Critical Minerals Report (07.18.2025): From Desert Oxides to Digital Tokens—The Week Critical Minerals Broke the Policy Sound Barrier

written by Tracy Hughes | July 18, 2025

Over the past seven days, critical minerals vaulted from specialist briefings to the front lines of economic statecraft. Washington guaranteed premium prices for home-grown rare earth oxides, Beijing tightened the export valves on EV-battery know-how, Tokyo and Brussels readied a joint procurement pact, and a Toronto–Dubai alliance unveiled plans to tokenize stocks of nickel, cobalt, and rare earths. Add a looming 50 percent U.S. tariff on copper and a $500 million Apple–MP Materials magnet deal in Texas, and the result is a rapid-fire convergence of security policy, industrial strategy, and financial innovation—all orbiting critical minerals such as dysprosium, neodymium, and uranium that are suddenly debated with the urgency once reserved for oil….

U.S. Milestones: Heavy Rare Earths and a Homegrown Magnet Supply Chain

At a remote mill in southern Utah, a quiet breakthrough signaled the U.S. intent to reclaim ground in rare earth elements. Energy Fuels Inc. (NYSE American: UUUU | TSX: EFR) announced it has begun pilot-scale production of **heavy rare earth oxides** – starting with dysprosium – at its White Mesa Mill. This is a

first in the nation: **the only U.S. facility currently producing separated heavy REE oxides from mined ore**, rather than from recycled materials. The initial batches are small, but plans are ambitious. By late 2025, Energy Fuels expects to be producing terbium and then samarium oxides on a pilot basis, and, if all goes well, moving to commercial-scale output of these critical magnet metals by the end of 2026. *"Energy Fuels is in a unique position to produce the heavy rare earth oxides needed by other U.S. producers to make rare earth metals, alloys and magnets,"* said CEO Mark Chalmers, underscoring the company's role in supplying downstream industries. In parallel, its newly acquired **Donald mineral sands project** in Australia – among the world's richest heavy rare earth deposits – could come online by 2027, providing a further feed of dysprosium, terbium, and samarium for processing in the U.S.. If these timelines hold, Energy Fuels would become **the only American commercial supplier of heavy REE oxides from mined ore**, filling a gap in the domestic supply chain for high-performance magnets and alloys critical to EV motors, wind turbines, and defense systems.

Across the supply chain, private industry is stepping up investment in U.S. production. Tech giant Apple Inc. (NASDAQ: AAPL) this week unveiled a $500 million multiyear commitment to source **rare earth magnets** from domestic producer MP Materials Corp. (NYSE: MP), in a first-of-its-kind deal. Under the agreement, MP's new **Fort Worth, Texas** facility will supply Apple with neodymium magnets made in USA, specifically for Apple's products like the iPhone and Mac. The partners are also launching an advanced recycling line at **Mountain Pass, California** – the same desert site where MP currently mines rare earths – to reclaim rare earth elements from end-of-life electronics and reprocess them into fresh magnets. Apple's CEO Tim Cook noted that rare earth materials are *"essential for making advanced technology,"* and said the effort will *"help*

strengthen the supply of these vital materials here in the United States.” The move not only secures a domestic source for Apple’s own components but also aims to cultivate American expertise in magnet manufacturing. New production lines in Texas, designed with Apple’s needs in mind, will build up a workforce trained in making high-grade neodymium magnets – an area long dominated by China. The commitment forms part of Apple’s broader pledge to invest in U.S. manufacturing and innovation (over $500 billion in the next four years). By creating a closed-loop of mined, manufactured, and recycled rare earths, Apple and MP Materials are signaling a model of vertically integrated resilience: mining-to-magnets-to-recycling all within U.S. borders.

Underpinning these corporate moves is an extraordinary new **pricing intervention** by Washington designed to tilt the economics in favor of U.S. rare earth producers. The Department of Defense struck a deal to guarantee a **minimum price of $110 per kilogram** for certain critical rare earth oxides – notably neodymium and praseodymium (NdPr), key inputs for permanent magnets – for the next decade. That price floor is roughly *double* the current going rate set by China’s market. In effect, the Pentagon will pay U.S. suppliers the difference if market prices stay below $110. This unprecedented step, revealed in a contract with MP Materials, immediately lifted expectations across the industry. By establishing a lucrative floor price well above Chinese levels, the U.S. aims to spur investment that has long been stymied by China’s ability to depress prices. MP Materials, for one, has announced plans to expand magnet output to **10,000 tons per year** in the coming years – roughly equal to total U.S. demand – with the Pentagon not only as a price backstop but also as its newest major shareholder (through a $400 million stock investment). Other would-be producers, from chemical giant Solvay in Europe to junior miners like Aclara

