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France engages in talks with Ukraine over rare earths for defense industry

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Since October 2024, France has been in discussions with Ukraine about securing key minerals for its defense industry, according to French Defense Minister Sebastien Lecornu. The talks were initiated following French President Emmanuel Macron's instructions, and the focus is on

acquiring raw materials necessary for France's weapons systems over the next several decades.

Lecornu explained that Ukraine, rich in rare earth minerals, proposed several opportunities for mineral extraction, which could strengthen France's defense infrastructure. The Ukrainian government has long recognized the strategic value of its raw materials, including lithium, uranium, and semiconductor-grade neon gas, which are crucial for modern weaponry and technology.

Ukraine holds about 5% of the world's mineral resources, and its reserves are estimated to be worth trillions of dollars. Lecornu confirmed that the Ukrainian government views mineral rights as a potential bargaining tool, contributing to defense negotiations not only with the US but also with France.

These discussions highlight ongoing negotiations between Kyiv and Western powers, focusing on security guarantees and the potential exchange of mineral rights for military aid. The future of these talks could significantly impact both Ukraine's defense capabilities and global mineral markets.