



## USA includes IMs in critical resource list – WikiLeaks

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### Bauxite, chromite, graphite, manganese & rare earths on leaked US security list

Several industrial minerals resources were included in a leaked US diplomatic cable detailing key overseas resources “whose loss could critically impact the public health, economic security and/or national and homeland security of the USA”, whistle-blowing website WikiLeaks has revealed.

According to the US State Department cable sent on 18 February 2009, the aim of this survey was to compile the critical infrastructures and key resources in order “to prevent, deter, neutralise or mitigate the effects of deliberate efforts by terrorists to destroy, incapacitate or exploit them”.

The State Department provided in the cable the Critical Foreign Dependencies Initiative (CFDI) list of key resources created in 2008, and expected to be updated by the 2009 survey.

In addition to communications, ports, and firms of strategic importance, the list details deposits of strategic industrial minerals all over the world.

The main minerals listed included: bauxite from Guinea; chromite from India, Kazakhstan, and South Africa; graphite from China, Canada and Mexico; fluorspar from China; manganese from Australia, Gabon and the Ukraine; and rare earths from China.

### Rare earths

It comes as no surprise that **rare earths** were included in the US list of key resources as they are critical to environmental, defence technologies, and high-tech products.

They are used in a wide variety of applications including high-strength magnets, lasers, glass polishing, phosphors and colouring,

Global production has been increasingly dominated by China, which now accounts for over 95% of global output.

In November this year, China **resumed shipments** of rare earths to Japan after a two-month ‘unofficial ban’ on exports to the country.

Another confidential US cable released by WikiLeaks also revealed that the governor of Afghanistan’s Ghazni province, Usman Usmani, has been accused of running a **chromite smuggling operation** into Pakistan from several districts in the region.

Governor Usmani is alleged to have transported chromite – from mines in Zanakhan district, and Logar and Wardak provinces – via his personal security force to avoid inspection at Highway One checkpoints into neighbouring Pakistan.