

U.S. Pressuring Countries to 'Pick Sides' in AI Is Tech Hegemony

Clear Voice

By GONG Qian & HU Dingkun

Reuters reported that the U.S. State Department is drafting a letter to inform the signatories to Joint Statement on AI Opportunity Partnership that they would be excluded from a U.S.-led AI coalition if they join a "competing framework" opposed to Washington.

The joint statement was released at the second Pax Silica Summit in the U.S. in June. The 35 signatories include more than 20 members of the Pax Silica initiative launched by the U.S. in December 2025, and other countries that have expressed interest in cooperating with the U.S. on AI.

Reuters quoted a U.S. official as saying, "It's difficult to see how a country can credibly position themselves as trusted partners in one technology ecosystem while simultaneously signing up for an initiative designed by China to advance a competing vision for AI."

The so-called Pax Silica initiative is ostensibly to secure supply chains for frontier AI models, semiconductor chips, and critical minerals. The U.S. has pledged to provide Pax Silica member countries with relevant technologies for shaping their AI economy.

It is clear that security is merely a pretext for the U.S. to launch the initiative, whose real objective is to contain China. As Trisha Ray, a researcher at the U.S. think tank Atlantic Council, wrote, Pax Silica aims at establishing an economic bloc to compete with China



Visitors observe robots working at the smart pharmacy during the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference held in Shanghai on July 19. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

across the full technology stack.

The subtext of the U.S. letter is obvious: If you pursue in-depth AI cooperation with China, you must decouple from the U.S.-dominated supply chain. Access to U.S. advanced chips, closed-source large language models, and other AI technologies may be cut off.

Ironically, the U.S. frequently claims that its AI supply chain is threatened by other countries and has rallied alliances under the banner of "supply chain security." And now it is using the "supply chain" itself as a tool to threaten and bind its own partner nations.

The attempt to force countries to "pick sides" runs counter to the national interests of many within the so-called Pax Silica economies, particularly developing countries. While advanced U.S. AI technologies are certainly attractive,

China's open-source ecosystem also offers a more cost-effective path to intelligent transformation. Engaging in in-depth AI cooperation with both China and the U.S. simultaneously, and integrating different supply chains and technological pathways based on their own conditions is often more aligned with the development needs of developing countries.

For example, Kazakhstan has joined the Pax Silica initiative and is also one of the founding members of the World AI Cooperation Organization initiated by China. In July, the Chilean think tank AthenaLab noted in a report that although Chile has joined the Pax Silica Declaration and has access to U.S. frontier AI models, it doesn't make it immune to dependence on other countries' AI technologies. "What real alternatives

exist outside that bloc" should be one of Chile's core considerations. The alternatives include increasingly accessible Chinese models.

Demanding that countries make an "either- or" choice between different technological systems is, in essence, interference in their sovereignty and right to development, and a typical manifestation of "technological hegemony." The U.S. attempt to turn Pax Silica into an exclusive bloc is distorting technological cooperation into a bargaining chip for geopolitical games, running counter to the spirit of openness and sharing in technological development.

Pressuring Pax Silica economies to pick sides is nothing short of a reversal of previous commitments. Jacob Helberg, U.S. Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, said in an interview with *The Straits Times* in May that Pax Silica is not an exclusive organization and the signatories are not being forced to choose between the U.S. and China. Helberg was hoping the assurance would allay the concerns of ASEAN countries and persuade them to join the initiative. But the leaked letter makes it clear that the assurance was a hollow one.

The world today has no place for bloc confrontation or zero-sum games. As the world's leading AI developers, China and the U.S. should strengthen cooperation in areas such as technology accessibility and security governance, and jointly lead the global transition to an intelligent era. All countries should have full freedom to choose solutions suited to their own development paths. Forcing countries to "pick sides" will win the U.S. no support and ultimately, leave it isolated.

Two Blockbuster Listings Mark China's Hard-tech Rise

Voice of the World

Edited by GONG Qian

Chinese pioneering humanoid robot maker Unitree Robotics made its stock market debut on the Shanghai Stock Exchange's technology-focused Star Market on August 19, becoming the first of its kind listed on the A-share market. The company has won global attention with its humanoid and quadruped robots that can run, dance and do backflips and kung fu.

It is going to be "the bellwether for the humanoid robotics industry," Lian Jye Su, chief analyst at the Singapore-based market research firm Omdia, told CNBC. Ethan Qi, associate director at market analysis firm Counterpoint Research, called it a milestone for the hu-

manoid industry. Qi told CNN that this can "serve as a benchmark for other initial public offerings in the pipeline."

