

EDITOR'S NOTE



Dear Readers,

Hello and welcome back to the IRS journal!

As October comes to an end, it's great to finally share our first issue of the fall semester with you. Between the sudden temperature changes in Ankara, endless coursework, and the midterms around the corner, we know things feel a little chaotic right now. Before anything else: take a deep breath. You've got this, and best of luck!

Of course, midterms aren't the only "frightening" thing about late October. With **Halloween** approaching, the campus is officially shifting into spooky season. Whether you're dressing up, craving pumpkin-spice everything, or just watching Halloween costume reels in your study breaks, we hope you find some time to embrace the autumn festivities.

Publishing today, on October 29th, is especially meaningful for us. Today, we proudly celebrate the **Republic Day of Türkiye**, marking the **103rd** year of the founding of the Türkiye Cumhuriyeti. It's a day that hits close to home, reminding us that a country isn't just built on paperwork and treaties, but on real sacrifices, reminding us that behind all the history and politics were the people who poured everything they had into building a future they might never live to see.

Happy 103rd Republic Day, Cumhuriyet Bayramınız kutlu olsun and here's to many more centuries!

For the October issue, we dig into two major shifts unfolding across the globe right now: **AI and Diplomacy** and **Elections** around the world.

And for this **Oct. Issue 2**: we are gonna talk about how algorithms are quietly changing foreign policy, international negotiations, and internal affairs.

We hope these articles give you something interesting to think about between classes. Thank you so much for reading. Hang in there with your exams, and have a fun Halloween!!



Müge Derin Doğan

THE FUTURE OF POLITICAL PROPAGANDA: DO ALL ROADS LEAD TO AI? OR DO ALL ROADS SHAPED BY AI?



A couple of weeks ago, TikTok users were bombarded with AI-generated MAGA propaganda videos. They were mostly AI-generated street interviews. Interestingly, these videos were not limited to American users only; TikTok users worldwide consumed this content regardless of their nationality, location, language, or age. Not to mention that TikTok is owned by ByteDance, a Chinese company, which makes the situation even odder, as the US and China are actively competing in trade wars, and Trump and his MAGA ideology don't quite benefit China's interests.

Thanks to the algorithm, not long after one video, most people fell down an AI propaganda rabbit hole. They took over your pages like a virus, trying to convince (or we can say, infect) users. White women and men are all shouting the same prompt about immigrants in the US being the most dangerous threat at the moment. They all had the same angry face and convincing attitude, in addition to the exact same anti-immigrant prompt that they were shouting. For me and perhaps for you, distinguishing AI from reality might be as easy as distinguishing black from white. However, can we say with certainty that every single internet user will find it as easy as we do to distinguish AI? Or even worse, can we be certain that this virus-like content won't affect people's decision-making?

So I began to dig deeper into this AI propaganda rabbit hole. There are many documented and off-the-record uses of AI by governments and political parties. The official usage includes data collection and analysis to understand voting choices, as well as videos officially published by political parties and governments. One of the most infamous ones is Trump's Gaza video. Aside from the derogatory and hideous messages it carried, it was not expected from even Trump to publish an AI-generated political campaign video. This didn't stop with Trump, of course. But I want to focus more on the off-the-record usage of AI.

Before AI became a dominant tool of creation, it would have required a significant amount of time, money, and resources to produce propaganda large enough to reach millions of people. But today, AI's accessibility, paired with digitalization, allows content to transcend borders and easily reach people around the world. Just like the AI-generated video I came across, much polarizing and misinformative content can easily spread like a virus. In her *The Guardian* article "How AI could 'supercharge' election risks across south-east Asia" Kate Lamb discusses the AI-centered political influence operation in Malaysia. According to Anthropic's recent statement, Claude AI was used to create "a commercial election manipulation platform, utilizing a network of about 1,000 X accounts, a fake news outlet called "Malaysia Pulse" and a series of fabricated documents." (Lamb). Lamb argues that this operation targeted sensitive social and political matters such as religion and race with the intention of influencing voter choices. Again, just like the video I mentioned, this content is targeted specifically to make people feel something without questioning the reasons beneath the surface. Anger, resentment, and hate towards a certain race, religion, or a marginalized group is usually the aim of these propaganda. In another case, in College Park, Georgia, Mayor Bianca Montley Broom was depicted kissing a man who was not her husband in an AI-made photograph. (Chidi).



