FutureProofed: Deep Research on the Most Important News Around Societal, Economic, and Cultural Changes Driven by Tech and Abundance from the Past 7 Days

1. Introduction: The Architecture of the Post-Scarcity Transition

The final week of November 2025 will likely be remembered by economic historians not merely as a continuation of the artificial intelligence boom, but as the precise moment when the theoretical promise of "abundance" collided violently with the physical realities of the state. In the seven days spanning November 19 to November 26, 2025, the global techno-economic paradigm shifted from one of speculative software development to one of heavy industrial entrenchment. We have moved beyond the "chatbot era" into the "infrastructure era"—a phase characterized by sovereign-scale capital deployment, the militarization of scientific discovery, and the radical restructuring of the social contract to accommodate a new, non-human workforce.

The theme of this report, "FutureProofed," captures the dual and often contradictory nature of this moment. On the geopolitical stage, nations are aggressively "future-proofing" their sovereignty. The United States' executive order establishing the "Genesis Mission" and Amazon's concurrent $50 billion investment in government AI infrastructure represent a definitive fusion of state power and private capital, creating a "State-Industrial Complex" designed to secure dominance in energy, science, and intelligence. Simultaneously, China is future-proofing its economy against demographic collapse by accelerating the deployment of "embodied AI"—humanoid robots—into its manufacturing heartlands, effectively replacing a shrinking human workforce with a synthetic one.

However, for the individual worker and the social institutions that support them,

"future-proofing" has become a source of profound anxiety. The World Economic Forum's *Future of Jobs Report 2025*, released this week, alongside breaking news of massive AI-driven layoffs at HP Inc., signals that the labor market is undergoing a structural fissure. We are witnessing the emergence of a "skill gap" so vast that it threatens to render a significant minority of the global workforce structurally unemployable, creating a class of "stranded workers" whom corporations deem too expensive to reskill.

This report provides an exhaustive, multi-dimensional analysis of these developments. Drawing on primary data from the OECD's *Pensions at a Glance 2025*, the WEF's latest employment surveys, and legislative updates from the UK, US, and EU, it argues that we are entering a period of "Asymmetric Abundance." The technologies of abundance—infinite compute, autonomous agents, and fusion-ready energy systems—are being deployed, but their benefits are currently accruing to sovereign entities and hyperscale corporations, while the costs of adjustment are being transferred to the social safety net.

The following analysis dissects the "FutureProofed" phenomenon across four vectors: the new industrial policy of AI, the transformation of the workforce, the re-engineering of education, and the fraying of the socio-economic compact. It is a documentation of a world hurriedly rebuilding its foundations while the ground is still shaking.

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2. Key Developments: The Industrial Policy of Abundance

The events of late November 2025 demonstrate that Artificial Intelligence is no longer viewed by global powers as a mere commercial sector, but as the central nervous system of national survival. The narrative has shifted from "market competition" to "sovereign capability," driven by unprecedented capital injections and executive actions that seek to bind the digital abundance of AI to the physical scarcity of energy and atoms.

2.1 The Genesis Mission: The United States' "Manhattan Project" for Science

On November 24, 2025, the President of the United States signed an executive order establishing the **Genesis Mission**, a directive that fundamentally alters the trajectory of American science policy.[1] This initiative is not a standard research grant; it is a structural reorganization of the federal scientific apparatus, explicitly modeled on the ambition and

urgency of the Manhattan Project.

2.1.1 The Integration of Compute and Physics

The core mandate of the Genesis Mission is the creation of the "American Science and Security Platform," a closed-loop AI experimentation system that integrates the nation's most powerful supercomputers, proprietary federal datasets, and the physical research infrastructure of the 17 Department of Energy (DOE) national laboratories.[2]

This represents a strategic pivot in how the US government views AI. Rather than focusing solely on large language models (LLMs) for text or code—domains dominated by the private sector—the state is focusing AI on the *physical world*. The mission aims to use AI to compress scientific discovery timelines "from years to days," specifically targeting breakthroughs in nuclear fusion, advanced materials, and grid optimization.[4]

