

# 2025 President Trump and the tech persons at the table

## SPECIAL EDITION

2025: lighting the tech fuse for dominance in the 21st century

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*Reading instructions: this document is a compilation of several individual documents I have produced on assignment for other organizations and countries. Some information overlaps, but several points bear repeating. This document deals solely with matters circulating around AI and infrastructure technology; other considerations have not been factored in at this stage.*

## Table of Contents

<b>2025 President Trump and the tech persons at the table</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Executive summary</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Key Tech Figures</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Four Influential Tech Clusters</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Ideological and Economic Drivers</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Potential Conflicts</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Policy Initiatives and Future Scenarios</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>First Conclusion</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Deep Dive on J.D. Vance</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Background and Career</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Connection to Tech Figures and the "PayPal Mafia"</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Risk Assessment of J.D. Vance's Tenure and Implications for Sweden</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Key Risks and Sweden's Mitigation Strategies</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>1. Economic and Trade Policies</b> .....	<b>8</b>

2. AI & Emerging Tech Regulation .....	9
3. U.S.-China Tech Rivalry and Its Spillover Effects .....	9
4. Shift in Transatlantic Relations & Security .....	10
5. Financial and Energy Impacts .....	10
<b>Perspective on Assessment: Sweden Must Act Proactively .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Sweden must:.....	11
<b>The PayPal Mafia .....</b>	<b>11</b>
1. Peter Thiel .....	11
2. Elon Musk.....	12
3. Reid Hoffman .....	12
4. Max Levchin .....	12
5. David Sacks .....	12
6. Steve Chen and Chad Hurley.....	12
7. Jeremy Stoppelman .....	13
8. Premal Shah .....	13
9. Luke Nosek .....	13
10. Roelof Botha .....	13
11. Keith Rabois .....	13
12. Jack Dorsey .....	13
13. J.D. Vance.....	13
14. Joe Lonsdale.....	14
Expanded Network and External Connections – groups of influence .....	14
<b>Second Conclusion.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Policy Direction of the U.S. Toward Core Technology Companies &amp; EU Under the Influence of This Group – Implications for Sweden .....</b>	<b>16</b>
1. U.S. Tech Policy Under Their Influence: Deregulation, AI Dominance, and Nationalism .....	16
What to Expect: .....	16
What Sweden Should Do: .....	17
2. U.S. vs. EU: Tensions in Digital Sovereignty & Market Control .....	17
What to Expect:.....	17
What Sweden Should Do: .....	17
3. Impact on AI, Defense, and Cybersecurity Policy .....	18
What to Expect: .....	18
What Sweden Should Do: .....	18
4. Space & Next-Gen Technology: U.S. Wants Europe Dependent on American Leadership .....	18
What to Expect:.....	18
What Sweden Should Do: .....	19
<b>Final Assessment: Sweden’s Position in This U.S.-EU Tech Divide.....</b>	<b>19</b>
Key Takeaways for Sweden:.....	19
<b>Strategic Priorities for Sweden: [Urgent Action Required].....</b>	<b>19</b>
1. Energy: Secure National Control & Strategic Allocation.....	20

2. AI & Cloud Infrastructure: Build a Sovereign Tech Stack .....	20
3. AI Capacity: Scale Swedish AI Startups into Global Players .....	20
4. Knowledge: Equip the Population for the AI Economy.....	21
<b>The Bottom Line: Sweden Must Act Now</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<i>A final word</i> .....	<b>21</b>
APPENDIX.....	<b>24</b>

## Executive summary

The document "Trump and Technology Implications for Sweden" provides an in-depth analysis of how the policies of the Trump administration, particularly regarding AI, technology, and cybersecurity, may impact Sweden. It explores key players in Trump's tech circle, such as Elon Musk, Peter Thiel, and J.D. Vance, and examines their influence on deregulation, AI acceleration, and geopolitical strategies. The document identifies critical risks for Sweden, including economic protectionism, AI deregulation, and transatlantic tensions, while proposing strategic mitigation measures. It emphasizes the urgent need for Sweden to strengthen its technological sovereignty, build independent AI and cloud infrastructure, secure its energy resources, and enhance its role in global AI leadership to navigate the evolving US-EU tech landscape. The bottom line is clear—Sweden must act decisively to safeguard its economic and technological future in light of the shifting global power dynamics.

## Introduction

President Donald Trump is surrounded by a number of influential tech figures whose interests and businesses often align with his political and economic agenda. These individuals have not only played a significant role in the tech sector but have also shaped the debate around innovation, free markets, regulation, and national security. Their influence spans several clusters that are materially important to the United States' future technology development and global competitiveness.

### Key Tech Figures

Among the most prominent tech figures around Trump are:

- **Elon Musk** (Tesla, SpaceX, X/Twitter, Neuralink, Starlink)
- **Peter Thiel** (Palantir, Founders Fund, formerly PayPal)
- **David Sacks** (PayPal, investor, conservative commentator)
- **Marc Andreessen** (Andreessen Horowitz, Silicon Valley investor)
- **Jacob Helberg** (geopolitical technology strategist)
- **Jared Isaacman** (SpaceX, military space initiatives)
- **Michael Kratsios** (former White House CTO)

- **Blake Masters** (Thiel protégé, former Senate candidate)
- **Vivek Ramaswamy** (biotech, Republican politician)
- **Shyam Sankar** (Palantir, AI and defense innovation)
- **Gail Slater** (legal expert in tech regulation)
- **Joe Lonsdale** (Palantir, OpenGov, 8VC, PayPal)

These individuals have had long-standing business relationships and often share ideological perspectives. Four main tech clusters can be identified based on their activities and influence:

