

## THE C5+1 INVESTMENT PUSH: MARKETING U.S.-CENTRAL ASIA ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIPS

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### Abstract

Since 2015, the C5+1 process between the United States and the five Central Asian states, namely, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan has shifted to a more economic-oriented partnership, which is based on connectivity, critical minerals, and attracting investments. Since 2015.1 2 Since 2015 an explicit investment push has been visible, with the 10th-anniversary C5+1 Business Conference and the 6 November 2025 summit in Washington, D.C., where U.S. officials announced a so-called Deal Zone in excess of \$25 billion of commercial deals and emphasized well above 50 billion of financing and potential deals mobilized to Central Asia since 2015.

The article restates and organizes the earlier studies of C5+1 investment communication into a complete research paper. It considers how the C5+1 brand of the U.S. and the Central Asian stakeholders are selling the area as an investment zone, and looks at three vital pillars of messaging, including regional connectivity, access to strategic resources, and American innovation and standards. The paper reveals the C5+1 investment push as a strategic branding campaign to rebrand Central Asia as a credible, rules-based, deal zone unlike the Russian and Chinese economic sectors using qualitative content analysis of official statements, policy reports, media coverage and business announcements of 2015-2025. A summary table of the largest transactions of C5+1 linked, and a conceptual map of the C5+1 funnel of investment marketing, demonstrates how narrative, policy, and capital flows are supportive of each other.

### Keywords

C5+1 economic partnerships, U.S.-Central Asia relations, Central Asia investment, Economic diplomacy, U.S. foreign policy, regional cooperation in Central Asia, U.S.-Central Asia trade relations, Central Asia market expansion.

## INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the C5+1 site became a strong change in the U.S. policy to the Central Asian region: rather than perceiving the five republics as the prism of Afghanistan and security issues, Washington started to view the region as a partner with its sovereignty and developmental agenda.<sup>24</sup>

Though discussions about security and regional stability ruled the day, the format has gradually evolved to include economic connectivity, energy, climate and trade. The most dramatic turning point was the C5+1 Leaders Joint Statement of September 21, 2023, which made the next level of the agenda<sup>25</sup> and promoted economic cooperation, especially regional connectivity and partnerships between the U.S. and Central Asia, through the prism of minerals resources.<sup>26</sup>

In mid-2025, American diplomatic and analytic reporting indicated that C5+1 action and funding under it had topped over 50 billion energy and infrastructure endeavors and developments projects in the region including aiding flagship undertakings like CASA-1000 or the Lapis Lazuli pathway.<sup>27</sup>

It is against this background that the 10 th anniversary C5 plus 1 Business Conference and the 6 November 2025 summit in Washington signaled the shift towards a deal as opposed to a dialogue. Officials at the high-profile Deal Zone hosted by the Department of Commerce reported more than 25 billion of new commercial dealings that included aviation, critical minerals, transport, digital infrastructure, and agriculture.<sup>28</sup>

On the political front, the White House meeting on 6 November 2025 united President Donald Trump with all five leaders of Central Asia to focus on rare Earths and critical minerals making the region an alternative to China as a source of major inputs to the high-technology industries.

That week, there was a further announcement of the potential repeal of Cold War-era trade restrictions and that Kazakhstan would be joining the Abraham Accords, which further entrenches the economic story in a more general repositioning<sup>29</sup> of geopolitical company.

<sup>24</sup> [11] U.S. and Central Asian Relations Through the C5+1. Policy report, June 18, 2025. (

<sup>25</sup> [4] Eurasianet. "United States Launches Initiative to Foster Central Asian Connectivity." March 14, 2024. Accessed November 17, 2025.

<sup>26</sup> [2] Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). "Ten Years of C5+1: U.S.–Central Asia Minerals Cooperation."

<sup>27</sup> Eurasianet. "United States Launches Initiative to Foster Central Asian Connectivity." March 14, 2024. Accessed November 17, 2025.

