



CSET CENTER *for* SECURITY *and*
EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

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Annual Report



CSET CENTER *for* SECURITY *and*
EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

GEORGETOWN
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A policy research organization within Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service, the Center for Security and Emerging Technology informs high-stakes decisions by providing decision-makers with rigorous analysis on the security implications of emerging technologies.

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Letter from the Executive Director



Helen Toner
Interim Executive Director

Dear Friends of CSET,

When we founded CSET in 2019, it was Washington's first think tank focused entirely on security and emerging technology, and it quickly grew to be the largest research organization in the world working on AI policy. At a time when many viewed these areas as niche, we saw an opportunity to invest in issues that we knew would be enormously consequential for the future.

Central to our approach from the beginning has been building an interdisciplinary team with data skills, foreign-language proficiency, national security experience, and deep technical expertise.. This has allowed us to be at the cutting edge of emerging tech issues, from our seminal paper on [the importance of AI chips](#), published a year before semiconductor supply chain issues hit the front pages during the pandemic, to our first-of-its-kind look at the future of [sophisticated AI agents](#).

CSET continues to look around corners. In 2025, we published the first in a series of papers drawing on an in-house dataset that revealed new information on how China is modernizing its military. CSET researchers analyzed thousands of procurement documents showing the efforts of the People's Liberation Army to purchase AI-related goods and services from both its traditional state-owned contractors and newer vendors.

[Our September 2025 report](#) revealed *who* showed up in these tender documents. In 2026, we've already published the first in a series on *what* the PLA was seeking to purchase. CSET is using the PLA's own contracting records to assess what China is going to do before they do it.

In the summer, CSET hosted a closed-door workshop on the [automation of AI R&D](#), a topic that is increasingly central in conversations among AI insiders but is largely absent from policy conversations. Against a backdrop of strong disagreement between experts, we identified areas of unexpected consensus, clarified points of true divergence, and mapped what further data is needed to fully appreciate the implications of AI R&D automation. This foundational work positions CSET to provide technical expertise to policymakers as AI R&D automation efforts grow.

Entering 2026, our most recent new initiative is Project ATLAS. ATLAS addresses the proliferation of scientific research that too often exists only in large, messy datasets. Building on our [Map of Science](#) and led by our data team, ATLAS will make scientific data more practically useful by using new LLM-based methods to extract research metadata, organize and describe the global scientific landscape, and identify emerging areas of activity. ATLAS will be a tool for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to find signals of new scientific or

technological applications and plan for the future.

These are a few examples of CSET's work over the past year. In the following pages, you'll read more about our pioneering research and impact.

On a personal note, it has been an honor and a joy to step into the role of Executive Director over the past six months. We took the opportunity of this leadership transition—with Cara LaPointe also joining as our new Director of Analysis in the fall—to take time for a strategic review of where we are and what we want to do next. I'm excited about the research priorities we've identified for the coming year, where we believe focused investment will have outsized impact: doubling down on analyzing the U.S. and Chinese tech ecosystems, continuing our pioneering work on how the U.S. can responsibly adopt AI for national security missions, investing in Project ATLAS to draw insights from data about scientific progress, and expanding our focus on the security and governance implications of progress at the frontier of AI.

Drawing on the experience, expertise, and energy of our dedicated researchers, we will tackle these big questions and work to inform high-stakes decisions from D.C. to San Francisco and beyond.

We can't do it without your support. Thank you for your help in making CSET's work possible.



Sincerely,
Helen



“Central to our approach from the beginning has been building an interdisciplinary team with data skills, foreign-language proficiency, national security experience, and deep technical expertise.”

Helen Toner
CSET Interim Executive Director

CSET in the Media



FP Foreign Policy



Cole McFaul
Senior Research Analyst & Andrew W. Marshall Fellow



Sam Bresnick
Research Fellow & Andrew W. Marshall Fellow

“Our data leaves little doubt that military-civil fusion is no longer an aspiration in Beijing—it is a reality. Unless the United States adapts its policies to that reality, it may find itself facing a PLA that is not only better armed but also better networked into the engines of civilian innovation.”