## Four Influential Tech Clusters

1. The PayPal Cluster
  - Musk, Sacks, and Thiel share a common background at PayPal and have since built influential companies with significant commercial and political clout.
  - Musk and Sacks have been given key roles in the Trump administration, where they are likely to push an agenda of regulatory relief, reindustrialization, and innovation in the defense sector.
2. Social Media and Information Control
  - Musk (X/Twitter), Zuckerberg (Meta), Bezos (Amazon, Washington Post), and Trump himself (Truth Social) control platforms with global reach and can shape political and economic debate.
  - They are likely to push issues of free speech, reduced government involvement, and deregulation of content moderation.
3. Defense and Space Technology
  - Musk, Thiel, Isaacman, and Stephens have significant interests in the defense and space sectors, which can directly affect U.S. strategy.
  - Modern defense solutions such as AI-driven weapons, satellite surveillance, and privately financed spaceflight will play an important role.
4. The Emerging Tech Cluster
  - Companies and individuals such as Musk, Kratsios, Bezos, Zuckerberg, and Nadella are driving developments in AI, quantum computing, and automation.
  - Government investment in research and development will be central, but competition among these players is intense.

Elon Musk holds a unique position because he is involved in all of these clusters and has business interests that touch both U.S. and global technology policy.

## Ideological and Economic Drivers

The Trump administration and the tech figures share several common interests:

- **Deregulation and free markets:** Reduced government involvement, particularly in AI and the digital economy.
- **National sovereignty:** American technology is to be prioritized, which may lead to restrictions on foreign-owned tech companies.

- **Free speech and platform governance:** Opposition to extensive content moderation and censorship.
- American dominance in new technology: The government may invest heavily in AI and cloud infrastructure.
- Ethical and safe AI: Ensuring that AI development proceeds within clear ethical frameworks, with protection of personal privacy and reduced risk of misuse in surveillance and decision-making systems.
- NOTE: the real enemy of the U.S. on all AI matters is China. Everyone I have spoken with feels that the Biden administration aligned too closely with the EU's line on regulation, and with that many former tech figures swung from their liberal nest not only to back Trump's line but to support him financially. The tech figures "bought" their way into the American administration — and will, in due course, expect a return on that investment.

## Potential Conflicts

Despite their shared interests, there are points of friction:

- Immigration policy: Musk and Ramaswamy want to attract top global talent, while the MAGA movement is often skeptical of immigration.
- Trade policy and China: Tech figures want to avoid trade wars, while Trump is more confrontational toward China.
- Internal competition: Rivalry between Musk and Bezos over space and AI contracts may escalate.
- NOTE: There is a historical friction between Musk and Thiel rooted in Musk feeling Thiel got undeservedly much out of the deal, plus Thiel having been better at making a name for himself and being held in higher regard than Musk. The friction will surface during the current administration's tenure, especially given that Thiel's Palantir is a major supplier to the U.S. government.

## Policy Initiatives and Future Scenarios

The Trump administration may introduce sweeping reforms:

- Simplification of rules and taxes: The U.S. could become a more attractive innovation hub compared to the EU.
- Strategic investments in AI and quantum technology: The government may allocate billions of dollars to secure American technological supremacy.
- Ethical frameworks for AI: Rules and standards may be developed to minimize AI's risks of discrimination, privacy intrusion, and autonomous decision-making in critical systems.
- Possible nationalization of certain key companies: American interests may be prioritized over foreign-owned firms. This could mean Trump moving to seize Ericsson, for example.
- NOTE: Expect moves and oddities around several of Sweden's leading-edge companies, ranging from tariff barriers to outright takeovers. Much of what we will see is "throw shit on the wall and see what sticks."

## First Conclusion

The tech figures around Trump have the potential to reshape U.S. technology policy through deregulation, government investment, and geopolitical strategy. At the same time, there are significant commercial and ideological conflicts, both internally and with established Republican values. The global tech sector, including Swedish players, will be affected by these changes and will need to navigate a rapidly shifting political and economic reality.

# Deep Dive on J.D. Vance

James David "J.D." Vance, born August 2, 1984, in Middletown, Ohio, is an American politician, author, lawyer, and former Marine. Since January 20, 2025, he has served as the 50th Vice President of the United States under President Donald Trump.

