

AMBASSADOR MANN: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think my starting point for this is a feeling that I know all of my colleagues share of gratitude to you, Mr. Chairman, for holding these hearings, for giving us this opportunity to talk about an issue that is so important and for your personal involvement in this issue, which I know is by no means new.

I handle the Central Asian part of these issues and for Central Asia, it's an important economic question and as with a number of other nations in the region, it's a question of supporting the independence and the sovereignty of these countries, when you get down to the base issues there.

So we have achieved a lot as a government, as an interagency team, and my colleagues have pointed out the challenges that we have in the future.

And just one final note, Mr. Chairman. You have a full table here of representatives of the executive branch. I think this shows the strength and the depth that we have because there are the four of us up here, but behind us, also, is a team of tremendous professionals in our departments, in Department of Commerce, Trade and Development Agency (inaudible), Ex-Im (ph), and in the intelligence community, who have been at the heart of the successes that we've had as a government.

So, anyway, thank you, again, Mr. Chairman, and to the committee.