

Technology Metals Report (02.14.2025): U.S. Foreign Policy Sharpens Focus on Global Critical Mineral Dominance

written by Tracy Hughes | February 14, 2025

This week, in the **Technology Metals Report**:

President Donald Trump is advancing foreign policy measures aimed at controlling critical minerals, targeting regions such as Ukraine, Greenland, and Canada. These actions are part of a broader strategy to reduce U.S. dependency on China, the dominant force in the critical minerals market. Trump's approach, which includes potentially aggressive acquisitions and transactional diplomacy, has ignited both international and domestic tensions. This pivot towards a resource-centered foreign policy is reshaping U.S. relations with both allies and competitors globally.

In Canada, mining leaders are advocating for domestic processing facilities to effectively utilize strategic mineral stockpiles. Amidst calls for a national stockpile to mitigate investment risks and counter U.S. influence, there is growing concern over joint U.S.-Canada investments that could compromise sovereignty. Industry advocates argue that without local processing capabilities, Canada will continue to export raw minerals for overseas processing, thereby undermining its economic and strategic interests. The establishment of these facilities is deemed essential for maintaining the value chain and promoting green technology production within the country.

Jack Lifton of the Critical Minerals Institute (CMI) has highlighted potential economic repercussions as the U.S. plans to impose significant tariffs on Canadian imports by March 4. These tariffs are expected to severely affect the automotive and steel industries, potentially doubling manufacturing costs for U.S. automakers and leading to higher vehicle prices. With Canada planning counter-tariffs, there is a looming threat of a trade war that could alter global alliances and encourage Canada to seek new trade partners in critical minerals, thereby reshaping North American trade relations and strategic positions globally.

China's Ganfeng Lithium has commenced lithium production at its Mariana project in Salta, Argentina, with a \$790 million investment aimed at producing 20,000 metric tons annually. Additionally, the company has constructed a \$190 million solar park to power the facility. Ganfeng is also advancing other projects in Argentina, including Pozuelos-Pastos Grandes and Incahuasi-Arizaro, supported by Argentina's favorable government policies designed to attract foreign investment and boost economic growth.

CMI		Critical Minerals Institute					
Purity			13.Feb.25	Month % Change	31.Jan.25	Year to Date % Change	Year End 31.Dec.24
99.65% fob China	ALUMINUM (Al)	\$ USD/ lb.	\$1.21	2.5%	\$1.18	4.2%	\$1.16
	ANTIMONY (Sb)	\$ USD/ tn	\$30,436	0.0%	\$30,436	0.0%	\$30,436
	COBALT (Co)	\$ USD/ lb.	\$10.73	0.0%	\$10.73	-4.1%	\$11.19
	COPPER (Cu)	\$ USD/ lb.	\$4.23	4.5%	\$4.05	7.8%	\$3.92
>99.99%	GALLIUM (Ga)	\$ USD/ lb.	\$134.2	0.0%	\$134.2	0.0%	\$134.2
	GOLD (Au)	\$ USD/ oz.	\$2,901.3	3.0%	\$2,817.1	10.5%	\$2,624.6
	NATURAL GRAPHITE North America	\$ USD/ lb.	\$0.57	0.0%	\$0.57	0.0%	\$0.57
>99%	LITHIUM METAL (Li)	\$ USD/ lb.	\$4.62	-5.4%	\$4.89	-6.5%	\$4.94
>99%	PRAESODYMIUM (Pr)	\$ USD/ kg.	\$84.19	2.6%	\$82.02	6.6%	\$78.98
>99.5%	NEODYMIUM (Nd)	\$ USD/ kg.	\$79.20	6.8%	\$74.14	10.2%	\$71.90
	NICKEL (Ni)	\$ USD/ lb.	\$6.99	2.5%	\$6.82	2.0%	\$6.85
0.999	NIOBIUM PENTOXIDE (Nb ₂ O ₅)	\$ USD/ kg.	\$45.00	0.0%	\$45.00	0.0%	\$45.00
	PLATINUM (Pt)	\$ USD/ oz.	\$988.15	2.1%	\$967.98	9.0%	\$906.76
	SILVER (Ag)	\$ USD/ oz.	\$31.85	1.0%	\$31.54	10.2%	\$28.89

The critical minerals pricing chart is supplied by the CMI Partners – MineralPrices.com

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Now for the critical mineral news highlights of the week....