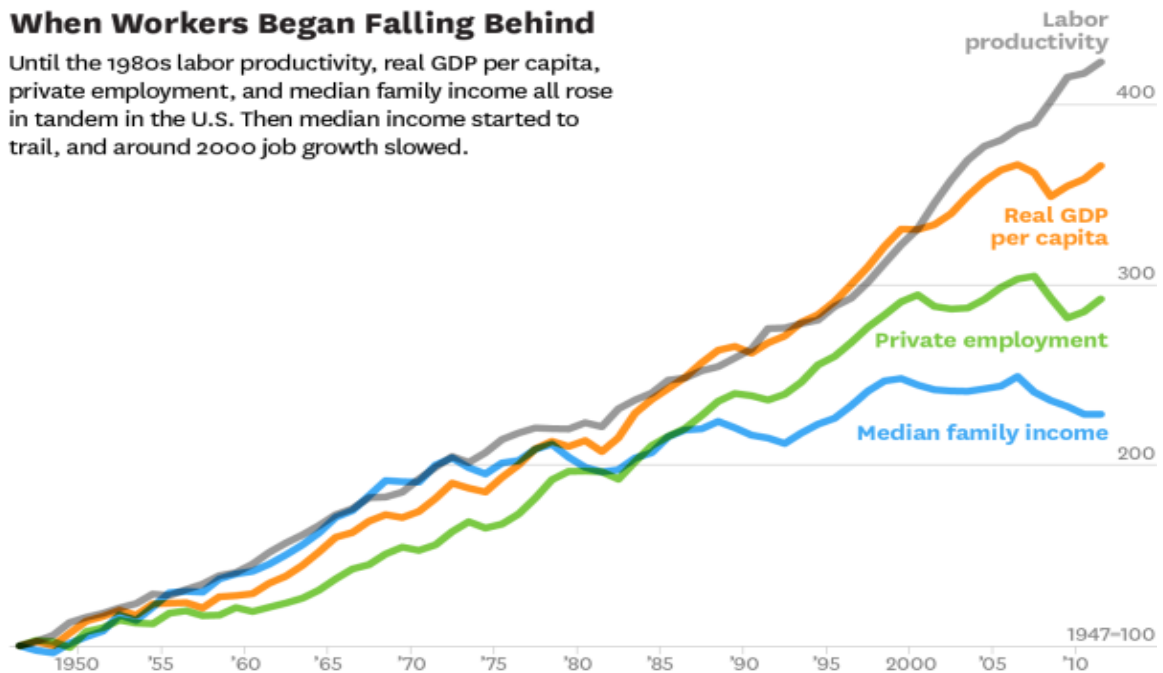
## Background and Career

Raised in a working-class family marked by poverty and addiction, Vance managed to escape those circumstances by serving in the U.S. Marine Corps and later earning a law degree from Yale University. His memoir, "Hillbilly Elegy" (2016), became a bestseller and offered a window into the life of the white working class in America's Rust Belt. The book helped explain the socioeconomic factors behind Donald Trump's success in the 2016 presidential election.

NOTE: a foundational factor in what J.D. Vance describes in his book is the decoupling of value-creating productivity, GDP per capita, real wages, and median household income that occurred in the United States in the late 1970s (see chart). Several well-known economists point to this as the inflection point at which the U.S. began running into trouble. Of note, Sweden has been developing along the same lines since the 1990s, but with a slower effect — so far. Without addressing this, Sweden can expect a political trajectory similar to what we are now seeing in the U.S.

## When Workers Began Falling Behind

Until the 1980s labor productivity, real GDP per capita, private employment, and median family income all rose in tandem in the U.S. Then median income started to trail, and around 2000 job growth slowed.



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After graduating, Vance worked in venture capital in Silicon Valley, where he built connections with several prominent tech figures. He was employed at Mithril Capital, a venture capital firm founded by Peter Thiel, one of the original members of the so-called "PayPal Mafia."

NOTE: the relationship between Thiel and Vance is VERY good. One can assume Thiel almost "remote-controls" Vance. Sources tell me that Thiel does not consider Vance especially smart, but very good at "executing" and carrying out orders.

## Connection to Tech Figures and the "PayPal Mafia"

"PayPal Mafia" is the name given to the group of former PayPal employees who later founded or invested in several prominent technology companies; the group includes, among others, Peter Thiel, Elon Musk, and Reid Hoffman. Vance's work with Thiel at Mithril Capital strengthened his ties to this influential group. Thiel also backed Vance financially during his political career, including his successful 2022 campaign for an Ohio Senate seat.

In addition to Thiel, Vance has also received support from other tech billionaires such as Elon Musk and Marc Andreessen. These relationships have been instrumental in Vance's political rise and have helped shape his positions on issues such as tax policy, AI development, and cryptocurrencies.

In summary, through his experience in both the tech sector and politics, J.D. Vance has established himself as a central figure with strong ties to influential tech figures and the "PayPal Mafia."

NOTE: For Sweden, this means that going through the usual political channels — ambassadors, consulates, government functions — does not work in practice and has little impact on this group. Instead, it has proven highly effective to use people with existing strong relationships within these clusters as a way in, paired with clear messaging, business opportunities, and above all distinctive recognitions such as Nobel Prizes, to name one example. Personally, I have had contacts and close relationships within these clusters since the mid-1990s.

## Risk Assessment of J.D. Vance's Tenure and Implications for Sweden

### Overview

J.D. Vance, as Vice President under Donald Trump's administration, is expected to reinforce Trump's policies, particularly in areas such as economic nationalism, deregulation, and a more adversarial stance toward China and the EU. His strong ties to tech billionaires, including Peter Thiel and Elon Musk, suggest a policy framework that favors technological acceleration, deregulated AI, and domestic industrial revival at the expense of international collaboration.

For Sweden, this creates both risks and opportunities that need strategic mitigation.

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# Key Risks and Sweden's Mitigation Strategies

## 1. Economic and Trade Policies

Risk: Increasing US Protectionism and Economic Nationalism

Vance and Trump advocate for policies that prioritize American manufacturing and technology sovereignty. This could result in:

- **Increased tariffs on European tech exports** (including telecom infrastructure and cloud services).
- **Buy American policies** that limit Swedish firms' access to U.S. government contracts.
- **Tech sovereignty measures** that could hinder companies like Ericsson from competing in the U.S. 5G market.

Mitigation Strategy for Sweden:

- Strengthen **bilateral trade agreements** with U.S. states that favor open markets (e.g., California, Texas) and make it a priority to considerably strengthen the function and profiles working in Silicon Valley with a clear mandate to build the relationships necessary for Sweden's continued strength.
- Increase lobbying efforts through the **EU and Nordic Council** to carve out exemptions for critical sectors.

- Enhance Sweden's technological **alliances with Canada, Korea and Japan** to counterbalance U.S. shifts. It is critical that we have strong bilateral relationships with these countries; all else equal, jointly they are bigger than the U.S. and China on AI infrastructure if we pool our resources.
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## 2. AI & Emerging Tech Regulation

Risk: U.S. Moves Toward Unregulated AI and a More Aggressive AI Race

Vance's proximity to Peter Thiel and Elon Musk suggests he will push for **deregulated AI development**, which may:

- Undercut **European AI safety standards** like GDPR and the AI Act.
- Give U.S. tech giants an **unfair advantage over Swedish AI startups** that must comply with strict EU laws.
- Increase **military AI applications**, pressuring allies like Sweden to align with U.S. defense AI strategies.

