

INSIGHTS

Science Decoupling Hurts Human Progress

Clear Voice 

By LIANG Yilian & ZHANG Mengran

Science magazine has reported that in May, several members of the U.S. Congress introduced the Securing Innovation and Research from Adversaries (SIRA) Act, a bill that would prohibit U.S. researchers from using federal funds to collaborate with "blacklisted" Chinese entities. These include Chinese institutions and individuals. Joint research projects, co-authored papers, data sharing, personnel exchanges, and even the co-supervision of students would all be prohibited.

A controversial escalation

The scope and severity of the proposed restrictions are virtually unprecedented in international scientific cooperation since the end of the Cold War.

The legislation is widely seen as a more targeted successor to the controversial Safeguarding American Innovation Act (SAFE Act), which sparked intense debate in 2025. The SAFE Act sought to prohibit U.S. scientists from collaborating with research institutions in countries designated as "foreign adversaries." This proposal immediately triggered opposition from nearly 800 scholars and several Ivy League universities, ultimately forcing lawmakers to remove the provision.

The SIRA Act has met with similar criticism. In a statement to *Science*, Representative Ro Khanna (CS), the top Democrat on the House Select Committee, warned that, "Overly broad legislation risks chilling legitimate, nonsensitive research and actually harms our ability to outinnovate China." Caroline Wagner, a science policy expert at The Ohio State University, described the bill as "an attempt to intimidate universities" into dropping any existing collaborations with "foreign adversaries" and blocking new ones. The backlash illustrates how



A researcher monitors hybrid rice growth in a smart greenhouse at a national lab in Changsha, Hunan province. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

controversial and impractical many in the academic community consider the proposal to be.

National security or competitive anxiety?

Measures like the SIRA Act routinely invoke "national security" to justify pushing U.S.-China scientific relations toward "comprehensive decoupling." Yet such efforts reveal a deeper anxiety among some American politicians. As China continues to make breakthroughs in fields such as AI and biomedicine, and as its share of global scientific output has risen dramatically over the past two decades, concerns about maintaining technological leadership have intensified. In this context, "national security" increasingly appears less like a genuine concern and more like a response to growing competition in science and technology.

For the U.S. to maintain its innovation ecosystem, the contributions of Chinese researchers and Chinese-American scientists are indispensable. A 2024 MacroPolo study found that 38 percent of researchers working at leading U.S. AI

institutions were educated at Chinese universities, slightly exceeding the 37 percent trained in the United States. Furthermore, in 2020, Chinese students accounted for 17 percent of all U.S. doctoral degrees awarded in science and engineering. These figures reflect the long-standing strength of the American research system to attract global talent. However, proposals such as the SIRA Act threaten to undermine that advantage.

The price of decoupling

The U.S. has been down this road before. In 2018, Washington launched the "China Initiative," a program that severely impacted academic cooperation. As *Nature* reported, the share of Chinese papers co-authored with U.S. researchers fell by 6.4 percent between its peak in 2017 and 2023 — the largest decline of any country included in the analysis.

Research published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)* found that China has long been the most important partner for the U.S. in the field of life sciences. However, U.S.-China cooperation slowed in 2019, partly due to investigations

launched by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in 2018, targeting scientists involved with Chinese collaborators. The affected U.S. researchers saw a significant decline in research output compared to their peers.

The chilling effect of political pressure is steadily eroding the openness, collaborative advantages and innovative dynamism that the United States spent decades cultivating. A report by the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft noted that U.S.-China scientific cooperation was the fastest-growing and largest bilateral research partnership in the world between 2005 and 2017. However, the relationship reached a turning point around 2017-2018.

The report argues that, "The evidence from the past decade demonstrates that complete disengagement from China is neither feasible nor desirable." The report warns that efforts to sever scientific ties with China could undermine America's innovative edge by "cutting off access and visibility into global scientific frontiers." It warns that severing scientific ties with China could "concede influence over global scientific norms to China, the European Union and other emerging players."

The facts are increasingly clear: comprehensive decoupling is a self-defeating strategy. Efforts intended to slow down another country's progress often end up constraining one's own capacity for innovation. Science is a shared endeavor of humanity. In the face of major challenges such as climate change and public health, no country can stand alone.

Turning academic exchange into a battleground of geopolitical rivalry is a betrayal of the scientific spirit. China has always been open to international cooperation based on equality and mutual benefit — this is not only a commitment to the laws of science, but also a responsibility for the shared future of humanity. Scientific truth belongs to all of humanity, and no one can stop those who seek it.

