

Position Paper of the People's Republic of China

United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

Agenda: Addressing the Proliferation and Militarization of Autonomous Weapons Systems and Artificial Intelligence in Armed Conflict

Background of the Agenda

China's watching how quickly artificial intelligence and autonomous weapons are changing the way wars are fought. Sure, these tools make things run smoother, boost accuracy, and give militaries a clearer picture of the situation surrounding them. But let's be honest—they additionally cause a considerable amount of additional complications. Complying with international law grows increasingly difficult, figuring out who's actually responsible can be quite troublesome, and there's always the risk that situations might escalate beyond control before anyone realizes. Technology is rapidly advancing, and the regulations aren't quite catching up.

Position of the People's Republic of China

China still believes the old, core ideas: distinction, proportionality, and precaution are important. Battles are more confusing now, for both people and machines, but those principles shouldn't get lost in the chaos. Any approach to these new systems needs to juggle security, humanitarian concerns, and respect for the rights of each country. On AI and autonomous weapons, China doesn't really mix words. AI isn't just for weapons, it's got tons of civilian uses too. China's pushing for careful, practical, and open-minded rules. People should always stay in charge of lethal decisions. Machines shouldn't get to call all the shots. At the same time, China isn't a fan of sweeping bans or trying to outlaw these technologies all at once. Every country's got different priorities; a blanket ban isn't realistic. The focus, for China, is on fair treatment, stable rules, and sticking with international agreements like the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. And "meaningful human control"? That definition can't be carved in stone, it needs to flex as situations change.

Legal and Technical Assessment

Autonomous Weapons Systems exist on a spectrum ranging from human-in-the-loop to fully autonomous configurations. The main legal challenge is not autonomy itself but algorithmic opacity, unpredictability under adversarial conditions, and difficulties in ensuring compliance with International Humanitarian Law in dynamic environments. Deep learning systems may introduce non-deterministic behavior, making accountability and predictability complex. China emphasizes that compliance should be assessed through system-level auditability, human authorization checkpoints, and traceable decision-making processes rather than rigid prohibitions that fail to reflect technological diversity.

Proposed International Framework

China hasn't just watched from the sidelines. They've jumped into international talks under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, backing guiding principles instead of rushing to sign bans. They want people in the loop for serious decisions, and they believe rules should mature gradually. At home, China's added oversight for algorithms, run risk checks, and set up ethical guidelines to make sure progress doesn't ditch safety. Looking forward, China suggests taking things step by step: First, set up non-binding guidelines under the Convention, just to make sure international humanitarian law still holds and meaningful human control doesn't slip. Next, get a UN team working on technical standards, agree on definitions, audit processes, the whole lot. In the end, build trust by sharing info, being clear about military practices, and setting up fast ways to calm things down if confusion starts to build.

Accountability and Proliferation Concerns

China keeps the accountability simple: the State, commanders, and operators are in charge. If things go off the rails because of faulty design or neglect, companies need to answer for it. There's also real worry about these technologies getting picked up by terrorists or other rogue actors, so China wants stronger controls, closer international coordination, and better checks on exports to stop technology from spreading where it shouldn't.

Private Sector and Strategic Stability

China knows the private sector is huge for AI, but governments should stay in the driver's seat, (sovereign regulatory oversight to ensure security and stability) . Ethics matter, oversight matters, and innovation has to stay responsible. On a bigger scale, China flat-out warns against reckless AI arms races. Similarly, undermining global strategic stability or introduce opaque escalation risks in high-intensity conflict scenarios is a major turn off for the nation. The last thing anyone needs is for autonomous weapons to throw off global stability or spark accidental crises.

Conclusion and Briefing of the paragraphs:

In the end, China stands behind multilateralism, with the UN as the umpire. Security, technology, and humanitarian standards are all connected. Managing AI in warfare should be an open, global effort, rooted in consensus and clear legal rules. China's ready to team up with the UN and other nations to make sure this new tech actually supports peace instead of undermining it .China's watching closely as artificial intelligence and autonomous weapons upend the way wars are fought. There's no question these technologies make militaries sharper and quicker—they automate decision-making, improve accuracy, and let commanders see what's happening on the battlefield in ways that were impossible a decade ago. Yet with all this progress comes a growing list of problems. It's not just about machines doing more; it's about the rules and the people behind those machines. The speed of AI development has completely outstripped international law, leaving governments and military leaders scrambling to keep up. Who's accountable if something goes wrong such as- a malfunction, an accidental strike, or an AI system making a catastrophic mistake? The old framework isn't holding up, and China recognizes it's stuck in a world where battlefield clarity has never meant more, or been harder to guarantee.

