

INSIGHTS

U.S. Exit from WHO Threatens Global Public Health

Clear Voice 

By LIANG Yilian & HU Dingkun

On January 22, the United States announced it had completed its withdrawal from the World Health Organization (WHO).

The process began on January 20, 2025, when the U.S. president signed an executive order to exit the organization. Two days later, WHO received formal notice from the U.S. According to WHO regulations, a member state can finalize its withdrawal only one year after submitting such a request.

"Withdrawal from WHO is a loss for the United States, and it's also a loss for the rest of the world," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said. The withdrawal, he warned, "makes the U.S. unsafe ... and makes the rest of the world unsafe, so it's not really the right decision."

The U.S. reportedly still owes 278 million USD in unpaid WHO dues. According to U.S. news organization STAT News, a U.S. State Department spokesperson stated that Washington does not intend to settle this debt. Hence the U.S. is leaving with both a financial shortfall and an unresolved obligation.

The withdrawal represents a clear retreat from international responsibility and poses a serious threat to global public health security. WHO serves as a cornerstone of global health governance. In 2023, the U.S. was one of its largest contributors, providing both assessed and voluntary funding. The abrupt and uncoordinated exit has created a major funding gap, forcing WHO to scale back staff



World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus speaks during a press briefing in Geneva, Switzerland. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

and critical health programs over the past year.

The budgetary constraints will likely reduce resources for low- and middle-income countries, which depend on WHO for funding and health guidance.

Judd Walson, chair of the Department of International Health at Johns Hopkins University, warned that "as countries experience worse health — more mortality and morbidity — economic conditions worsen as sick populations can't work, and the economic situation of already poor countries deteriorates further. Political instability follows, with mass migration, war and conflict, and now things start spilling over borders."

WHO also functions as a central platform for sharing infectious disease data and coordinating responses to global health emergencies. The U.S. has faced persistent public health challenges

in recent years, including repeated H5N1 avian influenza cross-species transmission events and a measles outbreak in 2025 that reached its highest level since 1992.

Leaving WHO weakens the U.S. role in global outbreak coordination and reduces other countries' ability to access timely and accurate disease data from within U.S. borders.

As Madhukar Pai, Canada research chair in Epidemiology and Global Health at the Montreal-based McGill University, noted, if a new outbreak emerges and the U.S. does not participate in coordinated global response efforts, neighboring countries such as Canada may be among the first to feel the impact.

The decision also carries serious consequences for U.S. national security. *Time* magazine reported that one of the first things that could change for U.S. scientists is their access to databases

that are important for monitoring infectious diseases like influenza, as well as emerging threats that could affect the health of Americans, such as COVID.

While many of these data sources are public, and U.S. scientists will continue to access them, they might not have as much insight into how the raw data were collected and processed, Walson said. That could be important for understanding how to interpret the information and for getting a head start on potentially dangerous outbreaks of new infectious diseases.

"By pulling out, we are not just losing our ability to provide data, but also to contribute to the dialogue and make sure we have a say in understanding why the flu vaccine is being composed in the way it is every year," said Dr. Jeanne Marrazzo, CEO of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) and former director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

The move is widely seen as another anti-science action by the U.S. government.

On January 22, IDSA issued a statement condemning the withdrawal.

"The U.S. withdrawal from the World Health Organization is a short-sighted and misguided abandonment of our global health commitments. Global cooperation and communication are critical to keep our own citizens protected because germs do not respect borders," Ronald Nahass, president of IDSA, told ABC News.

The U.S. government should restore respect for scientific evidence and international responsibility by rejoining WHO as soon as possible — rather than positioning itself as a disruptor of global public health governance.

Voice of the World

China's Sci-tech Innovation Leads the Way

By Staff Reporters

International institutions have recently published a series of reports to review global technological development in 2025. China's achievements in this field have been particularly notable, with many sci-tech research results recognized as major scientific breakthroughs.

In the field of basic research, several Chinese cities rank among the leaders globally in scientific research indices, and China's pool of top scientific research talent is growing. Meanwhile, in emerging technologies, China's breakthroughs in AI large model algorithms and applications, quantum technology and industrialization, and new energy have received significant attention.

