Artificial Intelligence and Rare Earth Metals in the International Arena of Conflict

(Translated)

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From the dawn of history, until Allah (swt) inherits the earth and all that is on it, international conflict has always been driven by two possible motives:

Firstly: The inclination to sovereignty and honor, such as the love of the sovereignty of the ideology of Islam among Muslims and its spread, as was the case with the Islamic State for nearly 1,300 years. It may also be the love of the sovereignty of the nation and the people, racially, as was the case with fascist Italy or Nazi Germany.

Secondly: The pursuit of materialistic gains.

With the demise of the Islamic State and the Soviet Union, the driving force controlling the world was reduced to the pursuit of material gains. This will remain so until the Second Khilafah Rashidah (Rightly-Guided Caliphate) on the Method of Prophethood, which will influence international conflict. The drive to promote and spread the principle of sovereignty will return, and the initiative will be seized from the superpowers and from the leading state in the world, America, due to its mismanagement of the world.

The most dangerous motive for conflict between countries is colonialism in all its forms and manifestations. It is what causes small and large wars — the two world wars, the Gulf wars, the wars in Africa, Afghanistan, Iraq, and others. It is what continues to cause problems, crises, and wars throughout the world, as well as competition, conflict, and strife.

The world is witnessing a frantic race among major powers to control rare earth minerals, given their central importance to modern technological industries, particularly artificial intelligence, renewable energy, and the microchip industry. These resources have become the cornerstone of digital and military transformation, transforming them into a crucial element in the geopolitical balance of power.

Therefore, it was necessary to understand the nature of internet bots, AI, the reality of rare metals, and their impact on the international arena of conflict.

An internet bot is a software application that performs repetitive tasks on a network. The bot follows specific instructions to mimic human behavior, but is faster and more accurate. A bot can also operate autonomously without human intervention. For example, bots can interact with websites, chat with site visitors, or scan content. While most bots are beneficial, third parties design some bots with malicious intent. Therefore, organizations secure their systems from malicious bots and employ beneficial bots to increase operational efficiency.

So bots are of different types, some are harmful, some are malicious, and some are beneficial.

Today, bots represent a pillar of the global technological revolution, witnessing rapid development and transformation from simple industrial tools to intelligent systems used in various fields, from manufacturing and healthcare to security and defense.

In a world of accelerating technological advancements, rare earth metals are the fuel that drives the digital and technological economy. These minerals, which include elements such as neodymium, lanthanum, and dysprosium, have become a cornerstone of industries essential to the era of artificial intelligence and renewable energy. Amid the growing demand for them, an international struggle has erupted between major powers to control these strategic resources. At the forefront of this struggle are the United States and China, the most prominent players in their quest to secure these rare earth metals, which hold the keys to the technological future.

Therefore, rare earth metals play a fundamental role in artificial intelligence, a technology that relies primarily on microprocessors manufactured using rare earth metals. Electronic chips, such as microchips and processors, rely on rare earth metals. Advanced batteries used to power smart devices require these rare earth metals too. As artificial intelligence becomes more advanced, the demand for rare earth metals increases. This is where these rare earth metals are important for the world’s technological and economic future.

The strategic role for major powers:

Rare earth metals have become a weapon that major powers are competing to control due to their importance in securing their economic and political standing. Rare earth metals are not just raw materials. They are tools of power that enhance their influence in the technological market and the military economy.

Washington seeks to reduce its dependence on China in this field. Despite attempts to develop domestic exploration, the United States remains dependent on imports of these minerals from abroad, exposing it to geopolitical risks.

Hence, the intense conflict between the US and China over rare earth metals, one of the most prominent features of modern geopolitical conflict, has become evident. These minerals are now used not only as an economic resource but also as a tool for political pressure.

In the early 1990s, China recognized the importance of rare earth metals in modern, smart industries. It invested in developing technologies to extract, separate, and refine them from other minerals. By the beginning of the 21st century, China had a 90% share of global production. This share was driven by low labor costs and the country’s lax environmental protection policies, which enabled it to export its surplus production at competitive prices.