Voice of the World

Chinese EVs: A Common Sight Across the World

By LIANG Yilian

China sold six out of every 10 electric vehicles (EVs) sold worldwide in 2025, according to the *Global EV Outlook 2026* released by the International Energy Agency (IEA). That achievement aligns with the more than 13 million EVs sold in the country last year, establishing China indisputably as the world's largest EV market.

But China's role extends far beyond market size. The IEA describes the country not merely as a major consumer market, but as the manufacturing and trading hub of the global EV industry. It now accounts for nearly 75 percent of global EV production and around 40 percent of worldwide EV trade.

International media coverage increasingly attributes the rise of Chinese EVs overseas to market fundamentals rather than political narratives. Reuters has reported that Chinese automakers' expansion abroad is driven largely by economics and consumer demand. As analysts cited by Reuters note, Chinese-made vehicles are increasingly meeting the needs and expectations of overseas drivers.

At the same time, international demand for Chinese EVs continues to grow. According to *Time* magazine, Chinese EVs have become a common sight across Europe, Asia and Latin America.

"China is not an emerging country in the auto industry. It's a top country, at the top level," Francois Roudier, secretary general of the International Organization of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers, a global industry group, told Reuters.

Even amid tariff pressures, Chinese EVs continue to demonstrate strong competitiveness. Reuters reported that Chinese EVs remain competitive in Europe, while interest among U.S. consumers in Chinese-made vehicles is also rising.

Europe's recovering EV market further highlights this trend. A recent Reuters report pointed to growing consumer demand for affordable Chinese electric cars. "What is striking is the strong momentum of Chinese manufacturers," said Philipp Saylor von Amende, managing director of Carwow Germany. Companies such as BYD have evolved from "niche brands" into some of the market's most sought-after names.

The global trajectory of electrification is also reinforcing China's central role. Citing IEA projections, the *Financial Times* reported that electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles are expected to account for nearly 30 percent of the global car market in 2026.

According to the *Financial Times*, citing IEA projections, China produced nearly three-quarters of the world's electric cars in 2025, while exports of Chinese EVs doubled to a record high. The IEA also projects that EVs could account for 60 percent of Southeast Asia's car market by 2035, up from nearly 20 percent in 2025.

This rapid transformation is forcing a broader industry reckoning. According to a recent BBC article, automakers from the United States, Europe and Japan are increasingly losing ground to Chinese manufacturers that are setting the pace, not only in EVs, but also in batteries, software and automotive design.

"The biggest mistake that the developed world is making is believing that the transition is only about electric cars," Shanghai-based auto analyst Bill Russo told the BBC. "It's about who will lead the next generation of mobility technology."

That assessment reflects a broader reassessment now emerging across international media and industry circles. A recent Bloomberg Opinion article said global carmakers "can't afford to give up on China," calling it "the world's largest vehicle market" and "the industry's most demanding arena."

Innovation, Market Drive China's Industrial Competitiveness, not Subsidies

Comment

By GONG Qian

A recent report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) says nearly 60 percent of the global market share growth of Chinese companies across 15 key industrial sectors including car manufacturing, shipbuilding and solar power since 2005 is attributed to government subsidies.

Misplaced focus on subsidies

The report finds that global subsidies amounted to 108 billion USD in 2024, 52 percent of which came from China. OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann said, "Large and persistent industrial subsidies can distort global markets, creating unfair competitive advantages and contributing to excess supply capacity."

However, this conclusion is not only one-sided and unsubstantiated, but also reflects a widespread misunderstanding of the real drivers behind China's manufacturing competitiveness.

First and foremost, industrial subsidies are a universal policy tool employed by economies worldwide, rather than a

practice unique to China. From the US's multi-billion-dollar CHIPS Act and Inflation Reduction Act to the EU's long-standing agricultural and aerospace support measures, governments regularly intervene to shape industrial development. The critical benchmark should always be compliance with World Trade Organization (WTO) rules. Since its accession, China has strictly adhered to WTO principles, upholding openness, fairness and transparency.

The OECD's report ignores the genuine core advantages of Chinese enterprises. China's manufacturing sector did not grow "thanks to subsidies" alone; they were forged through intense market competition, continuous technological innovation, and a vast domestic consumer market.