Resources Inc. (TSX: ARA), welcomed the move and may benefit indirectly from stronger pricing power. Still, the novel U.S. pricing system raises questions: global automakers and electronics firms – the ultimate magnet buyers – could face higher input costs if a new price floor takes hold internationally. Some industry voices wonder whether private buyers will accept paying a premium for non-Chinese rare earths or stick with lowest-cost sources. For now, however, **Washington has sent a clear signal that it is willing to rewrite market rules to challenge China's dominance in these strategic materials**.

Financial Alchemy and Digital Metals

Innovation in critical minerals isn't just coming from mines and factories – it's also emerging on trading floors and blockchain ledgers. This week saw an unusual partnership between a Canadian mining technology firm and a fintech platform, aiming to turn mined commodities into **"Digital Metal Assets."** **CVMR® Corporation**, known for its proprietary refining of nickel, cobalt, rare earths and other metals, has teamed up with **Finatrades**, a Dubai-based digital trading platform, to tokenize physical critical minerals. The idea is to back each cryptographic token 1:1 with a stockpile of a refined metal – whether nickel ingots, cobalt powder, rare earth oxides or even uranium – securely stored and verified for purity. By merging CVMR's global resource base and metallurgical expertise with Finatrades' asset-tokenization technology, the venture bills itself as **"the largest critical metals conglomerate"** spanning from mine to market. The tokens could be traded internationally or used as collateral, essentially **transforming illiquid mineral reserves into liquid financial assets**. Crucially, the project is eyeing emerging markets, especially in Africa, where countries rich in minerals often struggle to secure financing. By

digitizing the value of untapped mineral deposits or refined metals, a resource-rich government or company could raise funds without waiting years for a mine to reach full production. *“This has been tried many times, but never by a powerhouse like this,”* says Jack Lifton, co-chair of the Critical Minerals Institute, noting that previous attempts to financialize metals via blockchain lacked either significant physical inventory or regulatory legitimacy. In contrast, CVMR and Finatrades bring both – real metal supply and a regulated Swiss-backed trading infrastructure – lending credibility to an often hyped concept. If successful, the initiative could **open new liquidity channels** for critical minerals and provide alternative funding routes for mining projects in the Global South. At the same time, its proponents are taking care to set up compliance and oversight (a joint working group will handle regulatory and risk issues) to navigate what is essentially uncharted territory for commodities and finance. While digital tokens won’t replace physical supply chains, this “digital alchemy” could complement traditional markets by broadening the investor base for critical materials and smoothing trade – a potentially timely innovation as nations scramble to secure mineral resources.

Beijing’s Strategic Clampdown and Trade Chessboard

Even as the West ramps up domestic capacity, **China moved to tighten its grip** on the most crucial links of the clean-tech supply chain. In its latest policy salvo, Beijing imposed new **export restrictions on advanced electric-vehicle battery technology**, including technical know-how for lithium processing and the manufacturing of lithium iron phosphate (LFP) cathodes. Effective this week, any transfer of these technologies overseas – whether through joint ventures, licensing, or even foreign

academia — will require a special government license. The controls mirror Beijing's earlier curbs on exporting rare earth magnet materials and underline a broader strategy: protecting China's lead in EV battery production, where Chinese firms command about *67% of the global market share*. By keeping cutting-edge processing techniques under lock and key, China aims to **safeguard its "national economic security"** and maintain its edge in battery performance and cost. Chinese companies like CATL and BYD have been expanding overseas — building cell factories in Europe and Asia — but analysts note the new rules mainly target upstream processes that still mostly occur on Chinese soil. *"It deepens the emerging geopolitical tech decoupling beyond materials to process IP,"* observed Liz Lee of Counterpoint Research, adding that the move may spur Western efforts to localize battery material refining. In the near term, Chinese battery giants' planned plants in Germany, Hungary, or the U.S. might not be immediately hobbled, since those sites focus on cell assembly rather than the restricted precursor steps. But longer term, China is signaling it will not easily share the crown jewels of its EV industry. This export control arrives just after Chinese officials similarly blocked shipments of certain gallium and germanium products (used in semiconductors and defense) and amid its simmering trade war with Washington over chips and minerals. The message is clear: as the U.S. and allies push to *"de-risk"* or diversify away from Chinese supplies, China is prepared to wield its dominance in critical materials as leverage.