The socio-technical implications of this are profound. By centralizing scientific data under a national security framework, the US is effectively "nationalizing" the rate of scientific progress. The DOE, rather than the National Science Foundation or private universities, has been designated the lead agency, signaling that AI is now primarily an *energy* and *national security* asset.[3] The explicit goal is "energy dominance"—using AI to optimize the power grid and reduce electricity prices, which have been driven up by the voracious energy appetite of the very data centers driving this revolution.[1]

2.1.2 The "Gold Permit" and Regulatory Preemption

Crucially, the Genesis Mission is paired with a fierce deregulation agenda. The administration has signaled its intent to remove "barriers to American leadership," specifically targeting state-level environmental and zoning regulations that slow the construction of data centers and power plants.[6] This sets the stage for a constitutional clash between federal "abundance" mandates and state-level "sustainability" laws, particularly in blue states with strict renewable portfolio standards. The "FutureProofed" energy grid, in the eyes of the administration, is one where federal authority overrides local objection to ensure the electrons keep flowing to the GPUs.

2.2 The Privatization of the State: Amazon's $50 Billion Infrastructure

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Running parallel to the state-led Genesis Mission is a private-sector mobilization of equal magnitude. On November 24, 2025, Amazon Web Services (AWS) announced a **$50 billion investment** to expand AI and supercomputing infrastructure specifically for US government agencies.[8]

2.2.1 The Scale of the "Deep Cloud"

To understand the significance of this investment, one must look at the physical metrics. The project involves adding **1.3 gigawatts** of compute capacity—roughly equivalent to the output of a large nuclear reactor—dedicated solely to AWS's Top Secret, Secret, and GovCloud regions.[9] This is not merely "cloud hosting"; it is the construction of a parallel, classified internet.

This investment signals the total integration of commercial hyperscale infrastructure with the defense apparatus of the state. AWS is building "purpose-built" data centers that will host the government's most sensitive foundation models, including proprietary versions of Anthropic's Claude and Amazon's own Nova models.[9]

2.2.2 The Amazon-OpenAI Pivot

Perhaps the most shocking revelation of the week was the confirmation that OpenAI has diversified its infrastructure dependencies. Reports indicate that OpenAI and Amazon have signed a **$38 billion deal**, allowing the ChatGPT maker to run its systems on Amazon's data centers and access Nvidia chips through AWS.[11]

This development shatters the previous assumption of a Microsoft-exclusive hegemony over OpenAI. It suggests that the demand for compute is so insatiable that no single cloud provider—not even Microsoft—can satisfy it alone. OpenAI's "compute agnosticism" marks a new phase in the AI arms race, where model builders must consume the entire global supply of GPU availability, regardless of the vendor. The "abundance" of intelligence is currently constrained only by the scarcity of the infrastructure required to run it.

2.3 China’s Counter-Move: Embodied AI and the Real Economy

While the US focuses on generative AI for scientific discovery and intelligence, China’s strategy has pivoted decisively toward the **"Real Economy"**—the world of atoms, manufacturing, and logistics.

2.3.1 The Rise of the Synthetic Workforce

Reports from the week of November 19-26 highlight a coordinated push by Chinese state regulators and private firms to deploy **humanoid robots** into industrial settings. The deployment of UBTech robots, powered by the DeepSeek R1 model, into Zeekr’s electric vehicle factories represents a critical milestone: robots are no longer caged novelties but coordinated workers performing complex assembly tasks.[13]

This strategy is driven by demographic necessity. China’s shrinking workforce poses an existential threat to its status as the "world’s factory." By investing heavily in "embodied AI," Beijing is attempting to future-proof its manufacturing base against population decline. The state-led investment funds have poured billions into this sector, viewing it as the next "strategic high ground" akin to electric vehicles.[13]

2.3.2 Defensive Decoupling and Chip Sovereignty

Simultaneously, China is hardening its digital borders. New regulations reported this week have barred ByteDance (owner of TikTok) from using Nvidia chips in new data centers, forcing the company to adopt domestic alternatives.[15] This "defensive decoupling" is a calculated risk: it accepts short-term efficiency losses (as domestic chips lag behind Nvidia’s H100s) in exchange for long-term sovereignty. It is a clear signal that China views reliance on US silicon as a strategic vulnerability it can no longer afford.

