DÉBAT

Daniel Andler, Professor Emeritus at Sorbonne University, Member of the Académie des sciences morales et politiques, Philosopher

Wonderful. I think we seem to converge on this idea, we need a lot of human intelligence in order to make intelligent use of AI. That is one way of summing up what I think we have agreed upon. Thanks to the excellent chairmanship we have 15 minutes for the general discussion.

Bayu Krisnamurthi, Professor at the Bogor Agricultural University, former Vice Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Indonesia

I have a question for His Excellency, Mr. Sharaf. What is the experience in your own country of the use of AI to increase your people's productivity while at the same time maintaining ethical and cultural guidance for its use?

Omran Sharaf, Assistant Foreign Minister for Advanced Science and Technology of the United Arab Emirates

Thank you for that question but it is a little bit too early to say how far we have got with that. The UAE has been very engaged in this area since 2017 and even before that focusing on establishing different entities, positions and organizations, so we have good experience in building capacity and capabilities as a country. We have a university dedicated to AI, a private sector that is working on cutting-edge AI-related technologies like G42, and a ministry focused on AI, as well as being very engaged with multilateral discussions with regards to governance of the AI sector and how we can come up with international norms and guidelines and a code of ethics. I believe that the UAE is a leading nation when it comes to that, when it comes to the technology, as I said, we have a private sector working on it, as well as an academic sector with different universities working on this area, but I think it is a work in progress when it comes to translating that into applications, not just in the UAE but globally. All the things we have seen so far are still in the demo or qualification phases, and I think they will become fully operational sooner or later. I am talking about AI from the point of view not just in terms of the usual machine learning, I am talking about advanced cutting-edge stuff that was mentioned earlier on this panel. I think that overall, we are not yet fully operational, but we are on the pathway, and it will happen soon, and I really think our technological development in this field and our legal governance developments will happen in parallel. We cannot stop the technological development to wait for the legal or governance point of view to catch up, so it will happen in parallel. I think the more the political discussions related to AI diverge and become polarized, the more we will fall behind the technical developments.

I hope I answered your question.

Meir Sheetrit, former member of the Israeli Knesset

Israel is one of the most advanced countries in the world when it comes to AI technology, and I know that AI creates a lot of opportunities and possibilities for the future that are totally unbelievable. For example, all the new artificial intelligence has been developed for Apple. I know a lot of people in Israel who are dealing with AI, and it creates a lot of possibilities for human beings but, on the other hand it also presents a very high risk to human beings. If you think about Stephen Hawking, Bill Gates, Elon Musk, all three have said that AI presents dangers for the future existence of human beings and in my opinion, they are right. The possibilities for the use of AI are so huge and so unbelievable that I believe we have to take a step back to consider how to control it. Today, there is no control over AI, there is no control over the companies that operate AI, they do whatever they want. When it comes to the governance, I am sorry to say that most politicians do not understand high-tech and AI. It has a lot of advantages but there have to be some limits on what they can or cannot do because the possibilities are so huge it is really unbelievable what can be done with AI, and I think there is a real danger if people do not control it. Therefore, I am asking what you think we should do to make sure that the people controlling AI do not cross the boundaries of what they should be doing.

Daniel Andler

There is a lot of discussion on so-called existential risks, and I have my own opinion, but I am only the chairman not a panelist, so perhaps one of you would like to discuss this issue of control and existential risk.

Lee Tiedrich, Distinguished Faculty Fellow in Law & Responsible Technology at Duke University, Member of the OECD and Global Partnership on AI (GPAI)

The global policy arena is looking at this issue and people are divided on the existential risk issue and how imminent that is, but we are seeing a lot of attention on the safety issues. For example, the EU AI Act bans certain types of AI systems within the EU. That impacts any business, whether or not physically located in the EU, if they are doing business in the EU. There are a lot of EU AI regulations, and all the standards are being adopted right now to help implement them, including on data governance, risk governance, and testing. Even in some countries that are less regulated than the EU, we are seeing AI safety institutes being set up. There was a summit in San Francisco in November hosted by the US AI Safety Institute and part of what they are trying to do is figure out how they can do testing of large language models. It is a work in progress, and I think that everyone is aware that there are risks that need to be managed.

