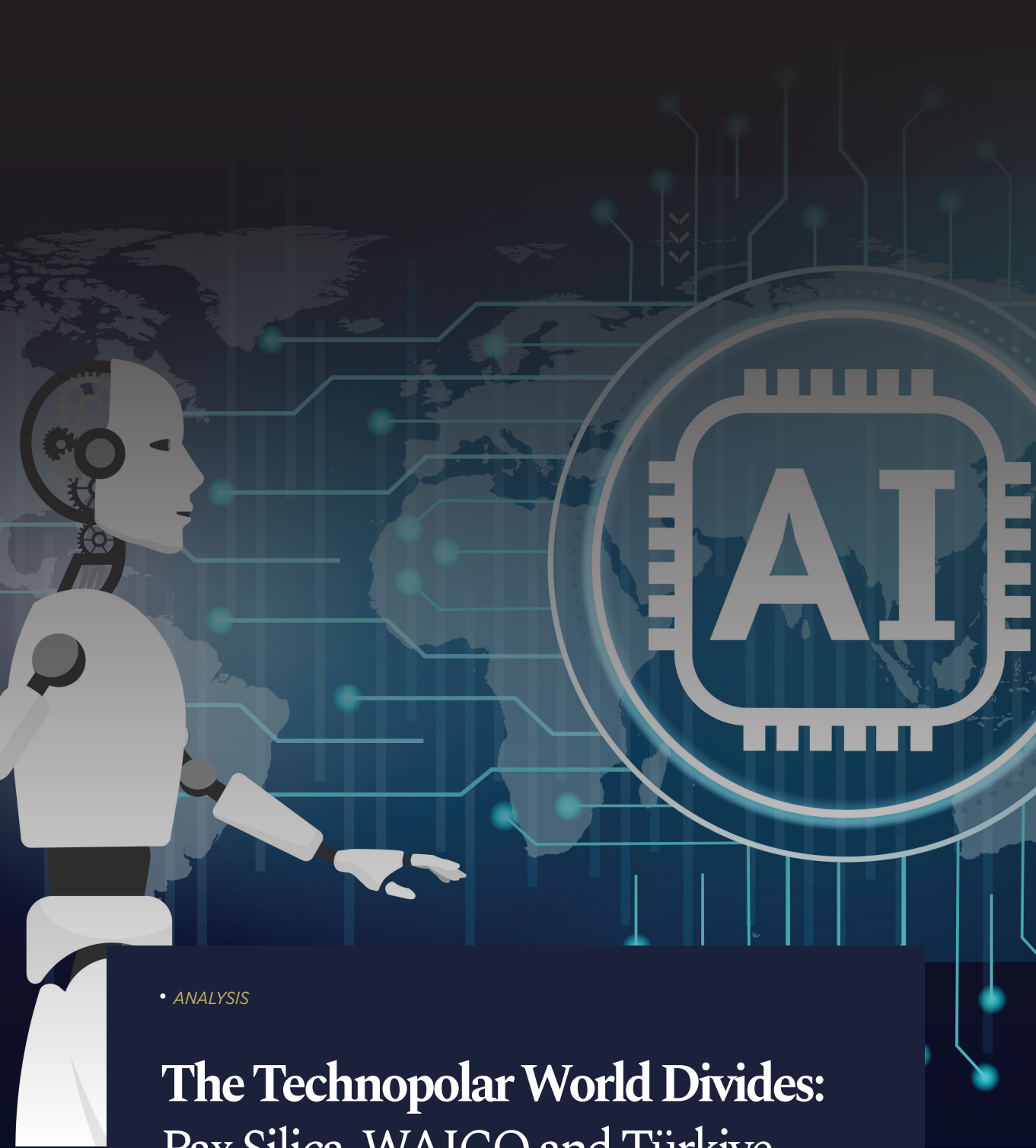




• ANALYSIS

The Technopolar World Divides: Pax Silica, WAICO and Türkiye

Erman Akilli

THE TECHNOPOLAR WORLD DIVIDES: Pax Silica, WAICO and Türkiye

ERMAN AKILLI

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SETA | SİYASET, EKONOMİ VE TOPLUM ARAŞTIRMALARI VAKFI

Nenehatun Cd. No: 66 GOP Çankaya 06700 Ankara TÜRKİYE

Tel: +90 312 551 21 00 | Faks: +90 312 551 21 90

www.setav.org | info@setav.org | @setavakfi

SETA | İstanbul

Defterdar Mh. Savaklar Cd. Ayvansaray Kavşağı No: 41-43

Eyüpsultan İstanbul TÜRKİYE

Tel: +90 212 395 11 00 | Faks: +90 212 395 11 11

SETA | Washington D.C.

1025 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 1106

Washington D.C., 20036 USA

Tel: 202-223-9885 | Faks: 202-223-6099

www.setadc.org | info@setadc.org | @setadc

SETA | Berlin

Kronenstraße 1, 10117 Berlin GERMANY

berlin@setav.org

SETA | Brussels

Avenue des Arts 27, 1000 Brussels BELGIUM

Tel: +3226520486

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This paper argues that the technopolar world order completed its institutional formation in the summer of 2026.