A 2023 photograph taken by Arvin Temkar depicts Mayor Bianca Montley Broom during her official duties.

The photo, despite being fake, spread across the internet like a virus. By shaming her through a "conservative" lens and connecting this shame to her political authority, this AI content has probably succeeded in infecting many people.

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In another case, an AI-generated site named Hanover Institute for Public Policy operates as a reliable institution and makes pro-Israel claims on subjects like torture and starvation of Palestinians, as well as war crimes. The sinister aspect of this website is that it mimics an academic institution so well, with its citations and site design, that it can easily pass as an academic source to the naked eye. However, this site is fully AI-generated, contains many contradictory claims, and is neither a legal entity nor does it have any staff. According to The Guardian, this site was funded by the Israeli government and third parties, including a European media outlet, Havas Media. Wilson writes that "According to a Guardian analysis, between 6 and 14 August, the Hanover Institute published 124 reports totaling more than 560,000 words, an average of about 4,500 words each. On 12 and 13 August alone, it produced 73 reports, amounting to almost 354,000 words in two days. Nothing has been published since the first reports about the Hanover Institute." (Wilson). The amount of false information this AI site published is far more than what Israel could have accomplished without AI. So, until this site was proven to be AI, it served misinformation that aligned with Israel's interests to persuade the American public.

So, what does the future of political propaganda look like? Most probably, AI is inevitable in this digitalized world and will eventually end up in the hands of politicians. We can identify AI propaganda when Trump himself posts it, but it is not as easy when we see an AI street interview or a changed picture of a politician posted from an anonymous account. So it is hard to determine to whom that propaganda serves. The video I saw, for instance, I don't know who generated it, where it came from, or why it appears to me. It can be a fault of the algorithm, or it can be the result of a greater far-right racist propaganda. Either way, when viewed by people who are prone to such propaganda, it achieves its goals. Going back to our earlier analogy: AI propaganda is a contagious virus. You might be immune to it, but that does not guarantee the same for others. Just like vaccines, I believe political awareness and media literacy can act as our defense against AI propaganda.

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THE GEOPOLITICS OF INTELLIGENCE: U.S.-CHINA COMPETITION IN AI



In today's world, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is not just a technological development but also a country's new favorite toy. We can see that countries that develop advanced AI may gain advantages in areas like economic power, national security, and global influence ("The 2026 AI Index Report"). That is exactly why the United States and China consider AI a strategic weapon. The relationship between the U.S. and China regarding artificial intelligence is definitely a more complex one when it is compared to any other state's.

The Competition Between China and the U.S.

So why are the United States and China competing? There are many answers to that question, but let's start by briefly breaking down each country's AI industries. The United States has major technology companies, AI research institutions, advanced chip-design capabilities, and substantial private investments. American companies play an important role in developing advanced AI models and the infrastructure needed to train them ("The 2026 AI Index Report"). For China, they have a large technology sector, strong government support, and significant ambitions in AI research and development. Chinese companies are developing their own AI models and seeking alternatives to foreign technologies, particularly advanced semiconductors, specialized computer chips essential for the massive computational processes required to train and run AI systems (Shivakumar et al.). As a result, access to advanced semiconductors has become a key point of rivalry in U.S.-China AI relations.

