



## *Strategic Materials*

A Publication of the Defense Metals Technology Center

Issue 1: July 2010

### **What is the Strategic Materials Initiative?**

In December 2008, the Defense Metals Technology Center (DMTC) established the Strategic Materials Initiative (SMI). In recent years, numerous observers have concluded that the United States military is becoming increasingly vulnerable because of the degradation of its domestic industrial supplier base. The SMI seeks to address this challenge by highlighting the Nation's defense supply-chain vulnerability, bringing the matter to the attention of key policymakers in northeast Ohio, Washington, D.C., and elsewhere.

### **What have we learned?**

This vulnerability is particularly salient in the area of strategic metals, including titanium, cobalt, and rare earth metals employed in critical military applications, such as high performance magnets in Joint Direct Attack Munition-equipped bombs (JDAMs) and enhanced protective solutions for multiple combat vehicle platforms, including the High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV) and Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle. The issue becomes more alarming when evidence surfaces that the United States military is increasingly reliant upon some of the world's most aggressively expanding powers, including China and Russia, for the production of strategic military systems.

### **What activities has the DMTC undertaken through the SMI?**

The DMTC has engaged policymakers, industry leaders, top academicians, and media in its effort to draw increased attention to America's defense supply chain. Among these activities have been:

#### ***Strategic Materials Conferences***

In April 2009, the DMTC hosted its inaugural Strategic Materials Conference (SMC) at which more than 100 business, government, and academic leaders assessed the role of strategic metals and materials in safeguarding the national security of the United States. Two related Cen-

ters of Excellence – the National Center for Defense Machining and Manufacturing (NCDMM) of Latrobe, Pennsylvania, and DSN Innovations of Pittsburgh – co-sponsored the conference.

U.S. Representative John Boccieri (D-Ohio 16<sup>th</sup>), in which district the DMTC's offices are located, offered opening remarks, while Colonel Peter Mansoor, U.S. Army (Retired), an Iraq war veteran and professor at The Ohio State University, provided the keynote speech on the significance of strategic materials in asymmetric warfare. The conference agenda also included panels on titanium and rare earth metals as well as a Washington policy update.

So successful was the event that in February 2010, the DMTC convened its second annual SMC, which again drew over 100 participants to Cleveland. Building on the substantive discussions of the inaugural conference, the second SMC provided updates on titanium and rare earth metals and included a session on beryllium and a tour of the ArcelorMittal steel mill, which produces more than three million tons of steel annually.





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The conference also featured remarks by former U.S. Representative Ralph Regula (R-Ohio 16<sup>th</sup>), whose vision established the DMTC, and his successor Congressman Boccieri,



whose participation for a second year demonstrated his ongoing commitment to strategic materials developed and produced in *America's Metals Heartland*. The presence of these two leaders underscored the bipartisan nature of the important public policy issues the conference sought to highlight.



A third annual SMC is currently being planned for early 2011 in Washington, D.C.

### ***Strategic Sourcing Forum on Rare Earth Metals***

In November 2009, the DMTC invited a small group of leaders from industry, government, trade associations, and academia to gather in Indianapolis for a facilitated discussion to identify the practical, real world considerations for developing a coherent national policy on rare earth metals. Underlying issues that surround rare earths are:

- continuing threat to availability,
- uncertainty,
- policies surrounding military readiness,
- exportation of U.S. technology,
- low importance of the issue in the eyes of key policy makers,
- negative media.

The objective of the DMTC in convening the Forum was to continue to play its role as “honest broker” and to generate a paper, reaching consensus on what is critical to the rare earth industry, and perhaps laying out a plan of action it might undertake.

The Forum group met again in conjunction with the 2<sup>nd</sup> SMC in February 2010 and continues to engage in discussions about possible actions. The group has already had an impact on the policymaking process, with members assisting in the drafting of legislation introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives Congress, the development of a working group established by several Executive branch agencies, and the establishment of a research consortium for collaborative research in rare earth technology.

### ***Policy Briefings & Industry Site Visits***

Since the establishment of the DMTC, Executive Director Charlie Clark has engaged in an ongoing effort to inform policymakers and other stakeholders of the mission of the Center and the SMI. He and his team are regular visitors to industrial partners, including steel and titanium manufacturers and producers of high-performance magnets; Congressional and Executive branch offices, such as the Defense Logistics Agency; professional military associations, like the Reserve Officers Association of the United States; and other organizations throughout *America's Metals Heartland*.

### **For More Information**

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