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Sent: Tuesday, September 8, 2026 6:01 PM
To: Brandon Casey
Cc: sung.chang@mail.house.gov; elizabeth.o'hara@mail.house.gov
Subject: Re: Kazakhstan PNTR — bipartisan H.R. 1024 and a Ways & Means path

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On Sep 8, 2026, at 5:49 PM, Manny Ortiz <mortiz@vantageknight.com> wrote:

Brandon—

Hope all is well. I wanted to reach out on Kazakhstan and the effort to finally graduate the country from Jackson-Vanik and establish permanent normal trade relations.

I have recently begun working with Kazakhstan on its U.S. engagement, and this is one of the issues I think merits another serious look. Jimmy Panetta and Robert Aderholt are leading the bipartisan H.R. 1024, and there is a broader strategic case for moving this beyond simply correcting an outdated trade restriction.

Kazakhstan is increasingly important to U.S. interests in critical minerals, uranium and nuclear energy security, the development of the Middle Corridor as an alternative to Russian-controlled transportation routes, and the broader effort to give Central Asian countries greater economic options beyond Russia and China. Continuing to apply a Soviet-era trade restriction to Kazakhstan while pursuing those objectives strikes me as increasingly inconsistent.

I know there may be concerns among Committee Democrats, whether related to Kazakhstan itself, broader trade policy, human rights, or simply the legislative pathway, and I don't want to assume them away. I would appreciate the opportunity to talk with you and the appropriate Committee staff about how you see the issue, what concerns we should address, and whether there is a responsible path forward in Ways & Means.

I've included below a short overview of the national-security rationale. Would welcome a chance to discuss when you have a few minutes.

Best to you always,
Manny

KAZAKHSTAN PNTR: U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY AND STRATEGIC RATIONALE

Extending Permanent Normal Trade Relations to Kazakhstan is more than correcting an outdated application of Jackson-Vanik. It is a practical step toward advancing U.S. national-security, energy-security and economic interests in one of the most strategically important regions connecting Europe and Asia.

Critical minerals and secure supply chains. Kazakhstan possesses substantial uranium and strategically important mineral resources and can play a significantly larger role in diversified supply chains serving the United States and its allies. Washington is already pursuing critical-mineral cooperation with Kazakhstan. PNTR would align U.S. trade policy with that national-security objective.

Nuclear energy and uranium security. Kazakhstan is a major global uranium producer. As the United States seeks reliable nuclear-fuel supply chains less dependent on Russia while electricity demand from manufacturing, AI and data centers increases — Kazakhstan's importance to U.S. energy security is growing.

Strategic competition with Russia and China. Kazakhstan cannot change its geography, but it can diversify its economic relationships. Greater U.S. trade and investment gives Kazakhstan alternatives to excessive dependence on Moscow and Beijing and reinforces its sovereignty and independence.

The Middle Corridor. Kazakhstan sits at the center of the Trans-Caspian transportation route connecting Central Asia with Europe while bypassing Russia. Developing this corridor creates alternative East-West supply chains and reduces Russian leverage over Eurasian commerce.

A proven security partner. Kazakhstan relinquished the world's fourth-largest inherited nuclear arsenal and has worked with the United States for more than three decades on nuclear security and nonproliferation — one of the most consequential successes of the post-Soviet era.

The United States should not simultaneously encourage Kazakhstan to diversify away from Russia and China, deepen critical-mineral cooperation, expand alternative transportation corridors and strengthen its sovereignty while continuing to subject it to a Soviet-era trade restriction enacted in 1974.

PNTR is not a concession to Kazakhstan. It advances American strategic interests.

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