The listing has given the public a rare chance to invest in a humanoid robotics company and could set a benchmark for other manufacturers, Jack Pearson from investment firm RoboStrateg told BBC.

China is solidifying its dominance in the world's robotics supply chain, and it holds an unrivaled grip on the manufacturing ecosystem for humanoids' bodies, according to *The Wall Street Journal*.

The country dominates the humanoid robotics market, generating 90 percent of the global output, according to Interact Analysis. Among them, Unitree and AgiBot, another Chinese company specializing in embodied intelligence, each shipping more than 5,000, together accounted for 71 percent of the nearly

13,000 humanoid robots shipped globally in 2025, according to Omdia.

Morgan Stanley predicts overall humanoid-robot shipments in China will reach 50,000 units this year and more than 440,000 by 2030.

"China's microelectronics, their motors, their rare earth, their magnets — which is foundational to robotics — they are the world's best," NVIDIA CEO Jensen Huang said in a podcast in March.

Unitree's debut followed another blockbuster listing in Shanghai by the Chinese memory chipmaker ChangXin Memory Technologies (CXMT) in July. In its debut, CXMT soared nearly 466 percent, making it the most valuable China-listed company. This was evidence of increased investor interest in China's efforts at self-reliance, Wu Zhuoyin, senior economist at French investment bank Natixis, told Nikkei.

CXMT is the world's fourth biggest

producer of dynamic random-access memory (DRAM), with its market share of about 7.7 percent in 2025, only behind Samsung Electronics, SK Hynix, and Micron Technology, Inc.

"Amid persistent supply shortages, many customers are seeking to diversify their memory supplier base, which should significantly benefit CXMT and create more business opportunities," Ellie Wang, an analyst at TrendForce, a technology research firm, told Reuters. According to Nomura, a leading financial services group, CXMT's share of the global DRAM market could rise to about 18 percent by the end of 2028.

"I have no doubt the company is going to grow to be a global leader. It's maybe just a question of time that it can be not only a challenger, it can be a global champion in this particular sector," Yiyi Capital CEO Theodore Shou told CNBC.

for path tracking. This significantly improved the drones' resistance to external disturbances. Field tests showed that the drone's straight-line tracking error could be controlled within ±10 centimeters, while the unmanned vehicle maintained a straight-line path tracking accuracy within ±5 centimeters.

Field trials demonstrated that the optimal operation paths automatically planned by the upper-level control system eliminated the need for highly experienced drone operators. Daily operation costs could be reduced by around 200 RMB, while route repetition rates dropped from 10–15 percent to below five percent under skilled manual operation.

The time required for a single drone liquid refill was shortened from five minutes to less than two minutes, doubling effective operating time. A single liquid-refilling unmanned vehicle can simultaneously support two spraying drones, enabling operators to complete an entire operation cycle without having to manually refill pesticides.

AI for All

China's Open-source AI Benefits All

By GONG Qian & CUI Shuang

Chinese AI developers are increasingly embracing open source to speed up technological iteration and ecosystem development.

Recently, MiniMax officially open-sourced its H3 model. Within just three days, it had topped the trending chart on Hugging Face, the world's largest open-source AI platform. Over a hundred enterprises integrated it immediately, with full-stack compatibility from chip makers to inference frameworks.

MiniMax H3 showcased its dominance in video generation, ranking first across three categories — multi-image-to-video, image-to-video, and video editing — on the Design Arena platform.

Emad Mostaque, an iconic figure in the open-source community and founder of Stable Diffusion, said on X, "Bravo to MiniMax AI some interesting things in here."

This is not just a case of overnight success for a single model, but further solid evidence of the collective rise of China's open-source AI models. Major players like DeepSeek, Kimi, and Qwen have released and open-sourced their latest-generation models.

The primary value of open source lies in technological spillover. It tears down barriers of closed-door R&D, making advanced model capabilities accessible to a broad range of developers and enterprises instead of being available exclusively to a handful of tech giants. Such spillover quickly energizes the entire industrial chain: Chip vendors can optimize hardware tailored to model features, inference frameworks deliver instant compatibility, and application developers pursue innovation at far lower costs. The full-stack compatibility rolled out immediately after MiniMax H3's launch exactly illustrates such synergy.

Furthermore, open source is reshaping how technology evolves. Improvements contributed by diverse teams flow

back into the model ecosystem at an accelerated pace, creating a self-reinforcing cycle of continuous advancement. This mechanism boosts efficiency and strengthens the overall competitiveness of China's AI system. Open source is not only a technical choice for Chinese companies but also a competitive strategy to expand market space through ecosystem building and openness.