SUMMARY

This paper argues that the technopolar world order accelerated its institutional formation in the summer of 2026. With the second Pax Silica Summit consolidating 24 signatories around the United States in June, and 29 states founding the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization (WAICO) around China in Shanghai on July 16, the two poles of the technopolar system now possess names, addresses, founding texts and membership rosters. The paper reads this bipolarization through the Cold War analogy while insisting on its limits: alignment is enforced today not by armored divisions but by infrastructural dependency, the membrane between blocs is porous, as Kazakhstan's dual membership demonstrates, and the deepest stake of the rivalry is epistemic rather than territorial. Drawing on the frameworks of cognitive diplomacy, epistemic dependency and augmented geopolitics, the paper contends that bloc alignment now determines the conditions under which entire publics will reason, since each pole exports not merely hardware but a complete regime of knowledge production. Against this backdrop, the paper defines Türkiye's stance as selective engagement combined with computational sovereignty: she engages both poles without acceding to either, as evidenced by her signature on the Joint Statement on AI Opportunity alongside her absence from the Pax Silica Declaration. The Artificial Intelligence Action Plan announced by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, examined here through the philosophy of its four axes, Perceive, Harness, Forge and Govern, is designed to provide the indigenous capacity on which the credibility of this posture will rest. The paper concludes by proposing connected sovereignty as the formula for the unaligned majority of the international system, an offer of shelter rather than discipline, rooted in the çınar of Türkiye's founding state tradition.

INTRODUCTION

Moments of structural clarification are rare in international politics. For most of the past decade, observers of the digital order have described a world in transition: a technopolar system, as conceptualized in previous writings¹, in which technological supremacy rather than military mass or economic volume increasingly determines strategic leverage, yet one whose poles remained diffuse, contested and institutionally unnamed.² That period of ambiguity ended in the summer of 2026. On July 16, twenty nine countries gathered in Shanghai to sign the founding agreement of the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization, known as WAICO, an independent intergovernmental organization headquartered in Shanghai.³ Three weeks earlier, on June 25 and 26, the United States Department of State had convened the second Pax Silica Summit in Washington, expanding its own declaration of trusted technology partners to twenty five signatories within six months of the initiative's launch.⁴

1 Erman Akilli, "NATO in the Technopolar World: 'Deterrence, Norms and Challenges'", SETA Analysis, June 27, 2026, accessed July 24, 2026, <https://www.setav.org/en/nato-in-the-technopolar-world-deterrence-norms-and-challenges>.

2 Erman Akilli, *Cognitive Diplomacy and Digital Autonomy: Statecraft in the Age of Artificial Intelligence* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2025).

3 "Twenty-nine Countries Sign Agreement to Establish Global AI Cooperation Body," Reuters, July 16, 2026, <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/twenty-nine-countries-sign-agreement-establish-global-ai-cooperation-body-2026-07-16/>.

4 U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, "United States Hosts Second Pax Silica Summit in Washington, DC," June 26, 2026, <https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesperson/2026/06/united-states-hosts-second-pax-silica-summit-in-washington-dc>.

Taken together, these two events mark the moment at which the technopolar world order acquired what it had previously lacked: two institutionally defined poles, each with a name, an address, a founding text and a membership roster. On one side stands the United States, its technological infrastructure and the states gathering under the umbrella of Pax Silica; on the other stands China as pole leader, its technology ecosystem and the states assembling under the roof of WAICO. The resemblance to the bipolar architecture of the Cold War, to the confrontation of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, is neither accidental nor superficial. Yet, as this paper argues, the analogy illuminates only if its limits are respected. **The new bipolarity is fought not over territory but over compute, not with divisions but with data centers, and its deepest battlefield is cognitive.** It is precisely here that the frameworks of cognitive diplomacy and augmented geopolitics become indispensable for understanding what is at stake, and it is through this lens that Türkiye's strategic position must be defined.



The new bipolarity is fought not over territory but over compute, not with divisions but with data centers, and its deepest battlefield is cognitive.

FROM DIFFUSE TECHNOPOLARITY TO INSTITUTIONALIZED BIPOLARITY

The concept of technopolarity describes an international system in which the distribution of power follows the distribution of technological capacity: semiconductor fabrication, hyperscale computing, foundation models and the standards that govern them.⁵ Until recently, this order was polarized in capability but not in institution. American and Chinese tech firms dominated the frontier of artificial intelligence, and states everywhere negotiated their access bilaterally, commercially and often invisibly. What changed in 2026 is that both principal powers moved to convert capability into architecture.

Structural realists have long observed that hegemonic competition eventually seeks institutional form, since institutions lock in advantage, socialize followers and lower the cost of discipline.⁶ The Cold War produced NATO in 1949 and the Warsaw Pact in 1955 for exactly these reasons. The technopolar era has now produced its functional equivalents, and it has done so with remarkable speed: Pax Silica moved from launch to twenty five signatories in six months, while WAICO moved from proposal to a signed founding agreement with twenty nine founding members in barely a year. Institutionalization at this pace signals not bureaucratic enthusiasm but strategic urgency. Both Washington and Beijing

⁵ Akil, Cognitive Diplomacy and Digital Autonomy.

⁶ Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

have concluded that the window for organizing the middle of the international system is open now and may not remain open long.

