

The role of AI (Artificial Intelligence) in terms of exploring international balance of power, disinformation, governance and ethics

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ABSTRACT

There has been an enormous increase in the use and growth of AI technology since the last decade. The use of this technology has filtered down to International Relations as well, and has been found to be used intensively in shaping power equations among powerful nations. These nations have started using this as a weapon in determining the level of spreading disinformation and creating their own power equation. This paper analyses the relationship between governance, extent of technology and the extent of their “powerfulness”. It also examines the role and level of ‘ethics’, followed by them during the process to attain the stature of “a powerful nation”. Are their code of ethics that should be followed? If so who should be involved are some of the questions that would be attempted to be addressed.

Keywords: AI technology, Technology uncertainty, Technological Innovation, global diplomacy, countries relate, compete and cooperate, political diplomacy.

Introduction

AI can be defined as the “ability of systems” to independently understand, apply and discover from external data,. This is further used and adapted for achieving specific targets through a process which can easily adapt to different commands and situations.(Haanlein 2019)

The phenomenal rise of AI, in recent times, has led the World super powers to face the future with an additional uncertainty namely that of “technological uncertainty”. The political discourse moves around the challenges that have emerged between policy makers navigating the future who are faced with the uncertainty that has emerged through “technological innovation”.

The entry of AI into global diplomacy has led to the emergence of various types of challenges as well as opportunities. The major input of AI, in this sector has been the ability to equip

governments with “advanced tools”, that help in shaping outcomes, both in the military sphere as well as in the political economic domain.

AI has helped in the crunching of vast data, making sense out of it for the nations that are entering into a dialogue. The potential of this technology is huge as it could cover international relations, diplomatic decisions, economic forecasting as well as trade strategies.

International relations being at the heart of World equations, dynamics, peace, harmony as well as power equations and conflict. To understand the increasing role of this sphere the UN Security Council in it's meeting in July 2023, discussed “Artificial Intelligence: Opportunities and Risks for International Peace and Security”. International Relations is one area where AI is definitely deciding the boundaries on partnership, solving and starting conflicts, along with “ethics challenge”. In this new field it is important to synchronise both ‘synthetic data “, with ‘real data” which are important in addressing the ‘ethical challenge’ along with ‘privacy concerns’. Most important are those “robust international agreements that are ethical and strictly adhered to among various nations of the world”, for continuous peace and harmony.

Background

AI has progressively spread in every sphere. The greatest challenge that this spread has brought out is the possibility of the impact of this on the spread of ‘disinformation’.

The main areas in which it has entered can be divided into the following:

- AI as a source of disinformation
- AI as a tool to combat the above
- Regulatory frame work
- Deepfakes
- Algorithmic literacy

The role of AI gained momentum since 2010 onwards, but picked up greater momentum after ChatGPT was released in 2022. Initially the emphasis was on the use of this technology in reaching targets under military domain. The aim was to crunch a large amount of data for precise target, without human interference. This did not involve “ethics”, in the use of this technology. A large amount of research in this sphere has been conducted by Ingvild Bode.

With the growth of AI, the whole concept has changed with respect to IR (International Relations), since the nature, culture and character of “war”, has been merged into one concept

known as “Hyper War”. Battle’s would be fought in the algorithmic, digitised, automotive and autonomous sphere. AI would be in a position to control nuclear facilities, navigate fighter planes and even deploy soldiers for combat. It is this aspect which is rewriting negotiations and dialogues among nations with regard to security. How nations have accepted that AI can threaten national security and understanding that the requirement among them is to have a pragmatic solution under a multi AI policy framework(Ipsita Bhattacharya, 2025). The growth of this technology has become one of the most important factors that have become involved in the ‘world’s power struggle’ leading to a complete transformation of equations involved in the world’s power equations.(Mashal Jamal Zai1 & Chen Fei -2025). AI cannot be considered technological advancement entirely, it is the main force behind global politics in terms of economic triumph, military strategizing and geopolitical influence.(Shulga et al., 2025). AI today is the synchronisation of Governments and AI companies. There are some like Palintir that work only for the government , and others like Anthropic and Nvidia that are involved in the both the public and the private sector.

With the introduction of this new technology there are additional equations that have emerged in the form of “new operating system”. These are different from the earlier systems of diplomacy that existed. They have changed the way that countries relate, compete and cooperate. These are specifically seen in the relationships that are existing among the super powers, the United States, and China along with the EU in establishing AI governance institutions(OLOTU & Michael, 2024).

Two aspects have developed in this area, one of them being that ‘contemporary technology’, which is important for multilateral deliberation and the second is that AI itself which is the topic of tech diplomacy.(Trang & Thao, 2025). AI based technology has already changed the way that war fare is being conducted during the current (2026) Iran-USA conflict. This has been in place in the war between Russia and Ukraine too since 2022.(Qader et al., 2025).

In spite of AI being a fairly nascent technology the impact that it has had on the geopolitical diplomacy is exponential , especially when there are a large number of nations that are involved in different levels and type of conflict.

