

Can Ethics Be Incorporated into Smart, AI-Equipped Machines?

April 14, 2017

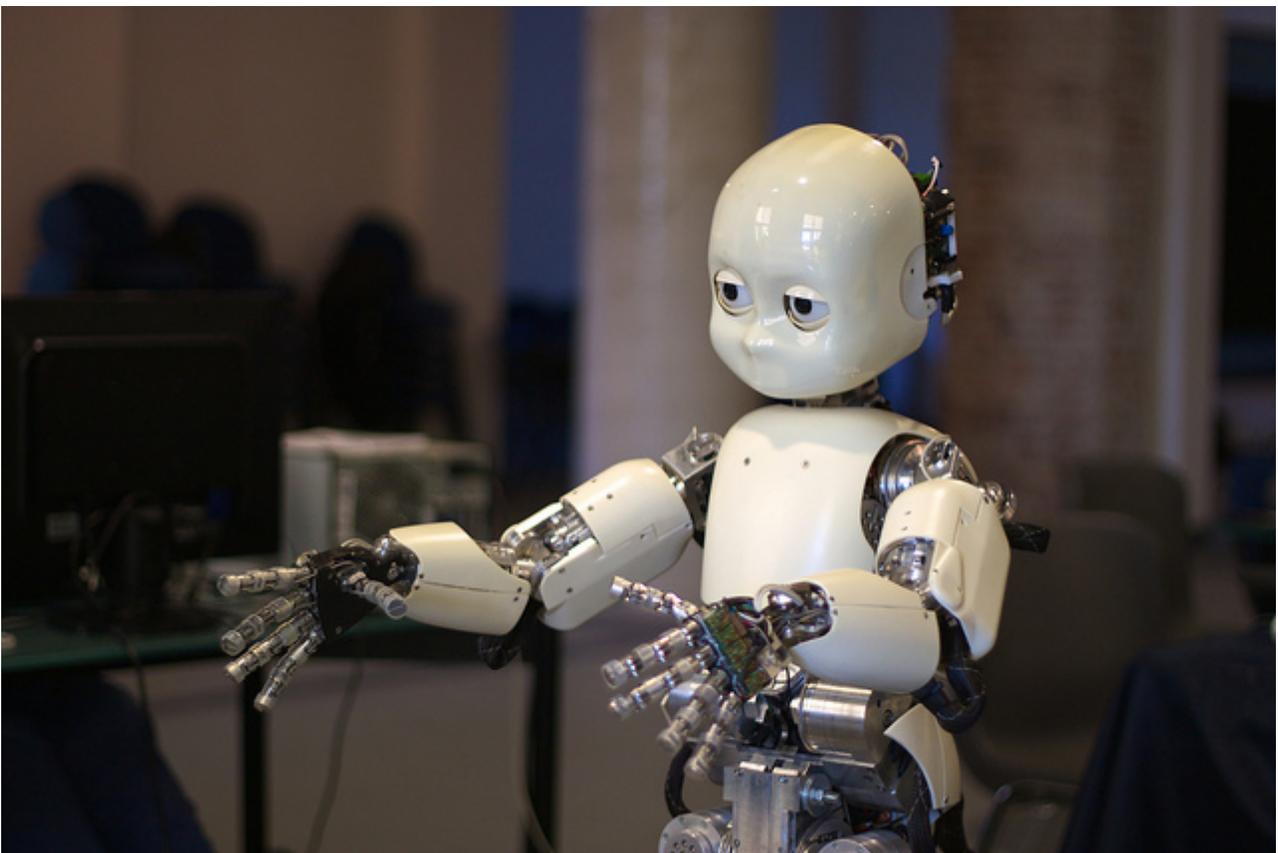


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Academic Article

[Incorporating Ethics into Artificial Intelligence](#)

This article reviews the reasons scholars hold that driverless cars and many other AI equipped machines must be able to make ethical decisions, and the difficulties this approach faces. It then shows that cars have no moral agency, and that the term ‘autonomous’, commonly applied to these machines, is misleading, and leads to invalid conclusions about the ways these machines can be kept ethical. The article’s most important claim is that a significant part of the challenge posed by AI-equipped machines can be addressed by the kind of ethical choices made by human beings for millennia. Ergo, there is little need to teach machines ethics even if this could be done in the first place. Finally, the article points out that it is a grievous error to draw on extreme outlier scenarios—such as the Trolley narratives—as a basis for conceptualizing the ethical issues at hand.

Published in the *Journal of Ethics*; [click here](#) for the full text.