THE WESTERN POLE: PAX SILICA AND THE ARCHITECTURE OF “TRUSTED” COMPUTE

Pax Silica was launched in December 2025 by the United States Department of State as its flagship effort on artificial intelligence and supply chain security, convened by Under Secretary for Economic Affairs Jacob Helberg.⁷ Its stated aim is to build a new economic security consensus among allies and “trusted partners” across critical minerals, energy inputs, advanced manufacturing, semiconductors, artificial intelligence infrastructure and logistics.⁸ The inaugural summit gathered stakeholders from Japan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Australia, alongside contributions from Taiwan, the European Union, Canada and the OECD.⁹ The second summit of June 2026 added Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, the European Union, Germany, Greece, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands and Panama as declaration signatories, and produced a separate Joint Statement on AI Opportunity signed by the United States and thirty four other nations.¹⁰

As argued in previous writings¹¹, the initiative must be read together with the American AI Action Plan of July 2025, which frames victory in the artificial intelligence race as a core national interest and links export controls, infrastructure promotion and the global diffusion of the American technology stack into a single strategy of algorithmic power projection.¹² The classical Latin resonance of the name is instructive. *Pax* never meant mere peace; it meant an ordered system of relations upheld by a dominant power. Pax Silica organizes access to the material foundations of the artificial intelligence age through a filter of geopolitical trust, and in doing so it functions as the institutional perimeter of the Western pole.¹³

7 U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, “Pax Silica Summit,” December 12, 2025, <https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesperson/2025/12/pax-silica-initiative/>.

8 U.S. Department of State, “United States Hosts Second Pax Silica Summit in Washington, DC.”

9 U.S. Department of State, “Pax Silica Summit.”

10 U.S. Department of State, “AI Opportunity Statement”, June 25, 2026, <https://www.state.gov/ai-opportunity-statement>.

11 Erman Akilli, “America’s AI Dominance Race: A Wake-Up Call for the World”, Daily Sabah, August 12, 2025, <https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/op-ed/americas-ai-dominance-race-a-wake-up-call-for-the-world>.

12 The White House, “Winning the Race: America’s AI Action Plan,” July 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Americas-AI-Action-Plan.pdf>

13 Erman Akilli, “Pax Silica and Türkiye’s Choice in the Age of Computing Power,” Daily Sabah, February 18, 2026, <https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/op-ed/pax-silica-and-turkeyes-choice-in-the-age-of-computing-power>.

THE EASTERN POLE: WAICO AND THE INSTITUTIONAL ANSWER

The Shanghai agreement of July 16, 2026 is best understood as the mirror image of this construction. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi signed the founding text on behalf of the Chinese government, joined by representatives of twenty nine founding member states including Russia, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Indonesia and Laos, with United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres in attendance.¹⁴ The agreement establishes WAICO as an independent intergovernmental organization committed, in its own language, to the purposes of the United Nations Charter, to extensive consultation and joint contribution for shared benefit, and to a people centered approach to artificial intelligence governance.¹⁵

The framing is deliberately universalist and deliberately oriented toward the Global South, presenting Beijing not as a bloc leader but as the convener of an inclusive alternative to Western dominated governance forums. Observers noted, however, that no major Western state signed the agreement, and that the ceremony took place on the eve of the annual World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai, the principal showcase of the Chinese artificial intelligence ecosystem.¹⁶

The sequencing matters. By anchoring a governance organization to its own industrial exhibition, Beijing fused norm production with technology diffusion, offering member states a package in which standards, infrastructure and market access arrive together. This is precisely how alliance architecture worked in the twentieth century, with the crucial difference that the integrative medium is no longer the interoperability of weapons systems but the interoperability of data regimes, model ecosystems and cloud infrastructures. The likely consequence, already anticipated by informed observers, is a bifurcated governance landscape in which states within the Western orbit calibrate their regulation to instruments such as the European Union's legislation and the OECD principles, while states within Beijing's orbit develop rules under WAICO's emerging normative umbrella, with diminishing pressure for compatibility between the two.¹⁷ Governance institutions, once established, persist and shape norms durably; the architecture

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Governance institutions, once established, persist and shape norms durably; the architecture being poured today is likely to harden into the constitutional concrete of the digital century.

14 “29 Countries Sign Agreement to Establish World AI Cooperation Organization in Shanghai,” Anadolu Agency, July 16, 2026, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/29-countries-sign-agreement-to-establish-world-ai-cooperation-organization-in-shanghai/4000615>.

15 “29 Countries Sign Agreement to Establish World AI Cooperation Organization in Shanghai.”

16 “Twenty-Nine Countries Sign Agreement to Establish Global AI Cooperation Body”, Reuters, July 16, 2026, accessed July 25, 2026, <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/twenty-nine-countries-sign-agreement-establish-global-ai-cooperation-body-2026-07-16>.

17 “China's New AI Club: The World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization,” The Diplomat, July 2026, <https://thediplomat.com/2026/07/chinas-new-ai-club-the-world-artificial-intelligence-cooperation-organization/>

being poured today is likely to harden into the constitutional concrete of the digital century.

THE COLD WAR ANALOGY AND ITS LIMITS

The structural parallel is therefore genuine. Two principal powers, each organizing a coalition around their own infrastructure, each exporting a normative order, each treating the alignment of third states as a strategic resource: this is the grammar of 1949 and 1955 translated into the vocabulary of 2026. Yet three differences distinguish the new bipolarity from its predecessor, and each carries consequences for policy.

First, the currency of alignment has changed. Warsaw Pact membership was enforced by armored divisions; WAICO and Pax Silica membership is enforced by dependency. A state that builds its public administration on one pole's cloud, trains its workforce on one pole's models and secures its supply chains through

one pole's export licenses has aligned itself more durably than any treaty of mutual defense could mandate, because exit costs compound silently with every system integrated.