The significance of this strategy stretches far beyond individual companies or a single country. For global developers, Chinese open-source models deliver more cost-effective alternatives and significantly lower the barriers to deploying AI.

According to *The Economist*, Martin Casado, a partner at the U.S. venture-capital firm Andreessen Horowitz (a16z), revealed that up to 80 percent of U.S. AI startups use Chinese open-source models during their fundraising pitches. MiniMax now serves over one million enterprises and developers worldwide, a five-fold increase from six months ago.

According to Hugging Face, China surpassed the U.S. in monthly downloads and overall downloads, with its open-source models accounting for 41 percent of downloads between February 2025 and February 2026, compared with 36.5 percent in the U.S. Chinese large language models took the top six spots in global usage rankings during the week from March 30 to April 5, according to OpenRouter.

Industry leaders also support the pathway of open source. Jensen Huang, founder of NVIDIA, has repeatedly stated that open-source models enhance cybersecurity, accelerate innovation and knowledge sharing, and help all nations meet their development goals. He has stressed that China is poised to deliver outstanding AI technologies, and the world should keep learning from and cooperating with China.

As tributes to China's open-source innovations evolve from individuals' praise into a widespread consensus, the global benefits brought by Chinese open-source AI are vividly demonstrated.



MiniMax demonstrates its latest AI model MiniMax H3 at the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference. (PHOTO: VOG)

When Sand Wears 'Nano Raincoat'

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This solution has found its place in restoring ecology in extreme environments. Domestically, it has been adopted to address desertification in the Taklimakan Desert, northwest China's Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous region, and the Kubuqi Desert in north China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region.

The products have also been sold to over 40 Belt and Road partner countries, including the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye. A desert greening project in Dubai used a whole set of solutions provided by the company.

Li Xiaobo, general manager of Maenam High-Tech, said they launched a new product named "Mars Water-Retaining Sand," a new material specifically developed for extreme environment in deep space like Mars and the Moon.

Able to block, retain and store water, the material remains stable in super large temperature fluctuation between -90°C and 250°C. This precisely matches the characteristics of soil on Mars and solves the problem of water control in extreme environments.

Customized service brings customers Domestic customers were satisfied

with their products and recommended them to overseas partners, Li said. That was how they gained cooperation opportunities with customers from Guyana in South America.

According to Li, customers in South America have two distinct requirements for the material: vibrant colors and durability. The company's waterproof colored sand meets both requirements.

Most of the waterproof materials in the market are organic, which eventually leads to problems like oxidation, paint peeling and cracking, Li said. Maenam High-Tech develops inorganic materials, with its products designed to last as long as the buildings themselves.

The exported waterproof-colored sand comes in a wide range of colors and has self-cleaning properties, allowing rainwater to wash away surface dirt and leave the walls looking fresh and clean.

During this year's spring Canton Fair in Guangzhou in south China, there were prospective customers from South Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and part of Europe. "Our goal is clear: to become a global leader in the field of eco-friendly new materials and to let hard tech set the trend," Lu said.

Air-ground System Keeps Spraying Drones Flying Longer

Hi-Tech

By Staff Reporters

A research team led by Professor Ding Shihong of the School of Electrical and Information Engineering at Jiangsu University in east China has successfully completed key functional tests of an



The air-ground collaborative autonomous liquid-refilling platform. (COURTESY PHOTO)

"air-ground collaborative autonomous liquid-refilling platform." The system enables drones to land with pinpoint precision and automatically refill pesticides, executing the entire process without human intervention.

For agricultural drone operators working in large fields or hilly areas, the biggest headache is often not pests or diseases, but the limited payload capacity of the drones. A single drone typically has to return for refilling less than 10 minutes after takeoff. Each round trip can take more than 10 minutes. When three to five drones operate simultaneously, operators can find themselves overwhelmed.

This system consists of two spraying drones, a refilling unmanned ground vehicle, and a unified intelligent ground station — simply put, the drones are only responsible for flying, while the unmanned vehicle handles the "liquid delivery."

The concept is straightforward: while the drone carries out spraying from the air, the unmanned vehicle waits at a designated location along farm roads. When the pesticide supply runs low, the system automatically calculates the optimal landing point. The drone then flies to the vehicle, lands precisely, and refills automatically before resuming operations — eliminating the need to return to a fixed base.

To accelerate the transition from laboratory research to real-world agricultural applications, the team moved its testing center directly to farmland. However, the complex wind conditions in hilly areas created significant challenges. The drones would sometimes drift during flight, deviating from planned routes.

To address the problem, the team applied a self-developed generalized super-twisting sliding mode control algorithm