

Environmental Problems and Greenpeace in China

*China Environment Forum
Woodrow Wilson Centre*

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Content

- Greenpeace perspective on Environmental challenges in China
- Recent environment controversies and Environmental NGOs in China
- Reflections on Greenpeace campaigning experience in China

Development x Environment @ China

Fundamentals

China's econ growth continues

China's envt degradation worsens

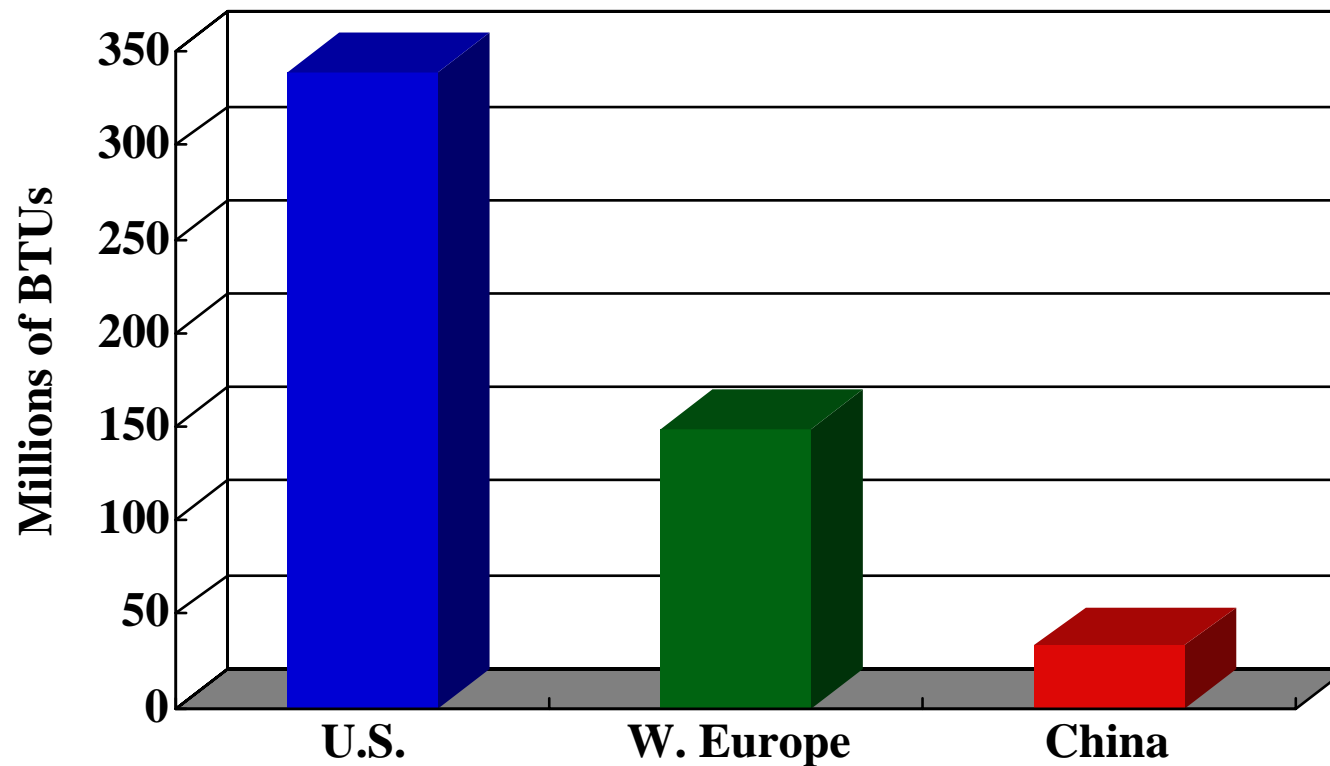
China's global envt impact increases rapidly