Indeed, behind closed doors, an uneasy trade détente is being hashed out linking **rare earths and high-tech hardware**. U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick revealed that **Nvidia's pending ability to resume selling certain advanced AI chips to China** was part of ongoing negotiations with Beijing over rare earth elements. *"We put that in the trade deal with the magnets,"*

Lutnick told Reuters, referencing an agreement that President Trump struck to persuade China to restart shipments of rare earth magnets to U.S. manufacturers. Just days earlier, Nvidia's CEO had met with Trump, and now the company says it expects U.S. export licenses imminently to ship its H20 AI processors to Chinese customers. This marks a **stark reversal** of an export ban imposed only in April that barred cutting-edge AI chips from China on national security grounds. The turnabout has drawn fire from U.S. lawmakers, who note these powerful chips (though a half-step down from Nvidia's top-tier models) could aid China's AI ambitions. Administration officials haven't detailed the full quid pro quo, but the timing suggests a delicate bargain: Washington may be easing tech restrictions, despite security hawks' objections, in exchange for Beijing lifting or pausing its rare earth export curbs that threatened to choke U.S. industry. In fact, a fragile **90-day truce on rare earths** was reportedly reached in early July, temporarily reversing China's magnet embargo to give automakers and electronics firms a window to stockpile. Nvidia's resumed chip sales can be seen as part of that truce – a concession to China with huge financial stakes (Nvidia earns over 10% of revenue in China) and big implications for AI competition. *If* China honors the magnet exports and the U.S. grants the chip licenses, each side gets a short-term win: Chinese EV and electronics makers regain access to industry-standard AI chips, while U.S. firms (and defense contractors) get access to Chinese rare earth materials again. Still, the controversy underscores the predicament: the U.S. is trying to maintain a hard line on critical tech, but in the realm of critical minerals, **interdependence has become a bargaining chip**. How sustainable this uneasy exchange is remains to be seen – officials on both sides concede the arrangement is "*fragile*". For now, it highlights the high stakes and complex trade-offs at play when minerals and microchips become intertwined in great-power negotiations.

Allies and Legislation: Diversifying Supply Chains and Streamlining Projects

Facing these maneuvers from Beijing, U.S. allies are closing ranks to reduce their exposure. In Tokyo, leaders from **Japan and the European Union** are poised to announce an unprecedented joint effort to secure rare earth supplies. According to a Nikkei report, the two will launch a new high-level economic dialogue — involving foreign and economy ministers — focusing on **coordinated rare earth procurement and supply chain projects**. The initiative, expected to be unveiled at the Japan-EU summit on July 23, includes public-private partnerships to develop alternative sources of rare earth elements outside of China. The EU would also consider **simplifying regulations** to facilitate Japanese investment in European critical mineral projects. Coming on the heels of China's export controls, this trans-Pacific partnership underscores a shared urgency: *if China won't sell the materials freely, Japan and Europe will work together to find other options*. Both have already taken steps individually — the EU launched its Critical Raw Materials Act, and Japan has been supporting rare earth ventures in Southeast Asia and Australia — but closer cooperation could mean pooling funds or jointly backing mining and refining ventures. It's a notable alignment for two economic powers that, collectively, remain heavily dependent on Chinese rare earths for industries from automotive to aerospace. The Japan-EU plan also mirrors U.S. actions: just this month the U.S. Department of Defense took a **multibillion-dollar stake in MP Materials**, making it the company's largest shareholder, to boost domestic rare earth output. Around the world, like-minded democracies are essentially building a new alliance for critical minerals, exchanging notes on strategic stockpiles, investment in mines

from Africa to South America, and technology sharing – all aimed at loosening China's tight hold on supply.

