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## Mixed picture as U.S. trade mission to China ends

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- \* Business executives upbeat as trip ends
- \* US Commerce chief hits China innovation plan
- \* Twenty-four companies take part in mission

By Doug Palmer

BEIJING, May 21 (Reuters) - U.S. business executives wrapping up a clean energy trade mission to China on Friday hinted at potential big sales in the world's hottest market for renewables and fuel-saving technology.

But U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke, who headed the delegation, offered his harshest critique yet of a Chinese policy Washington fears could push some U.S. companies out of the market, calling it "a dangerous precedent".

Locke, in an interview with Reuters Insider, said the United States would raise concerns about Beijing's "indigenous innovation plan at the annual U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue talks on Monday and Tuesday.

Locke led a team of executives from 24 solar, wind, energy efficiency, building design and manufacturing companies on a weeklong trip to Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing to scout new export sales opportunities.

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The group included corporate giants such as Boeing <BA.N>, General Electric and Dow Chemical, which all have an established presence in China, as well as much smaller firms.

Tom Casey, chief executive of Current Group, which sells "smart grid" technology to help utilities distribute electricity with less waste, told Reuters he expected new business to come from the contacts he made this week.

"I'm absolutely convinced there are opportunities for us here that didn't exist before I came," he said.

Alla Weinstein, president of Principle Power, a small Seattle firm which has developed a floating support structure for large offshore wind turbines, also was optimistic.

"Three positive prospects. They're really interested in the technology and completely not scared about the amount of money we need. In fact, one of the guys said 'I can build this and I can build 10 more projects that you want to do'," she said.

### WIND AND SOLAR FARMS

Kenneth Westrick, chief executive of 3Tier Inc, which sells energy information services to help power companies pick the best sites for wind and solar farms, said he also expected deals to emerge but declined to be more specific.

"For an initial visit, it went really well," he said.

Tim Tangredi, chief executive of Dais Analytic Corp, said he made a \$15 million sale of one of his company's nanotechnology devices that allows heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems to operate with less energy.

"They are absolutely hungry for new technology. They want to be considered leading edge," he said.

At the same time, China's hunger for its own firms to develop state-of-the-air products in sectors ranging from clean energy to computing to telecommunications could lead to policies that discriminate against foreign suppliers.

China's proposed policy on indigenous innovation "really means government contracts are going to favour companies that conduct R&D here, patent their innovation and creations here," Locke said in the interview.

"We think it's a very dangerous precedent for the government to say these are the companies from which (government buyers) can purchase goods and services," he added, referring to a Chinese proposal to establish a set list of products that would be eligible for public sector contracts. (Reporting by Doug Palmer; Editing by Ron Popeski)

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