Export Controls on Semiconductors

On October 7, 2022, the U.S. Department of Commerce announced a new export control restriction on China's access to certain advanced computing chips and semiconductor-manufacturing technologies (Bureau of Industry and Security). The main argument behind these restrictions was national security. U.S. policymakers sought to limit China's access to technologies that could contribute to advanced military skills or other strategic usages. However, these restrictions had the opposite outcome from what was intended. China had emphasized the development of its domestic semiconductor industry and greater technological self-reliance. This raised an important question: "Can a country maintain its technological advantage by restricting a rival's access to technology, or might those restrictions encourage the rival's efforts to become independent?" There is no simple answer: exports can create genuine technological obstacles, but their long-term effects depend on application, technological progress, and the availability of alternatives.

Bilateral Relations

The technological competition between the two states affected their relationship, but how? There are three important dynamics, and the first one is the security dilemma. The United States has restricted technology imports because it considers China a security risk. When China observes the United States' behavior, it might assume that these restrictions are an attempt to limit its development and freedom, thereby accelerating its own technological programs (Shivakumar et al.). This dilemma means that what one state considers defensive can make the other state feel less secure and encourage further competition. The second dynamic is technological decoupling, which refers to the reduction of technological and economic interdependence between countries. So if tensions between the US and China were to increase, companies might have to face pressure to use different suppliers, technologies, or production networks. This could produce separate technological ecosystems, but it would be pretty difficult due to complete separation. The last dynamic is the possibility of cooperation arising from risks associated with advanced AI, including cyber threats, misuse, and AI system failures. Despite their rivalry, countries could cooperate through dialogues on AI safety, technical standards, and risk reduction. However, we should always keep in mind that cooperation may be limited due to distrust and competing national interests (Chan and Hass).

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Why Does This Matter?

The U.S.-China competition in AI matters because it is not only about technological progress, but also about who will have greater influence over the future of the global economy and international security. Restrictions on advanced semiconductors show how access to technology can become a tool of foreign policy, while China's efforts to strengthen its domestic industry demonstrate how these restrictions can influence a rival's strategic decisions. This competition also affects countries beyond the U.S. and China, as governments and companies may face pressure to choose between different technological suppliers and systems. At the same time, growing rivalry could make international cooperation on AI safety and governance more difficult, even when both countries face shared risks. Therefore, the outcome of this competition could influence not only technological development, but also the distribution of power and the possibilities for cooperation in the international system.

