

China takes ‘stunning lead’ in key technological research, think tank says

From artificial intelligence to robotics, China is beating Western democracies in research output on 37 out of 44 technological areas deemed critical for economic growth and military power over the coming decades, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) said in a recently released report.

By often producing more than five times as many highly cited research papers as its closest competitor — typically the United States — China is not only further ahead in more areas than previously realized but has also built the foundations to position itself as the world’s leading science and technology superpower, the Canberra-based think tank revealed.

This “sometimes stunning lead” stretches to critical domains, including defense, space, robotics, energy, the environment, advanced materials, AI and key quantum technology areas, according to the report’s authors, who tracked and analyzed the most-cited research publications in each of the 44 fields over the past five years.

“Western democracies are losing the global technological competition, including the race for scientific and research breakthroughs,” said the report, which was partly funded by the U.S. State Department.

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