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Environmental challenges

- The intensity, speed, and scale of economic development caused unprecedented environmental degradation and pollution.
- China faced tremendous problems in enforcing its environmental regulations. Provincial and local governments prioritize in bringing in more investment and GDP growth, at the expenses of environment.
- There are increasing concerns about environmental problems in China, from top leaders, media to public, but the “local government + corporations” alliance is difficult to be tamed
- China’s growth also poses severe pressure on the world’s shrinking natural resources (e.g. forests and oil) and climate change
- China’s growth exemplifies that current consumption pattern is unsustainable: if China were to raise its per-capita consumption of paper to that level of the USA, the world would need to double timber harvest to meet that demand

Energy Consumption Per Capita



Source: Energy Information Administration, 2002

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After 25 years of rapid econ dev't ...

With 21% of world's population, China becomes

- the world's largest manufacturer
- the world's largest consumer of natural resources
- the world's largest importer of timber
- the world's largest consumer of coal, iron and copper & many other minerals
- the world's second largest consumer of petroleum and electricity
- Consumes 7.4% of the world's total crude oil and 31% coal
- But, GDP accounts for the world's 4% only

The true cost of growth

Economic loss caused by pollution estimated to be 3.05% (512bRMB) of GDP in 2004, virtual management cost to be 1.8% of GDP (287bRMB) (SEPA)

Pollutant emission per unit of GDP over 12 times higher than developed countries

China's energy use per unit of GDP is 7 times higher than Japan's, 6 times higher than America's and 2.8 times higher than India's

16 of the 20 most air-polluted cities globally

1/4 people drink polluted water; 1/3 urban population breathe polluted air, 70% of cancer deaths are pollution-related

In 2004, only 2 (7.5%) of the 27 lakes can be classified as good water quality. 5 are fair (18.5%), 4 are bad (14.8%), 6 are worse (22.2%), 10 are the worst (37%)

In 2004, 298 cities suffered from Acid Rain, accounts for 56.5% of cities in survey. Acid Rain affects 1/3 of national area

In 15 yrs, only 6 of the 45 major minerals in China will be left

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“污染对公众健康的危害将引发社会强烈不满。据统计，因环境污染引发的群体性事件以年均29%的速度递增。目前，我国已提前进入了环境事故高发期”

“以环境友好促进社会和谐”，《求是》，潘岳，2006-8-17

“Degradation of public health as a result of pollution will lead to strong social discontent. Social protests driven by pollution increase by 29% per year in average. Right now, our country enters into a Period of Frequent Environmental Incidents”

~ Pan Yue 2006 Aug

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The state

***“Let our people have fresh air,
clean water and safe food”***

~ Premier Wen 2005

让人民群众呼吸清新的空气、喝干净的水、吃放心的食物 (温总)

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政府(话语)越来越环保

Government (discourse) becomes increasingly pro-environment

「以人爲本」、「科學發展觀」及「和諧社會」
“human-centered,” “scientific development,” “harmonious society”

实质管治需要:

Pragmatic governance needs:

- 保持经济增长动力 Keeping the momentum for economic growth
- 继持和提高管治合法性 Maintaining and enhancing governance legitimacy
- 确保社会稳定 Ensuring social stability
- 平衡特殊利益集团 Balancing the “specialized interest groups”
- 减轻国际压力 Reducing international pressure

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三个转变

Three changes

国务院召开第六次全国环境保护大会，温家宝总理强调做好新形势下的环保工作，关键是要加快实现“三个转变”：

一是从重经济增长轻环境保护转变为保护环境与经济增长并重，把加强环境保护作为调整经济结构、转变经济增长方式的重要手段，在保护环境中求发展；

Environmental protection and economic growth are equally important

二是从环境保护滞后于经济发展转变为环境保护和经济发展同步，做到不欠新账，多还旧账，改变先污染后治理、边治理边破坏的状况；

Environmental protection and economic growth are synchronized

三是从主要用行政办法保护环境转变为综合运用法律、经济、技术和必要的行政办法解决环境问题，自觉遵循经济规律和自然规律，提高环境保护工作水平。

Solving environmental problems through comprehensive application of legal, economic, technical and executive means.

