

The Stark Choice: America Must Lead on AI and Keep a Watchful Eye on China

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Artificial intelligence is the defining contest of the twenty-first century, not just for economic advantage but for the soul of global governance and individual liberty. The US and China have each charted bold, competing visions for AI's future in almost simultaneously released plans and directives.

China issued its Global Action Plan for AI Governance at the 2025 World Artificial Intelligence Conference and High Level Meeting of Artificial Intelligence in Shanghai in recent days, as did the Trump White House with the release of the US AI Action Plan, titled "Winning the AI Race: America's AI Action Plan" on July 23.



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Two Plans

Trump's plan is accompanied by an executive order issued in January removing barriers to American leadership in AI. It outlines a comprehensive federal strategy with over 90 policy actions across three core pillars: accelerating innovation, building AI infrastructure, and leading in international AI diplomacy and security.

This is a technological revolution that will shape geopolitical power from this moment forward.

America's plan and China's plan could not be more different in sound and tone. China, from a position of inferior power, uses the classical moral chimera of "global cooperation." The US, from a position of greater power, unapologetically declares its intent to lead with the implication that American standards of freedom, equality, and inalienable rights naturally define the horizons of "world harmony and cooperation." These declarations are little more than ongoing manifestations of the constant, ongoing vying between left-leaning, globalist-guided UN-mind (and UN-speak) on the one hand, and US self-assertion that presumes a reliable record of commitment to human freedom, equality, divinely protected rights, and peace.

America's action plan is unambiguous. Its bedrock is comprised of freedom of speech, global security, and the long-term prosperity of individuals and families in free societies. China's script, on the other hand, wraps authoritarian priorities in the language of "cooperation" and "mutual benefit." Sadly, CCP's record abounds in routine disregard for both human dignity and international norms.

Long Record of Abuses

While the language of China's proposal is inarguably sweet and enchanting, unfortunately, China cannot be trusted as a steward of AI's future. The regime's record is clear, from its vast internment of Uyghurs

and ethnic minorities in Xinjiang and relentless crackdown on civil society to its digital totalitarianism at home and extraterritorial repression of dissidents abroad - including the CCP's "strike hard" campaigns and prosecutions of civil rights lawyers. Outside its borders, the CCP is equally aggressive, engaging in systematic espionage not just within US tech giant corporations, but also deeply within US higher education, and corrupting and coopting US elected officials.

US cybersecurity and counterintelligence records and watchdogs at top American universities all point to the same reality: China's intelligence services prioritize technology transfer by any means necessary. The recent flood of cases in which federal law enforcement agencies have apprehended the theft of sensitive military technology, recruitment of spies inside the Navy, and the wholesale exfiltration of academic know-how testifies to this truth: The CCP is not seeking partnership. It is pursuing dominance, often through illegal means, to further policies explicitly grounded in anti-Americanism and ambitions for global CCP hegemony

These facts undermine the possibility for clear-thinking people to throw in with China's exquisite-sounding AI initiative. Nations in need should be equally wary.

Action Plan

The United States must respond with clarity and resolve by:

Aggressively pursuing the American AI Action Plan. Only decisive leadership, as seen in the US plan's cutting of red tape, building American AI infrastructure, and setting global standards will ensure American values of freedom, equality, and protected rights will prevail. Export controls and rigorous security measures must become the norm, not the exception. The underlying intention in the American plan to make our AI the gold standard is vital not just for economic reasons but to keep free societies safe from malign manipulation.

The US must become vigorously and fully engaged in China's UN-minded initiatives and meetings, but with eyes wide open. America should not cede the table to rivals whose vision for AI is one of surveillance and control. US involvement is in our national interest. This can both ensure that new international norms are not set behind America's back and, wherever legitimate, offer opportunities for scientific collaboration. Participation provides a line of sight into the CCP's strategy, letting us monitor, expose, and whenever possible, constrain ambitions that run counter to the interests of free nations.

American and global audiences deserve the benefits of responsible, open, and truly accountable AI innovation, values that so far remain anathema to the CCP's governing ethos. Presently, there are no signs that China (for the moment) is likely to change course. But while the CCP violates its people and international standards of integrity and genuine cooperation, America has both the duty and an opportunity. In AI, as in all things, American vigilance and leadership are not just strategic necessities - they continue to stand, at least for now, as our world's last lines of defense for human rights and for freedom itself.

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