
China 'seriously considering' restricting rare earth exports to US – Global Times chief

28/05/2019



Beijing is considering a ban on exports of rare earth metals to the US, editor-in-chief of Chinese state-linked outlet Global Times has tweeted, warning it may not be the last retaliatory move by China as the trade war escalates.

Reports that China may resort to the embargo have been circulating for weeks. If implemented, the move could be really harmful to Washington as there are almost no alternative sources for the elements that are used in a wide range of industries from high-tech to the military.

"Based on what I know, China is seriously considering restricting rare earth exports to the US. China may also take other countermeasures in the future," Hu Xijin tweeted on Tuesday.

[@HuXijin GT](#) Based on what I know, China is seriously considering restricting rare earth exports to the US. China may also take other countermeasures in the future.

The US has recently increased tariffs on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods, triggering retaliation from China. Beijing raised levies on \$60 billion of American products. However, the vital rare earth minerals have not been subjected to restrictions so far.

A routine visit by President Xi Jinping to a Chinese rare earths facility last week came amid rising tensions between the two countries and shortly after the US turned up the heat on Chinese tech giant Huawei. Despite the lack of any official announcement from Beijing, the visit has triggered fears that China is ready to use the materials, specifically a ban on their export, as

an advantage against the US.

[Also on rt.com China's other nuclear option in trade war with US – Rare earth materials](#)

Xi's visit to one of the major rare earth processing plants sent an *"unequivocal statement"* to the US, according to independent political analyst Alessandro Bruno. The analyst believes that rare earth metals, essential for the military, aerospace and electronics industries, are *"certainly weapons that China can use in its trade negotiation arsenal against Trump."*

"China controls anywhere from 85-95% of all production and supply," Bruno told RT. He stressed that US companies are highly dependent on rare earth materials and the ban *"could cripple global industry, especially emerging technologies."*

"China has many more options than the US when it comes to rare earths and rare earth chess games," the analyst concluded.

The US used to be leading rare earth producer in 1990, but the situation has changed long ago. In 2018, Beijing increased rare earths mining by 15,000 tons to 120,000 tons, while the US produced just 15,000 tons in total. China holds 44 million tons of the elements if its reserves, while the US just 1.4 million tons.