<sup>28</sup> International Transport Forum–OECD. "Enhancing the Connectivity, Sustainability, and Resilience of Regional Freight Transport in Central Asia

<sup>29</sup> Nightingale International. "To Stay Relevant, the C5+1 Must Act." October 31, 2025.

The original article on The C5+1 Investment Push stated that it is not a contract-based agenda at all, but rather a strategic marketing and branding one: C5+1 is being packaged as a transparent, stable, high-potential investment zone, with a distinct differentiation of competing offers based on the promotion of rule of law, American Technology and long-term collaboration.

This paper builds such an understanding on a complete research plan to address three questions:

- What has made the C5+1 platform an investment and marketing platform between 2015 and 2025?
- What are the details and transaction statistics of this investment impulse?
- What is the influence of pillars of messaging connectivity, resources, and innovation on investor perception of U.S.-Central Asia economic relations?

## METHODS

This paper will be based on a qualitative policy-document analysis and media-content analysis, which will be complemented by descriptive statistics on announced deals and financing between 2015 and 2025.

### 1. Source Selection (2015-2025)

#### I. Official C5+1 texts:

- 2023, September 21. C5+1 Leaders Joint Statement.<sup>30</sup>
- U. S. Department of state, Joint Statement of intent on Economic Cooperation, (November 7, 2025).

#### II. Analytical commentary:

- CSIS commentary Ten Years of C5 +1: U.S. Central Asia Minerals Cooperation (November 4, 2025).<sup>31</sup>
- The other think-tank and policy essays on U.S. Central Asia minerals and connectivity.

#### III. Media reporting and business coverage 2023-2025

- AP News on 6 November 2025 summit on rare-earths and the 6 November 2025 agenda.<sup>32</sup>
- Central Asia and Standard Tashkent-based announcements on the "Deal Zone" and key transactions.
- Its commentary locally (Eurasianet, Nightingale International, The Diplomatic Insight, etc.) as in listed in the original bibliography.

#### IV. Synthesis reports:

<sup>30</sup> Shunyatax. "How the U.S. Is Re-Entering Central Asia Through C5+1." Blog post, November 15, 2025.

<sup>31</sup> The Diplomatic Insight. "Uzbekistan in C5+1: Strengthening Strategic Dialogue with the US." November 10, 2025.

<sup>32</sup> The Times of Central Asia. "The Deal Zone: U.S. Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick Unveils Economic Agreements with Central Asia at C5+1 Summit." November

- An overview of U.S.-Central Asia relations by C5+1 capturing more than \$50 billion of financing since 2015.<sup>33</sup>

## 2. Thematic Framework and the Coding.

It was a coded text in four dimensions:

- The Narrative Pillars include: connectivity, resources/critical minerals, American innovation and standards.
- Investor Signaling: allusions to rule of law, transparency, long-term commitment, and deal zone.
- Geopolitical Differentiation: open or unspoken differences with Russian and Chinese programs.
- Quantitative Claims: statistics on the values of deals, volume of financing, growth in the trade, as well as sectoral distributions.

## 3. Descriptive Deal Statistics.

To address the time frame of 2015-2025, the research lists:

- Aggregate financing and anticipated volumes of project C5+1 (e.g., more than \$50 billion in financing and project volumes since 2015).<sup>34</sup>
- Worth of transactions to be made on the occasion of the 10th-anniversary business conference and 6 November 2025 summit (e.g., more than 25 billion new commercial deals).<sup>35</sup>
- Chosen flagship dealings based on the reporting of The Times of Central Asia and similar sources.<sup>36</sup>

Not econometric causality but interpretive analysis: how the quantitative assertions and high-profile dealings are rhetorically turned to sell C5+1 as a desirable investment candidate.

## 3. RESULTS AND MATERIAL

The scale of the Investment Push (2015-2025): From Dialogue to Deal Zone (2015).