Axios



Steph Batalis
Research Fellow

“[Collecting better biological data, and running it through AI] might be the difference between managing a really small disease outbreak and letting it spread and become a much bigger problem.”



National Interest



Ali Crawford
Senior Research Analyst



Matthias Oschinski
Senior Fellow



Andrew J. Lohn
Senior Fellow

“Companies that invest in augmenting human work, respect creative rights, and prioritize transparency in AI deployment will be better positioned to attract top talent and earn long-term trust. In the decade ahead, speed alone won’t define the AI winners—the edge will go to those who treat human capital as a strategic asset.”



Hanna Dohmen
Senior Research Analyst

“China is working hard to build up its semiconductor fabrication capabilities and capacity; however, it still lags significantly due to constraints imposed by U.S. and allied export controls on semiconductor manufacturing equipment.”



Jessica Ji
Senior Research Analyst



Vikram Venkatram
Research Analyst



Mina Narayanan
Research Analyst

“If Congress imposes this moratorium [on states regulating AI], it will effectively shoot itself in the foot by stifling U.S. AI innovation and even endangering national security. The reality is that AI governance infrastructure is necessary for both objectives, and states are well-equipped to contribute to infrastructure — indeed, they are already building it.”



Lauren Kahn
Senior Research Analyst

“It could be that these social media accounts posting AI-generated content were nefarious pages that were trying to build an audience and would later pivot to trying to sell goods or link to ad-laden websites or maybe even change their topics to something political altogether. But I suspect more likely, many of these pages were simply creators who realized it was a useful tactic for getting audience engagement.”



Owen J. Daniels
Associate Director of Analysis and an Andrew W. Marshall Fellow

“There are aspects of the [Trump administration’s AI] Action Plan that many of us see as quite promising in terms of recommendations that we previously made to the government... The major challenge here is going to be implementation.”



Jacob Feldgoise
Senior Data Research Analyst

“Compute has been more skewed toward training in the past, and in the coming years, it’s going to shift much more toward inference, as demand for these AI services grows.”



William C. Hannas
Lead Analyst



Huey-Meei Chang
Senior China S&T Specialist

“[I]t’s fair to say that the DeepSeek surprise opened Western eyes but also closed them. While we now take Chinese AI seriously, we imagine that large statistical models—DeepSeek being one of them—are the only Chinese path to AGI, when there are several typologically different approaches seriously pursued there.”

Highlights of 2025

FEB



Colin Shea-Blymer (left), Owen Daniels (right), and Mia Hoffman attended an International Association for Safe and Ethical AI conference

MAR

Sonali Subbu Rathinam (left), Ronnie Kinoshita (right), Adrian Thinnyun, and Mina Narayanan presented their research at an Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence workshop



MAR



CSET hosted a workshop, *Opportunities in Open Science, Metascience, and AI*, organized by the CSET data team

APR

CSET hosted its inaugural Spring Symposium, *How the U.S. Wins the Global Tech Competition*; former Under Secretary of Commerce Alan Estevez was the keynote speaker



MAY



Mina Narayanan, Cole McFaul, Owen Daniels, and Mia Hoffman presented their research on global AI governance patterns at the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Conference on AI

MAY

Helen Toner testified on the role of trade secret protection in U.S. AI development before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property, Artificial Intelligence, and the Internet



MAY



Steph Batalis and Vikram Venkatram helped organize a workshop, *Violet Teaming AI-Enabled Biosurveillance*, co-hosted by CSET and Texas A&M's Biosecurity and Pandemic Policy Center

JUL

William Hannas testified before the Senate Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee on the topic of Chinese technology transfer



JUL



Ali Crawford delivered the keynote address and participated in a panel at the 2025 Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative Women's Leadership Academy

AUG

Kathleen Curlee was featured in a CNBC mini-documentary, *How the U.S. Became So Dependent on SpaceX*



SEP



Helen Toner, who helped found CSET, was named Interim Executive Director

OCT

CSET hosted a conference, *China's AI Leap*, based in part on a CSET report, *Pulling Back the Curtain on China's Military-Civil Fusion*, which was an exclusive feature in *The Wall Street Journal*; Congressman John Moolenaar (pictured with Emmy Probasco) was the keynote speaker



