Technology Metals Report (04.28.2025): Markets Attempt to Follow the Road to Resource Nationalism

written by Tracy Hughes | April 28, 2025

Canadian markets are anticipated to open flat to slightly lower, reflecting investor caution ahead of a tightly contested general election, with ongoing developments in U.S. trade policy also influencing sentiment. Meanwhile, U.S. stock index futures edged marginally lower as traders brace for significant economic data releases and earnings reports from leading corporations. In Europe, stocks advanced slightly, with investors optimistic about potential easing in tariff tensions, whereas in Asia, Japan's Nikkei marked its fourth consecutive rise, driven by automobile shares. In contrast, markets in China and Hong Kong consolidated as Beijing committed to stabilizing capital markets without introducing new stimulus measures in response to escalating U.S. tariffs.

Geopolitical and economic tensions in the critical minerals sector continue to intensify. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has proposed a novel "minerals-for-security" arrangement with the U.S., offering access to its vast cobalt and copper reserves in return for security assistance. This initiative seeks to reduce the DRC's dependency on Chinese investments; however, concerns about security stability and the risk appetite of U.S. investors present significant challenges. Simultaneously, President Trump has actively pushed to enhance U.S. self-reliance by signing an executive order accelerating deep-sea mining permits, aimed at extracting nickel and copper.

Despite potential economic gains, environmental concerns and international regulatory uncertainties persist.

The U.S. administration continues its strategic response to China's dominance in critical minerals by considering investments in mining and processing firms, alongside establishing a national mineral stockpile. Moreover, the White House has initiated a Section 232 investigation into imports of processed minerals, assessing potential threats to national security and economic stability. In corporate developments, ExxonMobil gained regulatory approval to develop a substantial lithium production facility in Arkansas, signaling growing competition among major energy firms to secure domestic lithium supplies.

Internationally, China's assertive stance on rare earth exports has prompted concern among key industries, notably automotive manufacturers anticipating shortages in critical components. This situation has led U.S. producer MP Materials to halt shipments to China amid steep retaliatory tariffs, prompting a shift toward domestic processing capabilities. Additionally, Chile has approved a strategic joint venture between state-owned Codelco and SQM to significantly expand lithium production, aligning with efforts to enhance state control and mitigate reliance on foreign entities. These collective developments highlight an increasingly complex interplay of economics, geopolitics, and resource nationalism in the global critical minerals landscape.

Could US-DR Congo 'minerals-for-security' deal threaten China's mining dominance? (April 27, 2025, Source) – The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is proposing a "minerals-for-security" deal with the United States, offering access to its rich reserves of cobalt, copper, and other critical minerals in exchange for security guarantees and military support. The deal

aims to curb violence in the DRC's east, attract American investment, and reduce reliance on China's mining dominance. However, significant challenges remain, including the DRC's unstable security environment, the reluctance of American companies to invest due to high risks, and China's control over mineral processing. Experts note that substantial U.S. government backing would be necessary to incentivize investment and create a secure environment for sustained American engagement.

Trump signs executive order boosting deep-sea mining industry (April 24, 2025, Source) – President Trump signed an executive order aimed at boosting the U.S. deep-sea mining industry, accelerating permit approvals to extract critical minerals such as nickel and copper from seabed nodules in domestic and international waters. Over 1 billion metric tons of these minerals lie within U.S. waters, potentially increasing GDP by $300 billion and creating 100,000 jobs. The order, intended to counter China's dominance, faces environmental opposition over ecological risks. The Metals Company's shares surged following the announcement, while environmental groups condemned potential biodiversity impacts. The move may also create international friction due to unresolved global regulatory standards.

Trump aims to fight China's control of minerals by investing in miners (April 24, 2025, Source) – The Trump administration is exploring investments in companies that mine and process critical minerals to reduce U.S. reliance on China, according to Interior Secretary Doug Burgum. Proposed measures include direct equity investments, a sovereign risk insurance fund to protect approved projects, and the creation of a U.S. mineral stockpile akin to the strategic petroleum reserve. Burgum emphasized that China's market dominance, including recent rare earth export controls and price dumping, has hindered U.S. competitiveness. The U.S. imported 80% of its rare earths in 2024, with 70% of

that coming from China in 2023.

