

**Susan Eisenhower-April 7, 2008**

**“The Politics of Energy”**

In the final Global Business Luncheon of the Council’s season, Susan Eisenhower articulated a strong case for the U.S. to take the lead in creating a comprehensive energy strategy that will address the mix of energy sources required to meet the growing demand here and elsewhere in the world. She suggested that energy is truly the infrastructure of the global economy and addressing the needs of the future will require international cooperation. Some examples of the growing demand is reflected in the following statistics:

- It is expected that over the next 20 years the global demand for electricity will increase 60% (40% in the US )
- China is building one new coal plant per week and has banned coal exports in an effort to meet its burgeoning needs

The comprehensive strategy needs to address the full complement of energy sources (coal, renewables, oil and nuclear energy)—just addressing one of these will not be sufficient to close the current and emerging gaps. The strategy will also have to take into account climate change imperatives. Ms. Eisenhower noted the critical importance of the U.S. catching up with other countries in tapping the potential of nuclear energy. Currently, only 20% of the US energy capacity is nuclear, but will decline because of aging facilities. Some 12-14 new plants are needed and it takes 15 years to build a plant using current approaches in the U.S. By contrast, nuclear is the source for 80% of France’s energy. In addition, France has reduced the time required to build a plant by pursuing standardized approaches to reactor design. In addition to nuclear energy being “clean,” it is also able to withstand weather-related pressures noting that after Katrina, the two nuclear plants were the only sources of energy for electricity.

Finally, she noted that Americans will need to adjust—to change their attitudes about nuclear energy and to recognize that the era of cheap energy is over.

-Sandy Cook

**Sponsored By:**

**Water Street Capital**

**The Clarkson Group, LLC**

**The St. Joe Company**

**Media Sponsor:**

