Statement of Paul Kapur
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Chairman Huizenga, Ranking Member Kamlager-Dove, distinguished Members: thank you for the opportunity to testify on U.S. policy toward Central Asia.

This year carries special meaning for the United States and Central Asia. While the United States celebrates 250 years of freedom, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan mark 35 years of independence. Under President Trump's leadership, our relationships with these five nations are stronger than ever. They rest on respect for each country's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity, and on a shared commitment to prosperity and security.

Secretary Rubio reaffirmed that commitment last month in Samarkand, where he attended the C5+1 Ministerial, met with each Central Asian counterpart, and led a historic delegation of more than 200 American business leaders. During the Secretary's visit, the U.S.-Uzbekistan Business and Investment Council announced 54 agreements and initiatives worth about $12 billion, highlighting the strength of our growing partnership with Central Asia. Today, I will describe that partnership across four areas: security, commercial diplomacy, infrastructure, and energy and critical minerals.

Security

A secure Central Asia protects the American homeland. We are working with our partners, both bilaterally and through the C5+1, to counter terrorism; organized crime; human, drug, and arms trafficking; and cyber threats. We also have committed to deepening cooperation on border security.

- In 2025, Uzbekistan became the first Central Asian state to join the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS.
- Tajikistan guards a long border with Afghanistan, which makes its role in stopping terrorism and transnational crime critical.
- Kazakhstan steadfastly supports President Trump's peace initiatives, including the Abraham Accords.
- The Kyrgyz Republic works with us on security and immigration enforcement.

- The United States conducts regular security and training engagements with Turkmenistan.

Commercial

Commercial diplomacy promotes prosperity and drives much of our engagement. Last November, President Trump hosted the five Central Asian leaders for the C5+1 Tenth Anniversary Summit, which has produced more than $25 billion in commercial deals:

- Kazakhstan committed to purchasing up to 20 Boeing aircraft.
- Uzbekistan signed contracts for 22 Boeing 787 Dreamliners.
- Tajikistan concluded more than $3 billion in aviation, digital, and Super Intelligence deals, including Boeing aircraft purchases.

Through the B5+1, the business-to-government counterpart to the C5+1 platform, we are bringing American companies directly to the table. After forums in Almaty in 2024 and Bishkek this February, Tajikistan will host the next meeting in Dushanbe in April 2027.

Looking ahead, we welcome Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan as observers at the G20 Summit in Miami next month. The summit will provide an opportunity to build on the C5+1's commercial momentum and advance additional U.S.-Central Asia deals in priority sectors, including aviation, energy, critical minerals, digital technology, and infrastructure.

Infrastructure

Geography creates connectivity challenges for Central Asian states but, together with our partners, we can make Central Asia a bridge between East and West.

- In Samarkand, we reaffirmed our joint commitment to expand connectivity by strengthening the Trans-Caspian Trade Route.
- We are taking steps to derisk American investment in a variety of infrastructure projects tied to reducing the time and costs involved in Central Asia trade with the United States.
- We are supporting investment vehicles such as the Trans-Caspian Enterprise Fund.

- We also support investment pipeline development and promotion, harmonization of customs procedures, and digital infrastructure built on secure, trusted technology in the region.

Energy and Critical Minerals

Energy and critical minerals tie our prosperity to our security. With our partners, we are building integrated, high-value supply chains and expanding mineral extraction and processing in the region.

- Last November, we signed a critical minerals memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Kazakhstan.
- We support Turkmenistan's efforts to diversify its natural gas exports through Trans-Caspian routes.
- Uzbekistan committed $400 million to strengthen U.S. critical minerals supply chains and, in February 2026, signed a bilateral critical minerals MOU.

Challenges

While our cooperation with Central Asia has witnessed significant progress in the last few years, the region still faces challenges. On security, instability in Afghanistan creates spillover risks of terrorism and transnational crime, and our partners must counter trafficking and cyber threats. To deepen our economic cooperation, our partners need to align regulations, develop their workforces, and improve sanctions compliance. On infrastructure, the Trans-Caspian Trade Route needs sustained investment in transportation links with harmonized customs procedures across borders. On energy, the region must diversify its export routes to ensure that resources flow freely, are not dependent on a single point of failure, and build the capacity to process its own critical minerals.

Working with Congress

Congress can help us make the most of these opportunities and address these challenges by visiting the region, promoting deepened bilateral and multilateral relations, and repealing Jackson-Vanik restrictions. Working with Congress, we can ensure that the United States becomes Central Asia's enduring partner of choice.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.