Mitigation Strategy for Sweden:

- Strengthen **Sweden's role in EU AI policy** to ensure harmonized global standards.
  - Promote **Nordic AI coalitions** that prioritize **ethical AI** as a counterweight to U.S. deregulation and build it on Sweden based AI developments.
  - Increase **public-private AI collaborations** to maintain Sweden's competitiveness in AI innovation. EcoDataCenter in Dalarna is a great example of this public-private partnership.
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## 3. U.S.-China Tech Rivalry and Its Spillover Effects

Risk: Sweden Caught in the Crossfire of U.S.-China Tech Sanctions

Vance supports a **hardline stance on China**, meaning:

- Swedish firms with **Chinese dependencies** (e.g., Volvo Cars, Ericsson's supply chain) could face **U.S. secondary sanctions** without prior notice or warning. Sweden is already seen as China-friendly by the list of people presented earlier in the text.
- **Semiconductor export restrictions** could impact Swedish access to key chip technology. This could happen overnight and could extend to certain software as well. The quicker we are as a country to get infrastructure in place the better off we are and can mitigate such actions.
- Potential **pressuring of Sweden to ban Chinese companies** (e.g., TikTok, Huawei) from critical infrastructure. This is not a risk — it's a guarantee. It comes in the next wave of Trump activities as this is on the U.S. administration's list of to-dos.

Mitigation Strategy for Sweden:

- Diversify semiconductor supply chains **beyond U.S.-China dependencies** (e.g., via Taiwan, South Korea, EU fab investments).

- Seek **security assurances from the U.S.** regarding trade impacts on Swedish firms.
  - Strengthen **Nordic digital sovereignty strategies** first to balance reliance on both U.S. and Chinese tech, and second to build sovereign capability and capacity in critical applications.
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## 4. Shift in Transatlantic Relations & Security

Risk: U.S. Reducing Commitment to NATO and EU Relations

If Vance and Trump deprioritize NATO funding or increase **bilateral deal-making over multilateralism**, Sweden faces:

- **Increased security burdens** despite recent NATO membership.
- Potential **U.S. military disengagement** from Northern Europe, shifting defense responsibilities to EU/NATO.
- Pressure to **align with U.S. military AI policies** despite ethical concerns.

Mitigation Strategy for Sweden:

- Strengthen **EU security initiatives** (PESCO) to reduce NATO dependency.
  - Expand **defense ties with the UK and Canada** in case U.S. security commitments wane.
  - Advocate for **AI governance norms in NATO** to prevent unchecked military AI escalation.
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## 5. Financial and Energy Impacts

Risk: U.S. Policies Affecting Green Energy and Investment Climate

Vance has been skeptical of **green subsidies** and supports **fossil fuel expansion**, meaning:

- Weaker U.S. support for global climate initiatives, affecting Swedish renewable investments.
- A stronger U.S. oil & gas sector, leading to price volatility for Sweden's energy market.
- **Increased capital flight to the U.S.**, making Sweden less attractive for tech startups and investments.

Mitigation Strategy for Sweden:

- Push for **EU energy autonomy policies** to reduce exposure to U.S. market fluctuations. It is important that Sweden temporarily adopt a Sweden-first energy strategy.
  - Expand Sweden's green technology exports to Asia and the Middle East.
  - Ensure Sweden remains a hub for **ESG-driven capital** to counterbalance shifts in U.S. investment trends.
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# Perspective on Assessment: Sweden Must Act Proactively

J.D. Vance's tenure as Vice President signals a more aggressive, tech-driven, and nationalist U.S. approach, with risks in trade, AI regulation, military policies, and energy security.

## Sweden must:

1. Bolster transatlantic trade protections through EU channels.
2. Strengthen AI and cybersecurity alliances with Nordic and EU partners.
3. Reduce dependence on U.S.-China supply chains to avoid economic shocks.
4. Enhance its role in shaping NATO strategy to counter U.S. unpredictability.
5. **Drive independent green investments** to stay resilient against shifting U.S. priorities.
6. **Build a small public/private taskforce** to operate in the clusters of relevant people and in that have a trade mindset of both comparative advantages and Swedish sovereignty.

By acting **early and decisively**, Sweden can **navigate the risks while maintaining strong U.S. ties** without being overshadowed by American economic nationalism.

## The PayPal Mafia

The "PayPal Mafia" refers to a group of former PayPal employees and founders who went on to establish and invest in numerous successful technology companies. Beyond their internal connections, many members have cultivated extensive networks across various industries. Here's an expanded overview of key figures and their external affiliations:

(yellow highlight denotes critical relationships for Sweden)

### 1. Peter Thiel

- **Facebook:** As the first outside investor, Thiel's early funding was pivotal in Facebook's development.
- **Palantir Technologies:** Co-founded this data analytics company, which collaborates with government and financial sectors.
- **Founders Fund:** Through this venture capital firm, Thiel has invested in companies like LinkedIn, Spotify, and SpaceX.
- **Political Involvement:** A prominent supporter of conservative causes, Thiel has backed political figures including Donald Trump and J.D. Vance.
- **Enhanced Games:** Partnered with Aron D'Souza to propose an alternative to the Olympics, allowing performance-enhancing drugs under controlled conditions.

## 2. Elon Musk

- **Tesla, Inc.:** CEO of this leading electric vehicle and clean energy company.
- **SpaceX:** Founder and CEO, advancing private space exploration and satellite communications.
- **Neuralink:** Co-founded this neurotechnology company developing implantable brain–machine interfaces.
- **The Boring Company:** Established to develop tunnel construction and infrastructure projects.
- **Political Connections:** Musk's involvement in government efficiency initiatives has been facilitated by political figures like Stephen and Katie Miller.