Editorials

[Earth to Trump: Needed, an East Asia Policy](#)

Pockets of order seem to emerge from the chaos also known as the Trump Administration. In mid-February, deputy national security adviser K.T. McFarland asked national security officials to submit proposals on ways to deal with North Korea that encompassed all options, including military action, regime change, and recognition of North Korea as a nuclear state. Officials reported back to McFarland a few weeks later. After these proposals are refined, they are supposed to be presented to the president for review and decision. And we learned from the *Washington Post* that Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis have developed a close working relationship – the two make a point to both meet in person and speak over the phone frequently. “All” that is missing is on the next level: the kind of meetings other presidents often conducted in the Situation Room, in which State, Defense, the Intelligence community, and various advisers made their presentations, exchanged views, and the president then – often after several such meetings – makes a policy decision. Instead we got another Trump dinner at Mar-a-Lago, one in which the secretary of State did not participate because he was in China.

Published in *The Diplomat*; [click here](#) to read the full article.

[Why Trump Needs Robots on Mars \(Not People\)](#)

Donald Trump recently signed a bill authorizing \$19.5 billion in funding for NASA, which will support NASA in completing a human mission to Mars by 2033. In his statement at the signing of the bill, Trump listed “human space exploration” among the core missions of NASA. It does not seem that the authorization and prioritization is the result of extensive deliberations by the White House about the merit of “manned” missions versus those carried out by smarter and more agile robots that are guided by artificial intelligence.

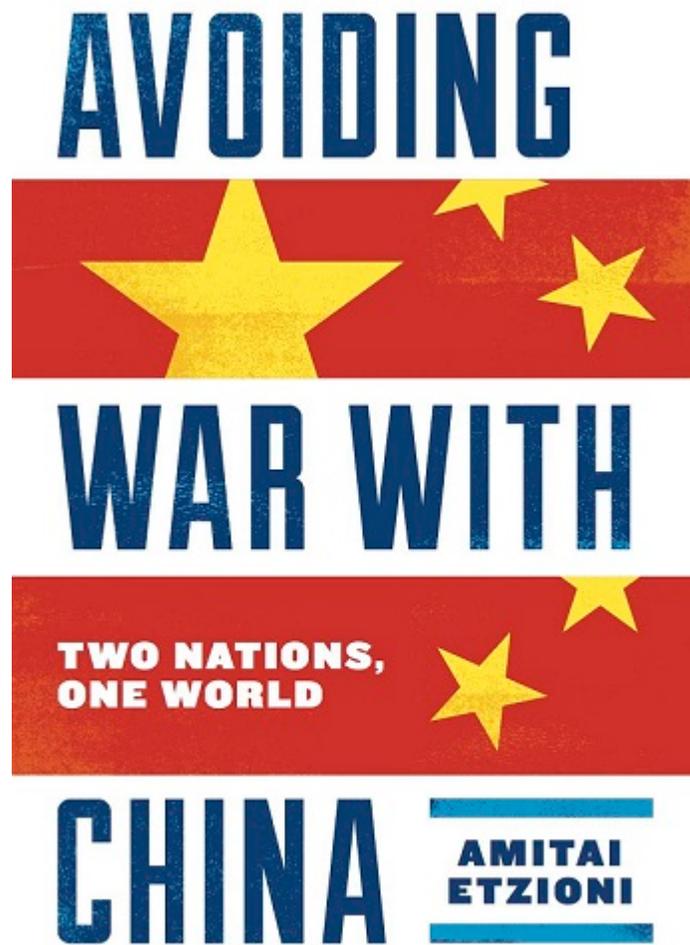
Published in *The National Interest*, [click here](#) to read the full article.

[America Can't Afford to Buy a Broken Afghanistan](#)

Trump should refuse to grant the request of Gen. Joseph Votel, head of U.S. Central Command, for thousands of additional troops to be sent to Afghanistan. Indeed, Trump should announce that, true to his campaign promise, he will not continue the failed Bush-Obama policy of nation-building in Afghanistan. The president should state that the United States will give the Afghan government six months to work out a deal with the Taliban, but then withdraw U.S. troops—advisers and all—and rapidly scale back the billions of dollars the United States provides to the corrupt government. He should warn the Taliban—who are sure to play a major role in the future of Afghanistan—that if it again hosts terrorists who seek to harm the United States, then the United States will respond with heavy bombings. Also, he should notify U.S. allies, who have troops in Afghanistan and who help train and finance the Afghan government, that if they are willing to take over the futile attempt to turn Afghanistan into a stable government, maybe even a liberal democracy, then they are welcome to try. Otherwise, they may wish to phase out assistance as the United States does.

Published in [The National Interest](#) and quoted in [The New York Times](#).

Just Out



University of Virginia Press
May 2017

"Etzioni has written a brilliant little book that meticulously examines the issues between the United States and China and the interests and emotions that bear on them. There is no better way to get up to speed on the increasingly tense relations between Washington and Beijing than to read *Avoiding War with China*."

