

*CAIDP Update 2.39 (Oct. 22, 2021) – NATO Announces AI Strategy*

On Thursday (21 October 2021), NATO Defense Ministers agreed to NATO’s “first-ever” [strategy for Artificial Intelligence](#). The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an intergovernmental military alliance between 28 European countries, Canada, and the United States.

According to the Defense Ministers, “The strategy outlines how AI can be applied to defense and security in a protected and ethical way. As such, it sets standards of responsible use of AI technologies, in accordance with international law and NATO’s values. It also addresses the threats posed by the use of AI by adversaries and how to establish trusted cooperation with the innovation community on AI.”

NATO has identified AI as one of the seven technological areas relevant to defense and security. Others include quantum-enabled technologies, data and computing, autonomy, biotechnology and human enhancements, hypersonic technologies, and space. “Of all these dual-use technologies, Artificial Intelligence is known to be the most pervasive, especially when combined with others like big data, autonomy, or biotechnology,” the NATO Ministers said. They also approved the first policy on data exploitation, and said they will develop similar strategies for other priority areas as they did for AI. NATO expressed specific concern about “threats from malicious use of AI by state and non-state actors.”

NATO countries and allies will commit to the Principles of Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence in Defense – Lawfulness, Responsibility and Accountability, Explainability and Traceability, Reliability, Governability, and Bias Mitigation.

The NATO Ministers also commit to “conduct appropriate risk and/or impact assessments prior to deploying AI capabilities.” They state that “NATO and Allies will consciously put Bias Mitigation efforts into practice. This will seek to minimize those biases against individual traits, such as gender, ethnicity or personal attributes.” And the NATO Ministers aim to minimize interference with allied AI. The Ministers declared “Allies and NATO must strive to protect the use of AI from such interference, manipulation, or sabotage.”

CAIDP noted earlier efforts of the US Department of Defense to promote ethical AI. (CAIDP Update 2.22 – “[US Defense Dept. Affirms Guidance for Responsible AI.](#)”) In May, the Department of Defense issued a new memo on Implementing Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Department of Defense. The memo carries forward the DoD AI Ethical Principles for the design, development, deployment, and use of AI capabilities.

Defense experts have called attention to the development of [drone swarms](#) by the Chinese governments, though the US and other nations are developing similar technologies. Professor Max Tegmark has warned that killer robot proliferation has begun. The NATO AI Strategy does not explicitly prohibit autonomous weapons, the original focus of AI policy.