



## OPENING STATEMENT

### **Senator Benjamin L. Cardin Co-Chairman**

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#### **“Pipeline Politics: Achieving Energy Security in the OSCE Region”**

**June 25, 2007**

*(as prepared for delivery)*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased that the Commission is focusing on energy security—a topic that binds all of the participating States of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We are truly all part of a global energy system that requires us to work together to achieve our common energy goals.

It has become clear that real energy security requires not only reliable sources of oil and gas, but a decrease in dependency on hydrocarbons. Recently I introduced legislation that would create a framework for the United States to become energy independent in a decade, and put us on the path to become fossil fuel independent. For too long America has been held hostage by its reliance on foreign energy. Energy independence is critical for our national security and for our environment, and this bill provides a much-needed framework for developing a comprehensive energy policy for our nation.

The Energy Independence Act would create a bipartisan Blue Ribbon Commission to study and review policy changes that are needed for the United States to achieve energy independence. Starting in 2009, the Commission would meet every two years and report to Congress on how to adjust our policies to achieve energy independence by 2017. Energy independence is defined as getting 90 percent of our energy needs from domestic sources.

Petroleum accounts for 84 percent of our nation's imported energy. Transportation accounts for approximately 28 percent of all energy used in the United States, so sourcing our energy domestically will require major changes in how we use our energy resources. I support raising CAFE standards, which could save more than 36 billion gallons of gas a year. There are other significant steps we can take such as creating standards for replacement tires, increased energy efficiency standards for buildings, and an increased availability of renewable energy products.

A comprehensive energy policy must include conservation, greater availability of renewable energy sources and investment in our transportation infrastructure, including more funding for rail systems, buses, subways and light rail.

Equally important, we need to become energy independent to protect our environment. Global climate change is a real danger to this country and we need an energy policy that will also make us friendlier towards the environment. We need greater investment in renewable sources of energy. Wind, solar, and biofuels all hold great promise for our future. But we need to make

a firm commitment to investing in these technologies, to increase efficiency and reduce costs to the consumer.

Energy security is not just about the high price of oil—this is also about helping to create a more stable and secure world. Our quest for hydrocarbons has led us to partner with countries that are either unstable or have horrendous human rights records. Real energy security means we can rely less on energy sources that come from unstable and unsavory countries. By removing the stranglehold they hold on our economy, we can more effectively address the economic and civil society developments in these countries. I know this aspect will be part of our second hearing in this series and I look forward to that discussion.

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