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BAUCUS SAYS CHINA POLICY NEEDS FOCUS, BETTER WAYS TO MEASURE PROGRESS

GAO study recommends improved reporting on U.S.-China trade relationship

Washington, D.C. – Senate Finance Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) commented today on a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report that found shortcomings in United States Trade Representative (USTR) reporting of China’s compliance with international trade obligations and its tracking of U.S.-China trade disputes. In its report, GAO outlined recommendations for how USTR might improve its reporting to Congress on China issues. The agency annually assesses Chinese Government’s compliance with international trade obligations. The Senate Committee on Finance has jurisdiction over U.S. international trade policy. Chairman Baucus will convene a hearing on trade enforcement issues on May 22.

“As our economic relationship with China grows in importance, so does the need to measure progress and gauge shortcomings. We must set clear goals and priorities, and lay out the steps to achieve them,” said Baucus. **“The USTR has accomplished a great deal in our relationship with China, but this GAO report shows that our China policy could use better metrics, more focus, and more follow through. We need to retool and rethink our strategy to get the most out of our ties with China.”**

GAO recommendations for USTR improvements include modifying its reports on China’s compliance with international trade obligations to better identify issues by number, type and disposition, and providing annual updates to USTR’s 2006 “top-to-bottom” review of U.S.-China trade relations.

As Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee and a leading voice on Asian affairs, Max Baucus oversees the U.S. trade and economic relationship with China. Baucus is an advocate of stronger bilateral economic ties and vigorous enforcement of China’s international trade obligations, and was a principal proponent of Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) with China.

The full GAO report may be viewed here: <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d08405.pdf>.

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