Many of Trump's actions against allies and foes focus on one big thing (February 13, 2025, [Source](#)) – President Donald Trump is pursuing foreign policy actions aimed at controlling critical minerals, focusing on areas like Ukraine, Greenland, and Canada. These efforts are part of a broader strategy to reduce U.S. dependency on China, which dominates the critical mineral market. Trump's proposals, which include potentially forceful acquisitions and transactional diplomacy, have stirred international and domestic tensions. His approach reflects a shift towards resource-centered foreign policy, influencing U.S. relations with both allies and competitors in the global arena.

Mining industry warns critical minerals stockpiles useless without processing plants (February 13, 2025, [Source](#)) – Canadian mining leaders emphasize the need for domestic processing facilities to make strategic mineral stockpiles effective. Amid calls for a national stockpile to reduce investment risks and counter U.S. threats, concerns grow over joint U.S.-Canada investments potentially compromising sovereignty. Industry advocates stress that without local processing plants, Canada will continue exporting raw minerals for overseas processing, undermining economic and strategic interests. Establishing these facilities is crucial for retaining the value chain and supporting green technology production within Canada.

Jack Lifton on the Turbulence of Imminent U.S.-Canadian Tariffs in the Automotive and Critical Minerals Sectors (February 12,

2025, [Source](#)) – As the U.S. plans to impose significant tariffs on Canadian imports by March 4, [Jack Lifton](#) of the [Critical Minerals Institute](#) (CMI) highlights potential economic challenges. The tariffs could severely impact the automotive and steel industries, doubling manufacturing costs for U.S. automakers and escalating vehicle prices. Canada's planned counter-tariffs suggest a potential trade war that might shift global alliances and push Canada towards new trade partners in critical minerals, reshaping North American trade relations and global strategic positions.

China's Ganfeng starts lithium production at Argentina's Mariana project (February 12, 2025, [Source](#)) – China's Ganfeng Lithium has initiated lithium production at its Mariana project in Salta, Argentina, with a \$790 million investment for an annual output of 20,000 metric tons. The company also built a \$190 million solar park to power the facility. Further, Ganfeng is progressing with other Argentine projects, including Pozuelos-Pastos Grandes and Incahuasi-Arizaro. Argentina's supportive government policies aim to attract foreign investment and stimulate economic growth.

European EV battery material startups make recycling breakthroughs (February 12, 2025, [Source](#)) – Two European startups, British-based Altilium and Germany's tozero, have announced significant advancements in recycling electric vehicle (EV) battery materials. Altilium's collaboration with London's Imperial College demonstrated that small batteries using its recycled cathode active materials perform comparably or better than those using new materials from Chinese suppliers. The company, supported by investors like Sociedad Quimica y Minera de Chile (SQM) and Marubeni, is working with Tata Motors on EV battery cells made with recycled materials from old Jaguar i-Pace EVs. Meanwhile, tozero is developing a pilot plant to recycle graphite using a "net zero" emissions process, and plans

to supply major automakers. By 2027, tozero aims to produce about 2,000 tonnes of recycled graphite annually, enough for 50,000 EVs.

US Treasury Secretary to visit Ukraine for talks on energy, rare earth minerals (February 11, 2025, [Source](#)) – U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent is set to visit Ukraine to discuss American access to Ukrainian natural resources, including rare earths, energy resources, and state-owned enterprises. This marks Bessent's visit as the first by a cabinet-level official in Trump's administration. The discussions aim to secure a pact where the U.S. would receive rare earths from Ukraine in return for continued support against Russia. U.S. National Security Adviser Mike Waltz highlighted the intention to partner with Ukraine on their natural resources to recoup costs associated with supporting Ukraine's war efforts. The trip coincides with other U.S. officials visiting Europe to discuss the Ukraine war, with Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Vice President JD Vance among those meeting with European allies.

Australia passes tax incentives law for critical minerals (February 11, 2025, [Source](#)) – Australia's parliament has approved new laws providing production tax breaks for critical minerals and renewable hydrogen, supporting the country's net zero emissions goal by 2050 and reducing reliance on China. The legislation, enacted on Tuesday, offers tax incentives amounting to 10% of processing and refining costs for 31 critical minerals from the fiscal year 2028 to 2040, for a maximum of 10 years per project. Additionally, the law introduces a tax incentive of A\$2 per kilogram for produced renewable hydrogen.

Uranium ban repeal in Greenland could revive massive rare earth project, licence holder says (February 11, 2025, [Source](#)) – The Kvanefjeld deposit in Greenland, owned by Energy Transition Minerals Ltd. (ASX: ETM), might see a revival if the upcoming

government repeals the uranium mining ban after the election. Previously halted by the Inuit Ataqatigiit party's environmental concerns and proximity to populous areas, its development could restart under a new administration. Despite local opposition and a current ban on extracting from uranium-rich deposits, the upcoming election could change the legal landscape, with the Siumut party open to uranium byproduct mining.

