Critical Minerals Report (10.11.2025): Western Critical Minerals Stocks Soar as China's Export Controls Ignite a Tech War

written by Tracy Hughes | October 11, 2025

The past week brought into sharp relief how **critical minerals have become a geopolitical battleground** and a focus of industrial policy from Washington to Beijing. In perhaps the clearest escalation yet, **China moved to tighten its chokehold on rare earths and battery materials**, extending its export controls from raw minerals to the very technology and equipment needed to process them. Beijing has **banned exports of rare earth processing machinery and know-how**, a direct strike on Western efforts to build independent supply chains. For two decades, virtually *every* high-precision alloy caster, furnace, and separator for rare earths have come out of China. By cutting off these tools, **President Xi Jinping is weaponizing the West's dependency** – controlling not just the elements, but the means to make magnets, alloys, and high-purity metals critical for EVs and defense. Our Critical Minerals Institute (CMI) Co-Chair *Jack Lifton* bluntly framed it as a technology war rather than a trade war, and his commentary on the move garnered over **31.5k views within a day** of publication, reflecting the alarm it sparked among investors and policymakers. Western rare earth ventures that saw their stocks jump on China's news may be misreading the challenge: *without Chinese equipment or engineers, scaling up is immensely difficult*. The new reality is that every step – from oxide to magnet – must be re-engineered domestically from

scratch, a process measured in years and billions of dollars.

China didn't stop at rare earths. In a **one-two punch, Beijing announced fresh export controls on advanced battery technology and materials**. Starting November 8, Chinese firms will need licenses to export high-performance lithium-ion batteries, certain **LFP and NCM cathode materials**, artificial graphite anodes, and even the specialized equipment to make them (publishing an interview with **Nano One Materials Corp. (TSX: NANO | OTCQB: NNOMF) COO Alex Holmes** later this afternoon on "Building a Western Battery Blueprint", click here for a sneak peek).

Ostensibly about "national security," this measure effectively stakes claim over the high end of the EV battery supply chain. The market reaction was swift: shares of major Chinese battery makers like CATL and EVE Energy plunged 7–11% on Friday's news (Source). Analysts noted that China is *expanding control from raw materials to the technological know-how* underpinning battery cells. Beijing's move comes even as **U.S.-China tensions simmer**, ahead of a possible Trump-Xi meeting (*this was cancelled then it was not cancelled, we are awaiting an update*), and follows China's earlier tightening of rare earth exports (adding more elements to its control list and scrutinizing buyers).

Rare earth magnet shipments to India remain frozen as well, pending New Delhi's written promise not to reroute any Chinese heavy magnets to the United States (Source). China, which produces ~90% of the world's heavy rare earth magnets, is essentially telling India: "You can buy our magnets, but *only* for your own use." India has so far balked at that demand (Source) — underscoring the new reality that critical materials now come with geopolitical strings attached.

Facing these maneuvers, **Western governments are responding with**

unprecedented direct intervention in critical mineral supply chains. In Washington, the Trump administration has embraced a hands-on industrial strategy more reminiscent of the Cold War than free-market orthodoxy. This week it **approved the Ambler Mining District road in Alaska** – unlocking access to vast copper and cobalt deposits long held back by environmental disputes. Even more strikingly, the White House is **taking equity stakes in mining companies** to secure supply. It announced a *$35.6 million investment for a 10% stake* in Vancouver-based **Trilogy Metals** (NYSE American: TMQ), the junior developing Ambler, immediately *rocketing Trilogy's stock over 200% higher* (Source). The federal government is now literally a shareholder in a critical minerals firm – a dramatic blurring of public policy and market participation. Administration officials portrayed the stake as cementing Trilogy's role as a "cornerstone" of U.S. resource security. And Trilogy hailed the reversal of a prior roadblock on the Ambler road as "renewed federal commitment" to domestic mining.

Washington's new activist stance doesn't end there. Officials have also been **in talks to acquire around a 10% holding in Lithium Americas** (NYSE: LAC), the company developing the huge Thacker Pass lithium project in Nevada. In exchange for more favorable terms on a $2.3 billion DOE loan, the administration wants a piece of LAC's equity – an almost unheard-of step that underscores lithium's strategic importance. (FYI: General Motors, notably, is already a major investor in LAC.)

