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## OPENING STATEMENT

### **Senator Sam Brownback**

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#### **“Pipeline Politics: Achieving Energy Security in the OSCE Region”**

**June 25, 2007**

*(as prepared for delivery)*

Mr. Chairman, thank you for convening this hearing. Energy security for the United States is certainly closely tied with that of Europe and Eurasia and I believe this hearing will help us better understand the implications of recent energy disputes in Europe.

Ensuring a steady supply of energy for the U.S. and its allies is a key national security priority. Our transportation sector is dependent on oil for 97 percent of its fuel. The United States uses 25 percent of the world’s oil, yet only has 5 percent of proven oil reserves. And as fate would have it, much of the world’s supply of these hydrocarbons is located in regions where countries are hostile to us or are unstable — or both. It is imperative that the United States decrease its dependence on foreign oil so that our economy is not held hostage to events happening half a world away. Given the demands of our economy, that will require the United States to not only increase our own domestic production of oil and natural gas, but also to increase our energy efficiency and find alternative fuels.

Diversification of the sources of energy and the delivery mechanisms are the key to overall energy security. This is true not only for the United States but for our European and Eurasian partners as well. U.S. policy should continue to foster more sources of supply and more pipelines. I believe it is unsound policy for the West to allow Russia to control the sources and transit routes for Caspian and Central Asian hydrocarbons. That would be so even if our relations with Russia were better than they are today or are likely to be in the foreseeable future — it is just common sense not to count on one supplier for such a valuable commodity.

Russia has enjoyed some successes in the past few months, locking up major energy deals with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Still, we cannot afford to throw up our hands in resignation. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline was a great success for Washington, reflecting a bi-partisan approach over two administrations to an energy and geopolitical problem. Opening up Azerbaijan’s reserves to the West set a precedent for promoting multiple pipelines that helps ensure supply while supporting the independence of Azerbaijan.

I have strongly supported the BTC pipeline. In legislation I have offered — the Silk Road Act I and II — I have urged that we enlarge the scope of our energy projects to the length and breadth of Central Asia and Afghanistan.

The question now is whether we can build on our success in other Caspian and Central Asian projects. The BTC was possible because Washington put its shoulder to the wheel and pushed hard for years until a dream became reality. I hope to hear from our witnesses how the U.S. Government proposes to continue this effort.

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