Technology Metals Report (03.07.2025): Critical Minerals in a New World Order

written by Tracy Hughes | March 7, 2025

Critical minerals are becoming pivotal in geopolitical dynamics, particularly in the context of the Ukraine-US-Russian peace talks, and the new Canada-U.S. trade war. Amid global supply chain challenges dominated by China, critical minerals are now diplomatic tools influencing negotiations, highlighted by recent U.S.-Ukraine discussions. Experts suggest that Canada could strategically leverage its critical mineral resources for trade concessions, fostering North American independence from adversarial suppliers. Concurrently, Ontario Premier Doug Ford has threatened to halt nickel and electricity shipments to the U.S., signaling heightened tensions and potential retaliatory measures as the trade conflict intensifies.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has reached out to the United States proposing a strategic alliance to counter Chinese dominance in its mining sector. Congo's offer includes exclusive access to essential minerals like cobalt, lithium, tantalum, and uranium, critical for the global energy transition and technological advancement, in exchange for U.S. military support against a Rwanda-backed rebellion. This initiative aims to fortify U.S. supply chains, secure economic interests, and enhance geopolitical influence in Africa, underscoring minerals' growing significance in international diplomacy.

PDAC 2025 has emerged as a significant event, marking a turning point for critical mineral investment and global industry collaboration. Attracting heightened attention from Silicon Valley and a younger demographic, PDAC has become central to

discussions on essential critical minerals like copper, rare earths, nickel, lithium and graphite. Influential industry figures emphasized the importance of investment-friendly policies and strategic positioning to capitalize on rising global demand. Notably, Canada announced the extension of its Mineral Exploration Tax Credit, reinforcing its commitment to attracting sustained investment into exploration and development.

In major corporate developments, Rio Tinto PLC (NYSE: RIO | ASX: RIO | LSE: RIO) completed its $6.7 billion acquisition of Arcadium Lithium PLC (NYSE: ALTM | ASX: LTM), positioning itself as a leader in lithium production critical to the global energy transition. This acquisition aligns with Rio Tinto's ambitious target to significantly expand lithium production by 2028. Meanwhile, Lithium Americas Corp. (TSX: LAC | NYSE: LAC) secured a strategic $250 million investment from Orion Resource Partners LP for its Thacker Pass lithium project, ensuring full funding for its initial construction phase. Additionally, copper and aluminum markets experienced significant volatility following announcements of new U.S. tariffs, reflecting ongoing market disruptions linked to broader trade conflicts.

CMI	Critical Minerals Institute						
Purity			06.Mar.25	Month % Change	28.Feb.25	Year to Date % Change	Year End 31.Dec.24
	ALUMINUM (Al)	$ USD/ lb.	**$1.21**	2.5%	$1.19	4.2%	$1.16
99.65% fob China	ANTIMONY (Sb)	$ USD/ tn	**$30,436**	0.0%	$30,436	0.0%	$30,436
	COBALT (Co)	$ USD/ lb.	**$11.65**	8.6%	$11.65	4.1%	$11.19
	COPPER (Cu)	$ USD/ lb.	**$7.10**	75.4%	$4.26	81.0%	$3.92
>99.99%	GALLIUM (Ga)	$ USD/ lb.	**$134.2**	0.0%	$134.2	0.0%	$134.2
	GOLD (Au)	$ USD/ oz.	**$2,916.8**	3.5%	$2,848.2	11.1%	$2,624.6
	NATURAL GRAPHITE North America (C)	$ USD/ lb.	**$0.57**	0.0%	$0.57	0.0%	$0.57
>99%	LITHIUM METAL (Li)	$ USD/ lb.	**$4.62**	-5.4%	$4.62	-6.5%	$4.94
>99%	PRAESODYMIUM (Pr)	$ USD/ kg.	**$87.09**	6.2%	$87.09	10.3%	$78.98
>99.5%	NEODYMIUM (Nd)	$ USD/ kg.	**$81.30**	9.7%	$81.30	13.1%	$71.90
	NICKEL (Ni)	$ USD/ lb.	**$1.28**	-81.2%	$7.10	-81.3%	$6.85
0.999	NIOBIUM PENTOXIDE (Nb_2O_5)	$ USD/ kg.	**$45.00**	0.0%	$45.00	0.0%	$45.00
	PLATINUM (Pt)	$ USD/ oz.	**$950.30**	-1.8%	$919.71	4.8%	$906.76
	SILVER (Ag)	$ USD/ oz.	**$32.66**	3.6%	$31.06	13.0%	$28.89

