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The use of artificial intelligence in the field of foreign policy

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Artificial intelligence (AI) is a fast-growing technology field that has attracted the attention of commercial investors, the defence industry, policymakers, international competitors and adversaries, alike. AI has the ability to analyse copious amounts of data and information in a relatively short space of time and can extract patterns and detect relationships unnoticed by ordinary humans. This means that AI can be leveraged to provide strategic recommendations and detailed analyses which assist with the forging of foreign policy decisions.

Amongst the many uses of AI in foreign policy is the analysis of the foreign policies of third countries in order to anticipate where they are headed. This is commonly done by monitoring and analysing media, websites and social networks. AI can also be used to develop predictive models to estimate the response of these countries to certain policy actions, which can help in shaping future diplomacy and foreign policy decision-making strategies.

As evidenced by several recent initiatives, a number of countries, including the Chinese government, have released strategies detailing their plans to take the lead in AI by 2030. Less than two months later, Vladimir Putin publicly announced Russia's intention to pursue AI technologies, saying, "The party that will become the leader in this field will rule the world."[1]

The United States, which has so far been a leader in this field, expressed its fears of losing this leadership due to competition. In 2021, R&D accounted for 3.40% of GDP, having exceeded 3% for the first time in 2019. Between 1964 and more recent times, the US witnessed significant changes in its domestic R&D funding sources, as federal R&D expenditures decreased and funding for U.S. companies increased. In 1964, federal expenditures accounted for 1.86% of GDP and 67% of total domestic R&D, while business finance accounted for 0.86% of the total economy

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[1] For Superpowers, Artificial Intelligence Fuels New Global Arms Race. https://www.wired.com/story/for-superpowers-artificial-intelligence-fuels-new-global-arms-race/

and 31% of R&D. By 2020, U.S. companies accounted for 73% of domestic R&D, equivalent to 2.47% of the value of domestically produced goods and services, while the share of federal funding fell to 21% of domestic R&D and 0.70% of GDP[2].

The Department of External Security Affairs, part of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is considered as one of the world's leading institutions in its use of AI systems for the analysis and decision-making processes of issues that come before it. For example, this institution used AI in deciding on the complex matrix of foreign investment in its "China's Belt and Road Initiative", which carries with it high inherent political, economic and environmental risks[3].

With the deterioration in global trade, China has faced considerable challenges and has had to, as a matter of necessity, to bolster its industrial base and improve investment. In this context, China began conducting in-depth research into the benefits and security of Chinese and foreign investment in China's "The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI, or B&R)." This is seen as a top priority topic in China's strategic vision.

The Chinese government reached a consensus on the need to use technological advances such as AI to put forward proposals and to evaluate the effectiveness and security of Chinese foreign investment. This will also involve taking steps to develop a neural network supported by AI technologies that will help enhance this task, as it can analyse and evaluate relevant data and provide valuable insights into the effectiveness and security of Chinese foreign investment. The synergy between AI and the evaluation of Chinese foreign investment has contributed towards achieving marked improvements in industrial output and improved investment efficiency and is therefore an important subject for more in-depth research and future studies[4].

As for Russia, it has shown great interest in AI technology and considers it to be one of the top national priorities in the development of its technological capabilities. It seeks to use AI in a variety of applications, including military reconnaissance,

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[2] Federally Funded R&D Declines as a Share of GDP and Total R&D .https://ncses.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf23339/
[3] Investment with Artificial Intelligence under the Belt and Road .https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08839514.2023.2219562
[4] Analysis of Benefits and Security of China's Foreign Investment with Artificial Intelligence under the Belt and Road .
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08839514.2023.2219562

surveillance and in the command and control of military operations. It aims to improve its capabilities in the collection and analysis of information and in making strategic decisions. It is also involved in developing automated analysis systems for the processing of data, imagery and intelligence gathering to improve military intelligence and strategic decision-making.[5]

The application of these AI-related innovations by the Russian military in their offensive against the Ukraine has demonstrated varying degrees of effectiveness and success. Ai has been deployed in support of surveillance and reconnaissance operations, command and control missions, as well as in disinformation operations. However, the military has found it difficult to utilise this technology effectively in certain other operational areas[6].

The Russian military has achieved great success in imposing a near-total no-fly zone in Ukraine using an automatic control system known as ACS (Automation Control Systems). This system relies on AI techniques to correlate information, command structures and weapons in a combat environment, thereby allowing military commanders to accurately assess the combat situation and make decisions effectively. This system is integrated with the S400 and Pantsir-S air defence systems and connects them to the Air Force and Navy. The Russian military has previously tested the effectiveness of this system as part of its military exercises in Crimea in 2019, with the aim of operating it in the future without human intervention[7].

In terms of disinformation, Western media has been rife with reports about Russia's supposed use of Deepfake technology to produce a video showing Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky declaring his surrender to Moscow. The video went viral on Twitter before being denied by the Ukrainian president on his personal Instagram account[8].