## 3. Reid Hoffman

- **LinkedIn:** Co-founded the professional networking platform, later acquired by Microsoft.
- **Greylock Partners:** As a partner, Hoffman has invested in various tech startups, including Airbnb and Dropbox.
- **Political Engagement:** An active supporter of Democratic candidates and initiatives promoting responsible technology use.
- **NOTE:** friends tell me that Reid feels more and more pushed out of the US narrative and is in that seeking a position in Europe.

## 4. Max Levchin

- **Yelp:** Co-founded this crowd-sourced review platform.
- **Affirm:** Founded this financial technology company specializing in installment loans for consumers.
- **HVF (Hard, Valuable, Fun):** Established this lab and fund to create and invest in projects that leverage data for innovation.

## 5. David Sacks

- **Yammer:** Founded this enterprise social networking service, acquired by Microsoft.
- **Craft Ventures:** Co-founded this venture capital firm investing in early-stage startups.
- **Political Involvement:** Appointed as the AI and crypto czar in the Trump administration, influencing technology policy.

## 6. Steve Chen and Chad Hurley

- **YouTube:** Co-founded the video-sharing platform, later acquired by Google.
- **AVOS Systems:** Established this company to develop new internet products and services.

## 7. Jeremy Stoppelman

- **Yelp:** Co-founded and serves as CEO, guiding its growth in the local business review market.

## 8. Premal Shah

- **Kiva:** Co-founded this nonprofit organization enabling peer-to-peer lending to alleviate poverty.

## 9. Luke Nosek

- **Founders Fund:** Co-founded alongside Peter Thiel, investing in companies like SpaceX and Facebook.
- **Gigafund:** Established to support companies with long-term visions, including SpaceX.

## 10. Roelof Botha

- **Sequoia Capital:** As a partner, Botha has invested in companies like YouTube and Instagram.
- **Eventbrite:** Serves on the board of this event management and ticketing platform.

## 11. Keith Rabois

- **Square:** Co-founded this mobile payment company.
- **OpenDoor:** Co-founded this online real estate marketplace.
- **Founders Fund:** Partner at this venture capital firm, investing in various startups.

## 12. Jack Dorsey

- **Twitter:** Co-founded the social media platform, serving as CEO during two separate terms.
- **Square:** Co-founded and leads this financial services and mobile payment company.

## 13. J.D. Vance

- **Author:** Wrote "Hillbilly Elegy," a memoir reflecting on his upbringing and socio-economic issues.
- **Politics:** Serves as the 50th Vice President of the United States under President Donald Trump.
- **Investment:** Partnered with Peter Thiel in venture capital endeavors, focusing on startups in Middle America.

## 14. Joe Lonsdale

- **Co-founder of Palantir:** Helped found Palantir Technologies in 2003 alongside Peter Thiel, Alex Karp, Stephen Cohen, and Nathan Gettings, building a data-analytics platform widely used by U.S. defense and intelligence agencies.
- **Investor:** Founder and managing partner of 8VC, a venture capital firm investing in defense, healthcare, logistics, and enterprise software; earlier co-founded Formation 8.
- **Government tech:** Co-founded OpenGov, a software platform for public-sector financial management used by U.S. state and local governments.
- **Network and influence:** Long-standing ties to Thiel and the broader PayPal network; active funder and commentator on U.S. tech-and-defense policy and a prominent voice in the conservative tech right.

These individuals have significantly influenced various sectors, extending their impact beyond the original PayPal network into broader technological, political, and philanthropic arenas.

**To expand on these people's external connections beyond this group, here are some notable associations:**

### Expanded Network and External Connections – groups of influence

1. **Elon Musk (Tesla, SpaceX, X/Twitter, Neuralink, Starlink)**
  - **Sam Altman (OpenAI, former Y Combinator President)** – Initial collaborations in AI development before Musk distanced himself from OpenAI.
  - **Larry Page (Google/Alphabet)** – Former close associate; reportedly disagreed on AI risks.
  - **Tim Cook (Apple)** – Musk sought collaboration with Apple regarding software and batteries but has had a strained relationship.
  - **Donald Trump (Politics)** – Musk has engaged with Trump's administration, particularly on AI and regulatory policies.
2. **Peter Thiel (Palantir, Founders Fund, PayPal)**
  - **Mark Zuckerberg (Meta/Facebook)** – Early investor in Facebook, influencing its growth strategy.
  - **J.D. Vance (U.S. Vice President, author of "Hillbilly Elegy")** – Political protégé, supported by Thiel's financial backing.
  - **Erik Prince (Blackwater founder, defense contractor)** – Overlapping interests in defense and security technology.
  - **Tucker Carlson (Media)** – Strong ideological alignment and influence in conservative media circles.
3. **David Sacks (PayPal, Investor, Conservative Commentator)**

