



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on October 1, 2020

Trump Declares National Emergency as China Monopolizes Rare Earth Elements

The day after debating Joe Biden in his bid for another four years in the White House, President Trump [declared a national emergency](#). It concerns the virtual monopoly the communists running China have gained over an obscure but vitally necessary group of 17 minerals called “rare earth elements,” or REEs. They are used to build a wide range of products, both consumer and military.

There is no known substitute for them, and China controls most of their production.

In his Executive Order, the president said, “I, Donald J. Trump, President of the United States of America, find that a strong America cannot be dependent on imports from foreign adversaries for the critical minerals that are increasingly necessary to maintain our economic and military strength in the 21st century.”

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It is now national policy “to reduce the Nation’s vulnerability to disruptions in the supply of critical minerals.” He warned: “Our dependence on one country, the People’s Republic of China (China), for multiple critical minerals is particularly concerning. The United States now imports 80 percent of its rare earth elements directly from China, with portions of the remainder indirectly sourced from China through other countries.”

His executive order detailed how important just three of the REEs are to the United States:

The United States also disproportionately depends on foreign sources for barite. The United States imports over 75 percent of the barite it consumes, and over 50 percent of its barite imports come from China. Barite is of critical importance to the hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) industry, which is vital to the energy independence of the United States.

The United States depends on foreign sources for 100 percent of its gallium, with China producing around 95 percent of the global supply. Gallium-based semiconductors are indispensable for cellphones, blue and violet light-emitting diodes (LEDs), diode lasers, and fifth-generation (5G) telecommunications.

Like for gallium, the United States is 100 percent reliant on imports for graphite, which is used to make advanced batteries for cellphones, laptops, and hybrid and electric cars. China produces over 60 percent of the world’s graphite and almost all of the world’s production of



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high-purity graphite needed for rechargeable batteries.

He declared the nation's dependence upon China a national emergency:

I therefore determine that our Nation's undue reliance on critical minerals, in processed or unprocessed form, from foreign adversaries constitutes an unusual and extraordinary threat, which has its source in substantial part outside the United States, to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States.

I hereby declare a national emergency to deal with that threat.

That threat has been building for years and has been largely ignored by previous administrations. According to China scholar and co-founder of the strategic consulting firm Horizon Advisory Emily de La Bruyere, China has taken advantage of the COVID virus crisis to promote its takeover of world production of those 17 critical elements.

She explained:

The PRC [People's Republic of China] has been focused on rare earths for as long as [the industry] has existed. Chinese sources explicitly treat rare earths as tools of power — and coercion — in today's globalized industrial system.

This orientation rests on China's military-civil fusion strategy: Beijing weaponizes integration into open, cooperative global systems for offensive ends.

In a White House press release issued Wednesday, the president said, "Though these minerals are indispensable to our country, we presently lack the capacity to produce them in processed form in the quantities we need.... We must reduce our vulnerability to adverse foreign government action.... Our national security, foreign policy, and economy require a consistent supply of each of these minerals."

Accordingly, his executive order urges department heads of all executive offices to start reducing regulatory requirements and licensing restrictions on American mining companies. In addition, the order is offering federal financial assistance to those companies to expand local production and processing of those REEs.

The United States is late to the game, said Joe Bryan, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council Global Energy Center. In the race for control of REEs, "the United States is getting lapped" by the communists running China. President Trump's order is needed now more than ever.



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