

Daily Editorial Analysis 11 March 2026

March 11, 2026 • vajiramandravi.com



AI and the National Security Calculus

Context

- The rapid expansion of Artificial Intelligence, particularly Generative AI, has intensified global debates about **technological power**, **national security**, and **governance**.
- Recent tensions involving Anthropic and Chinese AI firms such as DeepSeek, MoonshotAI, and MiniMax reveal how AI development is increasingly shaped by **geopolitical rivalry** and **corporate competition**.
- Disputes over **model distillation**, the **military use of AI**, and technological restrictions illustrate a struggle for technological dominance.
- Sustainable solutions require **international governance frameworks** rather than unilateral restrictions.

AI Competition and National Security Concerns

- Concerns emerged when Anthropic urged policymakers to classify certain Chinese AI laboratories as **national security threats**, alleging large-scale **model distillation**.
- Distillation allows a weaker model to learn from the outputs of a stronger system. The activity reportedly involved **fraudulent accounts**, deceptive access methods, and millions of interactions with Anthropic's

Claude model.

- Such actions violated **terms of service** and raised questions about intellectual property protection and technological access controls.
- At the same time, AI systems developed by American firms have reportedly been used by the United States military to accelerate the kill chain, linking **target identification**, **legal approval**, and **military strikes**.
- This highlights the **dual-use technology** nature of AI: tools designed for civilian applications can easily be adapted for **military operations**.
- Even Anthropic faced scrutiny when the Pentagon reportedly labelled it a **supply chain risk**, demonstrating the tensions between corporate autonomy, defence partnerships, and government oversight.

The Limits of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Analogy

- Comparisons between AI and nuclear weapons have encouraged calls for strict **technology containment**.
- However, the analogy is flawed. **Nuclear non-proliferation** works because **fissile material** is scarce, traceable, and controlled by governments.
- AI models, by contrast, are **mathematical systems** that can be copied, modified, and distributed with relative ease.
- Unlike nuclear research, historically driven by government programs such as the Manhattan Project, advanced AI development occurs primarily in **private companies** focused on **commercial innovation**.

Model Distillation and the Debate over Guardrails

- Arguments that distilled models will lack safety **guardrails** are weakened by the reality that frontier models themselves may support controversial applications.
- Leading firms including OpenAI, Google, and xAI possess technologies capable of enabling **surveillance systems**, **cyberwarfare**, and even **autonomous weapons**.
- Competitive pressure for lucrative **defence contracts** creates incentives for companies to adopt more permissive policies regarding military use.
- While some firms express concern over the ethical implications of these applications, others accept broader agreements with government agencies.
- This environment risks a **race to the bottom**, where **ethical safeguards** weaken in response to **market competition**.

The Difficulty of Controlling AI Diffusion

- Efforts to restrict AI development face significant structural barriers. **Talent mobility** across borders ensures that expertise circulates globally.
- Many researchers currently employed by Chinese AI laboratories received education or professional experience in American universities and technology firms, illustrating the interconnected nature of the **global research ecosystem**.
- Restrictions on technological inputs such as advanced **AI chips** have repeatedly encountered **circumvention strategies** and partial policy reversals.

- **Model distillation** represents another pathway that is even harder to regulate because it relies on analysing model outputs rather than accessing proprietary code or architecture.
- Each new restriction tends to produce new technical solutions, limiting the effectiveness of **input-based controls**.

Power, Intellectual Property, and Market Dominance

- Debates surrounding distillation also raise complex questions about data ownership and market concentration.
- Frontier AI companies argue that distillation amounts to large-scale **intellectual property theft**.
- However, these same models are trained on enormous datasets composed of web content, creative works, and publicly available texts created by millions of individuals who did not provide explicit **consent** or receive compensation.
- From this perspective, learning from model outputs may not be fundamentally more extractive than training models on publicly produced knowledge.
- Although violating a company's **terms of service** is legally problematic, framing distillation purely as theft overlooks deeper structural issues about **data ethics** and **digital labour**.

