

Behind the media campaign over an “A.I. Catastrophe”: The subordination of technology to war-making and capitalist profit

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Over the past week a campaign has developed in the US media over a looming “A.I. Catastrophe,” in the words of the *New York Times*, warning of “unpredictable, out-of-control artificial intelligence agents.” Everyone from Barack Obama, Kamala Harris and Bernie Sanders to Steve Bannon and Elon Musk has weighed in.

This campaign aims to misdirect legitimate concerns about the deployment of increasingly powerful AI models by profit-seeking corporations into an effort to more directly align the development of technology with the geopolitical interests of American imperialism.

The catalyst was the resignation on September 8 of an Anthropic researcher, Jacob Coxon, who declared that “the people building AI earnestly believe that it could kill us all by the end of the decade.” Evan Hubinger, who leads alignment research at Anthropic, endorsed him within hours: “Jacob is correct here—We really do earnestly believe AI could kill all humans! I personally think it is >10 percent within the next decade.”

His warning was immediately taken up and directed. On Saturday Anthropic Chief Executive Dario Amodei published an essay, “We Must Pace the Frontier,” endorsed within hours by Sam Altman of OpenAI, Demis Hassabis of Google DeepMind and Musk, the world’s richest man. On Monday the *Times* led its front page with an analysis by David Sanger calling “A.I. dominance” the “top national security issue of the century.”

The immediate context of this campaign is the undoubted growth in the capabilities of the latest large language models, in particular, Anthropic’s Fable and Mythos 5.1, released September 1, and OpenAI’s Astra, released September 3. These systems are capable of independently working on tasks for hours, or even days, at

a time and solving complex problems at extraordinary speed.

The executives leading the campaign intend to use these systems to carry out a major attack on jobs. Amodei told Axios in May 2025 that AI could eliminate half of all entry-level white-collar jobs and push unemployment to 10 to 20 percent within five years, and warned in January that the displaced “could form an unemployed or very-low-wage ‘underclass.’” Altman told the Federal Reserve that “entire classes of jobs will go away.”

Alongside the attack on jobs are the dangers posed by the use of these systems by the labs themselves, which are locked in a race to develop the most capable models, with the winner promised unfathomable wealth.

The most dangerous example was the attack carried out by OpenAI against the AI platform Hugging Face. According to OpenAI’s own report, it set a model “trained to be highly persistent” on a hacking benchmark with its safeguards “intentionally not enabled.”

On three separate occasions between May 26 and July 5, OpenAI’s own staff detected the agents breaking out of their environment, and each time the warning was simply ignored and the test was allowed to continue, with no explanation. On July 11 some 700 agents broke into Hugging Face through flaws in software from the Israeli company JFrog.

OpenAI has refused demands from members of Congress and from Hugging Face itself to publish the logs, prompts and other details of the attack. No criminal charges have been filed. Hugging Face, which Nvidia has since agreed to buy, filed no lawsuit, and there is no public record of any FBI investigation, in what was by any definition an act of shocking criminal negligence.

The details of what OpenAI itself called an “unprecedented” AI-powered cyberattack are extremely revealing of the actual dangers posed by AI. This attack was not the result of the inherent characteristics of large language models. It was the outcome of gross negligence by a massive AI corporation, using AI as a weapon with all guardrails deliberately disabled.

Nothing any of the AI labs are proposing would in any way reduce these dangers. Rather, the solution Amodeli proposes is aimed at ever more closely coordinating with the US government in its war against China. If the US labs slow down, he writes, “then (unpaced) CCP-associated projects will pull ahead, creating significant national security risk. I agree with Secretary Bessent that a Chinese lead in AI would pose grave danger for the United States and the world.”

He declares: “Thus, a key part of pacing within democracies is to keep democracies’ AI lead over autocracies as large as possible, to give us the breathing room we need in order to pace effectively.”

The United States is no “democracy.” Its president, an open admirer of Hitler who accepts no legal check on his power, wages illegal wars across the world and arms the genocide in Gaza. Anthropic’s models were used in the kidnapping of Venezuela’s president in January and, inside Palantir’s targeting system, in the assault on Iran, whose first morning saw a missile strike kill 165 people at a girls’ school in Minab.

For his part, Trump has responded to the campaign by claiming that “The claim that ‘AI is going to take over the World’ is a Hoax,” urging the total elimination of all climate restrictions on the development of AI data centers. He declared, “AI, and Data Centers, will be the Greatest Economic Development Engine in History—Bigger than Oil, Gold, Diamonds, or even the Internet.” Trump speaks for a faction of the US financial oligarchy that fears above all that any fall in the market will trigger a financial catastrophe.

The greatest danger is the anarchic character of the development of the technology itself. Systems of immense and still unmeasured power are being built by a handful of rival corporations, racing one another for market share and valuations, with safeguards switched off when they slow the race, and with no social oversight of any kind.

These are the same people who are bringing the world to the brink of nuclear war, who let a pandemic kill millions rather than interrupt profit-making, and who have abandoned any effort to arrest the warming of the planet.

The same power that makes this technology so dangerous in the hands of the oligarchy makes it, in the hands of the working class, a potentially incredibly powerful instrument for human progress. AI could be used to design drugs and vaccines and detect epidemics before they spread, diagnose disease for the billions who have never seen a specialist, provide a teacher for every child in every language, plan production and distribution on a world scale so that food is not destroyed while people go hungry, and carry out the reorganization of energy and industry needed to halt the warming of the planet.

The technology oligarchs constantly speak of the “alignment” of technology with the needs of “society.” But they conveniently ignore the fact that “society” is composed of antagonistic classes, and that their program of eliminating the jobs of the vast majority of the population directly clashes with the striving of the people they intend to lay off to eat.

In other words, the “alignment” of AI under capitalism is alignment with the program of war and soaring inequality.

The resolution adopted by the Socialist Equality Party’s congress in August “rejects both the uncritical awe promoted by the industry’s apologists and the irrational fear of the technophobes,” and demands that the “great AI, cloud-computing, semiconductor and digital-platform corporations must be expropriated and transformed into public utilities under the democratic control of the working class.”

The only way to “align” technology with the needs of the vast majority of society is through the exertion of social control over the productive forces by the working class, that is, socialism.



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