**In 2025, C5+1-related economic engagement may be subdivided into two layers:**

- **Infrastructure and energy financing (2015-2023):** The infrastructure and energy investments via the support of U.S. development finance and multilateral partners, which have a cumulative financing and potential transaction volume of

<sup>33</sup> The Times of Central Asia. "Washington Shifts C5+1 From Diplomacy to Deals." November 2025

<sup>34</sup> U.S. and Central Asian Relations Through the C5+1. Policy report, June 18, 2025

<sup>35</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce. "Commerce Celebrates \$25 Billion C5+1 Deal Zone." Press release, November 6, 2025.

<sup>36</sup> U.S. Department of State. "Joint Statement of Intent on Economic Cooperation." Office of the Spokesperson, November 7, 2025.

over 50bn are the ones that support regional corridors like CASA-1000 and the Lapis Lazuli route.

• **Commercial deals with high profile (2024-2025):** massive deals in the commercial sector by the large corporations in the areas of aviation, the critical minerals, transport and agriculture concentrated on the 10 anniversary C5+1 Business Conference and the summit on 6 November 2025.

The Department of Commerce announced on 6 November 2025, at the "Deal Zone" that more than 25 billion new commercial deals were to be made between the United States and the five Central Asian countries. These featured close to twenty deals announced in the media and official briefs, encompassing the multibillion-dollar planes buys to the massive resources and infrastructure deals.

## 2. Country and Sector Flagship Transactions.

The content review of summit-week reporting indicates a group of iconic contracts and letters of intent (LOIs).22

**Table 1. Selected C5+1 "Deal Zone" Transactions Announced in November 2025**

Country	Sector	Illustrative Deal	Reported Value (approx.)
Kazakhstan	Aviation	Air Astana announcement of up to 15 Boeing 787 Dreamliners	Not disclosed; multi-billion-dollar order
Kazakhstan	Critical minerals	Tungsten venture at Northern Katpar and Upper Kairakty, backed by U.S. EXIM LOI	Project scope $\approx$ \$1.1 billion; EXIM interest $\approx$ \$900 million
Kazakhstan	Agriculture	John Deere agricultural-equipment agreement	Estimated \$3-5 billion in tractors and seeding equipment
Kazakhstan	Rail/transport	Citigroup + KTZ Locomotives with U.S. EXIM export-credit financing	$\approx$ \$1.6 billion, described as record locomotive deal
Regional	Multi-sector	Aggregate "C5+1 Deal Zone" commercial agreements	Over \$25 billion total announced

Information summarized of Times of Central Asia and other business reports on the C5+1 "Deal Zone."<sup>37</sup>

These flagship deals are a twofold purpose: they create actual economic content and are a marketing symbol, being mentioned numerous times in speeches and press releases as examples that C5 +1 is not a mere diplomatic talking shop but a delivery platform.

### **3.Pillars of Messaging: Innovation, Resources and Connectivity.**

In the initial article, three central messaging pillars have been rightly established; the newest documents and news (2019-2025) support them.

#### **Regional Connectivity**

- The U.S. and Central Asian press releases put stress on transport corridors, modernization of logistics, and harmonization of customs, and introduce C5+1 as the facilitator of cross-border freight and trade.
- The 2023 and 2024 plans to promote connectivity in Central Asia and the 2025 ITF-OECD report on freight resilience contribute to the fact that better infrastructure and regulatory alignment is the key to the attractiveness of the region to investments.

#### **Getting hold of Strategic Resources.**

- Institutionalization of collaboration on the geological data, mining and the investment of processing took place in the C5+1 Critical Minerals Dialogue (2024).
- The 6 November 2025 summit positioned the reserves of rare earth and uranium found in Central Asia as a key to U.S. activities to limit its reliance on Chinese supply chains.

#### **3.American Standards and American Innovation.**

- The USAID Energy Innovation Partnership and American-centered innovation centers in the region are some of the initiatives that are used to outline the U.S. presence as one that involves the introduction of technology, transparency, and high standards.
- The Deal Zone did not just indicate hard assets (aircraft, turbines, locomotives), but also digital investment, higher-education relationships, and cooperation with AI, and complies with larger accounts of a knowledge-based partnership.<sup>38</sup>

#### **4.Investor Impression and New Institutional Platforms.**

Nowadays, it is reported that this marketing strategy started to have its effect on the way investors perceive the region:

<sup>37</sup> AP News. "Trump Hosts Central Asian Leaders as US Seeks to Get Around China on Rare Earth Metals." November 6, 2025.