Even in this new chaos, China emphasizes that the core principles of international humanitarian law, "The distinction between soldiers and civilians, proportional response to

threats, and taking precautions to limit harm”, still matter. These values don’t go out the window just because the technology is more advanced or the lines of responsibility get blurry. China argues that any new rules for AI and autonomous weapons must walk a tightrope: protect security, uphold humanitarian norms, and respect every country’s sovereignty. Cutting corners on any one of these creates new risks.

China hasn’t taken a wishy-washy approach to AI and autonomous weapons. It points out, rather pointedly, that artificial intelligence isn’t limited to bombs and drones. It’s also the backbone of economic growth, industry, and civilian life. Therefore, insisting on careful, balanced governance becomes a crucial necessity. Nobody should hand the keys over to machines, especially when lives are on the line. There must always be human control and oversight. At the same time, China isn’t buying the idea that a sweeping, universal ban on autonomous weapons is the solution. Every nation sits at a different place technologically and militarily, so a blanket rule isn’t practical. Instead, China calls for fair, consistent standards for everyone, based on current international agreements like the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. And when people talk about “meaningful human control,” China pushes to keep that definition flexible, let it evolve as the technology and the realities on the ground shift.

From a legal and technical perspective, the world of autonomous weapons is a maze. You’ve got everything from semi-autonomous machines that always need a green light from a human, to complex systems acting completely on their own in unpredictable environments. The real test isn’t just how independent these systems are, but how their complex algorithms make decisions—especially when things spiral out of control. Fast-learning AI can make choices no developer intended, which complicates assigning blame. China’s position is that we don’t solve this problem with bans; instead, it wants tough systems for audits, human sign-offs, and clear, traceable decision-making. The goal isn’t to shut the door on technology, but to make sure it’s always possible to answer questions when something goes wrong.

Internationally, China’s not just watching from the sidelines. It’s played an active role in the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons talks, supporting guiding principles as a first step rather than racing into a ban. Its bottom line: keep humans in command and let the rules evolve as technology does, building new norms slowly so they stick. Inside its own borders, China’s put in place strong algorithmic reviews, risk management checks, and ethical committees for AI, trying to grow its capabilities without letting safety and public trust slip away.

For what happens next, China suggests moving in stages. Start with voluntary guidelines built under the CCW—putting on record that international law still applies, and human control can’t be thrown out. From there, set up a United Nations task force to nail down technical standards: defining exactly what systems count as autonomous, agreeing how to audit them, and creating ways to double-check they work as promised. To lower the risk of dangerous

misunderstandings, China wants more sharing of military doctrine, transparent communication, and international tools to keep crises from getting out of control.

China sees accountability as a chain: States are ultimately responsible, but commanders and operators are on the hook for their own decisions too. If something fails because of a manufacturer's negligence or a design problem, companies should answer for that. And with AI moving fast, China's worried about these technologies landing in the wrong hands. So it supports stricter export controls, joint monitoring programs, and broader efforts to stop AI weapons from spreading to terrorists or rogue states.

The private sector is vital in pushing AI tech forward, but for China, government should set the rules to keep things safe and stable. Strong ethical guidelines, clear national oversight, and a commitment to "responsible innovation" are all non-negotiable. Globally, China warns against an arms race fuelled by unchecked AI development. It insists that autonomous weapons must never threaten global stability or trigger unintended conflicts.

At the heart of it, China stays committed to multilateralism. The United Nations should act as the main referee in these debates. Security, technological progress, and established humanitarian rules all count; managing AI on the battlefield can't become a closed-door affair. China's ready to cooperate with the UN and other countries to make sure this new generation of technology helps push the world toward peace, not drag it back into chaos. This is precisely why the nation stands out, because it is uniquely positioned to bridge the divide between security imperatives and technological progress, ensuring that Artificial Intelligence serves as a force for stability rather than confrontation in the international system.