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The social

- Rupture 断裂 & Gaming 博弈
- Oligarchy formation on the top;
fragmentization below (上层寡头化, 下层碎片化)
- Whose development & legitimacy of reform
- Civil Society & NGOs

Public Interest

I

State

III

NGO

Coercive
means

Voluntary
means

IV

Corporate-state
collaboration /
Corruption

II

Market

Private Interest

Popular mobilization in Xiamen against a chemical plant producing PX



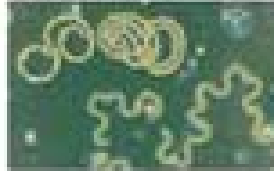




Algae explosion in Taihu and other areas

蓝藻

即蓝藻门，又称蓝绿藻，是一门最原始、最古老的藻类植物

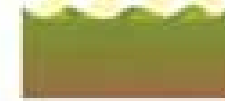


2. 高温提前导致蓝藻较早爆发



形成条件

1. 水体富营养化



3. 水体静止，蓝藻环境下蓝藻不容易沉潜



自来水受污染的原因

连日干旱导致太湖的水位下降一米多引起泛浮现象，太湖蓝藻爆发

沿湖的工业和城市生活废水超量排放

湖



人民图片网
www.photobase.cn



XINHUANET



Absence & Silence of NGOs 缺位失语

- PX mobilization in Xiamen: NGO - New Government Organization?
- Aglae explosion in Taihu and other areas
- NGO risking missing the opportunity....
 - Internal capacity bottleneck
 - Legal and financial limitation
 - SEPA taking over as the main activist-actor
 - Corporations proactively “greening” themselves

Environmental NGOs in China

- Environment is the most active field for NGO development
- Almost all major international environmental NGOs have presence in China
- There has been a rapid development of local NGOs in China in the last decade, but most of them are relatively small
- Most NGOs take an education and/or conservation approach, few are campaigning groups
- Difficult for NGOs to get registered. Most of them work in “grey area”. Almost impossible to do public fundraising in China, so most rely on overseas funding.



Greenpeace in China

Since 1997

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our mission

Greenpeace stands for positive change through action to defend the natural world and promote peace.

Greenpeace is a non-profit organisation, with a presence in 40 countries. To maintain independence, we do not accept donations from governments or corporations but rely on contributions from individual supporters and foundation grants.

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our history



In 1971, a small team of activists set sail from Vancouver, Canada, to protest peacefully against U.S nuclear testing. Their direct action marked the beginning of Greenpeace.

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today

Greenpeace has grown into a truly global organisation with a presence in 40 countries and 2.8 million supporters worldwide. Yet we are still motivated by the same principles of those early activists: taking action to bring positive change.

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Achievements in 2005 --

The most influential environmental NGO awarded by media

- ***Southern Weekend*** Dec 29th, 2005, “Rankings of NGOs”

-- Rank NO.2 among 9 NGOs

- ***Nanfeng Chuang Magazine*** “2005 Annual Organization Awards” --

“Greenpeace: Engaging in the reliable advocacy”:

“The work of Greenpeace in 2005 can be summed by 4 words: Investigate, expose, advice and advocate ... Its precise, scientific and strategic working methods establish a paradigm for other domestic environmental protection NGOs to refer to”.

