

EU Envoy:Any Global Warming Treaty Must Cover China To Succeed

WASHINGTON (AFP)--The European Union's envoy to Washington told U.S. lawmakers Wednesday that China won't escape making firm commitments to fight climate change at global talks set for December.

Ambassador John Bruton said both the U.S. and E.U. populations would likely reject any treaty that doesn't cover China.

"I don't think you could sell that (such a treaty). I don't think there will be a 'get out of jail free' card for China," said Bruton. "There will be no 'get out of jail free' card."

Bruton, who was briefing the U.S. House of Representatives' Select Energy Independence and Global Warming Committee, said Chinese leaders "recognize that they need to do a lot."

"We need to assist them as best we can," he said.

His comments came after Rep. James Sensenbrenner, R-Wis., warned that any treaty coming out of the December talks in Copenhagen would fail unless it imposes curbs on large developing countries such as Brazil, China, and India.

Bruton also pressed U.S. lawmakers to craft legislation creating a "cap-and-trade" market to limit carbon emissions blamed for global warming by the time the U.N. climate talks begin in the Danish capital.

"It would be very desirable if the Senate and the House had agreed on legislation by then. That would show that the United States was leading by example and domestic commitment," he said.

Bruton said U.S. lawmakers had indicated to him that they hoped "to have legislation at a very advanced stage by May" calling that commitment "extremely welcome" and rejecting any suggestion that it might weaken the U.S. negotiating position in Copenhagen.

"I think the contrary is the case," because U.S. leadership by example is needed to win emerging economies over to the need to restrict emissions, he told reporters outside the hearing room.

"I think the difficulty will be in getting some of the countries that are relatively low carbon emitters, with large populations, who want to improve the living standards of those populations - getting them to enter into commitments is going to be the biggest challenge in Copenhagen just as it was in Kyoto."

"It would be very difficult to get them to make commitments of the kind I was describing in there unless the U.S., which is per capita one of the biggest emitters in the world, had entered into firm commitments itself, first," he said.

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