

Chairman Brett Guthrie
Opening Statement—Committee on Energy and Commerce:
“Converting Energy into Intelligence: the Future of AI Technology,
Human Discovery, and American Global Competitiveness”
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As prepared for delivery

I want to thank our witnesses for being here and traveling long distances to be here. This hearing came from a Library of Congress presentation that Dr. Schmidt held on his book *Genesis*, that he wrote with Henry Kissinger, Henry Kissinger’s last book.

I walked away thinking we needed to have the entire Congress hear your presentation. So, we’re doing it with the entire Energy and Commerce Committee.

Because I think an author always wants to know when they write a book, will somebody read my book? And then if they read the book, then will it have an impact?

Well, today, you and all the witnesses are before the full Energy and Commerce Committee.

Our dear colleague, and the dear husband of our colleague, Debbie Dingell, used to say that “if it’s moving, it’s energy, if it doesn’t, it’s commerce” or something to that effect.

So, we have a large jurisdiction. I say it takes energy to move commerce. I can’t improve on Chairman Dingell, but that’s my version of it.

So, we’re having a full committee hearing. We typically do this in subcommittee, but this touches all jurisdictions, and I think everybody needs to hear it. If you think about it, it’s going to take enormous energy to beat China to AI. In doing that, we have to protect the environment.

Our telecom and privacy, through our commerce and telecom committees, will be dealing with this, and AI has particular health care applications. So, it touches all of our jurisdictions.

Dr. Schmidt, when I walked away from the Library of Congress, and I read your book, it gave me a sense of mission, and a direction I want to take this committee in the time that I’m chairman. To sum up what you said, it’s the U.S. versus China.

And who will win the war for AI? Essentially, this is as important as the dollar being the reserve currency in the world. It’s that important, that’s why it is before us.

What I hear from people in this space is that we have the brain power, and we have the capital, what we need is the energy and the correct regulatory framework.

We have an example of what not to do, and I believe you said in your presentation, Dr. Schmidt, is that Europe has chosen not to grow. We can’t look there as an example, we have to work through it ourselves.

Some of Europe's regulatory framework, written specifically to disadvantage American companies, has made them non-competitive.

Europe and the US had a similar sized economy in 2008, and I've read that our economy is now about 80% larger. So, what do we need to do? The reason we want to have a full committee hearing is that we have to have broad consensus on how we work together. It has to be Democrat and Republican.

People who invest tell me it's tough to invest based on congressional cycles or presidential cycles when the rules are going to change every two to four years. And so, what I would like to do in this committee is come up with a regulatory framework and an energy policy that most of us can agree on and build a broad consensus on how we develop massive amounts of energy while protecting our environment. Dr. Schmidt, you said all energy resources are needed and then AI will develop solutions to deal with climate change.

To put this in perspective, a Microsoft data center can use as much power as the city of Seattle, is what I've been told. On the regulation side of it, we have to protect our privacy. Yesterday we had a markup of our bills on children's privacy and children's safety, and we have to protect our privacy.

I think all of us want our privacy protected. We can't do it in a heavy-handed way that stifles innovation, and as I said, we have to look at our friends across the Atlantic. But I think we need to more intently look across the Pacific to a nation determined to win.

China has specifically said they are going to win the war on AI, and we are taking up the challenge to prove to them that the American entrepreneur and the American intellect will win the war on AI, but they have to have the energy and the regulatory environment to do so.

So, if this committee gets it right, America will win. It may win anyway, but we need to be there to make that happen. And if you look at 'what if China wins?' We just had an oversight hearing addressing how a medical device from China had an embedded URL connected to the University of Beijing.

What did that mean? We know they're using everything they can to get information they need on us.

So, we must win. We will win. And for the sake of the world, we have to win. And I'm determined, through this hearing, that all of us will work together, because all of us are dedicated to winning.