BROOKINGS

Harnessing Al and Emerging Technologies for Global Good

Competitive Cooperation: Al Governance Between Innovation and Risk Management

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Why this matters now

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Al capabilities accelerating governance is lagging. There are shared global risks.

The core tension:

How do nations harness AI for global good while competing for leadership?

Competitive Cooperation

- Cooperation and competition are not binary opposite
- Nations can coordinate on specific challenges where structural conditions enable cooperation despite broader competition.

Conditions for feasible cooperation

Domain separability

Cooperation possible when issues are separable from strategic competition

Mutual vulnerability

Shared catastrophic risks create shared incentives for coordination.

Verification and evaluation feasibility

Trusted evaluation enables compliance without sensitive disclosures.

Use case: DeepSeek 2025

Efficiency breakthrough

Open-weight diffusion

Governance implication

ARGUMENT An expert's point of view on a current event.

What DeepSeek Revealed About the Future of U.S.-China Competition

Washington faces a daunting but critical task.

By <u>Matt Sheehan</u>, a fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and <u>Scott Singer</u>, a visiting scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.



The DeepSeek logo is seen on a mobile screen in Ankara, Turkey, on Jan. 27, 2024. OMER TAHA CETIN/ANADOLU VIA GETTY IMAGES

https://foreignpolicy.com/2025/02/03/deepseek-china-ai-artificial-intelligence-united-states-tech-competition/

Possible areas where cooperation is feasible

- Examples:
 - Extreme risk prevention
 - Technical standards
 - Scientific collaboration
 - Incident reporting

Possible areas where cooperation is not feasible

- Examples:
 - Frontier model caps
 - Military Al
 - Compute controls
 - Value-driven norms

Power asymmetries

- Feasible ≠ fair.
- Participation and capacity gaps persist.

Closing

- Rivalry will persist.
- Cooperation remains essential.
- Competitive cooperation shows where to act.