Research Gap and Methodology

The aim of the paper would be to analyse the increasing importance of AI in political diplomacy. How do countries change their power equations with the availability of this technology with the world. What is the possibility of spreading misinformation to achieve supremacy? What means have countries adopted to control AI information entering into their domain? Are their ethical practices that exist or are likely to be implemented to prevent

misinformation among countries? What are the ways that developing nations can brace themselves against the powerful nations.

The methodology adopted would be both quantitative and qualitative. Qualitative explanation would be attempted for quantitative analysis. Both sets of data would be gathered from authentic secondary sources.

Analysis

The phenomenal growth of AI has led to a vast change in various international equations. Some of them are with respect to the Balance of Power among nations. This dominance can be further divided into:

- Productivity boost; It is likely that countries that have access to this technology can increase their productivity at a faster rate, replacing technology for labour. Their dependence on labour workforce declines, and are in a position to increase production with less labour.
- Technological monopolies; There are two major economies of the world that house firms that are producing advanced AI systems, namely US and China. Other countries then become dependent on these two nations. This itself has created a division of power equations among them, leading to countries becoming digitally dependent on them.
- Data Control; AI has led to a large amount of data being simultaneously analysed, leading to the possibility of countries with loose privacy laws losing important data that are private domains of their citizens.

Disinformation; Before the advent of AI, any disinformation that had to be spread required a large amount of labour, large expenditure, and extensive human network. AI has changed all of the above with the use of optimized algorithms that can adapt deceptive messages into turning into an automated industrialised weapon. Skilled writers and manual networks are no longer required, as Large Language Models (LLM) are now able to perform the job easily and effectively. This spreading of disinformation is being aided by the growth of audio and video manipulation. Adversaries are using cloned voices to authenticate the spread of disinformation. Earlier any disinformation was easily recognisable due to the accent or peculiar mannerisms that were peculiar to a country or region, but with the increasing usage of AI, this has been ably camouflaged. AI has been directed to understand where the disinformation would be most effective and dangerous. The technology uses and amplifies sensational material to keep interest alive which is manipulated. AI has the ability to understand its target audience, and create content that would adequately have the maximum impact in terms of 'disinformation'. For

countries the growth of this technology could very well undermine the trust factor among it's citizens.

Beyond Technology

As there has been a vast change in the role of AI in International relations; the scope has moved to encompassing and conceptualising technology , moving beyond the arms race, and along the way stacking relevant themes. The most important being the role of accountability for one's action. This involves among many other factors, ethical standards, which are being conveniently camouflaged.

Ethics

Geo politics- equations in the world depend on the system of governance as well as the forces that decide on the what?, how?, and whom? to produce for. The main issues that have to be solved are:

- strategic technological competition: AI models are as relevant to diplomacy as they are to health or any other field in the world. They are used to transform diplomatic practices, and help in quality decision making. Given various numbers that are available through AI countries are in a position to predict growth along with other important magnitudes, like trade among nations. The increasing use of AI have helped countries to sift through mountains of data helped in formulating strategic decisions with partner countries. These are in addition to the use of this technology in international relations, economic forecasting , trade and military strategy and global competitiveness. Not only does AI give insights into the future by analysing large data sets but also by learning from past experience, leading to adequate road maps being chartered for the future.
- Economic influence; the UN has clearly stated in their 2023 SDG that the growth of this technology will further accentuate the difference between developed and developing nations, with the impact on the poorer countries being greater than the richer ones. Primarily due to the scarce representation of these economies on the global platform.

The impact of AI on a country's economy primarily depends on the labour market structure, fiscal capacity, financial markets, social readiness as well as the close relation between labour displacement due to AI, and consumer demand on the other side. The two most important countries that have achieved great success in adopting and innovating AI technology are China and US. But this does not mean that they are "winners". As "winners", will depend upon the factors mentioned above along with strong relationships with supply chain allies, and also the geoeconomic leverage that they have. Developing countries that maybe lagging in research but

are fairly advanced in internet connectivity, availability of electricity, data quality, competitive businesses and supportive governments can achieve productivity driven gains.

Military applications; This sphere has been completely dominated by the use of AI. Military superiority is dependent on algorithmic superiority and autonomous capabilities rather than the traditional counting of weapons, missile count, and fleet size. Powerful nations like the US and China in their aim to becoming even more powerful tend to overlook and bypass all conventions both at the National and International forums. It is in this area that developing nations fall far far behind. As this technology is a powerful tool with regard to ‘Nuclear Weapons’, it is important that restraint is adopted in ensuring and adhering to ‘Nuclear Convention’ in terms of “nuclear stability”, and “nuclear deterrence”.

Ethical Practices with respect to AI in International Relations:

At the center of respecting ethical values in International Relations are respecting “human right and dignity”. This means that all countries should follow the principle of transparency, fairness, environmental sustainability and human intervention in the use of AI, and being responsible enough in ensuring that these basic “ethics are being adequately met”.

The UNESCO has laid down clear laws with respect to following ethical standards. They have emphasized on the five pillars of Ethics in the use of AI.