Daniel Andler

I have a lot to say but I must shut up.

Volker Perthes, non-Resident Senior Fellow and Senior Advisor to the German Institute for Internation and Security Affairs (SWP)

My question is triggered by Omran's presentation and thank you for that and to all the others. I think you laid out that AI needs multilateral regulation because, as you said, we cannot discuss it in a multipolar setting, but also that it has to serve national interests, and you work in the Foreign Ministry. I wonder how AI does actually serve national foreign policies because, from what I know about AI and it is working on patterns and regularities and irregularities, it should make foreign policy better in terms of prediction and foresight. However, if I look at the reality in your region or any other, it does not seem that we have got better at foresight. Do you think that AI is already helping you, is useless or will help you in the future?

Omran Sharaf

It is a very good question. I am a very biased Emirati, but I think that the UAE has been quite accurate in its assessments of what is happening in the region with regards to its foreign policy in general. Having said that, I think that AI will help us generate more accurate scenarios because there is no one scenario when it comes to actually predict or assess what will happen in the future. The scenarios for consideration by policymakers will probably be more accurate given that they will have access to more data and be able to analyze it faster, and it is natural that this will come with it. However, when I mentioned it from a political point of view it was not just in terms of applications to foreign policy, I actually meant in the landscape of geopolitics. This is the big challenge, and the reality is that nations need to serve their national interests. It is also a fact that AI is very complicated and advanced, but when it comes to applications, it is very easy to build capacity around from a software point of view if you have the right set of skills. It is not like building a nuclear reactor where you have to have huge facilities. That creates the sort of complexity that forces nations to put their differences aside and start working together.

Daniel Andler

If I may add, the human mind is also a very complex machine, and it is not only a matter of computing power or speed. As long as we do not entirely know how the human mind works, and we are very far from that, it will be very hard to predict to what extent AI can approach human intelligence. I wrote a book in which I say that AI and human intelligence are a double enigma, two enigmas working one with the other, which does not prevent us from making progress but should make us relatively humble about futures like superintelligence, autonomy, responsibility, etc.

Steven Erlanger, Chief Diplomatic Correspondent, Europe, for *The New York Times*

I wonder what artificial intelligence will tell you about the future of HTS in Syria, that is a bit of a joke, particularly for the UAE. We have not talked about the military applications of AI, which I think are the most serious right now. You see it in Ukraine, Russians using it, drones that can smell, and an entirely different form of warfare. You were talking about autonomous torpedoes, naval ships, etc. I know we do not have much time, but I think this is a topic that interests quite a lot of people, particularly people looking towards the next five or six years and the dangers to European security.

François Barrault, Founder and Chairman of FDB Partners, Chairman of IDATE DigiWorld

It is a very good question. When you look at how AI works from a software point of view, including some quantum models, LQMs, our brain can solve Level 4 or 5 differential equations. When you look at fixed trade, drug discovery or new materials, there is so much data and so many entry points that when you do this here it makes this here. AI will provide an additional thinking process that can manage a lot of entry points and create options. In other worlds, AI will not stop war, but it will provide more proactive options about how to solve it and reach peace. When you want to discover new molecules, it takes 10 years or if you want to create new materials it will take seven, but quantum-based AI will give the systems many more entry points precisely because we have reached the capacity of the brain to solve multi entry point problems, but it will never stop a war.

Daniel Andler

Nevertheless, the automatic battlefield is what I call a predicament. There is no solution to it, we just have to face it as best we can, but it is indeed a predicament.