Second, the membrane between the blocs is porous rather than absolute. The case of Kazakhstan is emblematic: Astana signed the Pax Silica Declaration in June 2026 and appeared among WAICO's founding members in July.¹⁸ Such dual positioning was inconceivable across the *Iron Curtain*, and its feasibility today reveals that the new order tolerates graduated and

layered alignments, at least for now. The reason such layering is possible is that the confrontation no longer unfolds on physical geography alone but on what has been conceptualized in previous writings as augmented geopolitics: a terrain in which every territory carries a second, computational layer of data centers, cloud regions, submarine cables and model ecosystems superimposed upon its physical coordinates.¹⁹

In physical geography a state occupies one location and could stand on only one side of an iron curtain; in augmented geopolitics the same state can host multiple overlapping infrastructures, and alignment becomes a property of layers rather than of soil. Kazakhstan has not moved an inch, yet it inhabits both blocs at once, because its physical singularity is compatible with computational plurality. The Cold War map had one surface; the technopolar map has



The Cold War contested where armies could stand; the technopolar confrontation contests how societies will know.

18 "State Department Expands Pax Silica Initiative at 2026 Summit," Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, June 29, 2026; "29 Countries Sign Agreement to Establish World AI Cooperation Organization in Shanghai."

19 The concept of augmented geopolitics is introduced systematically in the author's Technopolar Lexicon series (Lexicon IV: Augmented Geopolitics), building on the framework of Akili, Cognitive Diplomacy and Digital Autonomy: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/technopolar-lexicon-iv-augmented-geopolitics-erman-akilli-lu2gf/>

at least two, and statecraft that reads only the first will systematically misjudge the second. There is also an asymmetry of composition that the Cold War never displayed. The Western pole recruits along the existing supply chain of the artificial intelligence economy, gathering the states that host fabrication plants (US, Japan, South Korea, Singapore), lithography champions (Netherlands, and as a close observer Taiwan), capital markets (United Arab Emirates and Qatar) and frontier laboratories. The Eastern pole recruits along the demographic and developmental axis of the international system, presenting itself as the organization of those left outside the perimeter of “trusted” partnership. One bloc concentrates capability; the other concentrates population and grievance. Which resource proves more durable in norm competition remains the open question of the coming decade.

Third, and most importantly, the deepest stake of the competition is not territorial but “epistemic”. The Cold War contested where armies could stand; the technopolar confrontation contests how societies will know. It is this third difference that transforms rivalry from a question of industrial policy into a question of cognition, and it is here that the analysis must turn to cognitive diplomacy.

THE COGNITIVE STAKES OF ALIGNMENT

As defined in previous writings, cognitive diplomacy is the form of statecraft appropriate to an era in which influence operates through the architecture of perception, belief and cognitive framing, and its three constitutive dimensions are cognitive presence, cognitive practice and cognitive resilience.²⁰

Read through this framework, the bipolarization of 2026 is not primarily a contest over chips. Chips are the substrate; the product is meaning. The insidiousness of the condition lies in its visibility profile. Energy dependency is visible: pipelines can be mapped, contracts renegotiated, suppliers diversified. Technological dependency is measurable: chips, licenses and patents leave a paper trail. Epistemic dependency, as argued in a recent column, is largely invisible, and precisely for that reason more durable, because the categories through which a society interprets the world, the sources its models treat as authoritative, the questions they decline to answer and the framings they quietly normalize are all decided at the point of design, far from the dependent public’s sight.²¹ Each pole exports not merely hardware and models but an entire regime of knowledge production: training corpora curated under its values, alignment procedures reflecting its sensitivities, governance norms encoding its interests and content bound-

²⁰ Akilli, Cognitive Diplomacy and Digital Autonomy.

²¹ Erman Akilli, “Bilge, LLMs and Countering the Epistemic Dependency,” Daily Sabah, August 1, 2026, accessed August 4, 2026, <https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/op-ed/bilge-llms-and-countering-the-epistemic-dependency>.

aries mirroring its politics. A state that adopts a pole's technology stack therefore adopts, gradually and often imperceptibly, that pole's epistemic defaults.

This is the condition conceptualized in previous writings as epistemic dependency, and the institutionalization of the two blocs threatens to convert it from a commercial contingency into a structural feature of the international system.²² When a society's knowledge environment is mediated by foundation models trained elsewhere, on corpora it did not curate and under values it did not choose, that society lives in the condition of epistemic dependency. The categories through which it interprets the world, the sources a model treats as authoritative, the questions it declines to answer and the framings it quietly normalizes are all decided at the point of design. A state that analyzes its own data with someone else's algorithm has, in practice, transferred the sovereignty of that data. Over time, this silent architecture shapes foreign policy preferences, national security assessments and strategic decision-making without ever announcing itself. The gravest information harms of this era, as argued in the same writings, occur at the moment of training rather than at the moment of output; defects and biases embedded at the foundation travel into every downstream application that treats the model as authoritative. When bloc membership determines which foundations a society builds upon, alignment ceases to be a foreign policy preference and becomes a decision about the conditions under which an entire public will reason. No responsible state can treat such a decision as a procurement question.