The Five Pillars of AI Ethics as stated by UNESCO



Source: [geekforgeeks.org](https://www.geekforgeeks.org)

The basic reason for the laying down of the above tenets is to maintain and respect human right and human dignity. Open source AI infringes on citizens privacy and freedom, in spite of it

having the capability to examine information from large number of different sources. The growth of this technology has led to a lack of transparency and reliability. The aim is therefore to develop a specialised ethical framework in the manner in which AI can be used and the public should be duly informed about it. The idea of ethical practices comes into being in the usage of AI as it's growth brings along with it "power". This "power" provides individuals the ability to do 'things', that were earlier not possible, making people more powerful. This changes the power equation in favour of those that have access to this technology as compared to those who do not, further increasing differences in the level of importance among them aggravating power imbalances in society.

All of the above depends in which country and under what type of governance this technology is being adopted and applied. China for example is a state led country where AI is State driven, while the USA being a market driven capitalist economy, the private sector leads in defense innovation. The EU on the other hand, in spite of it being a democratic capitalist set up, works on an ethic based regulatory framework.

Role of AI in the creation of Imbalance of Military Power among nations

It is technological companies and their software that is driving governments today, an example of this is the way that Palantir's "Maven Smart System", has become a part of the US military framework. This has resulted in technology firms aligning with Governments foreign policy in altering power equations and achieving military dominance over other countries.. These technology firms have integrated data from satellites, drones and radars in almost a fraction of a second, allowing military personnel to determine their target. This has its drawback to as was seen in the way that American Military warfare accidentally targeted a school building in Iran where a number of innocent school children were killed. This occurred primarily due to a shortened window for human deliberation before an attacks resulting in an increase in the risk of "inadvertent escalation", and miscalculation. Such malfunctioning creates a lot of instability and mistrust among nations especially if they are nuclear equipped.

An important area of concern is the fact that AI has reduced the differentiation between a 'peacetime situation', and a 'wartime one'. This has occurred because information is being 'weaponised', primarily through "hyper-targeted disinformation campaigns", and "automated cyber attacks". In such a scenario countries can destabilise rivals without really crossing the line of conventional military attack.

So acute and intense is this race, that countries are reluctant to adopt guidelines that have been laid down by international agencies like the UNESCO, UN General Assembly, or any other

forum as they feel they might fall behind in the race of superiority compared to other countries, thus undermining their “power”.

AI has transformed modern warfare not only across intelligence, command, control and weapons but also the weaponising of information achieved through the spread of disinformation. This increases the capability to impact and influence operations, and has resulted in altering warfare, balance of power, and by default international relations.

Type of Governance prevalent in Countries of the world that influence the implementation of AI in International Relations

Taking into consideration some of the most powerful nations of the world, research has indicated that the type of governance in place influences the policies that are followed. The primary aim of all nations is to become “the most powerful one”. There is a basic difference in the countries so called ‘ecosystem’, that is prevalent. In the United States for example the government basically functions in a capitalist democratic structure where the primary aim is “profit making”. Their approach is one where the states benefit from “commercial-led, bottom up model”. This is restricted due to bureaucratic inertia. This inertia slows down the process of converting commercial technology into military capabilities.

China on the other hand is governed under a socialist set up, where all decisions are “state guided”. This ensures close cooperation between tech companies, university and the military. The major problem that the country faces is the dependence on foreign technology, especially in the field of “semiconductors”, which is primarily controlled by the US.

Russia on the other hand operates on a “State governed model”, which is ‘top down’. They rely on their traditional military-industrial equation. But this system is constrained by various sanctions, economic limitations, brain drain of tech talent that prevent the country from achieving mass production of their military equipment.

India on the other hand is an economy that is based on partnerships. They are reliant on various agreements with industrialised countries of the world. It is a mix of State owned defence enterprises along with a nascent start up system. The start up system is not fully integrated with government defence enterprises. The system is restricted by lack of funds, especially in the AI tech sector, along with a lack of central coordination.

Limitations

The main limitation of this study was that only authentic secondary source was used in analysing the research question. To obtain primary resources, like interviews etc with the concerned

officials would require a large amount of time and finance. The secondary resources by and large have portrayed an unbiased view of the issues involved in the role of AI's role International Relations.

Conclusion and the Way Forward

AI technology has disrupted the manner in which powerful nations view conflicts. This is more so among the super power countries namely the US and China. The race to become and then continue to be at that powerful position has led to the use of AI technology being widely used by nations in achieving continuing superiority. In the current conflicts the rampant use of AI is seen in all spheres of warfare. Private companies in America are spending billions of dollars to develop this technology which is then being offered to the government. Companies like Palantir are solely working for the US government, but others like Open AI , Anthropic are developing on their own and selling their wares to different sellers. They might be restricted in their sales as commanded by the government. China and Russia on the other hand, being more of a socialist set up, have all the technology under Government directed owned companies.

The type of growth of these companies depends on the governance prevalent in the country, but what is more important is that they should all conform to a set of ethics. This set could be laid down by international agencies or a consolidated forum with all the major economies as active partners. European countries do work in tandem on the basis of ethics that are in place in the European Union. This has to be replicated for the world. A lack of it will lead to a continued global geo political crisis, that would lead to major destruction of life, livelihood and growth. Power should not be the only aim, other humanitarian goals should be emphasised by all countries.

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