

**Senior Bureau Official for African Affairs Ambassador Jonathan Pratt**  
**Testimony for Subcommittee on Africa & Global Health Policy on**  
**“Critical Minerals: Finding Opportunities for U.S.-Africa Partnerships”**  
**July 30, 2025**

Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Booker and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the Administration’s strategy for securing critical minerals and expanding sustainable, secure, and transparent supply chains in Africa.

Critical minerals are essential to the United States’ economic prosperity, national security, and technological leadership. They power everything from advanced manufacturing and defense capabilities vital to infrastructure and the digital economy. Yet, our reliance on foreign nations for processing and refining these minerals poses a threat to our supply chains and industrial capacity.

Africa is central to our strategy to address this challenge. The continent is home to vast reserves of critical minerals, including cobalt, lithium, tantalum and graphite, which are indispensable for technologies such as batteries and semiconductors and are required by our defense industrial base for critical tools like jet engines, night vision goggles and mission systems. Africa’s substantial natural resource endowment provides an opportunity for the United States to increase its supply chain security.

The Administration’s approach prioritizes partnerships with African nations to ensure their minerals flow west, not east to China. China’s dominance in global mineral supply chains – specifically in processing and refining – is a threat to both U.S. and African interests. Beijing’s state-directed strategies exploit Africa’s natural resources, consolidate control over upstream mining assets, perpetuate opaque governance structures, degrade local environments and create economic dependencies that undermine regional stability.

**Supply Chain Resilience**

Executive Order 14156, *Declaring a National Energy Emergency*, and Executive Order 14241, *Immediate Measures to Increase American Mineral*

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*Production*, outline the Administration's approach to address vulnerabilities in the critical mineral supply chain.

The State Department and the Bureau of African Affairs play a role in a whole-of-government approach by identifying strategic opportunities on the African continent. These opportunities will allow American and U.S.-aligned companies to make targeted investments that secure upstream control of key critical mineral mining projects. This strategy is essential for achieving long-term, sustainable critical mineral security, while we continue to build up our own domestic capacity and supply.

Successful implementation requires consistent interagency coordination to ensure these opportunities are accurately identified, supported, and, where appropriate, de-risked through U.S. government financing mechanisms such as the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) or U.S. Export-Import Bank.

### **Strategic Investments in African Mineral Corridors**

The United States is committed to making targeted investments in infrastructure to facilitate the export of minerals from Africa to global markets. A prime example is the Lobito Corridor, which provides an alternative to Chinese-controlled transportation routes for minerals from Africa's copper belt to the Atlantic Ocean. The DFC plays a critical role in financing this project, ensuring it is economically viable and strategically secure.

We urge Congress to reauthorize the DFC by October to sustain these efforts. DFC support is essential to making these targeted and strategic investments financially viable for U.S. companies in Africa. We hope to see a reauthorization that provides the DFC increased flexibility to continue making these strategic investments that improve infrastructure, attract private capital, and create enabling environments for transparent commerce. These projects not only secure mineral supply chains but also foster economic growth and regional stability in Africa.

### **Diplomatic Engagement and Regional Stability**

The Bureau of African Affairs is working to enable investment in Africa's

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mining sector. Following the U.S.-brokered peace agreement between the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda, we created a framework for increased U.S. private sector investment in the DRC's critical mineral sector.

Last year, the DRC produced nearly 76 percent of the world's cobalt, most of which was exported to China because Chinese firms own or have stakes in 16 of the DRC's 19 major copper-cobalt mines and account for three fourths of global cobalt refining capacity. We aim to shift this imbalance and open opportunities for American companies by fostering regional stability, promoting legal, conflict-free mineral extraction and supporting DRC efforts to formalize artisanal mining, especially in cobalt.

Africa's critical minerals are not just a resource. They are an opportunity to deepen U.S.-Africa partnerships, counter China's malign influence and non-market practices, and diversify supply chains that underpin our national security and long-term economic prosperity. By investing in infrastructure, fostering private sector-led growth, and advancing regional stability, we can build a future of shared prosperity. This approach is not only about securing minerals but also about creating lasting economic ties that strengthen both the United States and Africa. By working together with African partners, we can ensure that Africa's vast mineral wealth is harnessed in ways that benefit its people, support its development, and align with our shared interests. The Administration is committed to this vision and to ensuring that the United States remains a trusted partner in Africa's growth and progress.

Thank you for your attention. I welcome your questions.