TÜRKİYE'S STANCE: SELECTIVE ENGAGEMENT, CONNECTED SOVEREIGNTY AND AI ACTION PLAN

Where, then, should Türkiye stand? Türkiye's reading of the technopolar order is not an abstraction; it is the application, to a new domain, of a lesson her strategic memory has recorded several times at considerable cost. During the first bipolar age, Cold War years, her security was bound to the Western alliance, and the alliance repeatedly demonstrated that dependency converts an ally's assets into another capital's bargaining material. The Jupiter missiles stationed on her soil were traded away in the secret resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 and dismantled without her consent, establishing that capabilities hosted under dependency can be withdrawn over the host's head.²³ In June 1964, as Türkiye prepared to act in Cyprus on the rights and responsibilities conferred upon her

²² Akilli, *Cognitive Diplomacy and Digital Autonomy*.

²³ Barton J. Bernstein, "The Cuban Missile Crisis: Trading the Jupiters in Turkey?" *Political Science Quarterly* 95, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 97-125, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2149587>; Philip Nash, *The Other Missiles of October: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the Jupiters, 1957-1963* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

as a guarantor power, the Johnson Letter informed her that allied commitments and allied equipment might be withheld at precisely the moment of need.²⁴ And after the Cyprus Peace Operation of 1974, undertaken on the basis of the Treaty of Guarantee to halt the bloodshed on the island, she endured a multiyear arms embargo imposed by her principal ally, years in which aircraft waited for spare parts while her security environment waited for nothing. The same grammar repeated itself across the following decades in the defense industry, where externally sourced systems essential to her counterterrorism efforts arrived encumbered with conditions, delays and vetoes. That accumulated experience produced, in answer, one of the most determined indigenization drives in contemporary defense economics.²⁵

It is the same experience that Türkiye now transposes into the algorithmic domain. She does not need to be persuaded that dependency is a lever held in another hand; she has felt the lever move. Epistemic dependency is, in her reading, the Jupiter missile of the cognitive age: an asset embedded in one's own territory, indispensable to one's own functioning, and controlled from elsewhere. The Action Plan is what a state that remembers builds.

Furthermore, the answer on Pax Silica applies with equal force to the completed bipolar picture: the strategic question for Türkiye is not membership but positioning, and her objective is not accession to either bloc but the construction of her own strategic technological capacity.²⁶ Türkiye's recent conduct is consistent with this principle. According to published summit assessments, Türkiye joined the Joint Statement on AI Opportunity signed by thirty five nations at the Washington summit of June 2026, while remaining absent from the list of Pax Silica Declaration signatories.²⁷ The distinction is subtle, and it is at minimum consistent with a deliberate strategy of calibrated engagement; read in the light of her prior positioning, it is difficult to interpret otherwise. She engages in the platform where engagement serves her interests in innovation, investment and dialogue, yet she withholds the act of accession that would subordinate her technological future to the discipline of a bloc. The same calibrated posture should govern her relationship with WAICO: channels of dialogue open, structural dependency refused. This is selective engagement combined with computational

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²⁴ “President Johnson and Prime Minister Inonu: Correspondence between President Johnson and Prime Minister Inonu, June 1964,” *Middle East Journal* 20, no. 3 (1966): 386-393.

²⁵ George S. Harris, *Troubled Alliance: Turkish-American Problems in Historical Perspective, 1945-1971* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1972), <https://doi.org/10.1177/000271627340600133>; Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2024* (Stockholm: SIPRI, March 2025).

²⁶ Akilli, “Pax Silica and Türkiye's Choice in the Age of Computing Power.”

²⁷ U.S. Department of State, “AI Opportunity Statement”; “State Department Expands Pax Silica Initiative at 2026 Summit.”

sovereignty, the model proposed as the appropriate response of a middle power with civilizational depth to a bipolarizing technological order.²⁸

Such a posture is credible only if it rests on indigenous capacity, and here the Artificial Intelligence Action Plan²⁹ covering 2026 to 2030, prepared by Ministry of Industry and Technology of the Republic of Türkiye and announced by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on June 13, 2026³⁰ alongside the national large language model Bilge, provides the substance. The plan is best read not as a technology program but as a deliberate state response to algorithmic



**Data sovereignty,
the first shield of
cognitive security in
an age when data has
become a weapon.**

domination, digital hegemony and the condition conceptualized in previous writings as epistemic dependency, organized around four strategic axes: Fark Et (Perceive), İstifade Et (Harness), Üret (Forge) and Yönet (Govern).

Under the first axis, a National Artificial Intelligence Literacy Program declares the objective of reaching five million citizens across all 81 provinces within two years and training 100,000 artificial intelligence professionals, while a National Data Library aims to open public data under a proportionate risk approach that preserves data sovereignty, the first shield of cognitive security in an age when data has become a weapon.

Under the second, the plan sets the declared targets of raising installed data center capacity to one gigawatt, allocating at least 2 percent of public investment budgets directly to artificial intelligence projects, positioning the public sector as first buyer and strongest reference for domestic solutions, and extending artificial intelligence vouchers to small and medium enterprises so that digitalization does not remain the monopoly of large capital.

Under the third, Bilge, developed by TÜBİTAK BİLGEM, is joined by the data centered strategic initiatives of actors such as the T3 Foundation, Baykar, ASELSAN, HAVELSAN and Turkcell, together with a planned National Artificial Intelligence Fund, growth zones and investment ready campuses intended to convert Türkiye from a technology importer into an exporting hub. Nor is this diagnosis idiosyncratic to Ankara; it has become state practice across regions. Bulgaria's BgGPT was developed with government backing precisely so that national data would be stored and processed at home; the Ukrainian MamayLM was engineered to think in Ukrainian at a fraction of frontier cost; the Falcon series of the United Arab Emirates demonstrated that a national institute can produce openly documented models competitive with the largest laboratories; and France's Mis-

²⁸ Akılı, "Pax Silica and Türkiye's Choice in the Age of Computing Power."