- *“People are no longer interested in the rights or wrong of APP. The issue has created a platform for the public to challenge the powerful, demonstrating a form of civil society centered around consumer democracy. The dynamics among Greenpeace, local government and APP presented a vigorous value conflict. These are taken in as “a new form of social movement in China with a very important political implication”*

- **Economic Review**, Jan 2006

- Greenpeace and HP, “A fight between an Ant and a herd of Elephants”

- **Commercial Weekly**, Jan 2006

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Greenpeace China



Established in 1997 with 3 offices

- Hong Kong
- Beijing
- Guangzhou

Staff number – around 90 in total
(HK~35, BJ~50, GZ~5)



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Campaigns

Climate and Energy

- Climate impact / Policy and Kyoto / Renewable energy VS Coal

Food and Agriculture

- GMOs & Pesticides vs. Sustainable Agriculture

Toxics

- Electronics pollution & Producers' responsibility / Water

Forest

- Illegal logging & forest-destructive timber trade

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Campaign

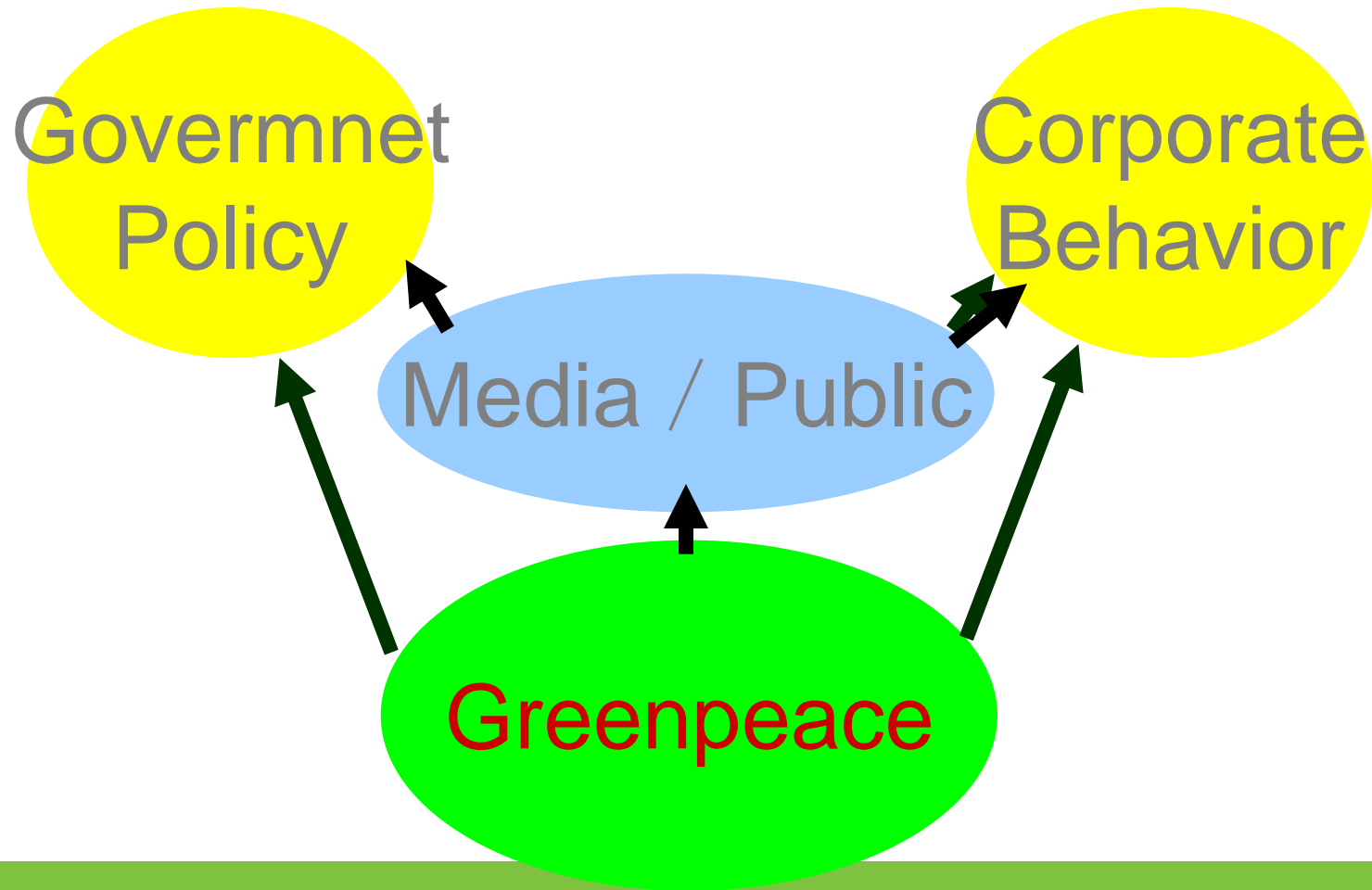
The pursuit of social and political goals

