

Britain must secure greater control and leverage over AI to protect our national security in fractured world

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In a landmark speech, the Technology Secretary said there must be a “decisive move” towards backing more British tech companies as AI reshapes global power, security and prosperity.

- In a keynote speech Liz Kendall set out why AI is key to this country’s economic prosperity and national security
- The Tech Secretary says UK must build up its AI sector and work with allies or risk losing out on race for the future
- Government to develop a UK AI hardware plan to secure Britain’s future capability in chips and the semiconductor technologies that underpins AI

Britain must act now to cement its place in the new technological era, Technology Secretary Liz Kendall said today.

In a landmark speech, the Technology Secretary said there must be a “decisive move” towards backing more British tech companies as AI reshapes global power, security and prosperity.

Speaking at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), she warned that nations which fail to master the defining technology of their age risk ceding control over their security and economic future.

She said history shows that the countries which pull ahead are those that master the defining currency of their age - from navies and railways to power grids.

Today, that currency is technology: chips, computing power and artificial intelligence, which are increasingly becoming engines of both economic power and hard power.

The Tech Secretary noted that 70 per cent of global AI compute is now controlled by just 5 companies.

Control over where AI systems are built, how they operate and who ultimately controls them is now fundamental to economic security, energy security and defence security.

The Cabinet Minister will argue that Britain is uniquely placed to flourish in this new era because of our huge AI strengths and deep international alliances.

The UK not only has a \$1 trillion tech sector, world-leading universities and research institutions but is also home to globally influential institutions such as the AI Security Institute, which is shaping international approaches to AI safety and security.

As part of a more muscular approach, the UK government will back British strengths in the parts of the AI stack where the UK can build real leverage.

Focussing on a few select things that the country does better than anyone - so crucial that we can

never be cut out - from frontier research and companies, to compute, skills and infrastructure - while working closely with allies to shape the global AI ecosystem.

To strengthen the UK's position in this race for the future, the Technology Secretary announced that the government will develop a UK AI hardware plan to secure Britain's capability in chips and the semiconductor technologies that underpin the full AI hardware stack.

She stressed this is not about isolation or trying to build everything alone, but about ensuring Britain is indispensable in the technologies that will define the future - a keystone in the global AI architecture rather than a bystander to decisions taken elsewhere.

Speaking earlier today the Technology Secretary said:

This government believes AI Sovereignty is not about isolationism or attempting to pull up the drawbridge and go it alone.

We will continue to use the best technology and welcome inward investment because that's what our public services and economy demand.

For Britain, AI sovereignty is about reducing over dependencies and increasing resilience in key national strategic priorities, as the Prime Minister has rightly argued.

So we secure greater control and greater leverage over the issues that matter most.

And if you want leverage for your country, you need to be a keystone in the global tech architecture - an indispensable partner. This requires 2 key shifts in our approach.

First, a decisive move towards backing more British AI companies, especially in areas where we have real strengths.

And second, by working more closely with our international partners, particularly other so-called middle power nations, including on setting the standards for how AI deployed.

The Technology Secretary rejected calls to pause the development of artificial intelligence, describing such a move as "a double betrayal" of British talent and British interests. Warning that retreating from progress would mean retreating from the world, the minister argued that the real choice facing the country is not between a world with AI and one without, but between a Britain that shapes its own AI future and one left at its mercy.

She pointed to a new generation of British founders and investors committed to building ambitious and responsible AI, alongside a government prepared to move quickly and work in new ways, citing the AI Institute and Sovereign AI as examples.

Britain stands on the cusp of a technological British renaissance. The Technology Secretary urged the government, alongside the country's scientists and founders, to seize the opportunity for the benefit of the economy, national security, and to "build a future that works for all."

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/britain-must-secure-greater-control-and-leverage-over-ai-to-protect-our-national-security-in-fractured-world>