China has the world’s largest rare earth processing plants, and is among the few countries producing this type of mineral, monopolizing nearly half of the world's rare earth metal reserves, followed by Brazil, Vietnam, and Russia, compared to only 12% in the United States. The United States has only one mine, in California, that exports rare earth metal extracts to China for processing there due to the environmental damage caused by the processing process, which the United States is trying to avoid.

In Ukraine, the National Geological Agency confirmed the presence of rare earth metals in several regions, particularly in the eastern part of the country, which is partially under Russian control. On February 4, 2025, US President Donald Trump announced his desire for Ukraine to supply the United States with rare earth metals, in exchange for financial support for its war efforts, an attempt to strengthen the strategic relationship, by leveraging Ukraine’s natural resources. On February 12 of the same year, US Treasury Secretary Scott Besant made the offer during his meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv.

The offer included granting the United States ownership rights to 50% of Ukraine’s rare earth metals in exchange for previous military aid provided by Washington, estimated at nearly half a trillion dollars. This includes lithium, titanium, and graphite, minerals vital to advanced technology industries, most of which are located in conflict zones in eastern

Ukraine. Zelensky rejected the offer, even though Ukraine has been at war with Russia since 2022 and is heavily dependent on Western military and economic support.

China has repeatedly threatened to reduce its exports of rare earths, posing a threat to US national security, which relies on these materials for technologies such as artificial intelligence and advanced military systems. Meanwhile, the United States is seeking to reduce its dependence on China in this field by encouraging domestic exploration and supporting projects in other countries such as Australia and Canada. However, the challenge remains that China outperforms the United States, not only in production, but also in extraction and refining technologies.

On 4 April, 2025, the Chinese Ministry of Commerce announced that it would begin imposing a licensing system for the export of seven rare earth minerals: samarium, gadolinium, terbium, dysprosium, lutetium, scandium, and yttrium. The decision also included products containing these elements, including permanent magnets manufactured as neodymium magnets (also known as NdFeB, NIB or Neo magnet), which are widely used in electric motors and hard drives. In response, Trump took to social media to attack China, without specifically mentioning rare earth minerals. In a May 30 post, he said, “The bad news is that China, perhaps not surprisingly to some, HAS TOTALLY VIOLATED ITS AGREEMENT WITH US.”

To curb China's advance, the United States has imposed numerous sanctions on the information technology and semiconductor industries. During Donald Trump’s first term, key Chinese companies were blacklisted, and restrictions were further tightened under Joe Biden. In October 2022, Biden banned global nanochip manufacturers from selling advanced technologies to China, escalating tensions. His administration subsequently imposed even tougher sanctions. Regardless of whether Biden or Trump is in power, the policy of curbing and containing China remains unchanged.

Despite these ongoing limitations, China recently made significant progress using its DeepSeek R-1 AI prototype, which cost just $6 million to develop, something American tech giants have failed to achieve for billions of dollars. China also succeeded in developing a 3-nanometer chip, a feat previously dominated by Taiwanese company TSMC. While American companies rely on massive supercomputers containing 16,000 advanced chips, DeepSeek achieved similar results using just 2,000 outdated NVIDIA chips, demonstrating the sufficiency of its hardware.

This technological shift has resulted in massive financial losses for American companies, including NVIDIA, a leading manufacturer of nanochips. This has led to clear state intervention. On January 31, Trump met with Nvidia’s CEO to discuss the DeepSeek project.

However, China’s strategy does not extend beyond economic competition. While it actively participates in the global economic arena, its approach remains largely defensive within its own region, prioritizing stability and strategic economic expansion over confrontational hegemony.

Despite Western attempts to reduce their dependence on China, the current situation demonstrates that the conflict over rare earth metals will continue to rage in the future. The future of artificial intelligence will depend on countries’ ability to secure these strategic resources. With the escalating rivalry between the United States and China, technological security and economic independence are inextricably linked to the ability to access these minerals. Therefore, we find the United States imposing its global system of globalization, privatization, the corporatization of the International Monetary Fund, so-called investment, and other colonialist tools through which it enters countries to plunder our resources. Asharq Al-Awsat reported in June 2017 that “the Sudanese Ministry of Minerals has offered fields

teeming with rare earths used in strategic industries for investment to local companies operating in the country, which number more than 400, as well as to international companies specializing in this field.