- by changing awareness and behavior
- by changing government policies and actions
- by influencing the private sector

Change

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How do we bring about changes?



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Easy and civilized, sometimes

2005 -- Take part in driving Chinese government to establish and issue the Renewable Energy Promotion Law, first of its kind in the developing world

2004 -- Delegate of Chinese government announced in the International Renewable Energy Conference in Bonn, Germany that China is expected to take the lead of using more wind energy and the installed capacity of renewable energy will be half of the whole national installed capacity.



Even easier than in the western countries?

“If the policies adopted by China over the past year read like an environmental group's wish list, that is due in part to... it is easier to pass major energy policy changes in China than in the United States, largely because the country has a highly centralized government and few entrenched companies trying to secure big profit margins.”

Greenwire March 16, 2004

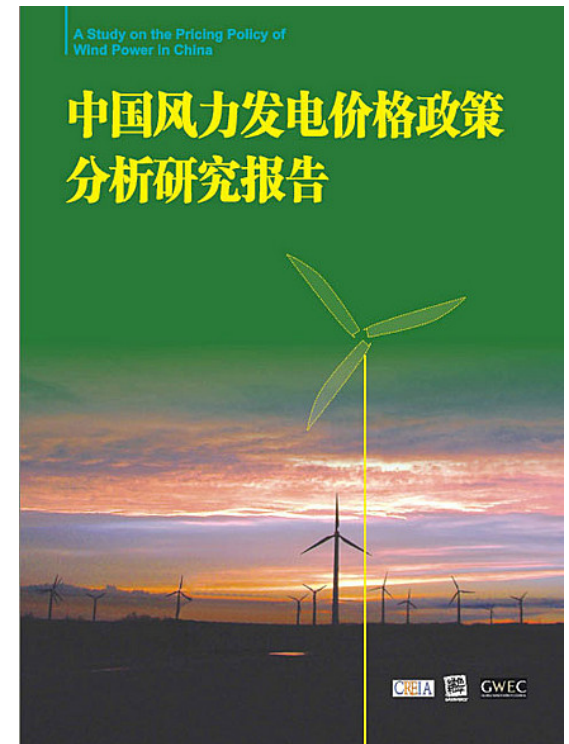
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But,
implementing these policies are very difficult...

National protectionism

Provincial protectionism

Formal and informal influence of the
established interested parties



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Even... the non-action of government

In 2004, GP exposed the illegal deforestation of APP in Hainan Province and Yunnan Province

.

SFA confirmed the deforestation activities of APP after sending an investigation team to Yunnan. But no punishment to APP.

In 2005, in the letter sent by APP to SFA, it admitted its deforestation activities and guaranteed to obey Chinese laws



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Luckily, when there are same interests...

In 2000, GPC exposed that Monsanto was applying for patent control of wild Chinese soy.

“Southern Weekend” published a headline story titled “Violating American patent right by planting Chinese soy?”

State Council instructed related national agencies to study how to protect genetic resources from Multinationals’ biopiracy encroachment.



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Of course, sometimes we have quarrels...

In 2004, Greenpeace exposed the scandal of illegal GE rice planted in Hubei Province and had contaminated the rice market. This GE rice had not be approved for commercial release and therefore illegal.

