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The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) has published a report detailing how the Department of Defense (DOD) can better manage supply chain risks for critical rare earth minerals and materials (rare earths). Rare earths are essential for many weapon systems components and other defense applications at DOD.

The report found that DOD's approach to critical minerals is fragmented, and although the agency currently lists which rare earths are critical for certain applications such as lasers or missiles, they have yet to identify a comprehensive list of which rare earths are essential for national security.

In addition to determining DOD-critical rare earths, the GAO report recommended developing a comprehensive plan for ensuring the supply of these materials. For example, most materials are currently provided from mines in China, which may pose risks for continued availability.

Sources: U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO)
