

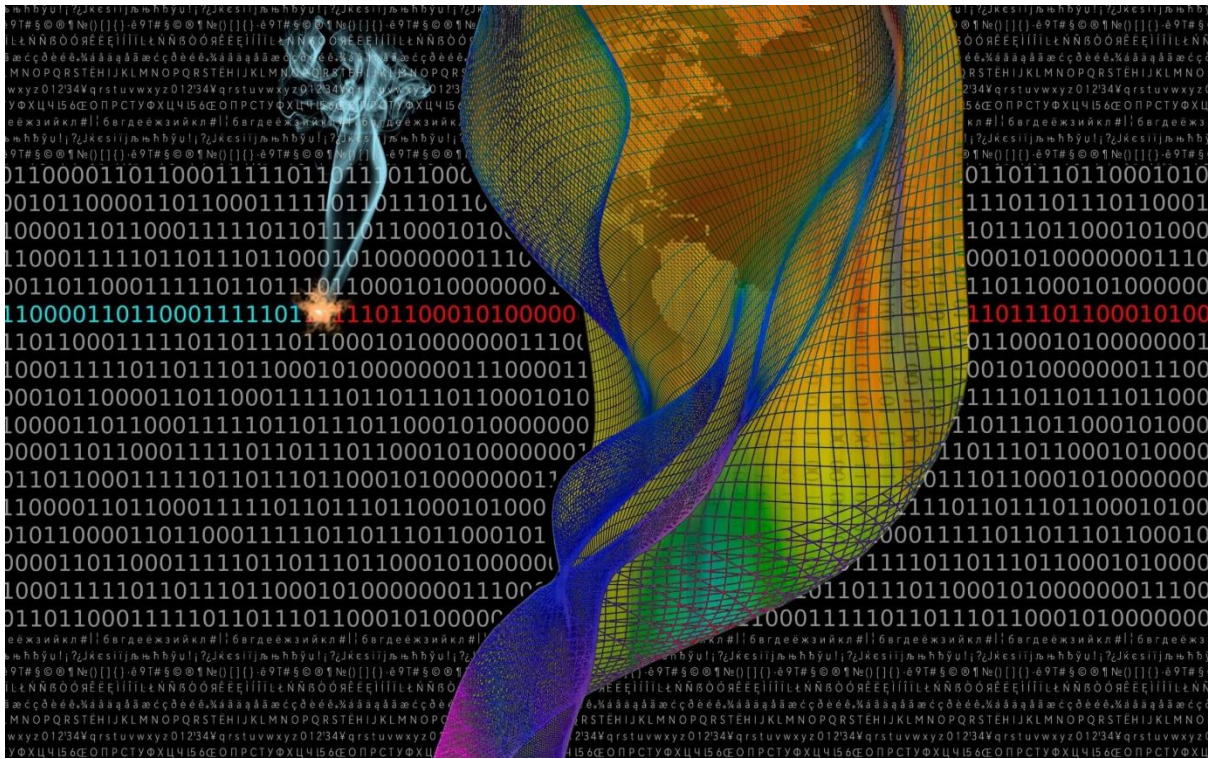
# REACTION

AI must be regulated just like any other technology:

Governance and geostrategic competition matter a great deal in the race to regulate the new leviathan.

Nayef AI-Rodhan

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Imagine a scenario where a global corporation conquers international markets and constantly wriggles out of regulation chokeholds, amassing so much power that even sovereign states have to answer to it. Does this sound familiar? This was the case hundreds of years ago with the [British East India Company](#) and the [Dutch East India Company](#), the industrial arms of the British and Dutch monarchies – although you would not have been far off the mark if you had thought this was a reference to modern-day tech giants.

We should think back to these imperial trading companies of yesteryear as we consider how AI technologies will shape the world, a debate recently reignited by the [boardroom drama at OpenAI](#) as well as significant breakthroughs in AI capacities. There are still many unanswered

questions, both practical and philosophical: is it possible for corporate giants in the AI space to balance safety with the pursuit of revenues and profit? Do we fully understand the ethical, moral, geopolitical and existential implications of these new disruptive technologies?

In the past month, on the heels of the global [AI summit at the famous Bletchley Park](#) near London, the United Kingdom and United States announced the establishment of national institutes dedicated to AI safety. In this spirit, leading tech companies including Meta, Google DeepMind and OpenAI agreed to allow regulators to test their latest AI products before releasing them to the public. Further efforts have also been made to harmonise AI governance and ensure a coordinated approach to generative AI tools, including ChatGPT. These steps should be applauded, but international leaders must not rest on their laurels. As [AI technology](#) advances at a breakneck pace, AI tools will become smarter, cheaper and omnipresent. There is no denying that many AI technologies carry a huge potential for good. Hardly a week goes by without a headline-grabbing report heralding the revolutionary potential of AI in all human and societal imperative needs. But therein lies the rub: a lot of the qualities driving AI's enormous potential could also lead to humanity's disruption and potential undoing.

