



Written by [David Kelly](#) on April 24, 2023

DHS Announces New Measures to Tackle AI and Threats From China

The fast-developing technology of generative artificial intelligence (AI) with its promise of unregulated new advances and discoveries led to Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas' [announcement](#) last Friday of the department's first-ever AI Task Force and a department-wide "90-day sprint" to counter threats from the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Mayorkas spoke candidly on a range of topics during his State of Homeland Security [address](#), delivered at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington, D.C., on Friday. He shared how the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) "environment has changed since the Department was founded 20 years ago."



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A DHS [press release](#) shared:

"The profound evolution in the homeland security threat environment, changing at a pace faster than ever before, has required our Department of Homeland Security to evolve along with it," said Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas. "We must never allow ourselves to be susceptible to 'failures of imagination,' which, as the 9/11 Commission concluded nearly 20 years ago, held us back from connecting the dots and preparing for the destruction that was being planned on that tragic day. We must instead look to the future and imagine the otherwise unimaginable, to ensure that whatever threats we face, our Department - our country - will be positioned to meet the moment."

According to the DHS, the new AI task force will report to Mayorkas in 60 days, delivering a concept of operations and milestones for the below-listed applications of AI to advance critical homeland security missions:

- Integrate AI into our efforts to enhance the integrity of our supply chains and the broader trade environment. We will seek to deploy AI to more ably screen cargo, identify the importation of goods produced with forced labor, and manage risk;
- Leverage AI to counter the flow of fentanyl into the United States. We will explore using this technology to better detect fentanyl shipments, identify and interdict the flow of precursor chemicals around the world, and target for disruption key nodes in the criminal networks;
- Apply AI to digital forensic tools to help identify, locate, and rescue victims of online child sexual exploitation and abuse, and to identify and apprehend the perpetrators of this heinous crime; and
- Working with partners in government, industry, and academia, assess the impact of AI on our ability to secure critical infrastructure.



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The DHS “90-day sprint to counter PRC threats” involves department-wide immediate action to drive down risk and assess the evolving threat in the following key areas:

- Defending critical infrastructure;
- Disrupting the global fentanyl supply chain;
- Preventing the PRC from abusing our lawful travel system to harass dissidents;
- Protecting against PRC malign economic influence;
- Advancing safety, security, and economic prosperity in the Arctic and Indo-Pacific; and
- Sharing information on threats posed by the PRC with our partners across all levels of government and the private sector.

A final report will be issued that will “identify opportunities for enduring enhancements to DHS posture to counter these threats.” Those opportunities may include public-private partnerships and department-wide “best practices” to “ensure DHS has the tools and capabilities to counter PRC threats today and well into the future.”

The PRC and Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) development and use of AI is a major concern for the United States. China expert Gordon Chang [told](#) Fox News in an interview last week, “Artificial intelligence poses a direct threat to humanity, but it’ll become even more a threat to humanity if China masters it before we do.”

The Epoch Times [reported](#) that the “United States could face significant threats from China,” sharing the result of a new [report](#) issued by the National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence (NSCAI). The report warns that “America is not prepared to defend or compete in the AI era. This is the tough reality we must face. And it is this reality that demands comprehensive, whole-of-nation action.”

Mayorkas [shared](#) his concerns about the rapid growth of AI and the potential threats the technology poses, especially from Russia and the PRC. “Roughly 14.4 billion devices are connected as part of the Internet of Things, everything from our home thermostats and doorbells to our electric grid and fuel pipelines. This has brought significant advances in capabilities and conveniences, but it also has exponentially increased the ways our interconnected, digital world can be exploited to do us harm,” he said.

The new DHS task force is a sign of the times and should be watched closely. It will be interesting to see what new DHS “best practices” will become administrative state policies forced upon us all — especially since the DHS has a history of sacrificing our liberties and freedom in their efforts to “protect the homeland” in the name of security.



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