The Way Forward: Toward Global Governance of Military AI

- The integration of AI into military systems appears increasingly inevitable as states seek advantages in **strategic competition**.
- Corporate guardrails alone cannot regulate such developments because companies can be pressured, replaced, or compelled by governments.
- Effective regulation requires **plurilateral agreements** among states that define responsible military uses of AI.
- Key commitments should include **meaningful human control** over lethal decisions, prohibitions on **mass civilian surveillance**, and **auditable technical standards** governing AI-enabled systems.
- These rules must apply universally to avoid selective enforcement driven by geopolitical interests.

Conclusion

- The intersection of **Artificial Intelligence**, **national security**, and **corporate competition** is reshaping global technological politics.
- Attempts to treat AI like nuclear technology underestimate its **decentralized innovation structure** and the speed of **knowledge diffusion**.
- Restrictive policies may slow competitors but cannot prevent technological spread and may reinforce **corporate monopolies**.
- A balanced approach requires **international cooperation**, **transparent standards**, and shared commitments to responsible military use.

AI and the National Security Calculus FAQs

Q1. What is model distillation in Artificial Intelligence?

Ans. Model distillation is a process in which a weaker Artificial Intelligence model learns by studying the outputs of a more advanced model, allowing it to replicate similar capabilities at lower cost.

Q2. Why is Artificial Intelligence considered a dual-use technology?

Ans. Artificial Intelligence is considered a dual-use technology because systems designed for civilian purposes can also be adapted for military applications such as surveillance or autonomous weapons.

Q3. Why is the comparison between AI and nuclear technology considered flawed?

Ans. The comparison is flawed because AI models are software-based mathematical systems that can be copied and shared easily, unlike nuclear materials, which are rare and tightly controlled.

Q4. What challenges exist in restricting the global diffusion of AI?

Ans. The global spread of AI is difficult to control due to talent mobility, knowledge sharing, and technological workarounds such as model distillation.

Q5. What kind of governance is required for the responsible use of military AI?

Ans. Responsible use of military AI requires international agreements that ensure meaningful human control, restrict mass civilian surveillance, and establish auditable technical standards.

Source: **The Hindu**

Reevaluating the Office of the Speaker

Context

- A recent **no-confidence motion** against Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has revived debate about the constitutional role, neutrality, and accountability of the Speaker's office.
- Although such motions are rare, they highlight concerns about the functioning of parliamentary institutions and the conventions governing the Speaker's conduct.
- The Speaker of the Lok Sabha is a key pillar of India's parliamentary democracy.
- S/he presides over the House, maintains order during debates, enforces procedural rules, protects members' rights, and ensures a balance between the government and the Opposition.
- The Constitution expects the Speaker to act as an impartial authority above party politics.
- The Speaker also holds significant powers, including recognising members, interpreting parliamentary rules, exercising disciplinary authority, and certifying Money Bills.
- Because these powers strongly influence legislative processes, the Constitution provides strong safeguards to ensure that the Speaker cannot be easily removed for political reasons.
- This article highlights the constitutional role, powers, and accountability of the **Lok Sabha Speaker**, examining the procedure for removal, the rarity of such motions, concerns about politicisation, and the need to strengthen parliamentary conventions and transparency.

Removal of the Lok Sabha Speaker

- The removal of the Lok Sabha Speaker is governed by **Article 94(c)** of the Constitution.
- The Speaker can be removed only through a resolution passed by a **majority of the total membership** of the Lok Sabha, not merely by those present and voting.
- This high requirement protects the stability and dignity of the office.

• **Procedure for Initiating Removal**

- The process begins when a member submits a written notice to the Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha seeking the Speaker's removal.
- A minimum notice of 14 days must be given before the motion is taken up.
- The motion must receive the support of at least 50 members to be admitted for discussion.