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

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PDAC 2025 Sparks New Era for Critical Minerals, Investment, and Global Collaboration (March 6, 2025, Source) PDAC 2025 marked a significant shift in the critical minerals sector, showcasing unprecedented energy and participation from Silicon Valley investors and a younger demographic. Tracy Hughes of the Critical Minerals Institute highlighted PDAC's evolution into a key global platform for resource industry collaboration. The event featured vibrant discussions on essential minerals like gold, copper, and rare earths, with strong advocacy for investment and branding changes led by influential figures such as Dr. Doris Hiam-Galvez. Additionally, the successful petition for the extension of the Mineral Exploration Tax Credit underscored a crucial legislative achievement for the industry. The event also shone a spotlight on geopolitical issues, particularly emphasizing the strategic importance of critical minerals in global economic and security strategies.

Why critical minerals are a bargaining chip in the Canada-U.S. trade war (March 6, 2025, Source) Critical minerals are emerging as vital assets in the trade dynamics between Canada and the U.S., especially against a backdrop of global supply chain challenges dominated by China. As industries increasingly depend on these minerals for advanced technologies, their strategic importance is accentuated. Recent talks between the U.S. and Ukraine highlight their use as diplomatic leverage. Despite tensions, such as the U.S. imposing tariffs on Canadian goods by President Trump, experts suggest that cooperative strategies could better secure supply chains. Proposals include Canada leveraging its critical mineral resources to gain concessions in

the ongoing trade war, enhancing North American production, and reducing reliance on adversarial sources like China.

Rio Tinto completes acquisition of Arcadium Lithium (March 6, 2025, Source) Rio Tinto (NYSE: RIO | ASX: RIO | LSE: RIO) has finalized its acquisition of Arcadium Lithium PLC (NYSE: ALTM | ASX: LTM) for $6.7 billion, sanctioned by the Royal Court of Jersey. This deal makes Rio Tinto the parent company of Arcadium Lithium, which will now operate under the name Rio Tinto Lithium, incorporating the Rincon lithium project. The acquisition positions Rio Tinto as a leading supplier in energy transition materials and a major lithium producer, planning to expand its lithium production to over 200 thousand tonnes annually by 2028. The merger aims to leverage synergies in technology and geographic reach to boost profitability and market share. Arcadium Lithium's shares and CDIs will be delisted from the NYSE and ASX following the transaction.

US Copper Prices Surge as Trump Signals 25% Tariff on Imports (March 5, 2025, Source) Copper prices in the U.S. rose over 5% after President Donald Trump suggested a 25% tariff on imports during a speech to Congress. This announcement follows a Commerce Department investigation into copper tariffs for national security reasons, potentially leading to higher U.S. prices compared to global benchmarks. The hint of swift tariff implementation spurred a significant rally in Comex copper prices and a smaller surge in London Metal Exchange prices. Traders and manufacturers are now rushing to acquire copper ahead of the tariffs, causing a spike in U.S. copper inventories and international trading activities.

Trump's tariffs drive US physical market aluminium premiums to record high (March 5, 2025, Source) U.S. aluminium premiums have reached a record high, largely influenced by President Trump's plan to reimpose a 25% tariff on aluminium imports starting

March 12. This tariff affects imports from several countries, including Mexico, Canada, the EU, and the UK. As a result, the U.S. Midwest duty-paid aluminium premium has surged nearly 60% since the beginning of 2025, now exceeding 40 cents per lb, or about $900 per metric ton. Market dynamics suggest these costs will likely be passed to consumers, potentially redirecting aluminium supplies away from the U.S. to regions like Europe, where premiums are currently at an 11-month low.

Trump grants one-month exemption for US automakers from new tariffs on imports from Mexico, Canada (March 5, 2025, Source) President Donald Trump has granted a one-month exemption to U.S. automakers from the new tariffs on imports from Mexico and Canada. This decision follows discussions with leaders from Ford, General Motors, and Stellantis. Trump advised these automakers to increase domestic investments and production to avoid future tariffs. The tariffs were originally imposed with broad goals such as reducing illegal immigration and the trade gap. In response, Canada and other nations have announced retaliatory measures. The temporary relief from the 25% taxes on autos and auto parts only delays a more significant economic confrontation scheduled for April 2, when broader reciprocal tariffs are expected.