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[5] Artificial Intelligence and Autonomy in Russia ·https://www.cna.org/CNA_files/centers/CNA/sppp/rsp/russia-ai/Russia-Artificial-Intelligence-Autonomy-Putin-Military.pdf
[6] TOMORROW'S TECHNOLOGY IN TODAY'S WAR: THE USE OF AI AND AUTONOMOUS TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WAR IN UKRAINE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR STRATEGIC STABILITY. https://www.cna.org/reports/2023/10/ai-and-autonomous-technologies-in-the-war-in-ukraine.
[7] Artificial Intelligence and Autonomy in Russia. https://www.cna.org/archive/CNA_Files/centers/cna/sppp/rsp/russia-ai/russia-artificial-intelligence-autonomy-putin-military.pdf
[8] Deepfake Zelenskyy surrender video is the 'first intentionally used' in Ukraine war ·https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/03/16/deepfake-zelenskyy-surrender-video-is-the-first-intentionally-used-in-ukraine-war

In contrast, Moscow has failed to use AI technology equally efficiently in the face of low-altitude, small-scale drone attacks. Russia's air defence system in Ukraine has suffered from weaknesses in this regard. Ukrainian forces have successfully carried out multiple attacks on Russian forces using the Turkish TB2 Bayraktar drone fighter, which has become a staple of Ukrainian propaganda in the war[9].

Similarly, the US National Defense Strategy, released in January 2018, identified AI as one of the key technologies that would ensure that the United States would be able to fight and win future wars[10]. The U.S. military is already integrating AI systems into combat situations through a groundbreaking initiative called Project Maven, which uses AI algorithms to identify insurgents. These dynamics have raised a multitude of questions, addressed in numerous sessions of the U.S. Congress, regarding the types of military AI applications that are possible, and what limits, if any, should be imposed: what unique advantages and weaknesses come with using AI for defence; how will AI change the war, and what impact will it have on the military balance of power with the U.S.'s competitors? The US Congress has at its disposal several oversight, financial and budgetary tools, as well as legislative powers to influence the answers to these questions and to shape the future development of AI technology[11].

Retired U.S. Gen. Stanley McChrystal explains that by relying on AI and sifting through unimaginable amounts of online and satellite data, Rhombus Power machines were able to collect information on Russian military manoeuvres and inputs such as developments in missile sites and heat maps of their military activities. The information gathered included detailed data about the weapons systems that were mobilised to the border areas in 2021; the pattern of movement of Russian officers who were unable to return to their barracks or homes anytime soon and other similar matters, all of which was carefully monitored, examined and

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[9] Cheap but lethal Turkish drones bolster Ukraine's defenses .https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-middle-east-africa-libya-europe-ecb9e820ea4bddb4464d7e8cb40e82fc

[10] Department of Defense, Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy, p.3, https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf.

[11] Ibid

analysed, in late October 2021, resulting in predications that war was imminent and this is indeed what happened[12].

It is noteworthy many people harbour grave reservations and fears associated with the use of AI in political decision-making and an awareness of these very real concerns and the means of dealing with them effectively are important in ensuring that AI is used in responsible and effective ways in the political field. Among these challenges and concerns are the following:

1- Ethical and legal issues: The use of AI in political decision-making raises complex ethical issues, such as privacy, discrimination, and justice. These issues must be handled in such a manner so as to ensure that data is used, analysed and decisions made in accordance with applicable ethical and legal standards.

2- Trust and transparency: The use of AI in political decision-making requires building trust and achieving transparency. Individuals must be able to understand how decisions are made and the principles upon which the AI system is based and to ensure that there are no unjustified biases or discrimination in these decisions.

3- Dealing with complexity: Political decision-making can be a complex and multidimensional issue. AI must be able to comprehend and address this complexity and deliver valuable and comprehensible outputs to the decision-makers.

4- Control and accountability: Effective mechanisms must be put in place to control AI systems and to ensure their accountability. Safeguards must be applied to ensure that the decisions made by AI comply with legal, ethical, and political standards, and there should be the possibility of vetting and auditing these decisions.

5. Bias and discrimination: The use of AI technologies can face challenges in terms of bias and discrimination. AI models may rely on aggregated data that contains biases that exist in society, which can lead to unfair decisions or discrimination against certain groups.

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[12] AI Has Entered the Situation Room. Data lets us see with unprecedented clarity—but reaping its benefits requires changing how foreign policy is made. JUNE 19, 2023, 11:00 PM
By Stanley McChrystal, a retired four-star U.S. Army general and an advisor to Rhombus Power, and Anshu Roy, the founder and CEO of Rhombus Power. https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/06/19/ai-artificial-intelligence-national-security-foreign-policy-threats-prediction/

Accordingly, these challenges and concerns must be taken on board and appropriate measures taken to address them in order to ensure that AI is used in responsible and effective ways in the field of political decision-making**.**

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