

**NINETY-EIGHTH NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Cincinnati, Ohio
August 30, 31, September 1, 2016**

Resolution No. 33: Rare Earth Elements

Origin: Nebraska

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, Rare earth elements are a collection of 17 elements that are critical to civilian and military high technology applications: Scandium; Yttrium; Lanthanum; Cerium; Praseodymium; Neodymium; Promethium; Samarium; Europium; Gadolinium; Terbium; Dysprosium; Holmium; Erbium; Thulium; Ytterbium; and Lutetium; and

WHEREAS, Rare earth elements are distributed globally, with 36 percent of known reserves located in China, and 13 percent located in the United States; and

WHEREAS, China now produces 97 percent of the world's rare earth elements, key components in a large assortment of advanced technologies, and increasing global demand along with Chinese government reductions in export quotas over the past six years have led to international concerns about future supply shortages; and

WHEREAS, Some U.S. weapons and equipment that contain rare-earth elements are: Predator unmanned aerial vehicles, Tomahawk cruise missiles, Zumwalt-class destroyers, night vision goggles, smart bombs, and sonar transducers as well as other sophisticated military applications including guidance and control systems; advanced optics technologies; radar and radiation detection equipment; and advanced communications; and

WHEREAS, China may use its monopoly over rare earths to leverage its influence on U.S. foreign policy, and numerous analysts have expressed concerns that Chinese quota reductions will increase U.S. element dependence; and

WHEREAS, The Government Accountability Office released a report in February 2016 to Congress outlining how developing a comprehensive approach could help the Department of Defense (DoD) better manage national security risks in the supply chain; and

WHEREAS, Given that DoD's assessment of future supply and demand was based on previous estimates using 2010 data, there could be new concern for a possible rare earth material supply shortage or vulnerability that could affect national security; and

WHEREAS, Dependence on foreign sources alone for rare earths may pose a national security threat; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Cincinnati, Ohio, August 30, 31, September 1, 2016, That The American Legion urge Congress to continue to require the Department of Defense to provide regular assessments of the needs of the U.S. rare earth supply-chain for defense and require the Defense Secretary to have a long-term rare-earth supply plan in the interest of national defense.