**THINK TANKS AND BUSINESS IN THE AI AGE :**

Leading with Geostrategic Foresight

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The second quarter of the 21st century marks a profound dual transformation that is shaping humanity's future.

One is technological acceleration. The other is geopolitical transformation. Together, they are redefining how both the states and the companies compete, invest, and manage risk.

On the **technological** side, change is happening faster than at any point in history. Artificial intelligence, quantum computing, neuroscience, space technologies, blockchain, and data governance are no longer emerging topics. They are already reshaping markets, value chains, and business models. These technologies are not simply improving productivity. They are changing the foundations of how economies function. They require massive amounts of clean energy, secure access to critical raw materials, and trusted digital infrastructure. In this environment, leadership in technology increasingly depends on talent, creativity, and ethical judgment, not only on capital or scale.

At the same time, the **geopolitical** environment is being permanently reshaped. Strategic rivalries are intensifying. Alliances are becoming more selective. Supply chains are being redesigned under political pressure. The line between economic policy and foreign policy, between defence and innovation, is fading. Nations and corporations alike must learn to navigate a world where interdependence is no longer a guarantee of peace but a test of resilience. The geopolitical trajectory of the next twenty-five years is crucial to permanently analyze: its mix of cooperation, fragmentation, and domination across regions will set parameters for all public policy and business decisions.

For both the political and the business leaders, this convergence of technology and geopolitics is no longer a distant backdrop. It directly affects investment decisions, access to markets, regulatory exposure, cost structures, and talent strategies. It requires a mindset that goes beyond quarterly performance or crisis response. Strategic success increasingly depends on the ability to connect technological ambition with geopolitical awareness, and operational efficiency with long-term responsibility. The companies that will lead tomorrow are those that combine data with judgment, innovation with purpose, and uncertainty with strategic confidence.

In this context, power is increasingly defined by the control and movement of data, energy, capital, and knowledge. Governments, companies, and societies are operating within a single, highly interconnected global

system, where shocks travel fast and opportunities reward anticipation. Power today is less about geography than about institutional capacity: the ability to coordinate industrial policy, manage strategic interdependence, and move up global value chains This is why geostrategic intelligence is becoming a core business capability. It is not about predicting headlines, but about understanding how global dynamics shape competitive advantage. This is precisely where think tanks, especially those embedded in transnational networks, play a growing role for business.

**From analysis to strategic foresight**

Traditional policy analysis, focused on static reports and backwards-looking assessments, is no longer sufficient for executive decision-making. Leading think tanks are therefore evolving into foresight platforms that integrate policy, technology, finance, and societal trends.

In this respect, key new roles include:

- creating early-warning mechanisms combining open-source intelligence with real-time analytics;
- developing scenario-based strategic simulations linking political trends with economic and technological indicators;
- and acting as trusted conveners between public authorities, business leaders, and academic experts.

**For companies, think tanks help turn complexity into strategic clarity.**

**They connect geopolitical developments to concrete business questions, market access, supply chain resilience, regulatory risk, capital allocation, and reputational exposure.**

Artificial intelligence is transforming how think tanks work, enabling continuous monitoring of global developments, predictive modeling, and more dynamic strategic analysis. Yet technology alone does not replace judgment. Geostrategic intelligence remains a human-centered discipline. It depends on experience, ethical reasoning, and contextual understanding. The challenge for business is therefore twofold: using AI to enhance insight while ensuring that AI itself is governed responsibly. Think tanks, with their cross-disciplinary expertise, may well be positioned to support companies in navigating this balance.

The most effective foresight systems do not operate in isolation. They function as ecosystems, where information and insight circulate between governments, companies, and civil society. Think tanks play a critical connecting role, translating political developments into business-relevant intelligence, and business realities into policy aware dialogue.

**Corporate geostrategy as a board responsibility**

Geopolitical intelligence is no longer optional. It is a board-level responsibility. Every major corporate decision, investment, technology adoption, sourcing strategy, market entry, or talent policy, is influenced by geopolitical forces.

Energy transition, AI regulation, data governance, supply chain security, and workforce mobility are now political as well as economic variables. Corporate governance and geostrategy have effectively merged. Boards that understand this reality are better equipped to protect value and capture opportunity.

For corporations, resilience increasingly depends on mastering the political and technological architecture of global interdependence. Think tanks can serve as strategic partners in this effort, helping companies establish internal geostrategic intelligence functions, deploy AI-driven monitoring tools, and develop partnerships that link innovation, security, and sustainability.

The following examples illustrate this convergence:

- **Capital flows** follow power. The freezing of Russian reserves and the weaponization of payment systems after 2022 illustrated that access to finance can no longer be considered politically neutral. The result is a gradual fragmentation of the global monetary system. For corporate treasurers and CFOs, geopolitical intelligence now means mapping not only credit ratings, but also the political risk embedded in currencies, sanctions regimes, and banking regulations. The cost of capital itself is being geopoliticalized.

- **China**'s CIPS (Cross-border Interbank Payment System), the digital yuan, and Gulf initiatives for cross-border digital settlements represent efforts to reduce dependency on the U.S. dollar. European institutions, through the Capital Markets Union and the new Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP), are mobilizing public funds for resilience and technological sovereignty. Africa and Latin America increasingly attract Gulf and Asian sovereign funds for green infrastructure, signaling a diversification of global investment centers.