- **Donald Trump & GOP Leadership** – Has hosted fundraisers for Republican candidates.
  - **Balaji Srinivasan (Tech Entrepreneur, Bitcoin Proponent)** – Shared libertarian and decentralization ideologies.
  - **Jack Dorsey (Twitter, Square)** – Worked together on Twitter policies and free speech debates.
4. **Marc Andreessen (Andreessen Horowitz, Silicon Valley Investor)**
    - **Ben Horowitz (Andreessen Horowitz Co-founder)** – Major investor in AI and crypto industries.
    - **Tim Cook (Apple)** – Andreessen Horowitz invested in various Apple-adjacent technologies.
    - **Naval Ravikant (AngelList, Podcast Host)** – Frequent collaborator in Silicon Valley startup ecosystems.
  5. **Jacob Helberg (Geopolitical Tech Strategist)**
    - **U.S. Department of Defense** – Works closely on technology and national security policies.
    - **Eric Schmidt (Former Google CEO)** – Has advised on technology and AI's role in geopolitics.
  6. **Jared Isaacman (SpaceX, Military Space Initiatives)**
    - **U.S. Air Force & Pentagon** – Has contracts for space-based defense technology.
    - **Lockheed Martin & Northrop Grumman** – Collaborates on military aerospace projects.
  7. **Michael Kratsios (Former White House CTO)**
    - **Palantir (Peter Thiel's Company)** – Transitioned into defense technology post-government service.
    - **Oracle (Safra Catz, Larry Ellison)** – Worked on cloud infrastructure deals with the government.
  8. **Blake Masters (Thiel Protégé, Former Senate Candidate)**
    - **Donald Trump (Politics)** – Endorsed by Trump in his Senate campaign.
    - **Josh Hawley (U.S. Senator)** – Shares national conservative ideologies.
    - **Fox News & Conservative Media** – Frequent commentator.
  9. **Vivek Ramaswamy (Biotech, Republican Politician)**
    - **Tucker Carlson & Fox News** – Prominent voice in conservative political commentary.
    - **JPMorgan & Wall Street Investors** – Deep financial ties from his biotech ventures.
  10. **Shyam Sankar (Palantir, AI & Defense Tech)**
    - **CIA & NSA** – Strong connections through Palantir's data analytics contracts.
    - **Microsoft (AI & Cloud Contracts)** – Works on government and defense cloud computing.
  11. **Gail Slater (Tech Regulation Lawyer)**

- **Federal Trade Commission (FTC) – Former key legal expert in tech regulation.**
- **Meta (Facebook), Google, Amazon – Advised on regulatory strategies.**

## Second Conclusion

These individuals are deeply embedded in **politics, national security, venture capital, and AI development**. Their influence extends to governments, financial institutions, defense contractors, and leading tech firms, shaping **U.S. policy, global tech infrastructure, and future regulations**.

# Policy Direction of the U.S. Toward Core Technology Companies & EU Under the Influence of This Group – Implications for Sweden

The individuals in this **core list**—Elon Musk, Peter Thiel, David Sacks, Marc Andreessen, Jacob Helberg, Jared Isaacman, Michael Kratsios, Blake Masters, Vivek Ramaswamy, Shyam Sankar, and Gail Slater—hold **strong libertarian, nationalist, and pro-tech industry** views. Their **policy preferences** will influence how the U.S. interacts with **core technology companies, the EU, and small allies like Sweden**.

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## 1. U.S. Tech Policy Under Their Influence: Deregulation, AI Dominance, and Nationalism

What to Expect:

- **Aggressive Deregulation for U.S. Tech Giants**
  - Favoring **less regulation** on AI, data privacy, and content moderation to promote rapid technological development.
  - Opposition to the **EU's AI Act, GDPR, and Digital Markets Act (DMA)**, seeing them as overreach.
  - Support for **corporate-friendly** policies that give U.S. firms an advantage over European counterparts.
- **Tech Nationalism: "America First" in AI & Cloud Infrastructure**

- Preference for **U.S.-centric AI development**, limiting partnerships with foreign entities.
- U.S. will likely **block European countries from relying on Chinese or non-American AI/cloud services**, pushing **AWS, Microsoft, and Palantir instead**.
- Pressuring allies to **align with U.S. standards** rather than EU frameworks.
- **More Government Contracts for U.S. Tech**
  - **More defense and intelligence funding** directed toward Palantir, SpaceX, and AI firms aligned with national security.
  - **U.S. pushing for control over critical AI & cybersecurity technologies**, reducing European tech independence.

### What Sweden Should Do:

- Push for **AI & cloud autonomy within the EU** while still **engaging with U.S. firms to avoid dependence on China**.
  - Advocate for a **balanced regulatory approach** that doesn't put EU firms at a disadvantage against U.S. tech giants.
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## 2. U.S. vs. EU: Tensions in Digital Sovereignty & Market Control

### What to Expect:

- **Increased Tensions Over EU Regulation of U.S. Tech Giants**
  - **U.S. tech leaders will fight back against EU antitrust actions** targeting Apple, Google, Meta, and Amazon.
  - Retaliatory measures, such as **U.S. restrictions on European tech firms** operating in the American market.
  - A push for **less EU intervention** in content moderation (aligned with Musk's free speech ideology).
- **Weaker U.S.-EU Cooperation on Digital Policies**
  - EU wants to create a **more independent European digital market**; the U.S. sees this as **anti-competitive**.
  - Potential **U.S.-EU conflicts over chip & AI supply chains**, especially if Sweden aligns too closely with EU industrial policies.
  - U.S. tech companies lobbying **against European regulations that impact their dominance**.

### What Sweden Should Do:

- **Position itself as a neutral bridge** between the U.S. and EU to **maintain access to both markets**.
  - Promote **Swedish AI & telecom as a "trusted alternative"** that can work within both U.S. and EU regulatory frameworks.
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### 3. Impact on AI, Defense, and Cybersecurity Policy

What to Expect:

- **Stronger Push for U.S. AI & Cybersecurity Leadership in NATO**
  - U.S. will demand **more European reliance on American defense AI & cybersecurity tools** (e.g., Palantir, Anduril).
  - Sweden & EU countries will be pressured **to avoid Chinese AI tech** (e.g., Huawei, SenseTime).
- **More Military-Grade AI in U.S. Alliances**
  - Strong backing for **AI-driven military technologies** from Thiel, Sankar (Palantir), and Isaacman (SpaceX defense projects).
  - **U.S. pushing allies to adopt these AI capabilities in NATO—**potentially **conflicting with EU ethical AI regulations**.
- **Reduced EU Influence on AI Ethics & Governance**
  - The **U.S. will set its own AI rules**, dismissing EU efforts to regulate AI risks (Thiel & Musk oppose strong AI restrictions).
  - Risk of **Sweden being caught between U.S. AI policy and EU AI safety frameworks**.

