

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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"REAGAN'S U.S.-JAPAN COAL EFFORTS A FAILURE"

Washington, D.C. -- After chairing a Congressional Coal Group meeting today, U.S. Representative Nick J. Rahall, II, (D-WV), announced that implementation of the Joint Policy Statement on Energy Cooperation, signed by President Reagan and Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone, is not being implemented in a good faith manner.

"The Reagan-Nakasone agreement is a failure," Rep. Rahall stated. "It promised to protect the coal trade with Japan from disaster -- a trade which heavily impacts the employment situation in the coalfields of southern West Virginia. Instead, we find that the Japanese are merely paying lip-service to our concerns." The U.S.-Japan coal trade, worth about \$1 billion per year, declined by 30% in 1983.

"I am particularly disturbed by the fact that U.S. metallurgical coal producers in southern West Virginia are not sharing in this year's steel recovery in Japan. Instead of buying U.S. coking coal to produce this steel, the Japanese have increased their purchases from Australia, Canada, the U.S.S.R., and China," Rep. Rahall said. "It is incredible that while the Reagan Administration has a policy to protect Japan's Persian Gulf oil supply, that country is buying coal from Communist Bloc countries," he added.

"Unless this situation changes very soon", Rahall warned, "my response to the Japanese is to push for even stronger trade restrictions on Japanese products coming into this country. Moreover, it is time we seriously consider an outright prohibition on U.S. imports of Japanese coke which have increased dramatically this year."

Appearing before the coal group meeting were representatives from the U.S. Departments of State and Commerce, the coal industry, and the Japanese Embassy.

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