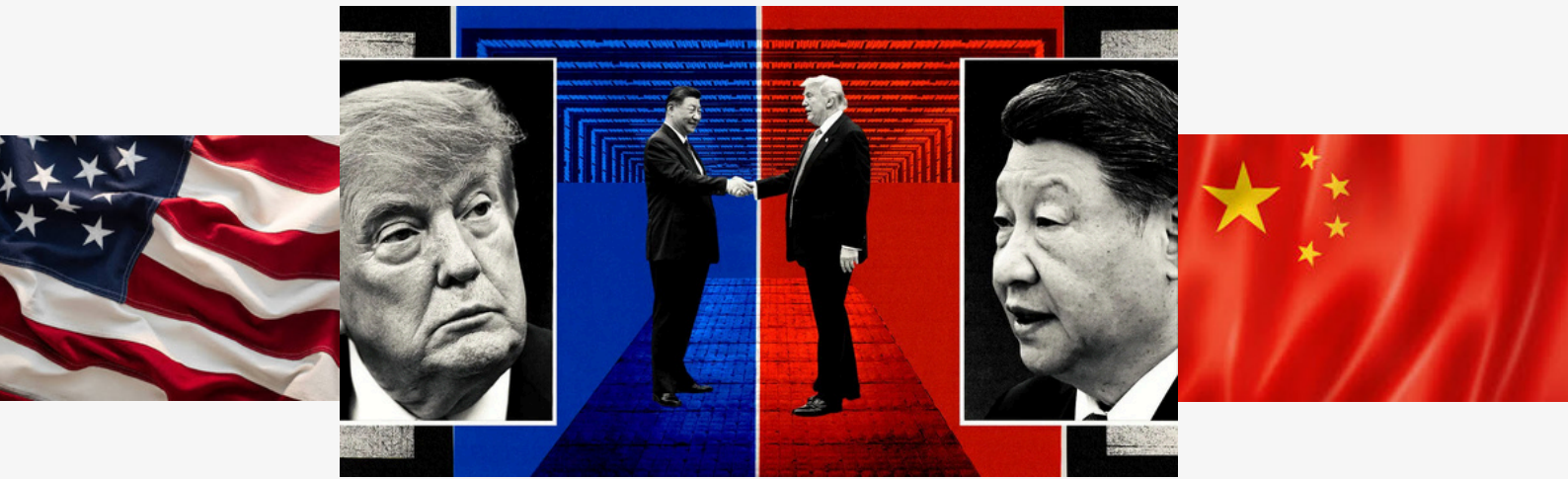


Illustration: Javier Palma

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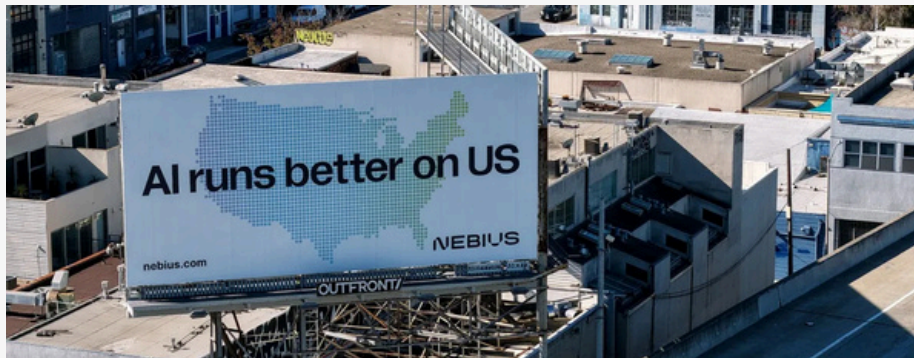
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THE NEW COLD WAR IN CODE: US-RUSSIA RELATIONS IN THE AGE OF AI



Nowadays, this newly integrated technology has changed the interactions among the great powers. Recently, the relations between Russia and the U.S. have taken on a whole new dimension with the development of AI. AI not only enables them to strengthen their technological capacities but also their military force. Even though these AI features are considered solely beneficial, they ought to raise security concerns and diplomatic challenges between the two great powers. Nowadays, this newly integrated technology has changed the interactions of the great powers. AI complicates the technological competition between the two countries. The U.S. aims to maintain its technological leadership. To manage this, it incentivizes entrepreneurs to invest in AI researchers. Meanwhile, Russia, with its AI-related technologies and automated systems, continues to strengthen its military, which continues unabated. A compelling example of competition in AI technology is the struggle for access to advanced computer chips. While U.S. companies have developed advanced AI systems, Russia has been investing in domestic models, such as Sberbank's GigaChat, to reduce its dependence on foreign technology. Moreover, the statement issued on September 30, 2026, by the U.S. establishment of a new command aimed at enhancing the military use of autonomous systems serves as a focal example of the competition.



From Aleksei Kiselev, "Russia Is Not Even a Contender in the Global AI Race," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 28 July 2026, carnegieendowment.org/russia-eurasia/politika/2026/07/russia-ai-race-spot.

The recent United Nations meeting in Geneva, which Russia and the U.S. participated in, discussed international regulations on AI-powered autonomous weapons. While some of the prominent names from the AI sector warned about the dangerous aspects of these autonomous weapons, Russia and the U.S. are in an unexpected effort to confine the effects of UN restrictions on lethal autonomous weapons, which has weakened some proposed safeguards, including provisions related to human oversight, ethical considerations, and the predictable performance of AI-powered weapons. Also, they supported a more flexible approach towards non-binding guidelines. This issue indicates that, despite the two rival countries' political and military competition, both share an interest in preserving their freedom through AI.