<sup>38</sup> PBS NewsHour. "Trump Hosts Central Asian Leaders as U.S. Seeks to Circumvent China on Rare Earth Metals." Broadcast, November 7, 2025

• The establishment of an Uzbekistan-U.S. Business and Investment Council, visa-free regimes and increased consular representation are all indications to investors that Central Asia is getting simpler to deal with and more welcoming to U.S. capital.

• Authorities emphasize political stability, macroeconomic stability, and predictability, and define C5+1 as an insurance against the turbulence of the regional environment and as a route through which partners of the U.S. can express a promise of long-term involvement.<sup>39</sup>

**Figure 1. C5+1 Investment Marketing Funnel**



## DISCUSSION

The findings confirm that C5 +1 is by 2025 not just a diplomatic acronym; it is a U.S Central Asia brand of economic cooperation. The investment push is more not about what is done in terms of the number of deals but what is written about the deals.

First, the magnitude and the prominence of the Deal Zone and associated announcements provide C5+1 with the feeling of momentum. The amount of funding (more than 50 billion) and commercial transactions (more than 25 billion) that have been announced at the 10th-anniversary conference is mentioned in the

<sup>39</sup> Reuters. "Rubio Plans to Visit Five Central Asian States in 2026." November 6, 2025. ([Reuters](#))

official and semi-official speech again and again to create a narrative of doubling investment involvement.

Second, the three pillars of the messaging, which are connectivity, resources, and innovation, fit well against investor worries:

- Connections deal with concerns of logistics, regulatory fragmentation and market size.
- Access to resources implies critical mineral and energy security of supply.
- The American innovation and standards are an indication of governance, ESG, and quality assurance.

Combined, they can make C5+1 a high-potential, rule-based deal zone, as opposed to opaque or politically risky projects featuring other external players in some cases.

Third, the summit of 6 November 2025 is especially noteworthy since it combines both symbolic and substantive elements: a white house gathering in which all five presidents took part, a special emphasis on rare earths, and a concomitant business agenda full of billion-dollar announcements. This offers a multi-layered marketing impact directed to international investors not just to local audiences at Central Asia or at United States.

**However, there are also risks and tensions:**

•**Delivery vs. announcement:** most of the marquee deals are just letters of intent or framework agreements, taking years to follow through, regulatory approvals and financing.

•**Resource-dependence and governance:** relying on the commodity dependency, a mineral-based story can be supplemented by diversification, adding value, and ensuring a strong environment without altering the environmental standards.

•**Balancing of geopolitics:** The states of Central Asia have to deal with multi-dimensional interaction with the United States, Russia, China, the European Union, and the local actors. The over-branding C5+1 as a club that is exclusive to investors might create counter-pressure.

In general, C5+1 marketing as investment push seems to enhance visibility and perceived opportunity, however, its success in the long run will rely on its implementation and coherence between policies, rather than its rhetoric and summits.

## CONCLUSION

Within 2015-2025, the C5+1 framework has become one of the key economic channels of the U.S.-Central Asia. It is supported by the fact that the amount of financing and future projects since 2015 amounts to more than \$50 billion and over

25 billion of business agreements announced at the 10th-anniversary business conference and the 6 November 2025 summit, indicate that dialogue has turned into deal-making.

The true measure of the investment branding of C5+1 will be whether the impressive figures and headline deals will be implemented projects, diversified economies, and long-lasting institutions. Should such a conversion take place, C5+1 might become a prototype of how targeted strategic communication and partnership branding can turn a geopolitical discourse into a long term, investment based, economic relationship that empowers the sovereignty and the well-being of the countries of Central Asia.

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