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WikiLeaks names key metals resources

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The Wikileaks website has named a number of metals mines and facilities outside of the USA that are key to US interests, as it published the list of sites that have been placed under the National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) at the behest of the Dept of Homeland Security. A cobalt mine in the Democratic Republic of Congo; chrome, manganese, palladium and platinum from South Africa's Bushveld Complex; and the Orissa and Karnataka chromite mines in India are among the metals resources named under the NIPP.

Nickel, germanium, tin, uranium, rhodium, niobium and graphite resources are also listed across all continents, while Rio Tinto's Brazilian iron ore operations is the only instance in which a particular metals company is named.

"[The NIPP] was written to provide the unifying structure for the integration of critical infrastructure and key resources (CI/KR) protection into a single national programme," the cable released by Wikileaks reads. "In addition to a list of critical domestic CI/KR, the NIPP requires compilation and annual update of a comprehensive inventory of CI/KR that are located outside US borders and whose loss could critically impact the public health, economic security, and/or national and homeland security of the United States," it said.

In the USA Patriot Act of 2001, critical infrastructure is defined as any systems or assets that are deemed "so vital to the United States the incapacitation or destruction of such systems and assets would have a debilitating impact on security, national economic security, national public health or safety, or any combination of those matters". Key

resources are defined as publicly- or privately-controlled resources essential to the minimal operations of the economy and government. Other assets listed under the NIPP include numerous undersea cable landings, US border crossings and a number of vaccine production facilities for diseases such as smallpox and polio. Critics, including several high-profile US politicians, have said that the list could help terrorists identify soft targets, and have called for Wikileaks founder Julian Assange's execution.