Trump raises tariffs on aluminum, steel imports in latest trade war salvo (February 11, 2025, [Source](#)) – U.S. President Donald Trump escalated his trade policies by significantly increasing tariffs on steel and aluminum imports to 25%, effective March 4, affecting products from Canada, Brazil, Mexico, South Korea, and others previously exempt. These proclamations, extending Trump's 2018 Section 232 tariffs aimed at protecting domestic industries, remove all country-specific exceptions and product-specific exclusions. This move aims to bolster American steel and aluminum sectors but may provoke retaliatory measures from affected nations. Trump's administration also introduced stricter regional requirements for steel and aluminum processing to limit the entry of minimally processed metals from China and Russia. Trump indicated plans to pursue reciprocal tariffs on other imports and did not express concern over potential foreign retaliation.

Ford CEO says 25% tariff on Canada, Mexico would 'blow a hole' in US auto industry (February 11, 2025, [Source](#)) – Ford CEO Jim Farley warned that President Trump's proposed 25% tariffs on imports from Canada and Mexico could severely damage the U.S. auto industry, providing a significant advantage to competitors from South Korea, Japan, and Europe. Speaking at the Wolfe Research Auto Conference in New York, Farley expressed concerns about the timing of these tariffs, especially during the industry's shift to electric vehicles and increased competition from Chinese automakers. He highlighted that such tariffs would

disproportionately benefit foreign manufacturers who export millions of vehicles to the U.S. that wouldn't face these tariffs. Farley's comments come ahead of a scheduled trip to Washington to discuss the potential impacts of these tariffs with Congress.

US copper price premium soars to record after Trump tariff moves (February 10, 2025, [Source](#)) – The U.S. copper price premium soared to a record high after President Donald Trump advanced his tariff agenda on industrial metals. On Monday, the premium for U.S. Comex copper futures over the London Metal Exchange options jumped to \$920 per metric ton, a significant increase from \$558 on the previous Friday. This escalation occurred as Trump prepared to impose a new 25% tariff on all steel and aluminum imports, adding to existing metal duties. Trump had also recently announced plans to levy tariffs on copper.

Novare to establish R1.8bn Africa's first rare earth refining facility with US firm (February 10, 2025, [Source](#)) – South African asset manager, Novare, has partnered with ReElement Technologies Corporation, a subsidiary of NASDAQ-listed American Resources Corporation (NASDAQ: AREC), to establish a R1.8 billion refining facility for rare earths in Africa. This marks Africa's first such facility, set to start construction in the second half of 2025. It aims to boost the battery and defense industries in Africa and North America. Novare will lead the project's capital investment and operational management, while also aiming to enhance Africa's stake in the global critical minerals supply chain.

Australia's Global Lithium seeks government help, alleging Chinese control attempt (February 9, 2025, [Source](#)) – Australia's Global Lithium Resources Limited (ASX: GL1) is seeking government intervention to block a takeover attempt by Chinese investors of its Manna lithium project. After the Takeovers

Panel refused to review claims of an unlawful association among China-linked shareholders, the company appealed to the Australian treasurer for help. The treasurer could prevent these shareholders from voting at the upcoming meeting. This situation is a challenge for a government eager to foster critical minerals projects without straining ties with China, its major customer. Global Lithium halted its project development due to market downturns and alleges that director Dianmin Chen, alongside other investors, aims to seize board control. The company has urged shareholders to reject these moves, arguing they may violate national takeover laws. The issue remains under regulatory review, with no comments from involved parties due to confidentiality.

Investors fear Chinese mine restart puts lithium resurgence in danger (February 9, 2025, [Source](#)) – CATL, a major electric vehicle battery manufacturer, is resuming lithium mining at its significant Jiangxi mine in China, stirring fears of an oversupply in a market already struggling with low prices. UBS analysts, who initially reported CATL's suspension last year, confirmed the restart, citing the Shanghai Metals Market. The Jiangxi mine, contributing around 5% to the global lithium supply, had boosted MinRes shares by over 20% when its closure was announced.

The upcoming **CMI Summit IV**, themed *The War for Critical Minerals and Capital Resources*, is scheduled to take place in Toronto, Ontario, on May 13-14, 2025. This event aims to unite industry leaders to tackle pressing issues in the global critical minerals market. To learn more about the **CMI Summit IV**, [click here](#) – or to secure a **CMI Summit IV** 2-day Delegates Pass, [click here](#)

The War for Critical Minerals and Capital Resources



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May 13-14, 2025**