What Sweden Should Do:

- **Strengthen AI sovereignty** while cooperating with the U.S. on defense AI.
  - **Avoid full reliance on Palantir & U.S. defense AI** by developing independent European cybersecurity solutions.
  - Balance **EU AI safety regulations** with **U.S. defense partnerships**.
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### 4. Space & Next-Gen Technology: U.S. Wants Europe Dependent on American Leadership

What to Expect:

- **U.S. Expansion of Space & Defense Tech (SpaceX, Starlink, AI Military Applications)**
  - SpaceX's role in **military satellite networks** means U.S. allies will need **American space tech for defense**.
  - **Starlink expansion into NATO military use**, forcing Sweden to decide between **U.S. control vs. European alternatives**.
- **Push for U.S. Leadership in Quantum Computing & Cloud AI**
  - Andreessen, Kratsios, and Thiel backing U.S. supremacy in **quantum computing, cloud AI, and biotech**.
  - **U.S. may limit Europe's access to key quantum breakthroughs**.

## What Sweden Should Do:

- **Strengthen European space collaboration** (ESA & independent satellite networks) to avoid reliance on U.S. space tech.
  - Invest in **Nordic-based quantum computing research** to maintain technological sovereignty.
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## Final Assessment: Sweden's Position in This U.S.-EU Tech Divide

Sweden **cannot afford to be passive** in the shifting tech landscape under a U.S. policy direction driven by this group. The likely scenario is a **more aggressive, protectionist, and deregulated U.S. tech policy** that may:

- Undercut **European digital sovereignty**.
- **Pressure Sweden to follow U.S. AI & cybersecurity frameworks**.
- **Create friction with EU digital regulations**.

## Key Takeaways for Sweden:

1. **Avoid full reliance on U.S. AI & cybersecurity dominance** – build European alternatives.
2. **Strengthen EU-Sweden leadership in AI ethics** to counterbalance U.S. deregulation.
3. **Leverage transatlantic partnerships wisely** – engage with U.S. tech while maintaining EU sovereignty.
4. **Anticipate U.S. retaliation against EU tech regulations** – navigate trade conflicts carefully.
5. **Develop Swedish-led AI & cloud solutions** to remain competitive globally.

Sweden must **strategically balance cooperation with the U.S. and alignment with EU policies** to stay competitive while protecting its digital sovereignty.

# Strategic Priorities for Sweden: [Urgent Action Required]

Sweden is at a **critical inflection point** in the global AI and technology landscape. To secure **economic strength, technological sovereignty, and national resilience**, Sweden must act **now**. Four key areas require **immediate** strategic action:

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## 1. Energy: Secure National Control & Strategic Allocation

**Risk:** Sweden's vast supply of clean, low-cost energy is increasingly attractive to foreign tech giants. Without a **national strategy**, Sweden risks becoming a **passive energy supplier** rather than a leader in AI and industrial innovation.

### Action Required:

- ✓ Establish a **cross-party "Sweden First" energy strategy** to ensure that national energy serves Swedish long-term interests first.
  - ✓ Prevent **uncontrolled energy sell-offs** that leave Sweden dependent on foreign tech interests.
  - ✓ Recognize that **cloud infrastructure can be weaponized**—as seen in the U.S.-Canada dispute, where Trump **threatened cloud shutdowns** in retaliation for energy policy decisions.
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## 2. AI & Cloud Infrastructure: Build a Sovereign Tech Stack

**Risk:** Sweden currently has **only one major operational AI/cloud infrastructure provider**. If no action is taken, Sweden will become **fully dependent on foreign AI infrastructure**, losing both economic and security control.

### Action Required:

- ✓ Establish a **national, sovereign AI and cloud stack**—without it, Sweden will be at the mercy of **U.S. and Chinese-controlled AI ecosystems**.
  - ✓ Prioritize investments in **Swedish-owned AI infrastructure**, ensuring critical industries and government functions remain independent.
  - ✓ Recognize that **this is a question of sovereignty**—not just economic policy.
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## 3. AI Capacity: Scale Swedish AI Startups into Global Players

**Risk:** Sweden has **world-class AI startups**, but they are **failing to scale**. If we continue small, fragmented investments, we will **lose leadership in AI innovation**.

### Action Required:

- ✓ **Cluster and consolidate** AI startups into strategic hubs, fostering **growth, collaboration, and rapid scaling**.
- ✓ Focus national efforts on **a few critical AI applications**, ensuring Sweden **owns key pieces of the global AI ecosystem**.

✔ **Stop slow-feeding innovation**—AI leadership is a race, and Sweden **cannot afford to fall behind**.

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#### 4. Knowledge: Equip the Population for the AI Economy

**Risk:** AI will reshape **every sector**. If Sweden fails to **rapidly upskill its workforce**, it risks becoming a **low-value service provider** in the global economy, much like **Bangladesh in the textile industry**.

##### Action Required:

- ✔ Launch a **nationwide AI upskilling initiative**, ensuring **all levels of the workforce** are equipped to **work alongside AI**.
  - ✔ Integrate AI education **across industries**—not just in tech, but in **manufacturing, healthcare, finance, and public services**.
  - ✔ Make Sweden a **leader in AI-augmented workforces**—turn **energy into intelligence** and **maintain national competitiveness**.
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## The Bottom Line: Sweden Must Act Now

If we fail to take decisive action in the next **12 months**, Sweden will:

- ⚠ Lose control of its **energy resources to foreign tech giants**.
- ⚠ Become **dependent on U.S. and Chinese AI infrastructure**.
- ⚠ Watch its **AI startups stagnate and get outcompeted**.
- ⚠ Fall behind in **AI-driven workforce transformation**.

## A final word

Sweden's role in this story is not as a peripheral northern economy reacting to American policy. Sweden is the most complete advancement engine in Europe — the place where ideas, talent, and a working capital ecosystem already meet at scale. Add to that an energy position no other European country can match: large volumes of clean, low-cost electricity, often produced in surplus. That combination — ideas, people, capital, and energy — is exactly the foundation the next decade of AI and infrastructure economics will be built on.

