Abstract

This thesis explores the influence that American and Chinese AI-related developments have had on Britain's attempts to implement artificial intelligence into its national security infrastructure and apparatuses – this exploration serves as the thesis' guiding research question throughout. In order to support this assessment, contextual backgrounds are first provided regarding the development and implementation of artificial intelligence for national security purposes in the United States, People Republic of China and United Kingdom respectively.

In order to answer the research question at hand, this thesis includes a qualitative analysis of British parliamentary debates between 1st January 2021 and 25th June 2024, sourced from Hansard, in which AI-related developments in the People's Republic of China or the United States are referenced in the context of Britain's AI-national security integration. This analysis was conducted using ATLAS.ti, in which document coding was conducted through purposive sampling. The results of this analysis are considered herein through the correlation of code groups and sub-codes pertaining to domains of warfare, identified Chinese AI-related influencing factors, identified U.S. AI-related influencing factors, identified British motivations for AI-national security integration, and identified ways by which the United Kingdom has sought to achieve this.

Following the presentation of results, an interpretation of the results is then provided in the context of my research question, and utilises neoclassical realism as a theoretical framework by which to both assess my results and provide an answer. This also serves to explore the limits of the explanatory power that neoclassical realism holds in explaining the influences identified herein.

The analysis and subsequent interpretation herein indicate that Britain's attempts to integrate artificial intelligence into its national security has largely materialised through its inter- and multinational collaborations; most notably through AUKUS, NATO and Five Eyes. Rather than reflecting distinct influences of Chinese and American AI-related developments, these findings indicate their influence as being intertwined; narratives herein reflect British perspectives of Chinese AI as a threat, and in turn, inter- and multinational collaborations as a means by which to 'contain' or 'counter' an AI-enabled China. This 'push' factor from China is mirrored by a

‘pull’ factor from the United States; a leader in AUKUS, NATO and Five Eyes, the U.S. is referenced very positively in AI-development contexts by British parliamentarians. As such, it appears that perceptions of Chinese threat are spurring British collaborative efforts with the United States in response.