Chile regulator greenlights Codelco-SQM lithium joint venture (April 24, 2025, Source) – Chile's competition regulator approved a joint venture between state-run copper company Codelco and lithium producer SQM to expand lithium output in the Atacama salt flats. This decision follows earlier approvals from the EU, Brazil, Japan, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia, though China's regulatory approval remains pending. The venture aligns with President Gabriel Boric's strategy to increase state control of lithium resources, despite legislative opposition and legal challenges from SQM investor Tianqi. Final approval from Chile's nuclear energy regulator (CCHEN) is anticipated, with the deal expected to be fully finalized in the second half of the year.

White House Escalates Critical Minerals Drive as New Section 232 Investigation Targets National Security and Economic Resilience (April 23, 2025, Source) – On April 15, 2025, the White House announced a new executive order launching a Section 232 investigation into whether imports of processed critical minerals and derivative products threaten U.S. national security. The order directs the Commerce Secretary to assess foreign supply risks, consider trade remedies like tariffs, and recommend policies to strengthen domestic production, processing, and recycling. A final report with recommendations is due within 180 days. This follows a March 20 order aimed at boosting domestic mineral output through regulatory easing and Defense Production Act funding, amid rising concerns over China's dominance in critical mineral supply chains.

ExxonMobil edges Occidental in US lithium race (April 23, 2025, Source) – ExxonMobil has secured regulatory approval to establish a 56,000-acre lithium production unit in Arkansas' Smackover formation, overcoming objections from Occidental

Petroleum, which claimed mineral rights in the area. The decision marks a key moment in the intensifying competition among oil majors—including Exxon, Occidental, and Equinor—to develop lithium extraction in the U.S. amid efforts to reduce reliance on Chinese supplies. The Smackover formation may contain up to 19 million tonnes of lithium, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. Exxon subsidiary Saltwerx plans to start production by 2028, while SWA Lithium, a joint venture between Standard Lithium Ltd. (TSXV: SLI | NYSE American: SLI) and Equinor ASA (NYSE: EQNR), also received approval for a separate unit.

China asks Korea not to supply products using rare earths to US defence firms, paper reports (April 22, 2025, Source) – China has reportedly asked South Korean companies not to export products containing Chinese rare earths to U.S. defense firms, according to the Korea Economic Daily, which later clarified that the message came from the Chinese government, not the Ministry of Commerce. South Korea's industry ministry is verifying the claim, stating no official letter has been confirmed so far. This follows China's recent export restrictions on rare earths, requiring licensing through a lengthy and opaque process. South Korea holds over six months' supply of key restricted rare earths and will meet U.S. officials this week to discuss tariffs.

US investor Cameron offers $5 billion for Kazakh mining giant, ERG says no sale talks (April 21, 2025, Source) – U.S. investor James Cameron has offered $5 billion to acquire mining giant Eurasian Resources Group (ERG), but ERG stated it is not engaged in any sale talks. ERG, 40%-owned by Kazakhstan, is expanding into rare earth minerals amid increased U.S. interest due to trade tensions with China. Cameron indicated funding would involve his own resources and international investors, with Goldman Sachs potentially advising. ERG previously produced

significant gallium, ceased after China's increased output. Kazakhstan recently announced a large rare earth deposit discovery, aiming to boost output 40% by 2028, positioning it among global leaders in rare earth reserves.