According to the technology company Digital Science, China has over 30,000 AI researchers, which is three times the number of those in the U.S. Furthermore, China's number of AI postdoctoral fellows and doctoral students is nearly twice that of the total number of AI researchers in the U.S., giving it a unique advantage in long-term innovation.

In January 2026, Microsoft released a report stating that the popularity of DeepSeek in countries such as Russia, Belarus, Iran and in Africa has experienced "explosive" growth. In the field of advanced chips closely related to AI computing power, the financial research institution Bernstein Research predicts that in 2026, local enterprises such as Huawei will occupy 80 percent of the Chinese AI chip market, while NVIDIA's market share will drop to eight percent.

The U.S. journal *Eurasia Review* has reported that the most influential code is not being guarded in California, but is

being shared with the world from Hangzhou and Beijing.

According to statistics from institutions such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology at the end of November 2025, the download volumes of Chinese open-source models like DeepSeek and Qwen have accounted for 17 percent of the global total, surpassing any similar models in the U.S.

Nature magazine stated that DeepSeek R1 is extremely close to the related top models in the U.S., and boasts much lower training costs than that of its competitors.

Apart from the algorithmic innovations, Chinese AI large models are also moving rapidly towards the application end. A report released by Stanford University in the fourth quarter of 2025 said: Since the beginning of 2025, the growth rate of derivative models based on Alibaba's Qwen and DeepSeek has exceeded that of any other base models.

According to a report by the World Economic Forum, a collaborative effort between various stakeholders, including government, industries, universities, research institutes and end-users, is promoting the widespread adoption of AI throughout China. This collaboration is driving the development of AI industry clusters and nurturing a vibrant AI ecosystem.

International observers believe that China's extremely high social acceptance of AI has provided fertile ground for its rapid experimentation and deployment in the fields of healthcare, education and poverty reduction. This "social consensus" is one of the core competitive advantages for the long-term development of AI in China.

Data Flow Should Be Safe and Steady

Comment

By LIANG Yilian & ZHANG Mengran

Amid the omnipresent tide of the digital age, January 28 marked another Data Privacy Day. Data protection has gone far beyond static notions of "privacy protection," shifting instead toward a more dynamic focus: how to ensure the free and orderly flow of data within stringent security safeguards. Consequently, data is no longer just a technical concern; it has instead become a strategic choice shaping future development.

As the "fifth factor of production," after land, labor, capital and technology, data is as vital to human development as a foundation is to a building, or fuel is to an engine. From the perspective of national-level competition, data sovereignty represents a critical extension of state sovereignty in the digital era. Technological evolution relies on high-quality data

as the driving force behind rapid advancement of AI. The quality of data and ethical principles governing its use significantly influence the direction taken by an intelligent society.

The global landscape of data governance, however, is influenced by a proliferation of competing rules. This ramps up digital competition and regulatory rivalry between Europe and the United States, which highlights the urgency of establishing international rules that are secure, fair and orderly. In addition, barriers and divisions are impeding the legitimate global circulation of data as a factor of production, presenting a shared challenge for the international community to overcome obstacles and unblock channels.

During this historic process, China has been an active participant and a constructive contributor. It is committed to promoting a governance framework that balances security and development and coordinates order with circulation on multilateral international platforms, offering a mutually beneficial

"Chinese solution" to the formulation of global rules. The success of this process lies in China's own domestic practice and in-depth exploration of coordinating data security with data factor market reforms.

Recently, the national data work conference, held in December 2025, designated 2026 as the year of promoting the value of data resources, a significant decision. It was made on the back of the macroeconomy's urgent need for new sources of growth, marking a critical stage for testing and actioning the basic systems for data and major projects built during the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-2025). This reflects the inevitable conditions for developing new quality productive forces for high-quality data supply. While the market seeks a smooth flow of data, success means more than placing data on platforms; rather, it lies in ensuring that data creates value as it circulates.