Back in Washington, D.C., the past 30 days have amounted to a whirlwind **policy sprint to rewire America's critical minerals strategy**. In Congress, lawmakers are shifting the toolkit from tax incentives to direct funding and authority. A provision in the House's latest omnibus bill would repeal a dormant 10% production tax credit for critical minerals (deemed too slow and indirect) and replace it with **$2.5 billion for direct purchase of U.S.-mined minerals for the national stockpile, plus $500 million in low-interest Defense Department loans**. The Senate's draft is similar, adding over $3 billion in grants and a $5 billion investment fund for the industrial base. And in an eye-catching nod to the future, House Republicans have introduced a bill explicitly authorizing **seabed mining** in U.S. waters for the first time, aiming to tap the mineral riches of the deep ocean and counter China's ventures in the Pacific. Meanwhile, the Executive Branch has been ordered onto a war footing of coordination: an early July memorandum from President Trump mandated a *"single application portal"* for companies seeking federal support for critical mineral projects, forcing agencies to share data and cut red tape. The Department of Energy has reprogrammed R&D funds towards critical materials and away from certain climate projects, signaling a priority shift to materials security. And regulators are feeling the impact of judicial decisions that ease the path for mining permits – a Supreme Court ruling in late June sharply narrowed environmental reviews under NEPA, so agencies no longer need to consider distant downstream effects of a mine, a change expected to **shorten litigation and permitting timelines** for new projects. In short, a combination of new laws, executive orders, and even Supreme Court precedents is rapidly converging to streamline domestic mining and processing. One senior defense official

summed it up: *“Rebuilding the critical minerals and rare earth magnet sectors of the U.S. industrial base won’t happen overnight, but [the government] is taking immediate action to streamline processes and identify opportunities to strengthen production.”*

Internationally, this policy blitz has been matched with diplomacy. The **G7 nations** agreed last month on a Critical Minerals Action Plan, pledging to coordinate investments in mining projects in Africa and Latin America and to **pool strategic stockpiles** among allies. And in the realm of trade defense, the U.S. Commerce Department has a report due in October on whether import reliance on lithium, cobalt, and rare earth alloys threatens national security — a finding that could justify tariffs or quotas under Section 232, potentially reshaping global markets overnight. All these efforts, from Washington to Brussels to Tokyo, point in one direction: reducing exposure to a single dominant supplier, and doing so with a speed and breadth that is striking for traditionally slow-moving bureaucracies. As one analysis put it, *a year ago “critical minerals” was a buzzword; now it’s a full-fledged national security doctrine.* The coming months — as Congress reconciles bills, agencies implement new authorities, and talks with China unfold — will test how quickly these policies can translate into actual mines, metal processing plants, and secure supply agreements.

Energy, AI, and the Quest to Fast-Track Nuclear

Not all critical mineral news is about metals and magnets — some is about the **fuel of the nuclear renaissance** that Washington hopes to foment. The U.S. Department of Energy this week announced a pilot program to **build advanced domestic nuclear**

fuel production lines, part of an effort to end reliance on imported enriched uranium for next-generation reactors. Under this program, DOE is soliciting private companies to construct and operate new fuel fabrication facilities under its oversight, with an initial target of selecting at least three advanced reactor designs by later this summer. The aggressive timeline envisions these pilot fuel lines achieving initial operation by July 4, 2026 – a date chosen not just for symbolism, but to meet the needs of several demonstration reactors slated to come online by then. The backdrop is a directive from President Trump to revive the U.S. nuclear energy sector and reduce dependence on Russian-supplied uranium fuel, which today powers many American reactors. Energy Secretary Chris Wright framed it in strategic terms: America has the resources and expertise to lead in nuclear energy, but *"we need secure domestic supply chains to fuel this rapidly growing energy source*". Companies selected for the pilot will have to shoulder the costs of building and running the fuel facilities and sourcing the uranium, but in return they get an expedited authorization process and a pathway to future commercial licenses. By compressing what is ordinarily a glacial regulatory timeline, the DOE hopes to attract private capital into an area long dominated by state actors. The first deadline – initial applications by August 15, 2025 – is only weeks away, putting would-be nuclear fuel entrepreneurs on the clock.

On a parallel track, **digital technology is being marshaled to cut red tape** in nuclear power. Microsoft and the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) announced a partnership to use **artificial intelligence to speed up the permitting process** for new nuclear plants. One of the biggest bottlenecks for nuclear construction is the painstaking assembly of license applications – running into the thousands of pages of engineering analyses, safety models, and environmental reports. Microsoft's AI tools, trained

on decades of prior successful applications, will auto-generate draft sections of these complex documents by pulling data from past studies and regulatory precedents. *“It’s created for human refinement,”* explains Nelli Babayan, Microsoft’s AI director for federal business, emphasizing that the AI will do the heavy lifting of compilation while human experts remain in the loop to review and edit. The initiative aligns with a recent push by the White House – via executive orders – to **halve the nuclear licensing timeline** (aiming for 18 months instead of many years) in order to accelerate reactor deployments and meet rising energy demand. Beyond new reactors, INL’s Scott Ferrara noted the AI could help existing nuclear plants optimize and uprate their output by quickly assembling the required license amendment requests using data from dozens of prior upgrades. In essence, the U.S. is exploring every avenue, from policy to automation, to overcome the procedural inertia that has historically hampered nuclear projects. If successful, these measures could not only bring advanced reactors and fuels to market faster, but also strengthen energy independence – another facet of critical infrastructure resilience.