The **Reuters news of these negotiations sent shares of Lithium Americas sharply higher** and, tellingly, a senior official noted *"hundreds of companies"* are now lobbying Washington for investment in their critical mineral projects (Source). Indeed, the U.S. has **just reallocated $2 billion** (from the CHIPS Act) specifically to fund such projects. One beneficiary could be **Critical Metals Corp.** (NASDAQ: CRML), which owns the **Tanbreez**

rare earth deposit in Greenland.

Reuters revealed that the administration is considering converting a $50 million Defense Production Act grant into an equity stake in Critical Metals – roughly **8% of the company** – to give the U.S. a direct interest in Greenland's rich rare earths. If executed, that deal would secure American influence over one of the largest REE deposits outside China (a project the previous U.S. administration quietly helped wrest from Chinese bidders). It's a remarkable full-circle from President Trump's once-mocked idea of "buying Greenland" – instead, the U.S. might buy into a Greenland mine.

Allies and partner nations are likewise recalibrating their critical minerals strategies. **Turkey, sitting on a giant rare earth reserve at Beylikova, has pivoted toward the U.S.** after deals with China and Russia soured (Source). Ankara has been in talks with Washington to jointly develop and refine the Beylikova deposit – believed to be the world's second-largest after China's – but with a key condition: technology transfer and local processing. Turkey watched a Chinese MoU stall when Beijing refused to share tech and insisted on doing the refining in China.

Determined not to just be a raw ore supplier, Turkey is seeking a partner who will help build local capacity. A pilot plant run by state firm Eti Maden already proved all 17 rare earth elements can be extracted there. If the U.S.-Turkey partnership materializes, it could establish a significant non-Chinese REE supply line – even if Turkey's eventual output would meet only a small fraction of U.S. demand (Source). For President Erdoğan, it's also about deepening ties with a NATO ally and attracting investment to hit an ambitious $100 billion trade goal.

Resource nationalism and supply security are also intensifying

in Africa. In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, which produces ~70% of the world's cobalt, President Félix Tshisekedi unveiled a tough new quota system to end years of oversupply and underpricing. After cobalt prices hit a 9-year low in early 2025, Congo outright **banned exports** in February (Source). That freeze, which forced major miners like Glencore and CMOC to halt shipments, achieved its aim – cobalt prices have *surged 92%* since March. Now Kinshasa will replace the ban on Oct. 16 with controlled quotas and has warned it will **permanently ban any exporter that breaches its allotted tonnage** (Source). Regulators set the cap at 18,125 tonnes for the remainder of 2025 and 96,600 tonnes per year for 2026–27. Glencore, the world's #2 cobalt miner, supports the plan, while top-producer CMOC (of China) opposes it. Tshisekedi touts the quota system as a "lever to influence this strategic market" and curb what he called *predatory strategies* by buyers (Source). The policy is risky – too high a price could accelerate thrifting out cobalt in batteries – but for now it has stabilized the market and might funnel more battery investment to Congo on Kinshasa's terms.

Meanwhile, **market signals in other key minerals flashed concern**. Tungsten, a niche metal critical for drilling and cutting tools, is causing headaches in the oil industry. **China controls about 83% of global tungsten supply**, and after Beijing in February restricted exports of tungsten (among other "critical" metals), prices for the ultra-hard metal have nearly **doubled to over $600 per metric ton unit** (Source). U.S. shale drillers, already battling cost inflation, now pay an extra $3,000–$25,000 per tungsten-intensive drill bit (normally ~$20k–$100k). Those higher costs are squeezing oilfield service margins and complicating America's push for more domestic energy production. The irony is not lost in Washington: tariffs and counter-curbs intended to bolster U.S. industry are, in tungsten's case, adding thousands to the cost of drilling each well. The U.S. DOE

has even funded a pilot to recycle tungsten carbide scrap in Texas (Source), but building any self-sufficiency in tungsten will take years given China's long head start in refining it.

