Beijing and Washington together, much as they were united decades ago by fear of the Soviet Union.

"I think their feeling is they need to have something at the core of U.S.-China relations that is of common interest and that could be environmental questions," Schell said.

"I was heartened to hear a senior official involved in organizing Hillary Clinton's trip to China expressing a similar view," he added, suggesting that a planned China visit by the U.S. Secretary of State could launch a new cooperation.

Global warming has sped up the agenda of China's leaders, because of rising diplomatic pressure and increasing evidence of the strain it will put on its already fragile environment.

But Beijing insists rich nations that enjoyed emissions intensive development must give developing countries cash and technology so they do not have to sacrifice economic growth to tackle warming, and it has been unhappy with global talks so far.

"Progress is still very sluggish," foreign ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yan told a regular news briefing on Thursday.

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