There are three areas, in particular, that we need to be alert to, starting with AI's potential impact on privacy and civil liberties. Generative AI tools used to create deepfake videos and disinformation campaigns are likely to damage trust in institutions and endanger national and international security. Left to its own devices, Generative AI could also exacerbate tensions around data sovereignty, intellectual property rights and surveillance. Given the large sums at stake and the economic and political influence of the companies creating these technologies, containing these AI tools will become a very difficult task. According to reports, the world's leading seven [tech companies building advanced AI now comprise 28 per cent of the S&P 500 index](#). With these numbers, serious self-regulation is looking like a distant dream.

The second area of concern is the military use of AI. Human machine learning is increasingly employed on the battlefield and in operational logistics. AI-steered drones are already able to suggest targets. At the moment, a human controller still decides whether to authorise the attack, but this might soon change as weapons acquire ever more autonomous capabilities. The prospect of fully autonomous robots with "run-away potential" is real, especially if these systems gain agency, become sentient and unilaterally develop Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) features that supersede human intelligence. There is also a real danger that [AI technology could equip rogue actors with the brainpower and tools to build dirty bombs](#). Asymmetrical AI capacities could empower hegemonic states to be more aggressive and exploitative, with dangerous implications for the stability of the international order.

Finally, we should also be worried about the ability of AI and quantum computing to fuel geopolitical rivalry. The highly disruptive and fast-moving nature of AI – and pressures to incorporate AI into the wider economy – is likely to increase instability in the international system: in particular, within the highly sensitive [nexus between AI, quantum computing](#) and nuclear security. Quantum computing's enormous potential – reports claim that quantum computers [could solve chemistry, physics and engineering problems in minutes](#) that would take today's supercomputers millions of years – has sharpened international rivalries as the race for quantum supremacy deepens. The [Biden Administration](#)'s recent executive order to limit US investments in semiconductors and quantum tech in China has demonstrated how the growing demand for the cutting-edge chips and the computing capacity required to run AI systems can push governments to tighten export and trade controls. These types of unilateral measures by leading world powers, and the responses they might provoke in geopolitical rivals, will become increasingly dangerous as tech companies and countries

around the world race to be first to develop quantum computing technology. Our priority should therefore be to seek shelter in more sustainable approaches to global governance (such as [Multi-Sum Security](#)), defined by absolute gains, non-conflictual competition and win-win scenarios, thus guaranteeing sustainable security for all.

This prompts the question: what can be done to prevent a doomsday scenario triggered by geopolitical rivals cutting corners to attain AI and quantum supremacy? Making AI work for humanity will require a long-term view and transdisciplinary dialogue between neuroscientists, AI researchers, philosophers, ethicists, geostrategists and policymakers from every corner of the world. The real danger of outsized power held in the hands of the very few makes regulating AI particularly important. We must understand the nature of these challenges and ensure that the governance of Generative AI is grounded in [humanity's dignity needs](#). In the 18th Century, the lack of strong regulatory frameworks allowed the British East India Company to become the de facto ruler of much of South Asia. Today, the power and resources held by some of the tech giants is comparable, although AI's enormous potential for good makes the situation less clear-cut.

To protect citizens and the prospects of a peaceful and prosperous global order, AI should be regulated just like any other technology. It is important to focus on existing AI threats – not just possible scenarios that may play out in the distant future. In a similar vein, we need to do more to empower antitrust regulators and enforce the laws currently applied to tech companies developing AI. New regulatory frameworks must guarantee the equitable distribution of AI resources, or at the very least help bridge the technological gap and disparities in development.

Above all, we need to be alert to how toxic commercial and geopolitical competition is leading to the potential covert development and release of new AI products before we have a full understanding of their potential uses and misuses. Narrow national interests and binary geostrategic competition will amplify these challenges. That is why well-grounded compromises must be found to guarantee that AI can be deployed ethically and safely. The stakes for humanity's collective future are far too serious not to try.

*[Professor Nayef Al-Rodhan](#) is a philosopher, neuroscientist and geostrategist. He is the Head of the Geopolitics & Global Futures Department at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy in Switzerland and an Honorary Fellow at St Antony's College, Oxford University.*