Engineer Al-Nour Koko, acting director of the Geological Research Authority at the Sudanese Ministry of Minerals, explained to Asharq Al-Awsat yesterday that there is evidence and discoveries in the Red Sea and elsewhere confirming the presence of rare minerals in a number of fields across the country. He pointed out that the discovered rare earth minerals are of two types: physical, used for scientific purposes, and others used in the country's major strategic industries, which Sudan has entered through the widest doors over the past five years."

Prior to the Eid al-Fitr holiday, the Sudanese Parliament approved the Ministry of Minerals' plan and statement, including its performance for the last quarter of 2016 and the first quarter of 2017, as well as the remaining aspects of the 2017 plan. The report, presented by the parliament's Energy and Mining Committee, addressed the ministry's program for investing in rare minerals. Minister of Minerals Professor Hashim Ali Salem stated that his ministry aims to diversify investment across all minerals this year, while opening applications for investment in rare minerals.

Countries with large reserves of these minerals, such as Australia, Russia, and Canada, now enjoy significant strategic advantages. The capitalist system, embodied by its selfish, materialistic nature and its mechanisms for plundering wealth for the benefit of the wealthy in capitalist countries, is the primary cause of all the economic and financial problems that countries experience on a recurring basis.

In an October 2014 BBC Arabic report by Credit Suisse, 1% of the world's population owns nearly half of its wealth, while 50% of the world's population owns only 1% of its wealth.

This report exposes the flaws of the capitalist ideology, which has turned the lives of hundreds of millions of people into an unbearable hell for the sake of a handful of the world's wealthy and powerful. It reveals the corruption of the capitalist ideology and its unsuitability for humanity, as ideologies are supposed to protect people's affairs and lead them from darkness to light, not to legislate injustice and codify greed, selfishness, and individualism.

This is one of hundreds of reports that confirm humanity's dire need for a system that achieves justice, tranquility, and mercy, which can only be found in the great Deen of Islam, which is preparing to regain its leadership position in the world with the establishment of the Khilafah Rashidah (Rightly-Guided Caliphate) on the Method of Prophethood. Its manufacturing is based on military manufacturing, for establishing a strong industry requires a focus on military manufacturing. For example, the United States and China are considered global industrial powers because they have a focus on military industries, such as America's production of advanced stealth aircraft, advanced military supercomputers, and space technologies. Germany and Japan both benefited from the military orientation of World War II, leveraging their industrial heritage in their current industrial development, producing competitive cars, armored vehicles, and jet engines. Military and space technology are also the source of many innovations in consumer products and by-products, including household electrical appliances, such as the use of Teflon on frying pans, and the use of internet systems to regulate household appliances.

Although some Muslim countries, such as Pakistan, have produced nuclear weapons, they have been deprived of heavy industries due to colonialism. Their armed forces rely on military technology from warring colonialist powers, and many vital areas of their economy rely on foreign products and technologies, from wired and wireless communications to

engines and heavy machinery. Therefore, the Khilafah will work to base its manufacturing on military principles, so as not to be dependent on any single state. It will work on research and development related to heavy industries, and will rely on them. However, both must be embraced within the vision of the leading state. For example, America, as the world's foremost power, established large-scale heavy industries, even seeking to employ foreign scientists, such as German rocket engineers, and establishing universities to conduct technological research. The Khilafah's universities were a preferred destination for the European elite, and Arabic was the global language of science and technology. The Khilafah's arms industry struck fear into the hearts of the Ummah's enemies around the world.

Therefore, the state must ensure the existence of research centers that enable industry in the Khilafah to become a world leader. This will involve large investments by the state, linking industry to university research, to meet the state's requirements for engineers, architects, urban planners, doctors, educational scientists, agricultural engineers, and others. In addition, the state will encourage private sector institutions to play their role in the field of research and development. Hizb ut-Tahrir adopted in its Draft Constitution, in Article No. 162, "All individual subjects of the State have the right to establish scientific research laboratories connected to life issues, and the State must also establish such laboratories." However, in the Muslim World today, there is a huge brain drain, with geniuses emigrating to countries that exploit their skills of practical and immediate benefit.