Tariff Whiplash: Autos Braced for Metal Squeeze

Amid these strategic moves, the week’s news also served a cautionary tale about the unintended impacts of resource politics: **American automakers are nervously eyeing a new 50% tariff on imported copper** that President Trump threatened to impose by August 1. Copper may not be a “critical mineral” in the official sense, but it is the lifeblood of modern vehicles – from the wiring harness in any car to the electric motors in EVs. The tariff announcement sent U.S. copper prices to record highs on the COMEX exchange (over $5.68 per pound, an

unprecedented premium of nearly $3,000 per ton above global benchmark prices). Already, suppliers have been scrambling to lock in metal supplies and **passing cost increases down the chain**. Within days of the news, auto parts manufacturers began notifying carmakers they would have to raise prices, unable to absorb the extra duties and the spike in raw material costs. *"This [copper tariff] complicates an already difficult situation"* for the auto industry, said Daan de Jonge, a lead metals analyst at Benchmark Mineral Intelligence. He and others note that U.S. manufacturers were *already* grappling with tariffs on steel and aluminum, which since 2018 have driven up domestic metal premiums and forced companies to pay significantly more than global prices. Carmakers like Ford and Toyota have cautiously drawn down inventory and delayed price hikes where possible, but the cumulation of import taxes is hitting their bottom lines. An analysis by Benchmark and Cox Automotive suggests that with the copper tariff in place, the **tariff-related cost per vehicle** would rise to about **$1,700 for every car made in the U.S.** and as high as $3,500 for each car imported from Mexico or Canada (even under USMCA trade rules). For cars imported from other countries, the tariff cost could exceed $5,000 per vehicle – a staggering figure in an industry known for tight margins.

Auto suppliers, speaking anonymously, report significant "friction" in commercial negotiations as they seek to pass on metal surcharges to OEMs. Some small manufacturers have cut investments and even staffing, trying to offset skyrocketing steel and copper expenses. Industry voices are split on whether the copper tariff will actually be implemented – **President Trump has a history of floating and then retracting tariff threats**, especially if political or inflationary backlash looms. A major Japanese metals trader suggested cooler heads may prevail in Washington once the economic "damage" is considered, predicting

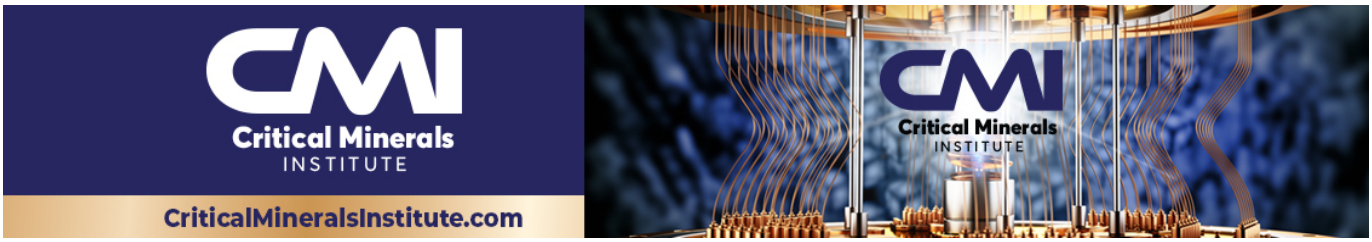
the tariff might be reduced or scrapped in the end. But in the meantime, the mere prospect has added volatility and uncertainty. It illustrates how policies aimed ostensibly at bolstering U.S. metals production or punishing foreign trade practices can boomerang onto domestic industries. As one U.S. auto executive remarked privately, these days **metals and minerals policy is felt on the factory floor** as much as in the mine – whether it's a shortage of rare earth magnets or a sudden spike in copper prices.

From rare earth oxides in Utah to tokenized nickel in Toronto, from Beijing's export licenses to Brussels' procurement plans, the critical minerals landscape is being reshaped by rapid developments on all fronts. This week's events show a mix of **bold government intervention, strategic alliances, technological innovation, and market turbulence**. It is a reminder that securing the materials of the future – the dysprosium for high-end magnets, the lithium for batteries, the uranium for reactors, or the copper for electrification – requires navigating a complex interplay of policy and commerce. As nations and industries sprint to build more resilient supply chains, they are finding both new opportunities and new friction points. The only certainty is that critical minerals will remain at the center of economic statecraft and industrial strategy – a trend that this week's news made more evident than ever.