• **Rules Governing the Motion**

- The procedure is detailed in the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha (Rules 200–203).
- The resolution must clearly state the charges against the Speaker.
- During the debate, the Speaker may participate as a member of the House.
- The Speaker can vote in the first instance, but cannot cast a deciding vote in case of a tie.

Rarity of Removal Motions

- No-confidence motions against the Speaker have been extremely rare in India's parliamentary history.
- Only three attempts have occurred:
 - 1954 – against G. V. Mavalankar
 - 1966 – against Hukam Singh
 - 1987 – against Balram Jakhar
- All these motions failed, highlighting the political and procedural difficulty in removing a Speaker.

Institutional Significance of the Motion

- Even if the current motion does not lead to the Speaker's removal, it highlights the **principle of accountability** in parliamentary democracy.
- The Speaker's authority ultimately depends on the **confidence of the House**, and credibility is closely linked to the perception of neutrality and fairness.
- The Constitution sets a high threshold for removing the Speaker, protecting the office from routine political pressure.
- At the same time, it preserves a democratic mechanism for accountability through the possibility of a removal motion.

Challenges to the Functioning of the Speaker's Office

- **Perception of Politicisation** – There is an increasing perception that decisions of the Speaker—particularly regarding disqualification under the anti-defection law and certification of Money Bills—are influenced by

partisan considerations.

- **Rising Political Confrontation** – Frequent clashes between the ruling party and the Opposition have resulted in procedural disruptions in Parliament. When the Speaker's neutrality is questioned, trust between political actors declines, making consensus-building more difficult.
- **Weakening Parliamentary Conventions** – Traditional parliamentary conventions that once guided the impartial conduct of the Speaker are gradually weakening. As political competition intensifies, these unwritten norms risk being replaced by strategic and partisan considerations.

The Way Forward for the Speaker's Office

- **Strengthening Parliamentary Conventions**
 - To maintain the credibility of Parliament, political parties must reaffirm the tradition of the Speaker's neutrality.
 - Once elected, the Speaker is expected to function above party politics, preserving the integrity of the institution.
- **Enhancing Transparency in Decisions**
 - Greater transparency in procedural rulings can build trust in the Speaker's office.
 - Providing clear explanations for key decisions, such as rejecting debates or certifying bills, would reduce perceptions of bias.
- **Promoting Dialogue Between Government and Opposition**
 - Improving communication and consultation between the ruling party and the Opposition is essential.
 - Structured discussions on parliamentary procedures and reforms can reduce confrontations and improve legislative functioning.
- **Clarifying Discretionary Powers**
 - Codifying best practices for the Speaker's discretionary powers can help remove ambiguities.
 - While procedural flexibility must remain, clearer guidelines would reduce disputes over interpretation and strengthen parliamentary governance.

Reevaluating the Office of the Speaker FAQs

Q1. Why has the debate over the Speaker's office resurfaced recently?

Ans. The debate has resurfaced after a no-confidence motion against Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, raising concerns about neutrality, accountability, and the functioning of parliamentary institutions and conventions.

Q2. What are the key constitutional powers of the Lok Sabha Speaker?

Ans. The Speaker presides over the Lok Sabha, maintains order, interprets procedural rules, recognises members, exercises disciplinary powers, and certifies Money Bills, significantly influencing legislative processes and debates.

Q3. How can the Lok Sabha Speaker be removed from office?

Ans. Under Article 94(c), the Speaker can be removed through a resolution passed by a majority of the total membership of the Lok Sabha after a 14-day notice.

Q4. Why are removal motions against the Speaker rare in India?

Ans. Removal motions are rare because they require majority support of the entire Lok Sabha and have historically failed, reflecting the high constitutional threshold protecting the office.

Q5. What reforms are suggested to strengthen the credibility of the Speaker's office?

Ans. Strengthening parliamentary conventions, ensuring transparency in procedural rulings, promoting dialogue between government and opposition, and clarifying discretionary powers can improve trust and institutional functioning.

Source: TH

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/daily-editorial-analysis-11-march-2026/>

© Vajiram & Ravi. For personal use only.