OCT



The CSET Advisory Board was launched with six founding members: the Honorable Alan Estevez, Joel Meyer, Lauren Bedula, Michael Brown, Michael Howard, and the Honorable Dr. Sarah Sewall

OCT

Maj. Katherine Carroll presented on AI talent in the U.S. Space Force as part of the workforce team's CSET Salon series



DEC



Jessica Ji participated in a panel at the Digital Vulnerabilities in the Age of AI Summit

DEC

Kyle Miller participated in an Information Technology & Innovation Foundation panel, *The State of Open-Source AI and Why It Matters*



Research

As AI dominates news headlines day after day, CSET has kept pace by providing rigorous analysis on topics ranging from the intersection of AI and biotechnology to the future of U.S.–China tech competition. Our experts are known for the depth and integrity of their research. They regularly provide briefings to decision-makers at the highest levels and field inquiries from members of the press seeking to better understand what's at stake as emerging technologies continue to reshape our world.

● Applications

Our Applications team solidified CSET's standing as a premier institute examining China's adoption of AI. The team published an influential report that examined nearly 3,000 AI-related defense contract awards to identify how China's commercial sector and People's Liberation Army are working together to adopt military AI. The report was featured as an exclusive in the Wall Street Journal, served as the lynchpin for a high-profile conference with House China Committee Chairman John Moolenaar and other esteemed China experts, and informed congressional oversight efforts of advanced chip exports from the U.S. to China.

Additionally, the team established a robust pipeline of research analyzing timely national security space challenges and burgeoning trends in international AI cooperation, all while continuing to regularly advise military leaders on emerging technology and directly informing the Pentagon's policies and adoption of AI. The next year will yield further research into Chinese military AI efforts and deep dives on the hurdles hindering the U.S. military's ability to leverage AI.



● Biotech

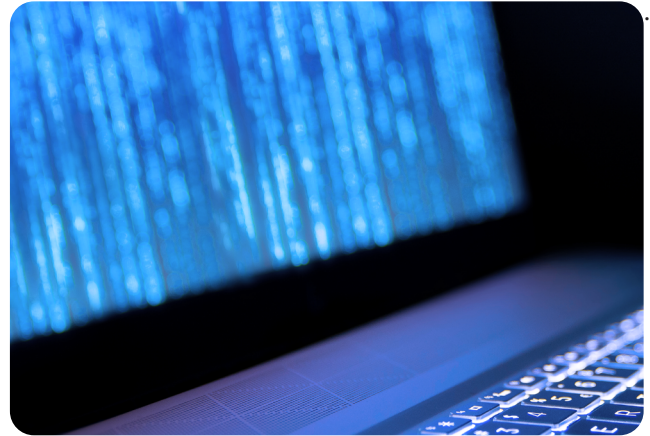
As biotechnology developments drew attention from policymakers last year, CSET's biotech team played a key role in evaluating emerging threats and informing stakeholders on appropriate responses. Team members authored two essays for the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, one for its 80th anniversary edition highlighting the promise and peril of new biotechnology tools and another on ways to counter bioterrorism that was named one of the Bulletin's top multimedia stories of 2025.



The team published new analysis tracing how NIH-funded research directly translates into human health improvements, commented on changes in public health policy and their implications for biodefense, and convened top policymakers, scientists, and industry leaders to identify and address the most pressing safety and security challenges in emerging biotechnology. The team's findings were briefed to congressional staff, national security agencies, and the National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology, directly informing executive branch policy and final NSCEB recommendations. Our experts also built new inroads with officials from Singapore, Sweden, South Korea, and Japan, advising them on how international cooperation can address challenges related to dual-use and risky biological research. Future work includes efforts to provide recommendations for building U.S. biotechnology leadership in line with the Genesis Mission.