On a more positive note, for Western industry, **copper's long-term fundamentals look robust, even if that implies future shortages.** The International Copper Study Group (ICSG) this week projected that **global refined copper will flip into deficit by 2026** – about a 150,000 tonne shortfall – whereas as recently as April they foresaw a surplus (Source). A spate of mine disruptions in Chile, Indonesia and DRC this year has crimped supply, and ICSG now expects a meager 0.9% growth in refined output in 2026 (Source). Demand, however, is set to rise over 2% that year (to 28.7 million tonnes), driven largely by Asia's ongoing electrification, even as Europe and Japan remain soft. China alone accounts for ~58% of world copper user. These dynamics already nudged **copper prices to a 16-month high** in recent days. Governments are clearly cognizant of copper's strategic role in the energy transition. In Australia, copper isn't on the official "critical minerals" list, yet Canberra just stepped in with a **A$600 million (~$395M) rescue package for Glencore's Mount Isa copper smelter and Townsville refinery** (Source). The aging smelter was poised to shut (taking 600 jobs with it), but officials deemed it a *"strategic national asset"* for Australia's own renewables supply chainreuters.com. The subsidy – jointly funded by federal and Queensland governments – aims to keep Australia's only copper smelting capacity alive through 2030 while upgrades are made. It's actually the third metals bailout by Australia this year (steel and zinc smelters were aided earlier), highlighting how *even wealthy nations are struggling to maintain downstream processing* in the face of cheaper Chinese competition and high local energy costs.

Amid these supply-side dramas, the demand outlook for critical minerals remains a tale of two narratives. In the United States,

there are signs of **near-term cooling in electric vehicle sales** after a period of breakneck growth. EV purchases hit record levels over the summer as buyers rushed to beat the expiration of a $7,500 federal tax credit (Source), but now automakers face a potential gap with incentives gone. Analysts warn U.S. EV sales could *drop by over 25%* without that support, contributing to a sense of **grim prospects for EV uptake** in the immediate future. Indeed, high interest rates, a glut of unsold EV models, and recent union strikes have some questioning whether the American EV rollout will stall. Yet the **auto industry isn't retreating** from its long-term electrification plans – far from it. Companies like Tesla, GM and Ford continue to invest heavily in new battery plants and models, betting that consumer demand will rebound and that tightening emissions rules (and California's 2035 gasoline car ban) will ultimately force the market toward EVs. This commitment is one reason **critical mineral investments remain feverish** despite cyclical ups and downs. The logic is simple: whether the EV transition takes 5 years or 15, the world will need vastly more lithium, nickel, graphite, rare earths and copper. **Recent U.S. data on uranium** underscore a parallel in the energy sector. U.S. nuclear utilities *nearly doubled their purchases of domestic uranium in 2024*, lifting U.S.-sourced uranium to 8% of their supply (from just 5% a year prior). While still modest (the bulk comes from allies like Canada and Australia), it signals a strategic shift to shore up local and friendly sources. Notably, Russian-origin uranium fell to only 4% of U.S. reactor fuel last year – a sharp drop as utilities heeded geopolitical risks. The **energy security narrative is driving tangible change** in procurement patterns, from nuclear fuel to battery metals.

In summary, this week's developments in the critical minerals arena paint a picture of *intensifying rivalry and realignment*. **China's latest gambits – restricting crucial exports and**

leveraging its dominance — have sent importing nations scrambling to fortify their own supply chains, even if that means rewriting the rules of capitalism and trade. The West is **pouring capital into mines and processing plants, invoking national security to justify market intervention**, and forging new partnerships from Alaska to Anatolia. Prices for everything from cobalt to tungsten are whipsawing as policy choices bite into supply. And although near-term demand signals (like U.S. EV sales) have softened, the overarching trend of electrification and decarbonization keeps the pressure on. In the span of a week, we've seen a microcosm of the new critical minerals reality: **a high-stakes balancing act between collaboration and confrontation, investment and intervention**. The message for investors and policymakers is clear — access to these resources will shape winners and losers across industries, and the game is only escalating. As one commentator noted, *we are not just in a trade war over metals, but a technology war over how to make them* — and the events of this week suggest that war is entering an intense new phase.



[A special nod to Melissa “Mel” Sanderson, Co-Chair of the Critical Minerals Institute (CMI), who was in London this week speaking at the Financial Times event, and to Alastair Neill, CMI Director, who took part in the Rare Earth panel in India. *(Photo: Alastair Neill meeting with the state minister or governor of Gujarat.)*

InvestorNews Critical Minerals Institute (CMI) Directorial Headline Picks for the Week:

- October 10, 2025 – China asks India for guarantee to not re-export heavy rare earths it supplies to the US: Report (Source)
- October 9, 2025 – China’s Latest Rare Earth Gambit: A Cold War on Technology (Source)
- October 9, 2025 – China announces export controls on lithium batteries, graphite anode materials (Source)