This is the European play. If Sweden plays it well, the country becomes the natural anchor for European technological sovereignty: where sovereign AI infrastructure gets built, where EU-aligned standards have credible industrial weight behind them, and where Europe's

answer to U.S. and Chinese tech dominance acquires a real home. If Sweden does not, Europe loses its most plausible base — and Sweden loses the dividend that comes from being that base.

The energy point deserves special emphasis because it is the one that can be lost the fastest and is hardest to recover. Sweden's surplus clean energy is already attractive to foreign tech operators looking for hyperscale capacity. Once long-term power purchase agreements are signed — and these typically run 10 to 15 years — the energy is effectively gone. The electrons stay in Sweden, but the value, the optionality, and the strategic leverage transfer to a foreign balance sheet for more than a decade. A country that signs away its energy advantage in this window does not become a tech nation; it becomes a third-world tech country renting its grid to others. Cherishing this resource — meaning treating it as a strategic asset rather than a commodity — is not protectionism; it is the precondition for everything else in this document.

Capital markets are the second structural lever, and they need transformative change. Today, scale capital for Swedish technology comes overwhelmingly from large U.S. venture firms and global private equity houses whose individual fund sizes rival the entire annual investment capacity of many European countries. That dependence is not a partnership; it is a pipeline that routes ownership, governance, and ultimately strategic direction back across the Atlantic. Sweden — and Europe with it — needs domestic and intra-European capital pools capable of leading rounds at the size that AI infrastructure, sovereign cloud, and frontier-tech scaling actually require. Pension capital, sovereign capital, family-office capital, and a reformed listing environment all have to be brought to bear. Without this, the comparative advantages described above accrue to foreign capital allocators rather than to Sweden.

The conclusion is therefore narrower and sharper than the body of this document might suggest. Sweden's task is not merely to navigate a Trump administration and a more aggressive U.S. tech posture. It is to recognize that Sweden holds, today, the strongest hand in Europe across the four variables that matter most for the next technological cycle — ideas, talent, capital ecosystem, and clean energy — and that this hand is exposed to rapid, contractual, and largely irreversible erosion if it is not actively defended. The window for decisive action is measured in months, not years. What Sweden does between now and the next election cycle will determine whether Europe has a credible technological center of gravity in the 2030s, or whether it does not.

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## APPENDIX

Individuals whom the media refers to as members of the PayPal Mafia include:<sup>[6][5]</sup>

- [Peter Thiel](#), PayPal founder and former CEO who is sometimes referred to as the "[don](#)" of the PayPal Mafia. He serves as Chairman of the [Palantir](#) board, was a founder of [Founders Fund](#), and was the first outside investor in [Facebook](#).
- [Max Levchin](#), founder and [chief technology officer](#) at PayPal. Current CEO of [Affirm](#).
- [Elon Musk](#), co-founder of [Zip2](#), and founder of [X.com](#) (which merged with [Confinity](#) to form PayPal), [SpaceX](#), [OpenAI](#), [Neuralink](#), and [The Boring Company](#). He bought a controlling share in [Tesla Motors](#) and purchased [Twitter](#) (rebranded as [X](#)). He is the [wealthiest person on Earth](#), with a net worth of \$384 billion, and since 2025, he has been acting as a senior advisor to United States President [Donald J. Trump](#) and as head of the [Department of Government Efficiency \(DOGE\)](#).
- [David O. Sacks](#), former PayPal COO who later founded [Geni.com](#) and [Yammer](#).
- [Scott Banister](#), early advisor and board member at PayPal.<sup>[7]</sup>
- [Roelof Botha](#), former PayPal CFO who later became a partner at the venture capital firm [Sequoia Capital](#).
- [Steve Chen](#), former PayPal engineer who co-founded [YouTube](#).
- [Reid Hoffman](#), former executive vice president who later founded [LinkedIn](#) and was an early investor in [Facebook](#) and [Aviary](#). Currently sits on the board of [Microsoft](#).
- [Ken Howery](#), former PayPal CFO who became a partner at [Founders Fund](#), and later served as the US Ambassador to Sweden during the Trump Administration.
- [Chad Hurley](#), former PayPal web designer who co-founded [YouTube](#).
- [Eric M. Jackson](#), who wrote the book [The PayPal Wars](#) and became chief executive officer of [WND Books](#) and co-founded [CapLinked](#).
- [Jawed Karim](#), former PayPal engineer who co-founded [YouTube](#). Founder of YVentures.
- [Dave McClure](#), former PayPal marketing director who later co-founded [500 Global](#) and became a [super angel](#) investor for startup companies.
- [Luke Nosek](#), PayPal co-founder and former vice president of marketing and strategy who later became a partner at [Founders Fund](#).
- [Keith Rabois](#), former executive at PayPal who later worked at [LinkedIn](#), [Square](#), [Khosla Ventures](#), and [Founders Fund](#).
- [Jack Selby](#), former vice president of corporate and international development at PayPal who co-founded [Clarium Capital](#) with Peter Thiel.
- [Premal Shah](#), former product manager at PayPal who later became the founding president of [Kiva.org](#). Serves on the [Change.org](#) board.
- [Russel Simmons](#), former PayPal engineer who later co-founded [Yelp](#).
- [Jeremy Stoppelman](#), former vice president of technology at PayPal who later co-founded Yelp.

- [Yishan Wong](#), former engineering manager at PayPal who later worked at [Facebook](#), became the CEO of [Reddit](#), and founded Terraformation Inc.
  - [Yu Pan](#) was one of the co-founders of PayPal and played a role in designing the company's user interface and user experience. He later became involved in [private ventures](#) and some successful startups.
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