Sources: The information in this commentary is drawn from the latest press releases, official statements, and news reports, including Energy Fuels' update on rare earth production, InvestorNews analysis of the CVMR–Finatrades venture, CNN and Reuters reports on China's tech export restrictions, a Reuters dispatch on the Japan-EU rare earth initiative, the U.S. Department of Energy announcement on nuclear fuel lines, Reuters coverage of the Microsoft-INL AI project, Apple's statement on its MP Materials partnership, Reuters reports on the rare earth

price floor deal, Reuters interviews regarding Nvidia's China sales and rare earths talks, Reuters reporting on Pentagon investments in minerals, an InvestorNews policy brief on U.S. critical mineral actions, and Reuters analysis of the copper tariff's impact on automakers. Each development, as cited below, contributes to the unfolding story of how critical minerals are driving decisions in business and government worldwide.

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Energy Fuels Now Producing Heavy Rare Earth Element Oxides (July 17, 2025, Source) – Energy Fuels Inc. (NYSE American: UUUU | TSX: EFR) has begun pilot-scale production of heavy rare earth element (HREE) oxides, specifically Dysprosium (Dy), at its White Mesa Mill in Utah, expecting to produce Terbium (Tb) and Samarium (Sm) oxides by late 2025 and early 2026, respectively. If successful, commercial-scale production of these critical oxides could commence by Q4 2026 from existing resources and potentially by Q4 2027 from its Donald Project in Australia. Energy Fuels aims to become the only U.S. supplier commercially producing heavy rare earth oxides from mined ores, significantly supporting domestic rare earth magnet and alloy industries.

Digital Alchemy: Turning Critical Minerals Into Liquid Assets (July 17, 2025, Source) – CVMR® Corporation and Finatrades have announced a strategic partnership to tokenize critical minerals, forming what they call the largest vertically integrated critical metals conglomerate. CVMR brings decades of expertise in mining and refining minerals like nickel, cobalt, and rare earths, while Finatrades contributes a fintech platform that enables the creation and trading of "Digital Metal Assets"—tokens backed 1:1 by physical metals. The initiative aims to streamline mining, finance, and trade, with a focus on emerging markets. This approach could unlock new funding sources, increase market liquidity, and offer alternative financing options for resource-rich but capital-poor regions.

China puts new restrictions on EV battery technology in latest move to consolidate dominance (July 17, 2025, Source) – China has imposed new export restrictions on key technologies used in electric vehicle (EV) battery production, including those for lithium processing and lithium iron phosphate (LFP) battery cathodes. These technologies now require a government-issued license for overseas transfer. The move follows similar recent controls on rare earths and reflects China's push to consolidate its dominance in the EV sector, where it holds a 67% global battery market share. While the full impact remains unclear, analysts say the restrictions mainly target upstream processes, potentially complicating international expansion plans for Chinese companies like CATL, BYD, and Gotion.

Japan, EU to explore joint rare earths procurement, Nikkei reports (July 17, 2025, Source) – Japan and the European Union are planning joint public-private partnerships to secure rare earth supplies and reduce dependence on China, according to Nikkei. This initiative, expected to be announced at the Japan-EU leaders' summit on July 23, includes launching an "economic two-plus-two" dialogue involving foreign and economy ministers.

The partnership aims to jointly develop critical mineral supply chains, simplify EU regulations, and enable Japanese participation in EU projects. These efforts come amid rising global concern over China's tightening of rare earth export controls, which threaten supply chains for weapons, EVs, and electronics.

Energy Department Announces Pilot Program to Build Advanced U.S. Nuclear Fuel Lines and End Foreign Dependence (July 16, 2025, Source) – The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has launched a pilot program to build advanced nuclear fuel production lines and reduce reliance on foreign enriched uranium. The DOE issued a Request for Application (RFA) to U.S. companies to construct, operate, and decommission fuel lines using DOE authorization. This initiative supports President Trump's directives on nuclear energy and national security. The DOE plans to select at least three advanced reactor designs by summer 2025, aiming for operational readiness by July 4, 2026. Initial applications are due by August 15, 2025, with ongoing submissions accepted thereafter.