What the OECD overlooks

CNBC cited a new report from research firm Rhodium Group, which concludes that structural advantages — not subsidies — are a key factor giving Chinese electric vehicle (EV) manufacturers an edge over Western automakers.

"Chinese carmakers benefit from fundamentally lower cost structures, driven by tighter control over their supply chains and a stronger focus on the China market — both of which significantly reduce operating costs," the report says.

The structural strengths include deeper vertical integration, greater scale, and lower overhead costs, including significantly cheaper R&D, the report says.

China's super-large domestic market and intense market competition promote cost reduction and product upgrading. For example, by the end of 2025, the number of Chinese NEVs in use had reached 43.97 million. China's NEV retail penetration hit a record high of 62.9 percent in May 2026.

"[China has] a huge cost advantage through economies of scale and battery technology. European manufacturers have fallen well behind," David Bailey, professor of business and economics at Birmingham Business School, told Reuters.

According to the International Energy Agency's 2025 report, Chinese EV startups have significantly widened their competitive advantage over established automakers in other nations over the last five years. "Battery electric car production costs are over 30 percent lower in China than in advanced economies," the report says.

Moreover, sustained and heavy investment in independent research and development has built irreplicable technological advantages. Leading domestic enterprises have steadily boosted R&D

spending, far exceeding the government subsidies they receive. In green industries, the major players have invested billions of RMB annually in technological research for years.

For instance, CATL, a dominant supplier of EV batteries in China, poured over 90 billion RMB into research over the past decade. BYD's R&D expenditure reached 54.2 billion RMB. Over 13 of the past 14 years (2011-2024), its annual R&D investment exceeded its net profit.

Rhodium's report also says Chinese original equipment manufacturers devote a larger share of their workforce to R&D — BYD reportedly allocates around 11 percent of global staff to engineering and R&D, compared with roughly 8.8 percent at Volkswagen.

Attributing China's industrial prosperity solely or largely to subsidies is a fundamental misjudgment. International organizations like the OECD should play a constructive, neutral role based on accurate data and WTO consensus, rather than serving as tools for geopolitical narratives.

After all, in today's deeply integrated global economy, politicizing trade issues and stigmatizing legitimate developmental advantages resolves nothing. It only adds uncertainty to the global economic recovery.

coordinated development.

Md Bazlur Rashid, first secretary (commercial) of the Bangladesh Consulate General in Kunming, said, "China is a huge market for South Asia and Bangladesh's top trading partner. I hope to develop mutually beneficial economic and trade cooperation with China and expand (Bangladeshi) trade exports to China."

Hi-Tech

Chinese Innovation Scores a Goal at 2026 FIFA World Cup

By LIANG Yilian & HE Liang

As the opening match of the 2026 FIFA World Cup kicked off in Mexico City's Azteca Stadium, the world's attention turned to North America. Yet amid the excitement surrounding the World Cup, one fact stood out: Chinese innovation is everywhere.

Inside a pre-match preparation room in the stadium, coaches consult an AI system on their tablet.

"How can we break down a three-center-back defense?" one of them asks.

Within seconds, the system retrieves historical match footage, tactical diagrams, and statistical analysis, generating simulations with virtual 3D players to test different strategies. What once seemed like science fiction has become

reality at the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Developed jointly by Lenovo and FIFA, Football AI Pro is an advanced AI-powered football intelligence platform that integrates more than 2,000 performance indicators and millions of data points. Harnessing multiple AI agents to work collaboratively, the system can complete

post-match analysis in less than two hours — a task that previously required up to two days.

Notably, the platform is built on a hybrid AI architecture designed to deliver faster and more reliable insights while providing enhanced security and privacy protection.

Strict safeguards govern its use. The system is available only for pre-match preparation and post-match review, and cannot be accessed during live matches, ensuring that the outcomes on the pitch are determined by the players and not algorithms. Sensitive tactical information and player data are accessible only to authorized team personnel through clearly defined permission controls, helping preserve data sovereignty.



A VAR monitor provided by Chinese firm Hisense is used during a match at the 2026 FIFA World Cup in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the U.S. (PHOTO: VCG)

China-South Asia Expo Brings Mutual Benefit to Both Sides

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The number of participating countries and regions, as well as international organizations, has increased to 89, covering all of South Asia, Southeast

Asia, and the member countries of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, serving over 20,000 participating enterprises.

Through innovation and expansion,

the expo has built a solid bridge connecting people's hearts, promoting economic integration, and fostering shared development between China and South Asia, injecting momentum into regional