Another political act that AI tools have influenced nowadays seems to be the election process in both parties. The U.S. Intelligence Agency reported that actors having ties to Russia engaged in activities by using an AI tool called Meliorator, whose primary goal is to influence public opinion and increase political polarization during the U.S. election. Particularly during the 2024 presidential election process in Russia, content looking real was spread through fake websites and fake news. The U.S. Department of Justice reports that it disrupted a Russian-government-backed, AI-enabled propaganda campaign to use a bot farm to spread disinformation. The Russian government also interfered in the 2016 U.S. presidential election by, among other things, hacking into the e-mail system of the Democratic National Committee (DNC). This private organization had designed a custom AI-powered platform to create, control, and manage hundreds of fake social accounts that looked like those of real Americans.

THE NEW COLD WAR IN CODE: US-RUSSIA RELATIONS IN THE AGE OF AI



The primary purposes of these activities are to influence voters' perceptions, weaken trust in democratic institutions, and reshape people's decisions. Consequently, AI is not only a technological issue between Russia and the U.S. but is considered a matter of political reputation and information security. These affairs between the two countries demonstrate that AI is not merely a tool for technological competition but can also be used to manipulate public opinion.

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THE DOUBLE-EDGED SHIELD: CAN AI SECURE THE STATE WITHOUT JEOPARDIZING IT?



Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming more and more important on governments' agendas. If AI is used correctly and carefully, it could be beneficial for governments in making policies. Therefore, most governments are trying to integrate AI into their systems, especially for managing national security, conducting diplomacy, and making foreign policy decisions. With the help of AI's enormous processing power compared to humans, governments could accelerate policy development and shift their focus and resources to other areas. This advantage could make a huge difference in areas such as diplomatic relations, intelligence, and the defense industry. However, even if AI seems excellent in theory, in practice, it raises serious security questions. The use of AI also poses risks, including cybersecurity vulnerabilities, inaccurate analysis, and a lack of accountability. Therefore, even if AI might be an important tool for governments, it must be supported by effective human oversight, strong cybersecurity measures, and clear accountability mechanisms.

The responsible and controlled use of AI could benefit the public sector. It has the potential to improve productivity by increasing efficiency in the policymaking process through its structural capabilities, such as analyzing large amounts of data to better understand users and identify patterns. Moreover, governments can better predict what people need and provide services for those needs. Additionally, AI can be used to detect fraud, suspicious activity, and identify risks in government institutions. Thus, AI might have a positive effect on objectives like productivity, responsiveness, and accountability (OECD 6).

Along with these benefits, the use of AI is increasing rapidly worldwide. However, the large-scale use of AI comes with serious concerns. In both the private and public sectors, despite the increasing use of AI, the mechanisms for regulating it are not keeping pace. Especially in the public sector, this could lead to a series of problems like wrong answers/analyses by AI, overreliance on AI, and, most critically, sensitive information leaks. These are critical points for national security and could be very harmful to national interests (Millî İstihbarat Akademisi 9). For instance, according to ABC News, "OpenAI's artificial intelligence agents appear to have used a German coding website to coordinate attempts to get access to Australian government health data, according to public logs" (Wilson). This shows that AI agents could attempt to access critical government information without authorization, posing serious risks to national security. If AI is used in intelligence and security operations without sufficient human oversight and effective regulation, it could expose sensitive data and weaken a state's ability to protect its national interests.

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EUROPE'S AI RACE: TECHNOLOGICAL SOVEREIGNTY IN A WORLD OF GREAT POWER COMPETITION



AI and Geopolitical Power

The growing integration of AI has become increasingly important, as it has been used as a source of economic and geopolitical power. Especially lately, The European Union is seeking to strengthen its position in the global artificial intelligence race, where the United States and China remain major players, while balancing its political values and economic interests. Although the EU presented a comprehensive framework for regulating AI, this solution is insufficient to make a meaningful contribution to the global technological race. The effort highlights a central challenge for the bloc: how to reduce reliance on foreign technology while balancing economic competitiveness with its political values.