Media questioned the managerial capacities of MOA.

Agriculture Bureau in Hubei Province investigated the case and punished some related companies.

Under the pressure, MOA recruited food safety experts and ecologists into the “Bio-safety committee”. Till now, no GE rice commercialization application have been approved despite huge pressure from the biotech industry.



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In a nutshell ...

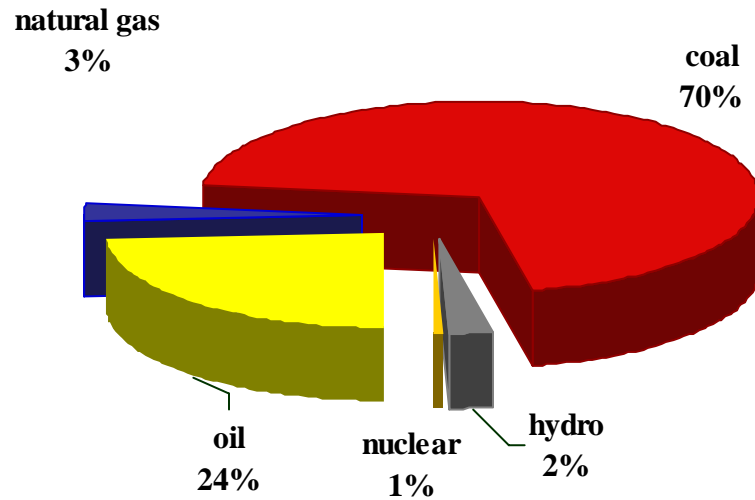
- The state is not homogenous. Policy work of Greenpeace does not necessarily need to follow just one route.
- The process of influencing policy is the process of power wrestling among various players who have different interests.
- Economic reform has been transforming China into a society with diversifying interests. If there is no such a channel for public interests or those powerless and marginalized groups to articulate and express their interests and influence policies, the situation of “winner wins everything” will come into being.

www.greenpeace.org.cn

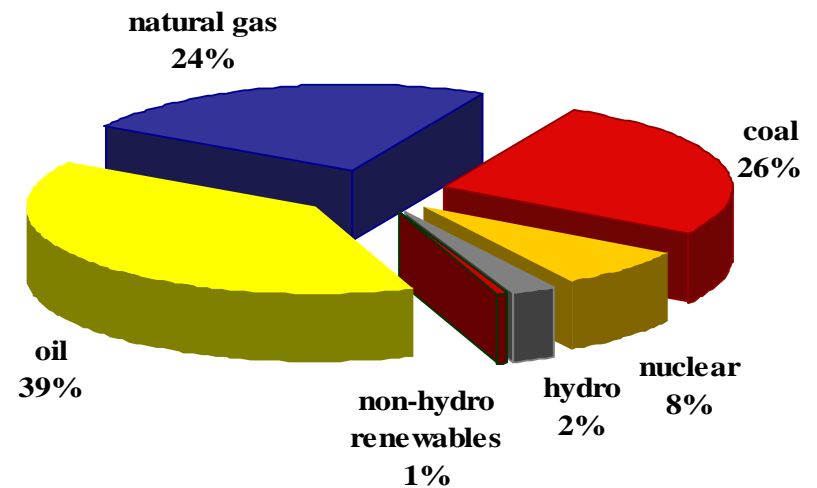
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Energy Consumption