2.4 Europe’s Regulatory Retreat: The "Digital Omnibus"

In stark contrast to the aggressive build-outs in the US and China, Europe spent late

November 2025 grappling with the economic consequences of its regulatory ambitions. Facing a widening productivity gap and the threat of capital flight, the European Commission unveiled the **"Digital Omnibus"** proposal.[16]

2.4.1 The Great Rollback

This proposal seeks to delay the enforcement of strict AI rules for "high-risk" systems until late 2027 and simplify GDPR requirements to allow for easier data usage in AI training.[16] This "regulatory rollback" is a tacit admission that the EU's "Brussels Effect"—attempting to export regulation as a product—has backfired, stifling domestic innovation while US and Chinese firms race ahead.

The socio-political implication is significant: the EU is deprioritizing "digital rights" in favor of "digital competitiveness." The fear of economic irrelevance has overridden the commitment to precautionary ethics, signaling that in a world of abundance, the cost of missing out is perceived as greater than the cost of moving fast.

Table 1: Comparative Industrial AI Strategies (November 2025)

Region	Strategic Focus	Key Mechanism	Goal	Socio-Economic Implication
United States	**Sovereign Integration**	Genesis Mission; AWS GovCloud ($50B)	Energy dominance; Scientific hegemony.	Militarization of science; Federal-State conflict over energy.
China	**Embodied Automation**	Humanoid Robotics (UBTech); Chip Bans	Demographic offset; Manufacturing autarky.	Replacement of human labor in "real economy"; Tech decoupling.

Europe	**Regulatory Retreat**	Digital Omnibus; Delaying AI Act	Stemming capital flight; Productivity catch-up.	Erosion of privacy standards; Late-mover disadvantage.

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3. Workforce Shifts: The Agentic Disruption

If the industrial policy of late 2025 is focused on building the *infrastructure* of abundance, the labor market is beginning to feel the *consequences* of it. The data emerging this week challenges the comforting narrative of "AI augmentation" and points toward a harsher reality of "AI substitution" and structural displacement.

3.1 The WEF Future of Jobs Report 2025: The Skill Gap Crisis

The *World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2025*, released this week, provides a sobering assessment of the global labor market. Based on surveys of over 1,000 employers representing 14 million workers, the report identifies **skill gaps** as the single largest barrier to business transformation, cited by 63% of respondents.[18]

3.1.1 The "Unreskillable" Class

The most alarming finding in the report is the identification of a structural underclass in the making. While 85% of employers plan to prioritize upskilling, they estimate that **11% of the workforce is "unlikely to receive the reskilling needed,"** effectively rendering them redundant.[19]

This 11% represents millions of workers who are viewed by their employers as "stranded assets"—individuals whose skills are so obsolete, or whose adaptability is perceived as so low, that corporate investment in their retraining is deemed to have a negative return on investment. This challenges the "lifelong learning" mantra; for a significant minority, the ladder of upward mobility is being pulled up, creating a potential crisis of long-term structural

unemployment.

3.2 The Canary in the Coal Mine: HP's Agentic Restructuring

The abstract warnings of the WEF report were given concrete form by **HP Inc.**, which announced on November 26, 2025, a plan to cut up to **6,000 jobs** by 2028.[20]

3.2.1 From "Cost-Cutting" to "AI Transformation"

Unlike traditional layoffs driven by declining sales, these cuts are explicitly tied to an "AI transformation push." HP's leadership stated that the goal is to "embed AI into almost all that we do," specifically using AI to drive customer satisfaction and product innovation.[21]

This is the beginning of the **"Agentic Era"** of corporate restructuring. HP is not just automating routine tasks; it is replacing entire operational layers. Customer support, coding, and administrative workflows are being handed over to autonomous AI agents. The financial logic is brutal: the company expects to generate **$1 billion in annual savings** by 2028 through this reduction.[20]

Socio-Economic Analysis: This signals a decoupling of revenue growth from headcount. In the industrial era, a growing company needed more people. In the Agentic Era, a growing company needs *more compute*. HP's move confirms that for large legacy enterprises, the efficiency gains from AI will be captured as margin expansion for shareholders rather than wage expansion for workers.