The true essence of the "Chinese solution" means exploring an innovative path toward efficient and orderly

data flows. Through constant domestic innovation, market cultivation and technological safeguards — such as accelerating the development of a secure, open and unified national data market, building infrastructure for cross-border data flow services, and formulating industry-specific guidelines for cross-border data transfers — China is providing credible and workable examples for international rule-making. Participating in, and advancing international regulatory dialogue, shapes a growing consensus that ultimately influences domestic governance. This creates a virtuous cycle, where internal momentum and external engagement reinforce each other.

Eventually, these efforts seek to realize data's potential as a factor of production and empower all sectors of the economy. Only by ensuring the smooth flow of data and making effective use of its power, can we effectively manage the digital civilization — safeguarding the present while shaping a sustainable digital future.



Alibaba's Qwen3-Max-Thinking model. (PHOTO: VCG)

Hi-Tech

AI-driven Cultural Jewelry Celebrates Year of Horse

By LI Linxu

TTF AI, a leader in AI-driven jewelry creation, and the Shenzhen Art Museum jointly launched the 2026 Year of the Horse Spring AI Jewelry Design Exhibition in Shenzhen on January 28, marking the official commencement of their strategic cooperation partnership.

The exhibition showcases nearly 200 AI-generated design paintings on canvas and more than 60 pieces of jewelry items designed and fabricated by AI.

A highlight of the launch ceremony was the debut of a cultural and creative jewelry masterpiece — the "Zheng Wan Li" ("Galloping Thousands Miles") brooch.

In this work, AI transcends its role as a technical instrument, becoming a novel creative force actively engaged in its creative logic and formal derivation.

Inspired by the Tang Dynasty's "Zhaoling Liujun" ("Six Steeds of Zhao Mausoleum") stone reliefs, the brooch fuses the grandeur of ancient Chinese sculpture with contemporary jewelry design.

Its silhouette is defined by sharp,

angular lines sculpting a horse's head with precision, while its mane — rendered as blade-like ridges — pulses with dynamic tension, capturing the instant of a stallion in full gallop.

Beyond form, the piece embodies the unyielding spirit of the striving individual and resonates with the pulse of our current era: Each sharp edge becomes a metaphor for resilience, each line a testament to perseverance — transforming metal into a manifesto of courage.

In Chinese culture, the horse embodies the spirit of pioneering, ambition and long-distance journeying. The brooch is not merely the gallop of a steed, but a posture of persistent exploration, and a relentless pushing beyond boundaries.



◀The "Zheng Wan Li" brooch, an AI-driven cultural jewelry. (COURTESY PHOTO)

Rising Integration of Technology and Industry in 2025

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By December 2025, China had released over 1,500 industrial large models, covering 50 sectors and more than 700 scenarios. The application of large models in the production and manufacturing process has grown significantly, with cases increasing to 25.9 percent from 19.9 percent in the previous year.

This indicates that AI has been upgraded from an auxiliary tool to the "core engine" for the transformation and upgrading of traditional manufacturing.

In 2025, the low-altitude economy took a significant step from pilot exploration to large-scale implementation. Six cities became national pilots for electric vertical take-off and landing aircraft operations, expanding the application scenarios of low-altitude technology.

The output of industrial robots, new energy vehicles and integrated circuits increased by 28 percent, 25 percent and 11 percent respectively year on year.

Institutional support

Successful technology-industry integration cannot be achieved without

strong institutional support. The principal role of enterprises in sci-tech innovation has been reinforced and the role of state-owned and central enterprises strengthened.

From January to November 2025, the R&D investment of central enterprises reached 890 billion RMB, achieving over 120 landmark results.

In 2025, many deep-rooted obstacles to technological industrialization were gradually removed.

For instance, Nanjing Tech University gave 90 percent of the ownership of its job-related sci-tech achievements to

their developers, which greatly encouraged researchers, according to Jiang Min, the director of the university's institute of science.

Universities across the country are exploring innovative practices from multiple perspectives and implementing sci-tech achievements throughout entire industrial chains.

On May 14, seven authorities jointly issued a set of guidelines with 15 measures to promote financial services for sci-tech innovation, including those to boost venture investment, credit supply and insurance support.