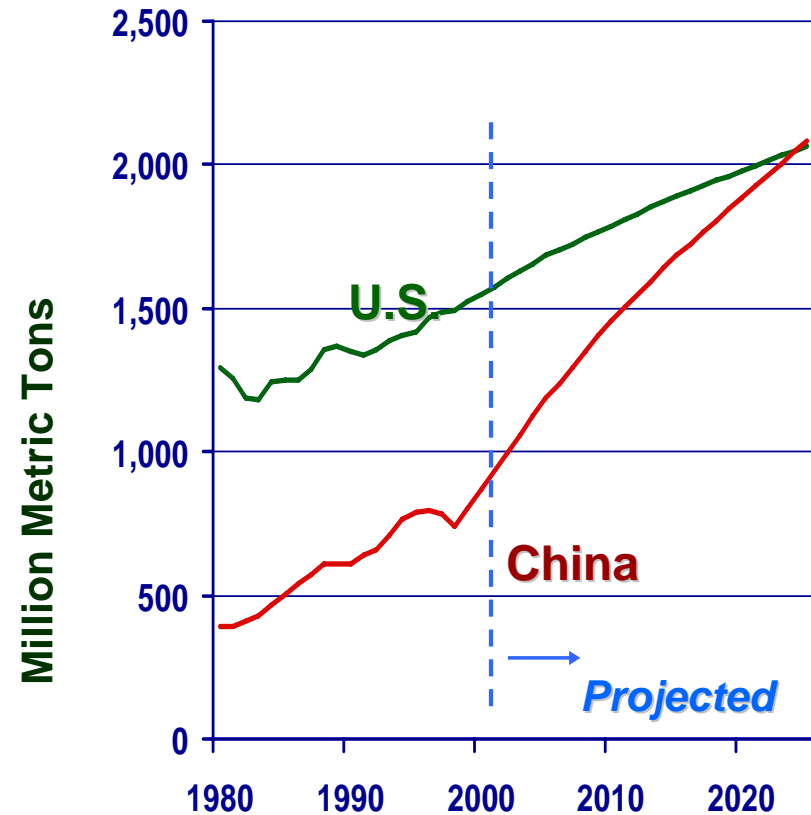
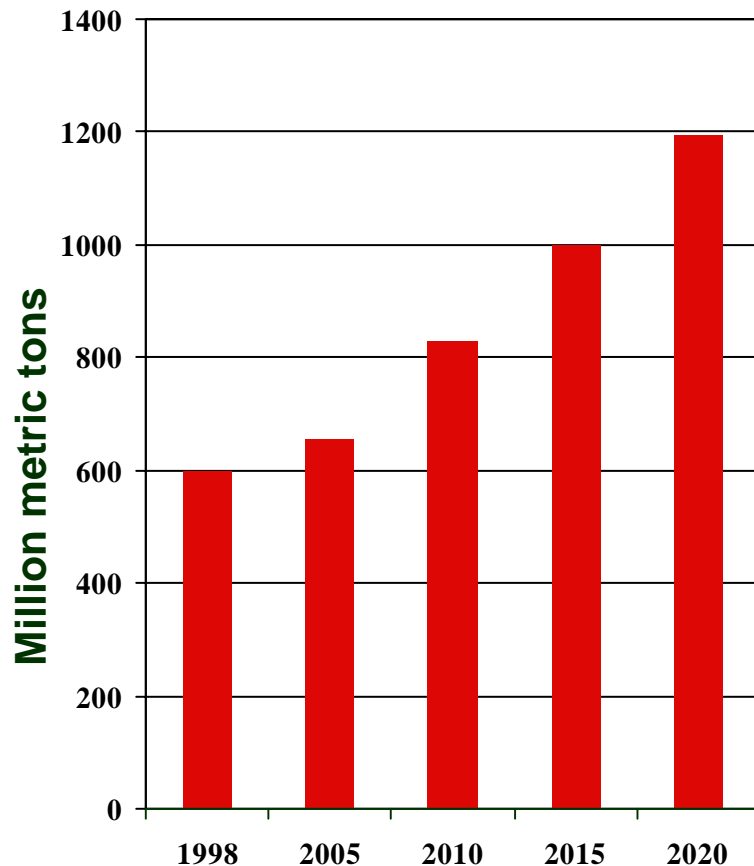
China 2002



World 2002



Carbon Emissions from Coal Use



China consumes 70% more coal per year than the U.S., and rising

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Thank you !

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