- October 9, 2025 – 2024 US figures show increase in domestic U purchases (Source)
- October 8, 2025 – Rising tungsten prices worsen oil drillers' inflation worries (Source)
- October 8, 2025 – Slower production growth will push copper market to deficit in 2026, says ICSG (Source)
- October 8, 2025 – Nano One Materials and Rio Tinto Forge a Western Supply Chain Blueprint for LFP Batteries (Source)

- October 7, 2025 – Why the U.S. government is investing in B.C. mining companies (Source)
- October 7, 2025 – Australia launches $395 million rescue of Glencore copper smelter (Source)
- October 6, 2025 – Turkey, US discuss rare earths deal as Ankara looks to diversify partners: report (Source)
- October 6, 2025 – Trump administration eyes stake in company developing Greenland rare earths mine (Source)
- October 6, 2025 – Congo to permanently ban cobalt exporters that breach quotas, says President Tshisekedi (Source)
- October 6, 2025 – President Donald J. Trump Approves Ambler Road Project to Unlock Alaska's Mineral Potential (Source)
- October 6, 2025 – The future for EVs in America looks grim. But the auto industry isn't giving up (Source)

InvestorNews.com Media Updates:

- October 09, 2025 – China's Latest Rare Earth Gambit: A Cold War on Technology https://bit.ly/4h7BTM3
- October 08, 2025 – Nano One Materials and Rio Tinto Forge a Western Supply Chain Blueprint for LFP Batteries https://bit.ly/4oaAXsy
- October 01, 2025 – A Little-Known British Metals Plant

Scores a Hail Mary with USA Rare Earth https://bit.ly/3KvqTMa

InvestorChannel.com (YouTube) Interview Updates:

- October 10, 2025 – China's Latest Rare Earth Gambit: A Cold War on Technology https://youtu.be/IShA_EV_k7E?si=ZPcbw2gXWHqmiOWA
- October 09, 2025 – Happy Creek's Jason Bahnsen on Advancing One of the World's Highest-Grade Tungsten Deposits https://youtu.be/aRxSmA9u1to
- October 09, 2025 – Quantum Critical Metals' Marcy Kiesman on Using AI to Advance Critical Minerals Exploration in Canada https://youtu.be/ayhyLFaYMdU
- October 08, 2025 – Meteoric Resources' Stuart Gale on Delivering Brazil's Next Rare Earth Powerhouse https://youtu.be/76X4yZTzgg0
- October 06, 2025 – Neo Performance Materials Opens Europe's Largest Magnet Facility, Europe's Landmark Critical Minerals Project https://youtu.be/tOZFBYkAPCs
- October 06, 2025 – Victory Metals' Ken Collerson on North Stanmore: A World-Class Heavy Rare Earth Discovery https://youtu.be/N8gnbizbXJs
- October 03, 2025 – Homerun Resources' Brian Leeners on Building a Vertically Integrated Silica and Solar Energy Powerhouse in Brazil https://youtu.be/rTVUS2HneqM
- October 03, 2025 – Constantine Karayannopoulos on the MP Materials Effect on the Rare Earths Market https://youtu.be/ISBCBBu7wdI
- October 02, 2025 – AR3's Travis Beinke on Building Australia's Next Rare Earth Giant https://youtu.be/wzmW4X6o5Yk
- October 02, 2025 – Defense Metals' Mark Tory on Why Wicheeda Stands Out as One of the World's Best Rare Earths

Projects https://youtu.be/Va7VsqQnj0w

- October 01, 2025 – Nord Precious Metals' Frank Basa on Unlocking 29 New Silver Veins https://youtu.be/ZkwZea9NHbg
- October 01, 2025 – Brazilian Rare Earths' Dr. Bernardo da Veiga Targets the World's Highest-Grade Rare Earth Deposit https://youtu.be/XWuiVTHkfWc
- September 30, 2025 – CVMR Leverages Gold to Launch and Expand a Multi-Billion Dollar Global Critical Minerals Fund https://youtu.be/6xZTInBEbZQ
- September 29, 2025 – George Bennett Bets on Low-Cost Rare Earths at Rainbow's Phalaborwa Project https://youtu.be/DuEWd9VQUyk
- September 29, 2025 – Appia's Brazil Rare Earths Project Gains Momentum with Ultra Partnership https://youtu.be/D9ARoWtB9Cs

InvestorNews.com News Release Updates:

