

Questions For the Record from Chairman Darrell Issa for Dr. John Brennan “IP and Strategic Competition with China: Part III – IP Theft, Cybersecurity, and AI”, October 19, 2023

1. How does the U.S. AI innovation ecosystem currently compare to the AI ecosystem in China?

Response: Thank you for that question, at a high level we must recognize that it is hard to make a straight comparison between the United States and China’s innovation ecosystem. China’s innovation ecosystem has particularly close linkages among military, private sector, and public sector research under its military-civil fusion policy. Whereas, in the United States, this is less the case.

As we look at the current state of generative AI, the United States still has a lead, although China is actively working to displace this leadership. We see this through both the amount of money they are investing in the technology, the amount of product releases that are public, as well as messaging from the PRC themselves.

Follow-up: In what areas is the U.S. ahead, and where is China ahead?

Response: As discussed in my testimony, China maintains a technological edge in computer vision, notably facial recognition, which has been heavily utilized throughout the PRC’s widespread domestic surveillance programs. The United States is leading when it comes to generative AI/large language models.

Follow-up: On our current trajectory, where is U.S. competitiveness in AI headed in comparison to China?

Response: I firmly believe that the United States will maintain our global leadership in the field of generative AI, although we cannot take our leadership for granted. China is on track to invest roughly three times the amount of the United States this year alone, and it almost certainly will continue to heavily invest in the future with the goal to lead the world in the technology development. It is imperative that the United States does not let this happen.

2. What are the biggest challenges that are facing the U.S. AI innovation ecosystem, especially in its competition with China?

Response: This is a critical question to answer and one that is vitally important to get right. Right now, the United States has the lead in technology because the world’s best talent and companies reside in the United States. However, as recently as this past month, we have seen China beginning to close the gap with their release of a very powerful large language model for the first time.

When it comes to winning this global competition, I believe that crafting the right regulatory framework along with continued government investment is key. This regulatory framework must be flexible enough to ensure innovation while establishing proper guardrails to maintain safety. Furthermore, we must also continue to invest heavily in national priorities, such as AI ready data, development of a test and evaluation regime, and frontier model risk, that are critical to both defense and commercial applications.