Microsoft, US national lab tap AI to speed up nuclear power permitting process (July 16, 2025, Source) – Microsoft and the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) are partnering to explore how AI can accelerate the nuclear power permitting process in the U.S. By leveraging Microsoft's AI technology, the collaboration aims to streamline the creation of complex engineering and safety analysis reports required for nuclear plant construction and operating licenses. The AI, trained on historical applications, will compile data from past studies into draft documents for human refinement. This initiative aligns with recent executive orders to shorten nuclear licensing timelines and may also assist in optimizing existing nuclear plants through license amendment support.

Apple expands U.S. supply chain with $500 million commitment to American rare earth magnets (July 15, 2025, Source) – Apple has announced a $500 million multiyear commitment with MP Materials to strengthen the U.S. rare earth supply chain. The deal includes purchasing domestically produced rare earth magnets from MP's new facility in Fort Worth, Texas, specifically tailored for Apple products. Additionally, the companies will build a rare earth recycling facility in Mountain Pass, California, to reprocess recycled materials from used electronics. This partnership supports Apple's U.S. investment pledge of over $500 billion and aims to expand advanced manufacturing, create jobs, and enhance magnet recycling technologies to meet global demand for sustainable rare earth materials.

US rare earth pricing system is poised to challenge China's dominance (July 15, 2025, Source) – The U.S. is introducing a new rare earth pricing system to counter China's market dominance by guaranteeing a higher price for domestic producers. The Department of Defense will pay MP Materials $110/kg for neodymium and praseodymium, nearly double China's current market rate. The move is expected to stimulate U.S. rare earth production and investment, including MP's planned expansion to 10,000 tons/year of magnet production. While analysts foresee global pricing impacts benefiting producers, consumer costs may rise. Companies like Solvay and Aclara welcomed the development, but uncertainty remains over how commercial buyers will respond to the higher prices.

Nvidia's resumption of AI chips to China is part of rare earths talks, says US (July 15, 2025, Source) – Nvidia's planned resumption of H20 AI chip sales to China is reportedly tied to U.S. rare earth trade negotiations, according to Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick. The move follows CEO Jensen Huang's meeting with President Trump and comes despite prior national

security-based export restrictions. U.S. lawmakers from both parties criticized the decision, citing security concerns. Nvidia, which derives 13% of its revenue from China, said it expects licensing approval soon. Chinese firms like ByteDance and Tencent are preparing applications. Meanwhile, AMD also awaits license clearance to export AI chips to China. Rare earth export tensions remain a key backdrop to these developments.

Pentagon to keep investing in US critical minerals projects, defense official says (July 15, 2025, Source) – The U.S. Department of Defense will continue investing in critical minerals projects to secure a domestic supply chain essential for weapons and electronics. A recent multibillion-dollar deal made the Pentagon the largest shareholder in MP Materials, a leading rare earths producer, and included financial support measures. The Pentagon has invested nearly $540 million in such projects and plans to expand efforts under congressional guidance. The investments aim to reduce reliance on China, streamline production, and support responsible U.S. mineral development through tools like the Defense Production Act and the Office of Strategic Capital.

A Month of Mineral Realpolitik: Washington's 30-Day Sprint to Rewire the U.S. Critical Minerals Supply Chains (July 15, 2025, Source) – In the past month, Washington accelerated actions to reshape America's critical minerals strategy. Congress introduced legislation supporting seabed mining and shifted funding from tax credits to direct investments, stockpile purchases, and defense-backed loans. The executive streamlined permitting, unified funding applications, and reprioritized Department of Energy resources. Supreme Court rulings reduced regulatory barriers by narrowing environmental reviews and reducing agency oversight, while substantial federal funding and international alliances aim to counter China's dominance. Upcoming policy decisions, including NEPA waivers and national

security probes, will further define America's push for mineral independence.

Trump's copper tariffs pile more metal misery on US auto industry (July 14, 2025, Source) – U.S. President Trump's planned 50% copper tariff has alarmed the auto industry, potentially inflating manufacturing costs and raising consumer prices. Already, metals prices—particularly copper, essential for vehicle wiring and electric motors—have soared. Carmakers, heavily dependent on imported metals, may be forced to pass additional costs to buyers. Suppliers are feeling pressure to raise prices amid increased raw material expenses. Some analysts, however, suggest the tariffs may be short-lived due to inflation concerns and political considerations. Previously imposed tariffs have already significantly increased the average production cost per vehicle in the U.S. market.