- October 10, 2025 – Ucore Comments on China's Expanded Rare Earth Export Controls https://bit.ly/4mUr5C7
- October 10, 2025 – Media Advisory – Neo Performance Materials Inc. Third Quarter 2025 Earnings Release & Webcast https://bit.ly/43ejeIx
- October 10, 2025 – Happy Creek Provides Corporate Update https://bit.ly/4obG2Rl
- October 9, 2025 – Western Uranium & Vanadium Announces Upsize of Brokered LIFE Financing to $5.9 Million https://bit.ly/471bf2S
- October 9, 2025 – West High Yield (W.H.Y.) Resources Ltd. Announces Exercise of Warrants https://bit.ly/4mXJaiC
- October 9, 2025 – Volta Signs MOU with Nipissing First Nation for Its Springer Rare Earth Element Project in Ontario https://bit.ly/4q7sgkI
- October 8, 2025 – Western Uranium & Vanadium Announces

Brokered LIFE Financing of $5 Million https://bit.ly/42uzlBI

- October 8, 2025 – Spartan Metals Engages Investor Relations and Market Maker Firms https://bit.ly/48h6VPb
- October 8, 2025 – Appia Announces Closing Scheduled for Final Tranche of Non-Brokered Private Placement https://bit.ly/3IEpl22
- October 8, 2025 – Homerun Resources Inc. Announces Future Production of 100% Antimony-Free Solar Glass in Brazil https://bit.ly/3J1cmaD
- October 7, 2025 – Scandium Canada participates in Quebec's economic mission to Asia and announces corporate update https://bit.ly/42xUbQB
- October 7, 2025 – Romios Appoints New Directors and Corporate Secretary https://bit.ly/4nHDjiT
- October 6, 2025 – Spartan Metals Announces Director and Officer Changes https://bit.ly/4mOykvz
- October 6, 2025 – Happy Creek Announces Arrangements to Address Mailing of Shareholders Meeting Materials Resulting from Canada Post Strike https://bit.ly/42ZvUTy
- October 6, 2025 – Nord Precious Metals Grants Stock Options https://bit.ly/3KWqPVQ
- October 6, 2025 – West High Yield (W.H.Y.) Resources Ltd. Announces Stock Option Grant https://bit.ly/3Wr87Z2
- October 6, 2025 – Nord Precious Metals' Test Work from Beaver Mine Tailings Produces Commercial High-Grade Silver Concentrate https://bit.ly/4mRvw0C
- October 6, 2025 – Western Uranium & Vanadium to Acquire Uranium Claims https://bit.ly/48d2N2E
- October 6, 2025 – Homerun Resources Inc. Financing Updates https://bit.ly/4n1sAic
- October 6, 2025 – Appia Announces Engagement of Marketing Firm Aktiencheck.de AG and Updates for Non-Brokered Private Placement and PCH Transaction

https://bit.ly/4o1MIRV

- October 6, 2025 – Nano One Pre-Qualifies Lithium from Rio Tinto for LFP Cathode Production and Provides Strategic Collaboration Update https://bit.ly/3KV5EDC
- October 3, 2025 – Energy Fuels Announces Closing of Upsized US$700.0 Million Convertible Senior Notes Offering and Full Exercise of Initial Purchasers' Option to Purchase Additional Notes https://bit.ly/4h2Qsk8
- October 2, 2025 – Appia Announces First Closing Non-Brokered Private Placement https://bit.ly/4mGM0IN
- October 2, 2025 – Quantum Completes Second Airborne Survey at NMX East Project in Quebec https://bit.ly/46yEJpN
- October 1, 2025 – Appia Announces Next Stage of Transaction in PCH REE Project https://bit.ly/48acBud
- October 1, 2025 – Energy Fuels Announces Pricing of Upsized $600 Million Offering of 0.75% Convertible Senior Notes Due 2031 https://bit.ly/3WhCa5m
- September 30, 2025 – Nord Precious Metals Completes Deep Ground Penetrating Radar Survey at Castle https://bit.ly/46FvhQ5
- September 30, 2025 – Australian Strategic Materials Limited: Management changes https://bit.ly/4gRh33m
- September 29, 2025 – Energy Fuels Announces Proposed $550 Million Offering of Convertible Senior Notes Due 2031 https://bit.ly/4gOfWBl
- September 29, 2025 – Volta Completes Initial Drilling at Springer REE Project in Ontario https://bit.ly/4pMfYxK

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