

ECONOMIC CORRIDORS: UNLOCKING TRADE AND SECURING CRITICAL MINERALS

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America wins with strategic investments in economic corridors that make the nation safer, stronger, and more prosperous. As Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has said, “**Economic security is national security.**” For the past 15 years, China has leveraged its Belt and Road Initiative to position itself at the center of global markets and supply chains. By drawing on the Department of State, the U.S. Development Finance Corporation, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and local partnerships, American leadership can offer an alternative, market-driven pathway for developing countries.

Leading the way on economic corridors through U.S. diplomacy and strategic international assistance will:

1. BOOST ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND ADVANCE MUTUAL PROSPERITY

Corridors mobilize American capital and expertise to deliver jobs, growth, and long-term development in Africa, Asia, and beyond—expanding markets and profits for U.S. companies.

- As the fastest growing markets in the world are in developing countries and many have underdeveloped infrastructure and natural resources, economic corridors offer American firms the opportunity to procure needed supplies and create jobs at home and abroad.
- By leveraging U.S. international assistance resources alongside investments in economic corridors, U.S. policymakers benefit from a “multiplier effect” where improved global health security, mutual prosperity, and resilient communities make for even more productive infrastructure investments. This virtuous cycle of assistance and investment boosts prospects for trade and demand for gradually higher-value U.S. goods.

2. SECURE CRITICAL MINERALS

Corridors enable U.S. companies to securely extract, process, and transport critical minerals essential to American defense and technology industries. U.S.-backed corridors will insulate U.S. supply chains from Chinese, Russian, Iranian, and North Korean interference and diversify supply routes and options, so the U.S. is not at the mercy of any single critical mineral supplier.

- Minerals-based industries **contribute** more than \$4 trillion to the U.S. economy, yet China controls much of the global refining capability, particularly through its investments in Africa, and supplies about 90% of the world’s processed rare earth elements.
- Earlier this year, amid trade tensions, Beijing **restricted** rare earth exports, directly impacting the U.S. defense industry supply chains and boosting costs for U.S. manufacturers as they sought non-Chinese sources.

3. STRENGTHEN TRADE AND CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Corridor projects expand transport, energy, water, and agricultural infrastructure—creating an enabling environment for American companies to further invest while building resilient economies in partner nations—a “win-win” situation.

- In addition to traditional infrastructure, corridors integrate secure digital connectivity, 5G, and data infrastructure—enabling modern commerce while ensuring America and our partners, not China, set the standards for the global digital economy, in line with the Administration’s [AI Action Plan](#).

The Trump Administration is already implementing several corridor partnerships that could serve as models for future engagement, including the Lobito Corridor in central Africa and the Luzon Corridor in the Philippines.

LOBITO CORRIDOR

The [Lobito Corridor](#) is an essential strategic component of U.S. access to, and development of, critical minerals—most of which currently flow to China for processing.

- In Angola, the [U.S. Development Finance Corporation](#) is helping finance railway upgrades to move goods and critical minerals to the Atlantic port of Lobito. The railway will accelerate win-win investments in areas like energy, agriculture, and infrastructure and includes plans to deploy fiber optic infrastructure, enhancing digital connectivity, countering efforts like those by China's Huawei Corporation to dominate the local telecoms industry.
- Using the U.S.-Ukraine Critical Minerals Agreement of April 2025 as a model, the United States is advancing discussions towards a strategic minerals partnership with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), reflecting America's growing focus on securing reliable access to critical minerals. China currently owns or has a stake in 9 out of 15 DRC cobalt mines, giving Beijing disproportionate control over a mineral central to communications and defense technologies.
- Zambia, a major producer of copper, lithium, and cobalt, presents a critical opportunity for U.S. investment in mining and processing—diversifying supply chains and reinforcing America's role as a trusted partner. Through public-private partnerships, U.S. companies are already [investing](#) in the country's mining sector, delivering returns to U.S. investment while building local infrastructure and stability.

LUZON CORRIDOR

The Luzon Economic Corridor, a U.S-Japan-Philippines initiative, offers a strategic counterweight to China's footprint in the Indo-Pacific. Anchored in the Philippines' Luzon Island, the corridor integrates transport, energy, and digital infrastructure to expand secure supply chains and support U.S. and allied investment. The Corridor supports connectivity between four key urban and industrial zones in the Philippines, driving economic growth and regional development, along with an initiative to increase food security.

- The U.S. Trade & Development Agency recently [announced](#) funding for development of the Subic-Clark-Manila-Batangas (SCMB) Railway, which will connect three of the Philippines' most critical ports on the corridor. The SCMB Railway will generate significant export opportunities for U.S. companies while easing the movement of essential materials to stimulate economic growth.
- The Luzon Corridor has the potential to meet growing demand for critical minerals. The Philippines [holds](#) the world's fourth-largest copper reserves, fifth-largest nickel deposits, and a surplus of cobalt. The Corridor can provide more efficient access to these resources while offering U.S. manufacturing firms better access to critical minerals.

WHERE ELSE COULD WE INVEST?

Additional strategic investments in economic corridors can help advance American interests, including the Administration's recent [Executive Order on Unleashing America's Offshore Critical Minerals and Resources](#), to ensure the U.S. can meet growing global demand for critical minerals and the advanced goods and technologies these minerals make possible. Beyond Lobito and Luzon, there are other economic corridors where strategic development and investment could boost the United States' economic and geopolitical position while strengthening our partnerships:

INDONESIA

Indonesia holds 42% of the world's nickel supply and 51% of its global production. But there are gaps in the processing of nickel that could be filled with U.S investments. Indonesia's strategic position in the Indo-Pacific provides an opportunity for America to partner with them on nickel processing instead of relying on China.

MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique has vast reserves of graphite—a mineral the U.S. heavily depends on China for in the use of lithium-ion batteries and steelmaking—as well as heavy mineral sands containing ilmenite and zircon. Mozambique is an opportunity to strengthen critical mineral supply chains while advancing stability with tools from the Development Finance Corporation or the Export-Import Bank to de-risk private investment for U.S. companies while addressing the security challenges within the country.