- The transition to a low-carbon and digital economy has created unprecedented pressure on **critical raw materials** (CRMs). Lithium, cobalt, graphite, and rare earths are the "new oil". China controls more than 60% of global rare-earth processing and dominates the supply of graphite used in electric-vehicle batteries. The Democratic Republic of Congo produces over 70% of the world's cobalt; refining, however, takes place largely in China. Europe is responding with the EU Critical Raw Materials Act, aiming to diversify sourcing through partnerships with Australia, Canada, Chile, and Türkiye. Türkiye itself is emerging as a regional hub for boron, nickel, and battery-component processing as well as new rare-earth potential, linking European and Asian value chains. For corporations, these dynamics affect procurement strategy, R&D priorities, and ESG reporting. Boards must combine geological awareness with geopolitical foresight: securing offtake agreements, investing in recycling technologies, and assessing the social license to operate in fragile regions.

- COVID-19, the war in Ukraine, and the Red Sea disruptions have exposed the fragility of global just-in-time models. **Supply-chain** security has become a new form of national and corporate defense. Semiconductors are a prime example: the U.S. CHIPS Act, Japan's subsidy programmes, and the EU's Chips Joint Undertaking all seek to regionalize production capacity.

Pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, once outsourced to Asia, are being repatriated through “friend-shoring” agreements within trusted political blocs. Food and fertilizer chains, affected by the Black Sea conflict, have redirected flows toward Latin America, the Gulf, and East Africa, forcing agribusiness boards to reassess logistics risk.

Companies now measure supply-chain efficiency not only in cost terms but in resilience metrics: redundancy, transparency, traceability, and political stability along the chain. This is the essence of corporate geopolitical intelligence: understanding how physical and regulatory geographies interact. The global race for clean energy and digital infrastructure blends technology with geopolitics. The EU Green Deal Industrial Plan and the U.S. IRA compete to attract private capital for renewables, batteries, and hydrogen. However, Trump Administration’s sustainable development policies are likely to change frequently. Meanwhile, sovereign wealth funds are investing in European and Asian cleantech, turning energy exporters into green-finance leaders. Another goal is de-risking dependencies. For example, intelligence helps boards identify "choke points" in their supply chain, such as a rare-earth mineral sourced from a single volatile region, and oversee the costly but necessary transition to more stable partners.

- Domestic **political cycles** such as U.S. elections, European populism, India’s industrial nationalism or China’s centralization determine the regulatory environment for labour, data, and taxation. Talent mobility depends on visa regimes and societal stability. Post-Brexit relocations of financial professionals, and the migration of digital talent show how domestic politics shape global labour markets.

- Recent developments in **Venezuela** highlight, once again, how tightly geopolitics and business performance are linked. Political uncertainty around Venezuelan oil affects global supply expectations, and that quickly feeds into energy prices. For boards, this is not an abstract issue. Energy costs influence margins, logistics, inflation exposure, and pricing power across almost every sector. When energy prices become volatile, business plans need to be adjusted, budgets revisited, and investment decisions reassessed.

- **NATO :** The North Atlantic Alliance faces its most complex environment since 1949, a convergence of hard-power confrontation, hybrid warfare, and disruptive technology. While the Ukraine war has re-energized transatlantic unity, it also exposes structural imbalances: defence industrial capacity, energy resilience, digital sovereignty. The Alliance now functions as both a military shield and a strategic platform for resilience — spanning space, cyber, energy, and innovation ecosystems. **NATO’s survival will not depend on the next war, but on its ability to integrate defence, technology, and democratic resilience into one credible deterrent ecosystem.**

Thus, the frontier between “business strategy” and “security strategy” no longer exists; they are one and the same. For companies, several board-level risks and opportunities emerge. For example:

- Geoeconomic exposure: critical materials, energy corridors, and digital infrastructure must be stress-tested for resilience.

- Strategic autonomy: boards should expect defence and technology policy to merge; procurement and compliance decisions will have geopolitical weight.
- Innovation partnerships: participation in NATO's DIANA accelerators, the Innovation Fund, or EU dual-use research programs can secure early access to frontier technologies.
- Human capital and governance: boards need internal "geopolitical intelligence functions", cross-disciplinary units linking risk, HR, and corporate strategy.

**Why think tanks still matter in the AI era**

A reasonable question arises. If AI can process vast amounts of data and generate insights almost instantly, do companies still need think tanks?

The answer is yes, because intelligence is not the same as understanding. AI excels at pattern recognition and prediction. It does not interpret values, legitimacy, or power. It cannot weigh ethical trade-offs or social consequences. Think tanks are not simply analytical tools. They are human institutions where judgment, debate, and responsibility intersect.

AI produces information. Think tanks help transform that information into strategic meaning. AI highlights trends. Think tanks assess consequences. The future of executive decision-making will therefore be hybrid. AI will enhance analytical capacity, while human institutions ensure coherence, accountability, and long-term orientation.

Strategic takeaways for business leaders:

- Every board agenda item now carries geopolitical implications.
- Geostrategic literacy is emerging as a core leadership capability.
- complexity.
- AI expands analytical power, but purpose, judgment and legitimacy remain human.
- Public, private, and think tank collaboration strengthens resilience and credibility.
- Think tanks are becoming strategic partners for executives navigating

The AI era will not simply simplify the world for business. It will make risks and opportunities more visible, faster, and more interconnected. The role of think tanks is to help leaders convert visibility into foresight, and foresight into sound decisions. In a world accelerated by algorithms, think tanks provide orientation. They help ensure that growth, innovation, and competitiveness are aligned with long-term purpose and shared stability.

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