Lithium Americas Announces $250 Million Strategic Investment from Orion Resource Partners for Thacker Pass (March 5, 2025, Source) Lithium Americas Corp. (TSX: LAC | NYSE: LAC) has secured a $250 million investment from Orion Resource Partners for the development of Phase 1 of the Thacker Pass lithium project in Nevada. This investment comprises $195 million in convertible notes and a $25 million production payment agreement, with an additional $30 million in notes available upon request. This strategic partnership is expected to fully fund the project and corporate needs through the construction phase, targeted for completion in late 2027. The deal, which

includes potential future financial support for Phase 2, is set to close the week of March 10, 2025, pending certain conditions.

Congo Courts Trump for Strategic Minerals Tie-Up as War Looms (March 4, 2025, Source) The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has proposed to the United States a strategic alliance, offering exclusive access to its critical minerals in return for security support against a Rwanda-backed rebellion. In an urgent request for a meeting between Presidents Felix Tshisekedi and Donald Trump, outlined in a letter to Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Congo seeks to provide American firms with rights to cobalt, lithium, tantalum, and uranium, crucial for the energy sector. This bid aims to establish a secure US supply chain and strengthen economic ties while distancing from Chinese dominance in Congo's mining sector. The proposal also includes military support and training in exchange for operational control and extraction rights for US companies.

Doug Ford threatens to stop nickel shipments to U.S. on eve of trade war (March 3, 2025, Source) Ontario Premier Doug Ford is considering halting nickel and electricity shipments to the U.S. in response to impending 25% tariffs on Canadian goods. In an NBC News NOW interview, he warned of severe repercussions, stating that Ontario could cut off supplies critical to U.S. manufacturing and energy needs. Ford described the tariffs as disastrous for both nations, potentially affecting millions of residents and businesses. He also threatened broader economic retaliations, including removing U.S. products from Canadian shelves and canceling contracts with U.S. companies. This move aligns with Canada's broader strategy to implement retaliatory tariffs if necessary.

Toronto exchange's mining dominance under threat as explorers exit (March 3, 2025, Source) Toronto's status as a leading global mining center is being challenged as exploration

companies depart from Canada, reducing the number of listings on the nation's resource-heavy stock exchange. Industry consolidation, stricter government regulations on foreign investment, and the shifting focus of investment from resource-specific funds to larger, more passive ones are contributing to this decline. Notable firms, including Barrick Gold Corp., are contemplating relocating abroad, influenced by the increasing attractiveness of other financial markets like New York, which continues to grow as a hub for gold equities. This trend is exacerbated by a decrease in initial public offerings and a long-term financing drought in the sector, prompting some companies to seek funding from foreign investors, particularly Chinese, as local options dwindle.

Canada to extend mineral exploration tax credit for two more years, minister says (March 3, 2025, Source) Canada will extend its mineral exploration tax credit for an additional two years to support investment in mining projects, announced Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson. The tax credit, which offers a 15% rebate to investors in smaller mining companies' flow-through shares, was due to expire on March 31. This extension aims to provide the mining sector, particularly junior companies, with essential capital-raising tools and reduce reliance on Chinese state investments. The extension is expected to inject C$110 million into mineral exploration, bolstering the sector's ability to raise capital efficiently.

Investor.News Media Highlights

- March 06, 2025 – PDAC 2025 Sparks New Era for Critical Minerals, Investment, and Global Collaboration https://bit.ly/3Xrsx5i
- March 04, 2025 – How a capital gain increase nearly wounded our junior mining industry https://bit.ly/3F3BSKa

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- March 6, 2025 – Nano One Provides Update on Technology Leadership https://bit.ly/4i4Jj25
- March 5, 2025 – PDAC 2025 Draws 27,353 Participants to Toronto https://bit.ly/43sFG1B
- March 5, 2025 – Scandium Canada Announces a Private Placement of Convertible Debentures https://bit.ly/43mWF5q
- March 4, 2025 – Voyageur Pharmaceuticals Advances Frances Creek Project, Paving the Way for a Secure, Vertically Integrated Barium Contrast Product Line https://bit.ly/3XvQx7k
- March 3, 2025 – Voyageur Clarifies Terms of Previously Announced Agreement https://bit.ly/3DfELa9
- March 3, 2025 – Nano One Announces Closing of Agreement to Sell and Lease Back Its Candiac Building and Property https://bit.ly/4ijaKVK

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

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