²⁹ T.C. Sanayi ve Teknoloji Bakanlığı, Türkiye Yapay Zekâ Eylem Planı (2026–2030) (Ankara: Sanayi ve Teknoloji Bakanlığı, 2026), <https://www.sanayi.gov.tr/yapayzekacylemplani>.

³⁰ Erman Akılı, "Teknokutup Çağda Türkiye'nin Yapay Zeka Eylem Planı (2026-2030)", SETA, June 15, 2026, accessed July 25, 2026, <https://www.setav.org/teknokutup-cagda-turkiyenin-yapay-zeka-eylem-planı-2026-2030>.

tral became Europe's flagship answer to Silicon Valley.³¹ Different regions, one shared conclusion: whoever outsources the model outsources the meaning. What distinguishes Türkiye within this movement is her coupling of the national instrument with a multilateral horizon, extending the logic of sovereign modeling into a shared civilizational corpus through the Organization of Turkic States.

The fourth axis carries the plan onto the diplomatic stage: a declared mobilization of ten billion dollars for sovereign artificial intelligence and domestic cloud infrastructure aimed at making İstanbul a global showcase for investment, a single window promising international entrepreneurs an operational pathway within 30 business days, artificial intelligence test laboratories designed to reinforce the model of cognitive presence, practice and resilience, and an overall value added objective declared to exceed one trillion Turkish lira.

These figures are declared objectives rather than accomplished facts, and it is precisely as objectives that they should be read, because the plan is calibrated against a scale environment that no middle power can ignore. The poles measure their installed compute in tens of gigawatts and their frontier investments in the hundreds of billions of dollars; Türkiye's gigawatt target and ten billion dollar mobilization are not bids for parity but instruments of autonomy, sized to guarantee that her public administration, her language and her critical sectors can run on sovereign foundations regardless of how the blocs configure access. Nor does the plan begin from bare ground. It consolidates an innovation base built over two decades, comprising more than 1,700 research, development and design centers, 114 technoparks and over 13,000 technology companies,³² and a model ecosystem in which the Bilge family already spans versions of 1.9 and 27 billion parameters, with a 122 billion parameter model in development.³³ Independent assessments register the same foundation: the Government AI Readiness Index compiled by Oxford Insights places Türkiye second in her region and credits her strong digital and innovation infrastructure, while confirming that the distance between regional leadership and the global first tier is exactly the distance the Action Plan is designed to close.³⁴ Read this way, the plan's targets are not promises awaiting indulgence; they are the quantified form of the diagnosis this paper has advanced throughout, that in a technopolar order the question is never whether a middle power can outbuild the poles, but whether she can refuse to be built by them. Their cumulative logic is coherent and unmistakable: each axis dismantles

31 Akilli, "Bilge, LLMs and Countering the Epistemic Dependency."

32 Merve Berker, "Türkiye Unveils 2026–2030 AI Action Plan at İstanbul Summit," Anadolu Agency, June 13, 2026, retrieved from Anadolu Agency, June 13, 2026, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/science-technology/turkiye-unveils-2026-2030-ai-action-plan-at-istanbul-summit/3966073>

33 Akilli, "Bilge, LLMs and Countering the Epistemic Dependency."

34 Oxford Insights, Government AI Readiness Index 2025 (Oxford Insights, 2025), <https://oxfordinsights.com/ai-readiness/government-ai-readiness-index-2025/>



In a technopolar order the question is never whether a middle power can outbuild the poles, but whether she can refuse to be built by them.

one link in the chain of epistemic dependency, from the literacy that inoculates minds, to the infrastructure that repatriates computation, to the models that produce meaning domestically, to the norm entrepreneurship that carries Türkiye's voice, and that of the Global South, into the governance of the algorithmic century. These four axes therefore deserve to be read philosophically before they are read administratively, for their sequence encodes a theory of sovereignty.

The first axis, "Fark Et"³⁵, is deliberately rendered here as "Perceive" rather than the flatter Recognize, because the Turkish verb carries within it the word "fark", difference, and perception is precisely the capacity to see difference where the untrained eye sees none. An educated eye perceives, in the same technology, both the opportunity and the risk, both the advantage and the trap; a society that cannot perceive the algorithm does not escape it but lives inside it unknowingly. Artificial intelligence literacy is therefore the very first step of Türkiye's plan not for pedagogical reasons but for ontological ones: perception is the first breach in the wall of epistemic dependency, since no dependency can be contested before it is seen.

The second axis, "İstifade Et"³⁶, is rendered as "Harness" rather than Utilize, because to utilize is to consume while to harness is to bridle a force greater than oneself and give it direction. Compute is the new river; left unharnessed it flows past a nation or floods it, harnessed it irrigates an economy. The state that builds the dam, the gigawatt, the data library and stands as first buyer is not using a technology; she is mastering a current.

The third axis, "Üret"³⁷, is rendered as "Forge" rather than Produce, and the choice reaches deep into civilizational memory. Production is assembly; forging is transformation under fire, the work of hammer and anvil in which raw ore becomes tempered instrument, and the peoples of the Turkic world carry in their oldest narratives the memory of smelting the iron mountain itself to open a path where none existed. A forged model, like a forged blade, bears the mark of its maker and answers to no other hand; *Bilge* is forged, not assembled.