The Global AI Race: The United States, China, and Europe

The global AI race has various dimensions, and in each, different countries and companies play significant, interdependent roles. However, in this competition, there are a few dominant actors: the USA and China. While the USA stands out with its global companies, cloud services, venture capital, and advanced AI models, China competes with the US through its state-backed technology policies, industrial capacity, and local AI companies. This shows that the USA is not a monopoly in this advanced technology industry. In comparison, European companies face challenges in reaching global markets and mobilizing investment across national markets.

Technological Sovereignty and External Dependencies

Most advanced AI systems, which rely on complex chips, cloud services, and data centers, are controlled outside Europe. Consequently, European companies and public institutions are becoming dependent on these external providers for essential services. These dependencies may result in vulnerabilities such as supply chain disruptions and blocking of data access to important services. In such a competitive environment, Europe's position in technology raises the question of whether it can make its critical decisions independently. Therefore, technological sovereignty does not mean self-sufficiency; it refers to the capacity to control key technologies and to use alternative solutions when external dependencies become risky.

The EU AI Act: Regulation and Its Limitations

The EU's main concern is to impose different obligations based on the risks they pose rather than treat them equally. The Artificial Intelligence Act, which entered into force in August 2024, aims to assess risks related to discrimination, transparency, and human safety rather than restrict companies. Even though these obligations aim to create a more secure environment, they may increase costs, especially for small companies with limited financial resources.



AI Artificial intelligence words, miniature of robot and EU flag are seen in this illustration taken December 21, 2023. REUTERS/Dado Ruvic/Illustration [Purchase Licensing Rights](#)

The EU's Response: Investment and Infrastructure

Moreover, Europe not only seeks to regulate the use of AI but also to develop sufficient infrastructure and human resources to produce AI. To accomplish these targets, the European Commission introduced its AI Continent Action Plan in April 2025. Also, the targets of this plan include strategies to strengthen Europe's infrastructure, improve access to data, develop AI skills, and promote AI adoption across industries. Also, in this context, the plan intended to expand the AI factory network and establish large-scale AI Gigafactories for investigators and companies to advance AI modeling.

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Furthermore, the Commission reported that the plan's implementation had made progress in April 2026. Furthermore, in June of the same year, the European Commission presented a technological sovereignty package comprising chips, AI, cloud infrastructure, and open-source technologies. These efforts illustrate the EU's attempts to reduce its dependence on external technology providers and to reinforce its strategic autonomy. However, the success of this strategy mainly depends on plans to transform sustainable investments, innovations, and European companies into ones that can compete on a global scale.

Economic Benefits and Strategic Challenges

The potential consequences of these policies may exceed the technology sector. Further developments in AI infrastructure could support start-ups in Europe, encourage scientific research, and enhance competitive strengths in sectors such as healthcare, automotive, and manufacturing. Additionally, it can reduce dependence on foreign technology providers during international crises.

Nonetheless, achieving this goal poses some challenges. Advanced data centers and AI models are expensive, as specialized workers, energy, and advanced computing infrastructure are required. Therefore, public investments alone cannot sustain these efforts, and EU countries' differing priorities may create difficulties in forming a united front. Furthermore, regulations can protect users but also discourage investments if compliance becomes expensive.

Strategic Autonomy in an Interconnected World

Due to dependence on interconnected international supply chains, research networks, and markets, complete independence from the US and China is not a realistic approach. The main goal of the EU must be the balance of international cooperation and the reduction of vulnerabilities. Therefore, the EU's success depends not only on establishing infrastructure but also on turning investments into products and companies that compete in the global market.

Conclusion

The EU's AI strategy demonstrates the link between technology, sovereignty, and security. The EU is attempting to combine regulations and investments to protect its values. The EU's challenge is to maintain cooperation while reducing vulnerabilities. Its ability to strengthen technological autonomy will depend not only on building infrastructure, but also on turning that capacity into globally competitive products and companies.