● CyberAI

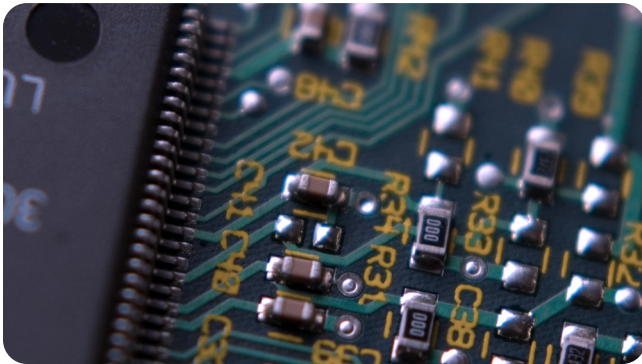
The CyberAI team continued its long-standing work of providing technical expertise to inform the most pressing AI policy questions. The team published analysis on AI's effect on cybersecurity, the use of open weight models to spur research and innovation, and the progress that foreign competitors and open-weight model producers have made in gaining on the leading U.S. corporate models. This analysis served a crucial role in helping tech and policy communities understand the implications of major AI news events, from the unveiling of DeepSeek's R1 model to Chinese hackers' use of Anthropic tools to execute the first reported AI-orchestrated hacking campaign



Additionally, the team hosted roundtables and published reports that outlined the potential of work-based learning for cyber jobs and harmonized AI guidance to support more efficient adoption of AI development standards by product developers. The team will continue to provide expertise to the AI policymaking community in 2026 with analysis on the growing use of distillation to support development of smaller models, recommendations for cybersecurity acquisition, and discussions on the opportunities and limitations of agentic AI.

● Data

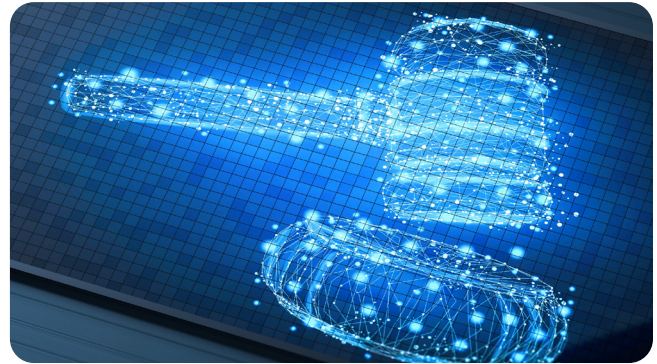
The CSET Data Team updated the interactive, public data tools on our Emerging Technology Observatory, and launched new data resources to help policymakers identify trends and make evidence-based policy decisions. The team completed major updates to our Map of Science tool, providing more coherently grouped research clusters to help users better understand the technological landscape. Additionally, updates to the Supply Chain Explorer illustrate where China has made progress in developing its own semiconductor manufacturing capability and where the U.S. still holds a sizable lead. The team also hosted a National Science Foundation-supported workshop with more than 30 experts to discuss open science, metascience, and the role that AI can play in promoting the two. A report on the event provided policymakers, funders, and researchers with high-priority recommendations to further advance AI-enabled open science and metascience.



In partnership with our workforce experts, the data team also launched PATHWISE, a tool to identify where cyber and AI talent is being produced and is most in demand. In 2026, the Data Team will launch a new interactive tool to explore global patents and publish new datasets with detailed technical information on over 2,000 advanced semiconductors and jumpstart a new project to build on our prior work mapping emerging science and technology trends around the world.

● Governance

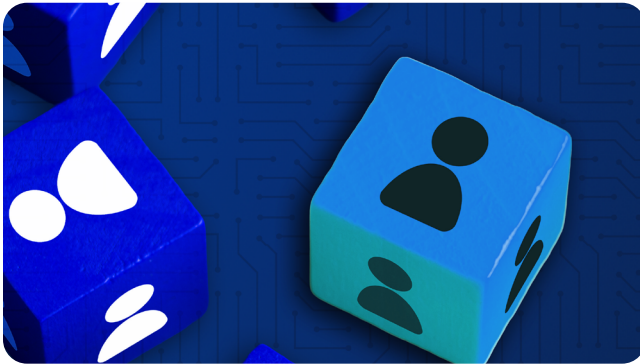
The Governance team made major strides in advancing CSET's profile at the intersection of AI governance and international competition. The team testified on measures to protect U.S. advantages over China in frontier AI before the House Judiciary Committee. It also presented an all-CSET panel comparing U.S., EU., and Chinese approaches to AI at the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers' (IEEE) annual AI conference in the Bay Area, as well as attending events at the Paris AI Action Summit and producing analysis on the competing goals of international actors. Additionally, the team unveiled the updates to CSET's Supply Chain Explorer to an audience of more than 150 policy experts, providing deeper analysis of China's progress in increasing its own semiconductor production capacity.