The fourth axis, "Yönet"³⁸, is rendered as "Govern", and its philosophy is the oldest in the Turkish Islamic canon of statecraft. "Yön" means direction, so "yönetmek" is literally to give direction, and the conviction that a polity is directed rightly only when power is joined to wisdom stands at the very source of that

35 T.C. Sanayi ve Teknoloji Bakanlığı, Türkiye Yapay Zekâ Eylem Planı (2026–2030) (Ankara: Sanayi ve Teknoloji Bakanlığı, 2026), <https://www.sanayi.gov.tr/yapayzekacylemplani>, 7.

36 T.C. Sanayi ve Teknoloji Bakanlığı, Türkiye Yapay Zekâ Eylem Planı (2026–2030) (Ankara: Sanayi ve Teknoloji Bakanlığı, 2026), <https://www.sanayi.gov.tr/yapayzekacylemplani>, 7.

37 T.C. Sanayi ve Teknoloji Bakanlığı, Türkiye Yapay Zekâ Eylem Planı (2026–2030) (Ankara: Sanayi ve Teknoloji Bakanlığı, 2026), <https://www.sanayi.gov.tr/yapayzekacylemplani>, 8.

38 T.C. Sanayi ve Teknoloji Bakanlığı, Türkiye Yapay Zekâ Eylem Planı (2026–2030) (Ankara: Sanayi ve Teknoloji Bakanlığı, 2026), <https://www.sanayi.gov.tr/yapayzekacylemplani>, 8.

canon: nearly a millennium ago Yusuf Has Hacib's *Kutadgu Bilig*, the knowledge that brings felicity, taught that the realm is steered not by force but by knowledge bound to justice. It is no accident that the model at the heart of Türkiye's AI Action Plan bears the name *Bilge*, the wise; a tradition that has always insisted governance begins with wisdom now builds wisdom itself into the machinery of governance. Nor does the lineage end at Türkiye's borders, for the *Kutadgu Bilig* was composed in Karakhanid Turkic, the classical tongue of the Karluk branch, and here the Action Plan performs its most elegant act of civilizational continuity: the Common Turkic Language Model, to be developed under Türkiye's leadership in partnership with the Organization of Turkic States, will encompass precisely the Oghuz, Kipchak and Karluk branches, gathering into a single computational corpus the linguistic family in which the Turkic world's founding book of governance was written.

It must be stated plainly why this diffusion of a model differs in kind from the diffusion practiced by the poles, for the difference is institutional, not sentimental. The poles export their stacks through packages in which standards, infrastructure and market access arrive bound together, and in which the exporter retains the levers of license, sanction and revocation; dependency is the business model. The Common Turkic Language Model inverts each of these terms. It is to be developed in partnership with the Organization of Turkic States, a body in which Türkiye is a member among equals rather than a hegemon among clients; its corpus is the shared linguistic patrimony of the Oghuz, Kipchak and Karluk branches, which no single member owns and every member co constitutes; and its purpose is to equip each participating state with capacity it would otherwise rent from a pole, not to substitute one landlord for another. The shade of the çınar is offered, not administered: it carries no export license, no trusted partner filter and no revocation clause. Where the poles convert technology into discipline, the Turkic model converts patrimony into capacity, and that distinction, between a stack that is licensed and a heritage that is shared, is the institutional content of the metaphor.

A millennium ago, one book carried governing wisdom across the steppe in a shared literary language; today, one model will carry that shared language, and the wisdom sedimented within it, into the digital age. The Common Turkic Language Model is, in this sense, *the Kutadgu Bilig* of the algorithmic century: a common epistemic ground for the Turkic world, and the digital embodiment of the strategic horizon set out in the Turkic World 2040 Vision.³⁹ To govern artificial intelligence, in this lineage, is not to cage it but to give it direction toward justice, and Türkiye extends that direction beyond her own borders in

³⁹ Organization of Turkic States, "Turkic World Vision 2040," adopted at the Eighth Summit, Istanbul, November 12, 2021.

the manner her state tradition has always understood greatness: as *the çınar* of the founding dream, whose shade falls freely on all who seek it. Eye, hand, fire, wisdom: perception breaks the unawareness of dependency, harnessing breaks its infrastructure, forging breaks its models, governing with justice breaks its norms. The four axes are, read together, the complete grammar of epistemic sovereignty.

CONCLUSION

July 16, 2026 deserves to be remembered as the date on which the technopolar world order completed its institutional formation. With Pax Silica consolidated in Washington and WAICO founded in Shanghai, the poles that previous writings anticipated in conceptual terms now exist in treaty form, and the international system has entered a bipolarity whose weapons are standards, whose terrain is augmented, every territory now carrying a computational layer above its physical one, and whose ultimate prize is the epistemic constitution of societies. The Cold War analogy captures the geometry of this order but not its substance; NATO and the Warsaw Pact divided physical plane, whereas Pax Silica and WAICO divide cognition.

