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## U.S. brings green power execs to red China

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By Doug Palmer

BEIJING (Reuters) - U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke began three days of meetings in Beijing on Thursday to push open doors for American clean energy companies looking to cash in on China's fast growing renewables market.

Chinese Vice Premier Li Keqiang met with Locke's delegation of business executives from 24 clean energy companies and sounded a positive note, despite U.S. concerns about Chinese policies that favor domestic firms.

"I'm sure the visit will lay the foundation for the possibility of winning a big deal in the clean energy field and securing market proportions in China," Li said.

While legislation aimed at cutting U.S. greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on fossil fuels is mired in Congress, China's central planners are pushing ahead with projects to expand solar and wind power, lay thousands of miles of new transmission lines and adopt "Smart Grid" technology to distribute power more efficiently.

"I would have to say that China is leading us in that effort," said Martha Duggan, vice president of United Solar Ovonic.

The Michigan-based manufacturer, a unit of Energy Conversion Devices, has a joint venture with an electricity provider in Tianjin to convert solar cells manufactured in the United States to solar modules for use in China.

"We're really just getting started here. But we see a lot of opportunity," Duggan said, adding that her company planned to sign "a fairly significant order" on Saturday.

The diverse group trade group includes major firms like General Electric, which has already sold over 800 wind turbines to China, and First Solar Inc, the world's leading and lowest-cost producer of solar photovoltaic cells.

Less well-known firms include Principle Power, based in Locke's home state of Washington, which is pitching a floating support structure that would allow off-shore wind farms to be placed in previously inaccessible locations where water depths exceed 50 meters.

Locke, who began the trade mission Monday in Hong Kong, touts such joint ventures as "win-win" opportunities to create new jobs in both countries and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"When climate change starts creating more deserts and less water in northwest China and in the southwest United States, and when rising sea levels flood Manhattan or Pudong in Shanghai, you had better believe climate change is going to be bad for business," he said on Wednesday in Shanghai.

He has twinned his optimism about the opportunities for U.S. clean energy exports to China with warnings about Beijing policies that appear to be aimed at keeping out foreign firms.

At nearly every event, he has argued it is in China's long-term interest to use "the best technology," no matter if it is foreign or home grown.

A meeting at China's Ministry of Science and Technology last week had eased some of GE's concerns about Chinese "indigenous innovation policies," said Mark Norbom, chief executive officer of GE Greater China.

"It likely won't address every problem completely, but I think it will be better than what we've seen before that," Norbom said, referring to China's recently released revised draft regulations.

Locke and U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk will raise U.S. concerns about the indigenous innovation policy at the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue meeting beginning on Monday in Beijing.

U.S. officials cautioned against expecting a breakthrough announcement on the issue next week.

(Editing by Lucy Hornby)

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