

Progress On US-Europe Policy But They Agree To Disagree

United States President George W. Bush, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso have met to discuss ways to combat global warming. While the discussion has failed to agree on any concrete targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, Europe has welcomed the development. "I really welcome the fact that there was progress in this meeting," says Barroso. "We agree there's a threat, there's a very serious and global threat. We agree that there is a need to reduce emissions. We agree that we should work together." Merkel has pressed the issue of climate change in the hope of making it a significant part of the agenda at a Group of Eight summit to be hosted by Germany in June. However President Bush has made clear any agreement between the US and Europe would have a limited impact as long as Developing countries like China are not included. "The United States could shut our economy and emit no greenhouse gases, and all it would take is for China in about 18 months to produce as much as we had been producing" to make up the difference, he says. Merkel says the developed world must lead the effort to reduce carbon emissions. "If the developed countries with the best technologies do nothing, then it will be very tough to convince the others," says Merkel. "Without convincing the others, worldwide CO2 emissions won't go down." The trio has also agreed to hold a ministerial-level international renewable energy conference in Washington in March with the goal of advancing the development and commercialisation of renewable energy sources, including biofuels and solar energy.

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