

Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats  
Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA), Chairman

Emerging Threat of Resource Wars

OPENING STATEMENT

I call to order this hearing of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittees on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats. Today's topic is "The Emerging Threat of Resource Wars."

After the Ranking Members and I each take 5 minutes to make opening remarks, each Member present will have one minute to make their opening remarks, alternating between Majority and Minority Members. And without objection, all Members may have five days to submit statements, questions, and extraneous materials for the record. Hearing no objection, so ordered.

There is an increasing global demand for supplies of energy and strategic minerals that is sparking intense economic competition that could lead to open conflict. Who owns the resources, who has the right to develop them, where will they be sent and put to use, and who controls the transport routes from the fields to the final consumers are issues that must be addressed.

Whether the outcomes result from cooperation or coercion; from market forces or state command, will determine if this is a world of peace with an acceptable level of prosperity. A "zero sum world" where no one can obtain the means to progress without taking them from someone else is inherently a world of conflict. Even when new sources of supply are opened up, as in the case of Central Asia, there is still fear that there is not enough to go around.

Additional problems arise when supplies are located in areas where production could be disrupted by political upheaval, terrorism or war.

The wealth that results from resource development and the expansion of industrial production increases power as it uplifts economies. This can feed international rivalry on issues that go beyond economics.

We too often think of economics as being merely about "business" but the distribution of industry, resources and technology across the globe is the foundation for the international balance of power and we need to pay more attention to economic issues in our foreign policy.

The control of access to resources can be used as political leverage, as Russia and China have both demonstrated. Indeed, China is engaged in a very aggressive campaign to control global energy supply chains and to protect its monopoly in rare earth elements. This obviously indicates that Beijing is abandoning its "peaceful rise" policy. This is not an unexpected turn of events given the brutal nature of the Communist regime.

This hearing will look at the economic and geopolitical tensions that could threaten U.S. and allied security from competition for resources, and what America can do to protect its interests.