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SPEED, FOG, AND FIREPOWER: NATO'S GAMBLE ON MILITARY AI



A new stage in NATO's Transformation

NATO's military operations are incorporating Artificial Intelligence, raising questions about how the Alliance will respond to future conflicts with this new capability. NATO's Maven Smart System reached full technical operational capacity in June 2026, becoming a significant advancement in NATO's digital transformation. The platform reflects NATO's initiative to adjust to a growing, complex security environment. Yet these technological improvements pose a dilemma: Does processing information faster create an environment for better judgment? NATO's incorporation of AI undertakes a step toward stronger coordination and faster analysis; however, its strategic benefit will rely on preserving substantial oversight and accountability.

From strategy to practice

NATO combines technological initiative with commitments to accountability in the use of artificial intelligence. Following the initial approach to AI strategy in 2021, NATO issued a revised version in July 2024. The revised document demands accelerating AI adoption, reinforcing cooperation with academia and industry, and advancing interoperability across Allied systems. Interoperability matters for a multinational alliance because forces need to exchange information and operate together. Nevertheless, NATO also recognizes that incorporating AI systems requires reliable data, trained personnel, safeguards, and testing. Therefore, its strategy presents responsible use as a pivotal part of military modernization and AI adoption, rather than solely separate ethical considerations and dilemmas.

The acquisition of the Maven Smart System reflects how these initiatives are moving towards practice. According to the NATO Communications and Information Agency, the platform supports intelligence fusion, situational awareness, planning, and targeting. Through these actions, such systems could help commanders interpret intricate operational environments and coordinate responses accordingly. Their probable benefit lies in diminishing the burden of processing large quantities of data. Still, these are NATO's stated capabilities and objectives; an acquisition adjustment and declaration cannot be enough to establish how beneficial the systems would be in the military environments where there would be uncertainty, ethical concerns, and the pressure of an actual conflict.

Marking a further stage in implementing AI systems with Maven Smart System's full technical operational capability, NATO declares that the said platform has undergone intensive training and testing through military exercises and received security accreditation for operation on its classified network. These improvements show institutional investment in incorporating AI systems into existing command structures. They also bring questions about governance a step closer to everyday military practices. While technical readiness and reliable access are crucial, neither can independently establish correct usage and interpretation by users or exercise judgment. The central question is how people will interact with the system once it becomes integrated into operational routines.

The Limits of Faster Decisions

AI decision-support systems should not be mistaken for autonomous weapons. Their aim is to assist human decision-makers by classifying information and identifying patterns. Yet, assistance can considerably shape a decision even when a human formally retains authority. Research published by the International Committee of the Red Cross stresses the danger of automation bias. It explains that users may place extreme trust in AI systems and machine-generated outputs. Under pressure, a recommendation can establish authority over decisions as it appears systematic or is quick to arrive. Thus, human approval can be a procedural action, rather than an integral part of decision-making and independent assessment of the available circumstances.

SPEED, FOG, AND FIREPOWER: NATO'S GAMBLE ON MILITARY AI



Another difficulty would be the quality of the information. Armed conflicts are generally depicted through insufficient or incomplete knowledge, changing conditions, and calculated deception. A system that is not prepared for such manipulations, unsuitable data, and a lack of information may give misleading outputs. Moreover, comprehending why an AI system produced certain outputs may be difficult. These limitations are especially crucial when the decisions that are made affect civilian lives and welfare. As ICRC researchers state, inspections required by international humanitarian law cannot be reduced to numerical calculations. A faster pace may assist those assessments, but it cannot eliminate the need to assess uncertainty, assumptions, and the consequences of the force used or will be used.