The team published analysis on newly introduced AI legislation, mechanisms of AI risk and harm, and a framework for policymakers to compare and contrast the approaches of corporate, non-profit, and government frontier governance proposals. Our experts appeared across a wide range of media to discuss the Trump Administration's AI Action Plan and China's AI soft power strategy with open models like DeepSeek. In 2026, the team will provide new insights on national implications of state-level AI governance efforts and examine how effective governance can strengthen democratic competitiveness in AI.

● Peer Watch

The Peer Watch team solidified its role as an authoritative expert on China's decades-old technology transfer programs, while raising the banner about China's aggressive pursuit of artificial general intelligence. The team engaged directly with policymakers, including through testimony before the Senate Small Business Committee for its hearing on how the United States can better protect small businesses from the threat of Chinese technology transfer and espionage. Additionally, the team published multiple reports showing that China is aggressively pursuing artificial general intelligence and that they are doing so in a multitude of ways while U.S. companies focus more selectively on generative AI.



As policymakers grew concerned about the narrowing performance gap between U.S. and Chinese advanced AI and the latter's ability to deploy smaller and more efficient models, CSET's analysis served as a particularly crucial reminder that China's diversified approach in developing advanced AI could pose a threat to the United States' AI leadership. The team shared their insights over the last year in briefings with U.S. and allied government agencies, op-eds and media interviews across a variety of channels. The team looks forward to continuing their public and government outreach, while diving deeper into the ways Chinese leadership is working to align new AI tools with its political and social preferences.

● Workforce

The Workforce team advanced data-driven analysis on how AI is reshaping labor markets critical to U.S. competitiveness and security, while expanding its engagement with policymakers to collectively tackle the most pressing emerging technology workforce challenges. In partnership with the Data team, Workforce launched PATHWISE, a data tool to understand where cyber and AI talent is being produced, where it is in demand, and how policymakers, educators, and industry can better bridge the two. The team also launched its CSET Salon Series, a recurring forum to bring together experts across government, industry, academia, and philanthropy to discuss ways to better attract and retain tech talent in government.



The team engaged with policymakers through congressional briefings, a formal response to the Trump Administration's Request for Information on high-skilled immigration, and a workshop on the AI chip manufacturing workforce. Looking ahead, the team is excited to produce analysis on the role that workers play in the successful adoption of AI and develop an expanded, more granular version of PATHWISE.

Donors

CSET is grateful for the support of those who made financial gifts in 2025 to sustain our research. We accept funding from parties who share our interest in security and emerging technology and respect our commitment to intellectual independence. Learn more about investing in CSET's work at cset.georgetown.edu/donate.

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CSET Culture Statement

CSET was formed to examine emerging technology through an evidence-based, data-driven approach independent of government, funder or ideological perspectives.

CSET staff come from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines, bringing a robust wealth of perspectives and experiences to inform research at the intersection of technology and national/international security.

We are committed to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture rooted in intellectual curiosity and respect.



At CSET, we:

- ✓ Challenge assumptions, follow the evidence, understand how data can inform decisions and formulate policies, and serve as trusted advisors to the national security community.
- ✓ Are lifelong learners who understand that intellectual humility is essential to ongoing growth. We seek and absorb feedback and actively work on self and organizational improvement.
- ✓ Celebrate individuality and encourage all team members to welcome one another to create a sense of belonging.
- ✓ Collaborate because we know that problems are best solved as a team.
- ✓ Are empowered to take agency in the workplace and participate in meaningful decision-making.
- ✓ Support and encourage open dialogue across all teams.
- ✓ Know that while our work is important, our individual and familial needs come first. We value our time outside of work, respect a healthy work/life balance, and support one another in times of need.
- ✓ Measure our success as a team.
- ✓ Place acting with integrity and respect above all.



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