China's rare earths controls prompt fears of auto shortages and shutdowns (April 20, 2025, Source) – China's new export controls on rare earth elements—especially heavy and medium rare earths like dysprosium, terbium, and samarium—are raising concerns of imminent shortages in the global automotive industry. These elements are essential for high-performance magnets used in EVs, wind turbines, and military applications. The restrictions, a response to U.S. tariffs, have already led to force majeure declarations and halted shipments. With current stockpiles expected to last only two to six months, automakers are scrambling to secure supplies. Japan and others are looking to Lynas Rare Earths Limited (ASX: LYC) in Malaysia to mitigate the risks by mid-2025. Export license delays further cloud the outlook.

Chinese rare earth processor Shenghe sees little impact from halt to US feedstock imports (April 20, 2025, Source) – Shenghe Resources stated that its production will not be significantly affected by MP Materials' (NYSE: MP) suspension of rare earth concentrate shipments to China, citing a diversified supply chain. The halt follows China's imposition of 125% tariffs on U.S. imports in response to new U.S. tariffs. While China dominates rare earth refining, it imports some raw materials, including from MP. Shenghe noted ongoing supplies from Sichuan, other countries, and monazite. Despite declining U.S. imports—down 13.7% in 2023 and 16.9% in 2024—their offtake agreement with MP, renewed in January 2024, remains valid through 2026.

Trump to fast-track permitting for 10 mining projects across US

(April 18, 2025, Source) – The White House announced plans to fast-track permitting for 10 U.S. mining projects under the FAST-41 initiative to accelerate critical mineral production. The selected projects include copper, antimony, lithium, and metallurgical coal operations across states like Idaho, Arizona, Montana, Nevada, Arkansas, and Alabama. Companies involved include Perpetua Resources, Rio Tinto, Hecla Mining, Albemarle, Standard Lithium, and Warrior Met Coal. The projects' progress can be publicly tracked online to promote transparency. This initiative aligns with President Trump's broader strategy to enhance domestic supply chains and follows his recent directive to investigate new tariffs on critical mineral imports.

MP Materials stops sending US rare earths to China amid Beijing's tariffs (April 17, 2025, Source) – MP Materials, operator of the only U.S. rare earths mine, has halted shipments of minerals to China due to Beijing's 125% tariffs imposed in retaliation against U.S. levies, significantly impacting its revenues. MP previously relied heavily on Chinese partners like Shenghe Resources for processing, generating over 70% of its revenue from these sales. However, nearly half of MP's concentrate is now processed domestically in California. Amid this trade conflict, MP continues stockpiling minerals and expanding its U.S. processing capabilities, including developing a magnet facility in Texas. The company plans to provide further financial details on May 8.

Malaysia to gain from China's willingness to share advanced technology (April 16, 2025, Source) – Malaysia is set to significantly benefit from China's increased willingness to share advanced technologies, especially in rare earth processing, technical and vocational education (TVET), and artificial intelligence. Foreign Minister Mohamad Hasan noted China's shift from previously protective stances, highlighting President Xi Jinping's openness during his recent state visit.

China is offering technology transfers enabling Malaysia to domestically process rare earths, potentially increasing their value 10 to 15 times. Hasan emphasized the importance of state-federal collaboration for sustainable exploitation and underlined enhanced cooperation between Malaysia, ASEAN, and China to strengthen economic opportunities amid current geopolitical and trade challenges.

The Mine Is American. The Minerals Are China's. (April 16, 2025, Source) – A Brazilian rare earths mine backed by American investors highlights China's dominance over critical minerals essential for modern technology, defense, and renewable energy. Serra Verde, the only significant rare earths producer outside Asia, exports nearly all its heavy rare earths to China, due to China's unique processing capabilities. Although the U.S. seeks to finance the mine's expansion amid intensifying trade tensions, China has secured contracts for Serra Verde's output until at least 2027. Western nations, lacking adequate processing facilities, are struggling to diversify rare earth sources, underscoring their heavy reliance on China for strategic minerals.