Keeping Humans Accountable

NATO's responsible use axioms deliver a framework for addressing these concerns. The principles include lawfulness, responsibility alongside accountability, governability, reliability, bias mitigation, and traceability. The arising dispute is interpreting these liabilities into consistent practice across the Alliance. This brings responsibilities for personnel: they need training on the capabilities and limitations of new technological systems and platforms; they need sufficient time to comprehend them; and they need access to reliable information that is open to testing and serves as material for education. The interactions between users and systems should be closely assessed. Moreover, and most importantly, clear accountability and responsibility must remain identifiable.



Leaders of NATO member and partner nations posing at the 2025 NATO Summit in The Hague, www.nato.int

Eventually, NATO's approach to AI should be considered in the context of civilian lives and military operations, with an emphasis on the effectiveness and quality of system and platform governance. While AI helps operations by enabling a faster pace, it should be noted that every output from these systems depends on human inputs; hence, informed users and reliable data and information are crucial to new technological developments.

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THE SYNTHETIC CAMPAIGN: GENERATIVE AI AND POLITICAL POLARIZATION IN ISRAEL



The High-Stakes Contest: Israel's First "AI Election"

The approaching Israeli elections on October 27 will mark a crucial turning point that can either remove Benjamin Netanyahu from power or consolidate his influence. Political scholars call it Israel's first "AI election" as this electoral cycle involves extensive use of AI across various aspects of campaign management, including provocative media content creation, automated robocalls, and social media bots.

The upcoming Israeli national elections could be a milestone for the nation, as it either ends Netanyahu's political career or guarantee him many years ahead in power. Political scientists have dubbed this contest the first true "AI election," pointing to the new role algorithmic tools played in shaping the race. Various political parties are actively using AI technologies to manage virtually all aspects of their campaigns. They use such things as automated phone calls, bots on social media, and the production of controversial videos. (ZebeAI)

Regulatory Limits and Growing Voter Reliance

As early as July, Israel's Central Election Committee adopted a rule requiring a special label to be affixed to any material created or modified using AI technology. Apart from the labeling requirement, there are no regulations governing any other aspect of using AI tools in the election. For instance, in July, the chairman of the committee requested that the video, which was created using AI, be removed because it lacked the mandatory label and was considered misleading (Collection Of Regulations-12484). Apart from the process of the campaign, AI is used in evaluating the candidates and synthesizing the information from citizens. The study, carried out by the Israel Internet Association, shows that about 25% of Israelis are ready to use the help of AI-powered services to make voting decisions.



Packing ballots and polling station equipment at the Central Elections Committee's Logistics Center in Shoham, Israel, this month. Credit: Amir Levy/Getty Images

The Rise of Generative Engine Optimization (GEO)

This increase in the importance of AI in the country's political life raises a problem of Generative Engine Optimization (GEO), the process of creating content for AI chatbots intended to influence the answers generated by the models. The Israeli government was actively using this industry's services. As appears from the disclosure made under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), the Israeli government engaged a US-based company to develop websites designed to provide Large Language Models (LLMs) with information favoring the government. (Cleveland-Stout)

Algorithmic Persuasion Redefining the Ballot Box

From viral candidate videos and photorealistic political satire to voter information retrieval and deliberate search engine optimization targeted at LLMs, campaigns now rely on AI at every turn, not just to reach voters but to change their minds.

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The Aftermath: Did the Algorithms Deliver?

As the counting of votes continues, the results are showing the lead of veteran Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu by 85% over his rival, former military chief Gadi Eisenkot, while still having a shortage in parliament. With between 430,000 and 480,000 absentee ballots from groups including politicians, hospital patients, and soldiers yet to be counted, while Arab led parties could emerge as kingmakers despite the fact that none of the Jewish parties are working with them. While the process of finalization of the election could take multiple weeks, in case of a failure of the decision from President Isaac Herzog, the possibility of another election is still on the table. The current picture is showing that months of AI propaganda, fueled with Israel's own regional conflicts, have indeed worked, which raises the question of "How will the future of propaganda take shape in the future?" (Ali)

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