



## EDITORIAL: INDIAN EXPRESS

**GENERAL STUDIES 2: INTERNATIONAL RELATION**

**DATE: 27.02.2025**

**TOPIC: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests**

**Framework for rare earth minerals deal with US in place but no security guarantee: Zelenskyy**

**Ukraine's Critical Minerals and Its Role in Resolving the Russia-Ukraine War**

**Ukraine's Offer and Its Global Impact**

- Ukraine is offering the U.S. access to its **critical mineral resources** as part of a potential peace deal.
- This could **influence the resolution** of the Russia-Ukraine war.
- The global economy is moving towards **clean energy and advanced technologies**, making **lithium, cobalt, graphite, and rare earth elements** as valuable as oil once was.
- These minerals are essential for **electric vehicles, renewable energy, and semiconductors**.
- India must analyze its **own dependency on critical minerals** and reduce its vulnerabilities.

**Historical Comparison: Oil and Foreign Conflicts**

**1. The Role of Oil in Past U.S. Foreign Policy**

- In the **20th century**, America's military interventions were often influenced by **oil security** (e.g., First Gulf War).
- The U.S. was heavily dependent on **oil imports** and had to secure its energy supply.
- Over time, the U.S. became the **world's largest oil and gas producer**, reducing its reliance on imports.

**2. Russia's Energy Independence**

- Russia's ability to **sustain long-term conflicts** comes from its **self-sufficiency in oil, gas, and defense production**.
- **Europe's dependency on Russian energy** has made it difficult to take strong actions against Russia.
- This highlights how **energy control influences global conflicts**.

**Critical Minerals: The New Energy Battle**



## 1. What Are Critical Minerals?

- **Critical minerals are essential for economic development and national security.**
- If these minerals are concentrated in a few countries, it creates a **supply chain risk**.

## 2. The U.S. and Its Dependence on Imports

- The U.S. is **no longer dependent on oil** but is heavily reliant on **imported critical minerals**.
- **China controls around 75% of the global supply of rare earth elements**, creating a major risk for the U.S.
- If this situation was compared to the **Cold War**, it would be like the **Soviet Union controlling global oil supply**.

## 3. America's Search for Alternative Mineral Sources

- The U.S. has been looking for **new sources of critical minerals**:
  - **Trump's interest in Greenland** was driven by its mineral wealth.
  - The U.S. has also **tried strengthening ties with Canada** for resource security.
  - **Ukraine** has one-third of **Europe's lithium reserves**, along with **top graphite and rare earth deposits**.
- Securing **Ukraine's mineral resources** would help the U.S. reduce its dependence on **China**.

## The U.S.-China Technological Competition

### 1. The Race for Global Technology Leadership

- The **U.S. and China** are in a **competition for technological dominance**.
- The U.S. leads in many areas, but China has made rapid advancements in:
  - **Electric vehicles** (Tesla is the only major U.S. competitor).
  - **AI development** (China's DeepSeek project).
  - **Military technology** (sixth-generation fighter jets).

### 2. Risks of U.S. Dependence on Chinese Minerals

- If **China controls the mineral supply chain**, it can **restrict U.S. technological growth**.
- The U.S. wants to **diversify its sources** to avoid reliance on any single country.



- **Ukraine's mineral reserves** become strategically valuable because the U.S. has leverage over Kyiv due to the war.

## Lessons for India: Reducing Import Dependence

### 1. India's Need for Critical Minerals

- India is not a **major player in the U.S.-China tech race** but has **big ambitions in manufacturing**.
- India wants to expand its **electric vehicle, solar panel, and semiconductor industries**, which all require **critical minerals**.

### 2. India's High Dependency on Imports

- India's **dependency on critical mineral imports** is even greater than its past reliance on **oil**.
- While India is securing **mineral supply agreements with friendly nations**, it still lacks **domestic exploration and production**.

### 3. How India Can Reduce Its Vulnerability

- India needs to **liberalize mineral exploration** and attract **private investment** in mining.
- Many countries allow companies to **discover and monetize mineral deposits**—India should adopt this model.
- Increasing **domestic production of critical minerals** is essential for India's **long-term economic security**.

## Conclusion: The Growing Importance of Critical Minerals

- The world is shifting from an **oil-driven economy** to a **critical minerals-driven economy**.
- The U.S. recognizes that its **dependence on China for minerals** threatens its **technology and military dominance**.
- **Ukraine's mineral wealth** gives it a key role in shaping the post-war geopolitical landscape.
- **India must learn from this global shift** and work towards **securing its own mineral resources** to ensure economic stability.

Source : <https://indianexpress.com/article/world/trump-zelenskyy-us-visit-no-security-guarantee-ukraine-us-minerals-deal-9857997/>