

## CHINA-LED RESOLUTION ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: PROSPECTS FOR HUMAN SECURITY AND STRATEGIC STABILITY

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*(Views expressed in the brief are those of the author, and do not represent those of ISSI)*



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In efforts to regulate Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies, the 78<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) unanimously adopted a resolution on "Enhancing International Cooperation on Capacity-building of AI" that was proposed by China and co-sponsored by more than 140 countries. The resolution aims to enhance international cooperation in the capacity building of AI.<sup>1</sup> The combined efforts were made to shape the future of AI technologies by ensuring secure developments and deployments.<sup>2</sup> The resolution advocates for AI development in a free, open, inclusive, and non-discriminatory environment between developed and developing nations. History has demonstrated that states are constantly striving to enhance their security measures in response to evolving paradigms, including the arms race to acquire developed weapons, aircraft, and technologies, as well as the development of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and the competition for advanced weaponry.<sup>3</sup> This constant competition has undoubtedly put the element of human security at risk and has been progressing

1 Huaxia, "UNGA Adopts China-Proposed Resolution to Enhance Int'l Cooperation on AI Capacity-Building," accessed July 18, 2024, <https://english.news.cn/20240702/cacef9fa6eeb403192f6b2815ee4c053/c.html>.

2 Khushboo Razdan, "China-Led Resolution on Artificial Intelligence Passes in United Nations," South China Morning Post, July 2, 2024, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3268788/china-led-resolution-artificial-intelligence-passes-united-nations-general-assembly>.

3 Lloyd J. Dumas, "Armament, Disarmament And National Security:," *Journal of Economic Studies* 6, no. 1 (1979): 1–38. <https://ideas.repec.org/a/eme/jespps/eb002496.html>.

**only from a realist perspective. Similarly, as new technologies emerge, the realm of warfare continues to evolve, potentially negating human security in the pursuit of artificial intelligence advancement.<sup>4</sup>**

The primary objective of AI competition was to capitalise on the commercial benefits of the technology.<sup>5</sup> However, as the AI arms race for military applications intensifies, it necessitates continuous observation to monitor significant advancements in major states, aiming to reduce the growing gap between the developed North and the developing South. To promote cooperation in the growing trend of AI advancement, a more focused approach is necessary, which may potentially safeguard the national security of states lacking sufficient AI capabilities. This approach could also promote human security by enabling states to collaborate with developed states, thereby reducing the likelihood of unilateral aggression. The Chinese resolution on enhancing international cooperation on capacity-building of AI is of great significance to governments around the world, who have agreed to responsibly regulate the development of AI.<sup>6</sup>

China's emergence as a leader in AI research and development has placed it at the forefront of global discussions concerning AI governance. Chinese Ambassador to the UN Fu Cong termed it “complementary” in terms of the modern-day need to a previous AI resolution that was led by the U.S.<sup>7</sup> However, while the previous resolution was more general in scope, this one primarily focuses on capacity building. He further stated that “we look forward to intensifying our cooperation with the U.S. and emphasizing the crucial role the UN could play in AI governance as the “most inclusive organization.” In support of this initiative, the U.S. showed its readiness to work with China on AI governance issues around the world. On November 15, 2023, U.S. President Joe Biden in the meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in California had discussed the establishment of a shared standard for AI technology and the management of risks in an inter-governmental dialogue on AI.<sup>8</sup> Earlier, the U.S. had imposed investment and export restrictions to prevent China from gaining

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<sup>4</sup> Eds Alexander Lautensach and Sabina Lautensach, “Threats to Human Security,” September 8, 2020, <https://opentextbc.ca/humansecurity/chapter/threats-human-security/>.

<sup>5</sup> Gary Grossman Edelman, “The AI Arms Race Has Us on the Road to Armageddon,” *VentureBeat* (blog), April 19, 2021, <https://venturebeat.com/ai/the-ai-arms-race-has-us-on-the-road-to-armageddon/>.

<sup>6</sup> EDITH M. LEDERER, “UN Adopts Chinese Resolution with US Support on Closing the Gap in Access to Artificial Intelligence | AP News,” accessed July 18, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/un-china-us-artificial-intelligence-access-resolution-56c559be7011693390233a7bafb562d1>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> The White House, “Readout of President Joe Biden’s Meeting with President Xi Jinping of the People’s Republic of China,” The White House, November 16, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/11/15/readout-of-president-joe-bidens-meeting-with-president-xi-jinping-of-the-peoples-republic-of-china-2/>.

access to advanced artificial intelligence technologies.<sup>9</sup> The U.S. and China are competing in AI development in many areas, including politics, technology, the economy, and more. This shows how their relationship is changing. Recent years have witnessed a surge in tech competition as both nations strive to enhance their national security by devising policies that foster AI advancements, seeking a strategic edge over each other, despite their distinct approaches to planning and execution. The support for AI resolution can also be seen in the lens of this ongoing tech competition between both states as they continue to compete fiercely in the semiconductor and artificial intelligence industries.

As noted, the resolution on AI development aims for a "free, open, inclusive, and non-discriminatory" environment in the "non-military domain. This advocates for providing equal opportunities to both AI-developed and underdeveloped countries to bridge the technological gap between them. The goal is to support developing nations facing "unique challenges" in AI, prevent them from falling behind, and promote global cooperation in the field. The resolution outlines measures to establish international AI ethics standards, promote AI research for humanity, and establish a global framework for AI security. This ensures that the resolution aligns with UNESCO's AI Ethics, which highlights four fundamental values, and provides the human security perspective that has been lacking in recent years:<sup>10</sup>

1. Need to respect human rights and dignity.
2. Keep societies peaceful and fair.
3. Encourage diversity and acceptance.
4. Safeguard the environment and ecosystems.

The competition has also seen a ripple effect in its approach, since, like developed countries, developing or underdeveloped countries are engaged in an intensive cycle to increase their potential in getting hands on more developed and advanced AI tools. These shifting developments have created emerging risks, and the potential use of AI in cyber warfare, autonomous weapons, and mass surveillance raises security concerns both regionally and globally. Therefore, this resolution was urgently needed to protect the changing dynamics of global security. This resolution will assist developing AI-blind states in comprehending and enhancing their AI capabilities in accordance with

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<sup>9</sup> Karen Freifeld, "Exclusive: US Tackles Loopholes in Curbs on AI Chip Exports to China," *Reuters*, October 16, 2023, sec. Technology, <https://www.reuters.com/technology/upcoming-us-rules-ai-chip-exports-aim-stop-workarounds-us-official-2023-10-15/>.

<sup>10</sup> "Ethics of Artificial Intelligence | UNESCO," <https://www.unesco.org/en/artificial-intelligence/recommendation-ethics>.

emerging global trends. It will help Pakistan advance technological innovations while collaborating with China and other countries. It will provide Pakistan with the necessary expertise and resources to develop its AI industry. The resolution can help Pakistan to mitigate risks, foster innovation, and address AI-related security threats. As the resolution was primarily focused on identifying and mitigating potential risks generated because of AI and monitoring the advancements of technologies, it will play an important role in determining the future governance of AI, ensuring that its development and implementation follow ethical principles and promote security and arms control to create equality.

The resolution will pave the way for secure AI governance in the future, offering cooperative measures and approaches to bridge the divide between the North and the South. It requires further steps for more cooperation, which will allow different states to align their national AI policies with international standards and regulate AI.