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Strategically, what is the significance of AI for the future of Iran?

To answer this question, we must have a proper understanding of the future world and the global power structure. Iran's Leader speaks of a new world order, and we need to see the direction of the serious competitors of the Islamic Republic under such conditions. Unfortunately, the world is controlled by a small elite group, largely from Zionist banking families, who try to dictate their desired direction for the world and pull other countries along with their agenda. However, Iran's Islamic Revolution is not intended to be a player in their scheme. Islamic Iran intends to discover and chart its future independently; it aims to act as a director in the international arena, not just

a player. We are not seeking international power through conquest; instead, we aim to introduce the principles of pure Islam and the ideological framework of the leaders of Iran's Islamic Revolution, which we believe contributes to the well-being of humanity. The current world is thirsty for such ideas because, despite all the advancements in science and technology, Western civilization has not brought peace to the world. Western civilization, in fact, is built on a foundation of blood, with 70 million deaths in World Wars I and II, and the current massacre in Gaza, being the result of advanced technologies of Western civilization. The foundation of our international power is scientific authority, and the driver of scientific authority now and in the future is artificial intelligence.

Currently, the Americans might be the leaders in this field. They focus on software, infrastructure, and hardware, effectively leading global AI efforts. The Chinese have developed their AI plan for 2050, aiming for global AI leadership by then. They focus on infrastructure and human capital development, recognizing their weakness in human resources and thus designing comprehensive programs to familiarize new generations with AI concepts. Russia is pursuing its strategic plans differently; it aims to smarten its weaponry and focus on social capital to establish itself as a leading AI-based global power. Putin unveiled this plan in 2017, describing the main strategy and comprehensive roadmap for Russia over the next forty years. The Islamic Republic of Iran also has its unique strategies, which I have explained.

What is Iran's current position in the field of artificial intelligence compared to other countries?

Presently, the United States, China, and Russia, followed by Germany and Japan, are leading in the automation of factories through the use of various robots to reduce the need for human labor. The European Union is focusing on the risks and challenges posed by artificial intelligence, emphasizing human-centric and ethical approaches. They have formed various consortia and are actively

engaged in this field. Canada and India are also among the leading countries in this area. Currently, Iran ranks among the top 15 to 17 countries worldwide in terms of scientific and academic output. However, in terms of technology and its application, Iran is ranked 75th, which is not very favorable. In practical applications, it ranks 95th. It should be noted that some related data might pertain to classified sectors, which are naturally not reflected in statistical assessments. For instance, in the military domain, artificial

intelligence algorithms are certainly utilized but are less frequently included in metrics and parameters. Our goal is to be among the top 10 countries in the three areas mentioned. The technology gap in artificial intelligence between Iran and the world is not significant. Our objective is to be among the top five countries globally in this field, as the primary foundation for this work is human capital, and fortunately, our country is well-positioned in terms of human resources.



Iran's MCI operator unveils its key AI services during GITEX GLOBAL 2023 tech show in Dubai, the UAE.
● digiato.ir



Although we have developed numerous strategic maps and documents, I believe we face a significant challenge: institutional mapping. Institutional mapping means creating a national and international division of labor in AI. It needs to be precisely determined which institutions and universities will play roles in advancing and solving various AI-related issues.

What characteristics define artificial intelligence as a component of power in the international arena?

Artificial intelligence plays a crucial role in shaping international power. Possessing knowledge, technology, and AI-based products will be a power-building factor for the Islamic Republic. Human capital, infrastructure, focus, attention, and data storage and data governance capabilities are extraordinarily important subjects.

In the new world where future generations will live, key resources will no longer be fossil fuels, which will not hold significant added value. What will generate high added value will be data, as well as the processing and analysis of data, which brings knowledge. Whoever possesses knowledge holds power.

The vast amount of data available on the internet, which is continuously increasing, poses a challenge for future management. Can humans manage this volume of data with traditional programs? Certainly not. The management, governance, and data mining will be based on artificial intelligence algorithms. Any country with this capability will be powerful. In the comprehensive plan to be developed, both national and international levels will be considered, and the development of multinational companies will also be on the agenda.

What are the obstacles and challenges facing the development of artificial intelligence in Iran?

The first challenge is the lack of precise understanding and awareness of the overall impact that AI can have on governance. This issue is fundamental for advancing all scientific fields with the aim of addressing a country's systemic problems. Once a thorough and accurate understanding is achieved, organizing, systematizing, and solving these problems with the help of AI become the next steps.

The role of universities in advancing this issue and creating a discourse around it is also crucial. Iran's Imam Hussein University, as a state-owned university, has prioritized addressing these matters. In terms of human capital, we are in a favorable position, and AI has a strong presence in academic disciplines. Our scientific output is relatively satisfactory, but in management and execution, there is still a lack of effective connections with human capital, which needs attention. The country's major automotive, petrochemical, and steel industries, among others, should gradually redefine their activities based on AI technologies. Additionally, knowledge-based companies, tech units, innovation hubs, and startups need to be strengthened. Both public and private sector managers must pay special attention to this policy.



The AI-powered Abu Mahdi cruise missile, unveiled in a ceremony in Tehran, Iran, on July 25, 2023
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Do you think artificial intelligence can surpass humans?

Scientists have two perspectives on this issue. One view is that AI can surpass humans, creating significant risks regarding human control and potentially dominating humans. The second view, contrary to the first, holds that nothing can replace humans in this world. As an expert, I agree with the second perspective. I believe that the principles that have shaped this world, created by God Almighty — the ultimate intelligent creator — will not disappear. However, we must not ignore the natural consequences of mismanaging AI. There are numerous challenges, particularly in cultural, social, and even legal domains, that countries around the world, especially developing countries, face.

This is why an international consortium has been formed. AI diplomacy is an extremely important issue that should be prioritized by our country's statesmen. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in particular, should focus on this area. Our legal experts and judiciary must work on this issue. Currently, international legal frameworks related to AI, along with standards, regulations, and guidelines, are being developed. We must diligently follow and sign the most effective global standards and guidelines.

About five years ago, a protocol was signed by 192 countries, including Iran. A consortium of leading countries in AI is now forming to control AI development and seeking to monopolize AI discussions among a few countries. The Islamic Republic of Iran must pay close attention to these legal dimensions, and our legal experts must be proactive. Iran has established a team to advance active AI diplomacy. We must ensure that some countries do not unjustly interfere with our legitimate rights to use technology.