Hervé Mariton, Chairman of the Federation of French Overseas companies (Fedom), President of the Franco-British Council

A remark and a question. The remark is that with AI and as a whole with cyber issues, we did not really tackle the issue of cyber and AI attacks when we had a panel about Ukraine. It raises questions about what Article 5 of NATO means when you can have no attack on a territory but a lot of attacks on AI and cyber systems in different states, which can obviously be a real problem in the future.

We were talking about regulation in Europe, which has actually been criticized in France, and regulation in California has been hinted at in the conversation before. We are in a movement today when obviously with the Trump administration where we are hearing a lot against regulation. How do you answer to the fact that we are asking for more efforts on multilateral regulation on AI, with a tendency from the American administration, which obviously also has consequences in Europe? In France, we read a lot about companies speaking up against regulations, not particularly on AI, but we are in an anti-regulatory movement as a whole coming from the states but that also influences Europe, and at a time when we need something for AI. How do you imagine making progress on regulation in AI at a time when there is an overall feeling against regulation?

Lee Tiedrich

I think we need to give the Trump administration an opportunity to get in and see what they are going to do. During President Trump's first term he also had a couple of AI Executive Orders, and President Biden has used AI Executive Orders. We have to see how that plays out. Coming back to something Daniel said earlier, regulations, laws and policies can come in a lot of different ways. You could have what you call hard law, which is the EU approach, and they passed the EU AI Act, which is law. You can also have a soft law approach in terms of standards, and something even the Biden administration has relied upon is voluntary commitments from companies. One thing that is going to be really important -- that will help with global harmonization -- is the global process working together to come up with common standards. If we have that, countries that may prefer a more voluntary approach can stick to

that. Similarly, jurisdictions such as the EU that prefer more hard regulation, can rely upon that. Common standards can help foster more international interoperability.

Daniel Andler

I am sorry we are over time, but I promised one more question and Omran has something to say.

Omran Sharaf

Just on this point to add to what I said earlier, there is no entire regulatory mindset or approach to AI. I think the mindset and philosophy of the approach is more that we cannot fully regulate something that we do not completely understand. Something was said earlier about the military use of AI and whatever we are seeing today, this is nothing, for me, it is not really the use of AI, the AI we are actually talking about. I think there is much more that needs to be discussed in the military field when it comes to its application but then we need to keep in mind that the distinction between civilian and military technology is kind of fading away. Today, we are literally seeing commercial, off-the-shelf technologies or components being used by violent non-state actors, as well as sometimes violent states, which they deploy in the field to cause negative disruption. With that in mind, we need to realize that it is very difficult to just put a regulation in place because it is much more complicated than we think it is.

Sylvie Ouziel, Founder and Chairwoman of Swift Property Holdings, Founder and CEO of Blue Bridge

I deploy AI agents and assistants at scale for corporations, so I am all on the sunny side of AI. I wanted to come back to your matrix plotting opportunities in terms of technological readiness and dangerousness. I see a lot of discussions about corporations being cautious, explainable AI, possible bias, mistakes, etc., but I would like to come back to the military use cases. We know that the US is now developing autonomous drones, which is called Terminator as we all know, and some other countries like France have rolled out autonomous drones. However, there is a valid argument that some countries will end up developing them so what do we think about regulating such military use cases? For me these are much more interesting than the potential corporate issues we may face.

Omran Sharaf

We are talking about drones here. It is like autonomous cars, they are programmed by software, but autonomous drones are like rockets, if you want to go from A to B, you can send nuclear bombs, drones, etc., and it has nothing to do with AI. The difference with AI is that it takes a holistic view of the situation and incorporates a lot of data that is then given to the commander. I would not talk about artificial intelligence but augmented intelligence, which gathers a lot of information. If the question is whether they will attack the world and take over, that will never happen because at the end of the day, we are the boss, and they are the chief of staff.

Daniel Andler

Thank you very much, that is a very good conclusion. Thank you everyone, audience and panelists.