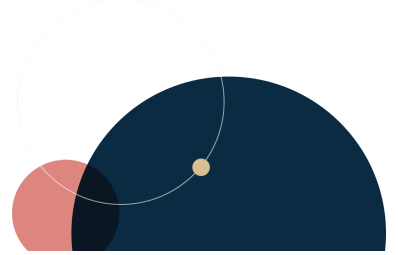


The Trump Administration's AI Agenda: What It Means for National Security

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Overview

Since taking office, the Trump administration has sent a clear message with respect to the regulation of AI—US leadership in AI is critical, and the administration will oppose any rules that hold back industry. For example, when revoking the Biden Administration's AI executive order, President Trump stated, "This order revokes certain existing AI policies and directives that act as barriers to American AI innovation, clearing a path for the United States to act decisively to retain global leadership in artificial intelligence." Similarly, in his speech at the Paris AI Summit, Vice President Vance remarked, "We believe that excessive regulation of the AI sector could kill a transformative industry just as it's taking off. We will make every effort to encourage pragmatic growth and AI policies."

The administration has, in particular, made clear it disapproves of the concept of "AI safety," which it associates with censorship and political bias. In Paris, Vice President Vance stated, "I'm not here this morning to talk about AI safety ... I'm here to talk about AI opportunity."

It would be a mistake, however, to read this shift away from AI safety and focus on AI growth as suggesting a pullback in all areas of AI regulation. On the contrary, early signs from the Trump administration suggest an enhancement of national security laws focused on AI.

This focus on national security regulations can be seen in a number of places. In Vice President Vance's Paris speech, he noted that authoritarian regimes were using AI for a range of malign activities contrary to US national security and foreign policy objectives. He stated, "This administration will block such efforts, full stop. We will safeguard American AI and chip technologies from theft and misuse, work with our allies and partners to strengthen and extend

these protections, and close pathways to adversaries attaining AI capabilities that threaten all of our people.”

Similarly, in President Trump's America First Trade Policy Memorandum, the President directed the Secretaries of State and Commerce to "assess and make recommendations regarding how to maintain, obtain, and enhance our Nation's technological edge and how to identify and eliminate loopholes in existing export controls -- especially those that enable the transfer of strategic goods, software, services, and technology to countries to strategic rivals and their proxies." The memorandum also addresses the Department of the Treasury's new outbound investment national security rules that seek to restrict certain investments in AI companies with links to China and directs the Secretary of the Treasury to determine whether the regulations include "sufficient controls to address national security threats."

President Trump's American First Investment Policy Memorandum also foreshadows the possibility of heightened controls on AI, indicating the administration plans to "strengthen" the authority of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) to further "restrict" investments involving AI and will explore "new or expanded restrictions" on outbound investment involving AI.

Additionally, lawmakers from both parties have called for enhanced export controls on AI-related items following recent advances in the Chinese AI industry. A number of senior Trump administration officials, including Secretary of State Marco Rubio and National Security Advisor Mike Waltz, are also longtime China hawks who appear likely to support such measures targeting China.

Therefore, while the Trump administration appears poised to eliminate many of the regulatory enhancements made during the Biden administration, early signs from the administration suggest that industry should *not* expect significant deregulation when it comes to the various national security rules the Biden administration promulgated with respect to AI. The Trump administration is, of course, likely to make changes to those rules and to put its stamp on them. But those changes are likely in the vein of strengthening rather than weakening the rules, particularly with regard to countering China.

Practices

Artificial Intelligence

National Security & Cross-Border Transactions

Policy Perspectives