Ambassador Chas W. Freeman Jr.

former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs

"Drawing on his encyclopedic knowledge of the history and current state of US-China relations, Etzioni sorts out the many myths and common misconceptions and contrasts them with reality. His book outlines the truly essential issues concerning competition and cooperation between the two countries. His proposal for realistic ways to construct a more peaceful relationship is poised to inspire important debates over US-Asia policy."

Ho-Fung Hung

John Hopkins University, author of *The China Boom: Why China Will Not Rule the World*

"In *Avoiding War with China*, Etzioni clearly points out that in this globalized world, relationships between great powers should adopt geoeconomic principles, which often result in a win-win situation, and should shy away from geopolitical considerations, which are always zero-sum games."

Patrick C. P. Ho

Deputy Chairman and Secretary General of the China Energy Fund Committee

Forthcoming: Three Events!

All events are open to the public.

April 18th

Debate on Asian security from a U.S. perspective with Aaron Friedberg and Amitai Etzioni

Hosted by The Alexander Hamilton Society at The George Washington University

Time: 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Location: Marvin Center, Room 310, 800 21st St NW, Washington, DC 20052

April 24th

***Avoiding War with China* Book Launch**

Time: 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.

Location: Room 505, Elliott School of International Affairs, 1957 E St NW, Washington, DC 20052

May 1st

Avoiding War with China Panel Discussion

Panelists: Chas Freeman, Mike Pillsbury, and Amitai Etzioni

Time: 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Location: Lindner Commons, Elliott School of International Affairs, 1957 E St NW, Washington, DC 20052

My Diary

Several corporations not only collect data about people and sell it to other private corporations, but also to government agencies! In this way, the government circumvents many limitations on data collection that Congress and the Courts impose. Details follow. They are dated, but the point is not:

—ChoicePoint, a major Privacy Merchant, has at least thirty-five contracts with government agencies, including the Department of Justice (through which it provides its databases to the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI)), as well as the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services.

—The corporate data miner, Florida-based SeisInt, ran a massive database called MATRIX (Multi-State Anti-Terrorism Information Exchange) in a joint effort among several U.S. states to coordinate counter terrorism efforts.

—Moreover, the trend is to extend this use, as evidenced by a 2011 FBI manual that enables agents to search for private citizens in commercial databases without prior authorization or even notification. In 2011, Google revealed that the U.S. government made the most requests for Internet users' private data in 2010, with Google complying with 94% of those orders.

For more discussion, see our article ["The Privacy Merchants."](#)

From Our Communitarian Reporter

Usually, the features of a wedding that draw the most attention for most of us are details like the dress, the music, and whether any family drama boils over, wedding ceremonies also have a way of revealing the underlying values of the culture (or cultures) in which they take place. Do the vows reflect gender equality or a more hierarchical view of gender roles? Does the involvement of the families and the broader community in the ceremony suggest that they will play a role in the new couple's life, or does it imply that the new couple is now a discrete entity that should be self-sustaining, with its own nucleus?

One very telling feature of American weddings is their ever-increasing costs; weddings, like too many other aspects of life, have become a big business. Several recent surveys have estimated the average cost of a wedding in the US to be around \$30,000. In many large urban areas, the average cost rises above \$40,000, and in Manhattan, the average wedding costs \$88, 176, according to consumer research group Value Penguin. And of course, these numbers don't even take into consideration the money spent by guests on gifts for the new couple. According to an American Express survey, friends spent an average of \$99 on wedding gifts, while family members spent \$127.

Some couples, however, have decided that such ostentatious displays of consumerism don't reflect their values. The New York Times recently documented a growing trend of couples who have decided to ask guests to make a donation to a charity instead of buying a gift. Others are opting to make a donation to a charity in guests' honor instead of giving out party favors – the trinkets that are often forgotten or discarded shortly after the reception.

The trend toward redirecting at least some of the ballooning nuptial expenditures towards

charity seems to reflect a desire to make sure that wedding ceremonies are an expression of participants' values. The New York Times article quotes Melissa A. Berman, the chief executive of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, who says that "there's a growing awareness among millennials that what you do with your whole life should reflect your values."

--David Kroeker-Maus

New Video!

Avoiding War with China (Part 1)

[Click here to watch it on our YouTube channel.](#)



Recent Tweets

Snowden and CIA leaks happen because government relies on private contractors to do intelligence work. For more see: <http://ow.ly/qlVu309YmFf>

In Dutch elections, the messenger lost (well, came in second) but the populist message won, adopted by the winner!

The CIA's surveillance power is vastly overrated. It cannot find out even when it is about to be hit, let alone prevent it

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The Institute for Communitarian Policy Studies
Executive Associate in University Professors Department
1922 F Street NW, Room 413
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