InvestorNews.com Media Highlights

- July 17, 2025 – Digital Alchemy: Turning Critical Minerals Into Liquid Assets https://bit.ly/4nVHhoy
- July 16, 2025 – Move Over, DRC—Morocco's Cobalt Frontier Emerges https://bit.ly/3INnjvT
- July 15, 2025 – A Month of Mineral Realpolitik: Washington's 30-Day Sprint to Rewire the U.S. Critical Minerals Supply Chains https://bit.ly/3GApPFj

InvestorNews.com Video Highlights

- July 18, 2025 – Rockland Aims to Secure the Pentagon's Optics with Utah Beryllium https://youtu.be/c6Ww1ntsR6c
- July 16, 2025 – Antimony Resources Leads the Charge to Forge North America's First Stand-Alone Antimony Supply

Chain https://youtu.be/OZlJQ6LcOOU

- July 15, 2025 – Critical Minerals Guru Jack Lifton and Brian Leeners on the Homerun Resources' Silicon Challenging China's Solar-Glass Dominance https://youtu.be/f-POqSPAU4k

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- July 18, 2025 – Project Update: Optimization Underway With Clear Path Set to Unlock Halleck Creek's Rare Earth Potential https://bit.ly/4kKBXS8
- July 18, 2025 – Results of Annual General & Special Meeting of Shareholders https://bit.ly/4lBCJ5f
- July 17, 2025 – American Tungsten Corp. Announces Upsize in Private Placement from $2.5 Million to $7.0 Million https://bit.ly/4lXMKcv
- July 17, 2025 – CVMR® Corporation, Finatrades of RAMINVEST Holding Announce Their Strategic Partnership to Mine, Refine, Finance, and Monetize Various Mineral Assets and Launch the Largest Critical Metals Conglomerate. https://bit.ly/4lWmEXl
- July 17, 2025 – Homerun Resources Inc. Announces Update on European Financial Markets Advisory https://bit.ly/4kKhmgK
- July 17, 2025 – Appia Issues 500,000 Shares and Earns Further Interest in the PCH Project https://bit.ly/3GQdYTx
- July 17, 2025 – Energy Fuels Now Producing Heavy Rare Earth Element Oxides https://bit.ly/4m2tqLj
- July 16, 2025 – Happy Creek Upsizes Previously Announced Private Placement to $3,750,000 https://bit.ly/4f0wNjO
- July 16, 2025 – Nord Precious Metals Unveils 68th Test Pit Excavation Drone Video, Confirms Tailings Extend to Property Boundaries https://bit.ly/40Xbt8G
- July 16, 2025 – Antimony Resources Corp. (ATMY) (K8J0)

Announces the Completion of the First Phase of Drilling – Drill Hole BH-25-05 Had Massive Antimony Bearing Stibnite Identified over 20 Meters and Antimony Bearing Stibnite Identified in 70% of the Drill Holes https://bit.ly/4eP33WM

- July 15, 2025 – Happy Creek Announces $3,250,000 Private Placement https://bit.ly/4kI2eR6
- July 15, 2025 – Nord Precious Metals AGM Results https://bit.ly/4lwDPz5
- July 15, 2025 – The Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach invests in Scandium Canada https://bit.ly/40m0x4t
- July 15, 2025 – Panther Metals PLC: Tailings Sampling Programme Underway at Winston Project https://bit.ly/4nQeKR0
- July 15, 2025 – ASM marks milestone with first heavy rare earth metals sale and strengthened Neo Performance Materials partnership https://bit.ly/451RqbE
- July 15, 2025 – Nano One Selected to Join U.S. ALTA and Strengthen North American Battery Supply Chain https://bit.ly/46ctbZC
- July 14, 2025 – Voyageur Pharmaceuticals Grants Deferred Share Units and Options and Accelerates Expiry Date of Warrants https://bit.ly/3IuCcTM
- July 14, 2025 – Coniagas Files Year-End Financials and Announces MCTO Status https://bit.ly/4nOHUA1
- July 14, 2025 – Nord Files Year End Financials and Announces MCTO Status https://bit.ly/4kFLCJw
- July 14, 2025 – Ucore Launches US Department of Defense Funded $18.4 Million Commercial Rare Earth Refining Project https://bit.ly/464lHrq
- July 14, 2025 – Volta Partners with The Idaho National Laboratory to Advance Metallurgical Work for Rare Earths and Gallium From the Springer Deposit, Ontario, Canada https://bit.ly/4eJKNhu

- July 14, 2025 – Power Metallic Closes on Li-FT Power Land Acquisition https://bit.ly/44H3IVx

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