President Trump Unleashes Permitting Technology for the 21st Century (April 15, 2025, Source) – President Trump signed a Presidential Memorandum directing the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) to modernize federal environmental review and permitting processes using advanced technology. The plan aims to digitize permit applications, expedite reviews, enhance interagency coordination, and provide greater transparency and predictability for project sponsors. Agencies will also share information with state and tribal officials. Leaders from the Departments of Interior, Energy, Agriculture, Transportation, and the EPA praised the action, emphasizing that faster, tech-driven permitting will boost infrastructure development, energy dominance, agricultural production, and economic growth while

maintaining environmental standards.

InvestorNews.com Media Highlights

- Pat Ryan of Ucore Rare Metals Inc. to Deliver High-Impact Keynote Address on “Critical Minerals, Tariffs, and Collaboration: Fueling North American Independence” at CMI Summit IV https://bit.ly/3EzZrdG
- April 24, 2025 – Feisal Somji of Sio Silica Corporation to Spotlight Silica’s Critical Role in North American Security at CMI Summit IV https://bit.ly/4m0lj2O
- April 24, 2025 – Kendra Johnston of PearTree Canada to Spotlight Structured Flow-Through Financing as Canada’s Competitive Edge for Critical Mineral Investments at CMI Summit IV https://bit.ly/42Kt3gy
- April 23, 2025 – Home-grown barite aims to shake up the medical-imaging supply chain https://bit.ly/4cKplrB
- April 23, 2025 – White House Escalates Critical Minerals Drive as New Section 232 Investigation Targets National Security and Economic Resilience https://bit.ly/4ihJpmg
- April 15, 2025 – Power Metallic Mines CEO Terry Lynch to Deliver Keynote Address on “Tariffs and the Strategic Future of North American Critical Minerals” at CMI Summit IV https://bit.ly/4cBUVYP
- April 13, 2025 – CMI Unveils Critical Minerals List 2025, Urging International Collaboration for Unified Global Response to Supply Chain Risks https://bit.ly/3Rg4W3T
- April 11, 2025 – CVMR Set to Revolutionize Albania’s Industrial Landscape with Country’s First Environmentally-Neutral Nickel Refinery https://bit.ly/4idGXgO

InvestorNews.com Video Highlights

- April 16, 2025 – Ucore CEO Pat Ryan Warns of Geopolitical Risks and Urges North American Collaboration on Critical Rare Earth Supply Chains in Interview with Jack Lifton https://youtu.be/OcU3FYxUp6I

InvestorNews.com Member News

- April 24, 2025 – Energy Fuels Announces Call Details for Q1-2025 Earnings https://bit.ly/3S5NPSE
- April 24, 2025 – Nano One 2025 Annual General Meeting of Shareholders https://bit.ly/44HT16P
- April 23, 2025 – Voyageur Launches Market Introduction of Barium Contrast Product Line Following Successful Clinical Study Results https://bit.ly/4lJaa6e
- April 22, 2025 – ArcStone and Kingswood Announce Growth Summit 2025 at The St. Regis Toronto for Growth Companies https://bit.ly/4lIenqS
- April 17, 2025 – U.S.-Based Energy Fuels Poised to Produce Six of the Seven Rare Earth Oxides Now Subject to Chinese Export Controls at Scale https://bit.ly/3YIX5jp
- April 17, 2025 – Media Advisory – Neo Performance Materials Inc. First Quarter 2025 Earnings Release & Webcast https://bit.ly/4jIdlcG
- April 17, 2025 – Power Metallic Expands the Tiger Zone – First Indications of Lion Style Copper Dominant Mineralization at Tiger https://bit.ly/4jALFpW
- April 15, 2025 – Meteoric Resources NL: Maiden Barra do Pacu Resource adds strategic high-grade rare earths https://bit.ly/3Y1AfDo
- April 14, 2025 – Ucore Corporate Update

https://bit.ly/3RVPfit

- April 14, 2025 – ArcStone Releases Inaugural Report on Revolve Renewable Power Corp. https://bit.ly/43NSBLO
- April 14, 2025 – Western Uranium & Vanadium Corp. Announces Ore Purchase Agreement https://bit.ly/4ikzOeK

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

