THE CHATGPT RUSH HASTENS CHINA'S RACE IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

SHAN Wei & CHUA Jing Yee

EAI Background Brief No. 1706

Date of Publication: 3 May 2023

Executive Summary

- 1. As a new artificial intelligence (AI) technology that could potentially change the world, ChatGPT has sparked a frenzy of competition among Chinese technology companies.
- 2. Almost all of China's major technology companies, as well as some startups, have announced that they will launch similar products as ChatGPT.
- 3. Search giant Baidu and e-commerce leader Alibaba have already released their chatbots which, despite their shortcomings, are considered competitors to ChatGPT.
- 4. In the context of the technological competition between China and the United States, the race among Chinese companies around ChatGPT has also intensified the competition between the two countries in AI.
- 5. The Chinese government's response to the launch of ChatGPT was quick. During the National People's Congress in March 2023, officials and representatives discussed ways to facilitate China's own large language model products. The Beijing municipal government stated that it will fully support Chinese technology companies in developing ChatGPT-like products.
- 6. China plans to achieve a leading position in the field of AI by 2030. It is investing heavily in AI, promoting research programmes and reforming its scientific and technological governance system to enhance its position in technological competition with the United States.
- 7. In the meantime, the authorities have also put constraints on the development of AI. In April 2023, the Cyberspace Administration of China issued new regulations requiring AI products to undergo government security reviews and to be consistent with the official ideology.

8. Overall, the Chinese government is making significant efforts in promoting the development of AI, albeit with the firm control of the government. It remains to be seen whether this state-led approach to AI development can compete with future GPT-like innovations.