Beyond capacity, Türkiye holds a positional asset that neither pole can replicate. Situated at the nexus of continents and civilizational traditions, an active voice in NATO, the OECD, the G20 and the Organization of Turkic States simultaneously, and a credible interlocutor of the Global South, she is structurally suited to the role of norm entrepreneur in artificial intelligence governance. On augmented terrain her classical geography compounds: the state that sits at the crossing point of continents can also sit at the crossing point of cables, corridors and clouds, provided she builds the second layer that the Action Plan now projects. The claim is not rhetorical, and the events of 2026 permit it to be tested against the other states most frequently nominated for third way leadership. India, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, each a plausible candidate, appear among the twenty five signatories of the Pax Silica Declaration; Brazil and Indonesia, the demographic anchors of the Global South, signed the WAICO founding agreement in Shanghai; Kazakhstan, as noted, signed both.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, Kazakhstan's membership in both initiative demonstrates its graduated alignment, although growing US pressure to choose sides may constrain this strategy.⁴¹

Each of these states has thus resolved the dilemma of the technopolar age by accession, single or dual. Among the middle powers of consequence, Türkiye

40 U.S. Department of State, "Outcomes of the Second Pax Silica Summit," June 2026; "29 Countries Sign Agreement to Establish World AI Cooperation Organization in Shanghai." <https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesperson/2026/06/outcomes-of-the-second-pax-silica-summit>

41 Michael Martina, "US to Tell Partners They Must Pick Sides in AI Race with China," Reuters, August 14, 2026, <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/us-tell-partners-they-must-pick-sides-ai-race-with-china-2026-08-14/>

stands nearly alone in having engaged both architectures while acceding to neither founding text, and this is what converts her position from one option among many into a distinct model. Where others have purchased access with alignment, she proposes that access and alignment can be decoupled, and she is, at present, the most institutionally complete demonstration that the proposal is livable.

The vast majority of states will belong fully to neither Pax Silica nor WAICO; they will inhabit the space between, exposed to the gravitational pull of both. That space needs articulation, representation and principled leadership. During the Cold War, states seeking a third way founded the Non-Aligned Movement. The technopolar century requires an updated formula, which we would describe as connected sovereignty: not physical neutrality or technological isolation, but the capacity to trade, cooperate and interoperate with both poles while retaining sovereign control over data, algorithms and computing power. Türkiye is positioned to give this formula a voice, and, should the Action Plan's targets materialize on schedule, a proof of concept.

For Türkiye, the completed picture clarifies rather than complicates her course, and her answer is already written into the four verbs of the AI Action Plan, announced by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Türkiye will perceive, with the educated eye that sees both the opportunity and the trap in every algorithm; she will harness, bridling the current of compute rather than being carried by it; she will forge, tempering her own models in her own fire so that they bear her mark and answer to no other hand; and she will govern, in the oldest sense her tradition knows, joining power to wisdom as the *Kutadgu Bilig* taught a millennium before the first parameter was trained.

Türkiye will engage both poles from a position of sovereignty rather than supplication, and to the unaligned majority of the international system she will offer neither a third bloc nor a new discipline, but shade: the shade of *the çınar* (oriental plane tree) seen in the founding dream of her state tradition, a tree that rises from its own root, in its own soil, and spreads its branches until nations weary of the heat of hegemony find shelter beneath them without surrendering an ounce of their own sovereignty. In the first bipolar age, middle powers were asked to choose a side. In the second, the wiser ones will choose themselves; and wisdom, as her own tradition has always insisted and as the name *Bilge* now declares to the world, is precisely where governing begins.

ERMAN AKILLI

Prof. Dr. Erman Akilli is currently serving as a faculty member in the Department of International Relations at Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University. His areas of expertise include artificial intelligence in foreign policy, digital diplomacy, the Turkic World, the Africa region, public diplomacy, and its sub-branches. Throughout his academic career, he has published articles in peer-reviewed journals indexed in SSCI and WOS; and has contributed as an author and editor to books published by prestigious publishing houses such as Routledge, Palgrave MacMillan, and Springer Nature. Additionally, he continues his work as an assistant editor for the Insight Turkey journal published by SETA Foundation.

The Technopolar World Divides: Pax Silica, WAICO and Türkiye

Erman Akilli

L This paper argues that the technopolar world order accelerated its institutional formation in the summer of 2026. With the second Pax Silica Summit consolidating 24 signatories around the United States in June, and 29 states founding the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization (WAICO) around China in Shanghai on July 16, the two poles of the technopolar system now possess names, addresses, founding texts and membership rosters. The paper reads this bipolarization through the Cold War analogy while insisting on its limits: alignment is enforced today not by armored divisions but by infrastructural dependency, the membrane between blocs is porous, as Kazakhstan's dual membership demonstrates, and the deepest stake of the rivalry is epistemic rather than territorial. Drawing on the frameworks of cognitive diplomacy, epistemic dependency and augmented geopolitics, the paper contends that bloc alignment now determines the conditions under which entire publics will reason, since each pole exports not merely hardware but a complete regime of knowledge production. Against this backdrop, the paper defines Türkiye's stance as selective engagement combined with computational sovereignty: she engages both poles without acceding to either, as evidenced by her signature on the Joint Statement on AI Opportunity alongside her absence from the Pax Silica Declaration. The Artificial Intelligence Action Plan announced by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, examined here through the philosophy of its four axes, Perceive, Harness, Forge and Govern, is designed to provide the indigenous capacity on which the credibility of this posture will rest. The paper concludes by proposing connected sovereignty as the formula for the unaligned majority of the international system, an offer of shelter rather than discipline, rooted in the çınar of Türkiye's founding state tradition.



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