The Khilafah State's quest to become an industrial state requires that heavy industry, such as the manufacture of engines and industrial machinery, be the engine of industry in general, and that government funding and private investment be its fuel. Furthermore, the state must dominate strategic industries. Despite the immense wealth in Muslim lands, including trillions of dollars locked away from industrial investment in banks and stock markets, the agent rulers have resorted to taking out loans from colonialists, on conditions that prevent local industrial development in both the private and public sectors. From the first day of its return, the Khilafah state will strive to become the world's leading state, unrivaled, as it was before.

With regard to industry, the military focus in the state's policy will lead to the establishment of a heavy industrial base. Hizb ut-Tahrir adopted in its Draft Constitution, in Article No. 74, "The Department of Industry is in charge of all the affairs connected to industry, whether heavy industry such as the manufacturing of engines, machines, vehicles, materials and electrical equipment, or light industry. Similarly, whether the factories are of the public property type or they are included in the private property and have a relationship to the military industry. All types of factories must be established upon the basis of military policy." The explanation of the article stated that "In order that the State becomes independent of other countries and does not become influenced by any of them it should manufacture and develop its own weapons by itself. This makes it independent and in continuous possession of the most advanced and strongest weaponry, regardless of the level of development and advancement of weapons. It would also have at its disposal all that it needs of weapons to intimidate both the evident and potential enemies."

Therefore, we find that the great Islam has made the ownership of public resources, such as minerals, fuel resources, and all forms of energy, such as electricity and other things, public property, and the benefit from them is for all people, and the state guarantees this. Factories that use these resources are also considered public property, and these factories may not be private. This includes coal, gold, copper, pastures, gas refineries, electricity generation stations, and distribution networks. It is not permissible to privatize or nationalize

such factories related to public resources. In addition, it is not permissible to nationalize private property or include it in public property.

In its Draft Constitution, Hizb ut Tahrir adopted Article 138, “Factories by their nature are private property. However, they follow the rule of the product that they are producing. If the product is private property, then the factory is considered to be private property, such as textile factories. If the product is public property, then the factory is considered public property, such as factories for iron ore production.” Article 139 states, “The State is not permitted to transfer private property into public property, since public property is confirmed by the nature and characteristic of wealth and not by the opinion of the State.” Article 140 states, “Every individual from the Ummah has the right to utilise anything from public property, and it is not allowed for the State to permit someone to individually possess or utilise it.”

Therefore, the state must manufacture its own weapons, as well as all the war machines and spare parts it needs. This can only be achieved by adopting heavy industry, and first establishing factories that produce heavy industries, both military and non-military.

It must have factories for the production of nuclear weapons, spacecraft, missiles, satellites, aircraft, tanks, cannons, warships, armored vehicles of all kinds, and various types of heavy and light weapons. It must have factories for the production of machinery, engines, materials, and the electronics industry, as well as factories related to public property and light factories related to the military industries.

Regarding financing industrial development, basic industries will be established in a robust manner, by returning public property to public and state ownership, and other Shariah rulings related to revenues will be applied. The state will be able to finance industrial development through the public and private sectors, without relying on other nations and being subject to their conditions, allowing the state to become self-sufficient in matters such as military technology, clothing, housing, education, and health.

The foreign trade policy with non-belligerent countries will be in a way that encourages them to accept Islam, so that Islam eventually becomes dominant over the entire world. Hizb ut-Tahrir adopted in its Draft constitution, in Article No. 165, “Development and investment by foreign funds within the state are forbidden. It is also prohibited to grant franchises to foreigners.” So the state does not resort to colonialist loans with destructive conditions, and spend from the large state revenues, including the enormous public property such as oil, gas, and rare materials.

The major powers will continue to chase material gains, which will inevitably lead to their demise. The world can only escape this misery and plunder of resources through the great Deen of Islam, implemented by the Second Khilafah Rashidah (Rightly-Guided Caliphate). This Islamic ideology, not the pursuit of material gains, is the driving force behind struggle in the international arena.