3.3 The Rise of the "AI Orchestrator"

New research from McKinsey and IBM released this week sheds light on what the remaining jobs will look like. McKinsey's *State of AI* report notes that **62% of organizations** are already experimenting with AI agents that can execute complex workflows.[22]

However, IBM's analysis highlights a critical new role: the **"AI Orchestrator"**.[23] As agents take over execution, human work shifts to "governance"—managing the risk of cascading failures where one autonomous agent triggers an error in another. The workplace of 2026 will be

hierarchical, but the subordinates will be digital; the humans will be the managers of these digital fleets.

The "Agent-Ready" Divide: A key constraint identified is that most organizations are not "agent-ready" because their internal data is not accessible via APIs.[23] This explains the massive infrastructure spending: companies must rebuild their digital plumbing before they can deploy the agent workforce.

3.4 The Crisis of Confidence

The macroeconomic backdrop to these shifts is deteriorating. The **US Consumer Confidence Index** fell sharply in November 2025, with the Expectations Index dropping to **63.2**—a level that historically signals an imminent recession.[24]

Crucially, consumers are explicitly citing "reduced confidence across jobs and incomes," despite headline GDP growth.[24] This divergence suggests that the "AI anxiety" previously confined to tech circles has bled into the general population. Workers instinctively understand that "abundance" for the macroeconomy might mean "obsolescence" for their household balance sheet.

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4. Education Innovation: The Corporate-Academic Nexus

As the workforce transforms, the education sector is undergoing a rapid, forced evolution. The developments of the past week highlight a growing convergence between Big Tech and higher education, raising fundamental questions about the independence of academic institutions.

4.1 The Platformization of the University

A defining trend of late 2025 is the deep integration of proprietary tech ecosystems into university curricula.

- **Purdue University & Google:** On November 14, 2025, Purdue announced a strategic partnership with Google to place AI tools in the hands of every student and faculty member.[25] The partnership focuses on "physical AI"—linking back to the embodied AI trend—and aims to make "working competency" in Google's AI stack a graduation requirement.
- **University of Kansas & Google:** Similarly, the University of Kansas launched the "Falling Into AI" program, a campus-wide initiative to scale AI literacy, effectively using Google's platform as the default infrastructure for academic inquiry.[26]
- **Northeastern University:** Hosted an AI Summit focusing on "human-AI collaboration," shifting the pedagogical narrative from "cheating prevention" to "augmentation strategies".[27]

Analysis: These partnerships represent the "platformization" of the university. Higher education institutions are becoming training grounds for specific corporate ecosystems (e.g., the Google Cloud ecosystem or the Microsoft Copilot stack). While this ensures students are "job-ready," it risks reducing university education to vendor certification. The "FutureProofed" student is increasingly one who is certified in the tools of a specific hyperscaler.

4.2 Credentialing for the Transition

Universities are also launching specialized degree programs to capitalize on the anxiety of the professional class.

- **Carnegie Mellon University (CMU):** Introduced a "Chief Data & AI Officer" certificate program. Priced at nearly **$18,000**, this executive education product targets senior leaders who fear being left behind.[28] It is a monetization of transition anxiety.
- **Webster University:** Launched a specialized MS in Computer Science with AI, signaling that generalist CS degrees are losing value relative to AI-specific credentials.[29]
- **MBZUAI (UAE):** The Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence announced plans to expand into undergraduate education, signaling the UAE's strategic intent to build a domestic talent pipeline for its post-oil economy, independent of Western institutions.[30]

4.3 The "AI Divide" in Global Education

Amidst this rush to adopt, **UNESCO** released a major report during its Digital Learning Week in Paris (late November 2025). The report warns of a "two-speed" global education system

and highlights the **"AI Divide"**.[31]

The report notes that **one in three people globally** still lack the connectivity required to access AI learning tools.[31] While Purdue students get access to Google's latest "physical AI" models, a third of the world's learners are being structurally excluded from the AI economy before they even enter the workforce. UNESCO's call for "human-centered" AI education stands in stark contrast to the "industrial-centered" models being adopted in the US and China.

The Death of Independent EdTech: A final, telling data point is the collapse of venture capital funding for independent EdTech startups. Funding in Q1 2025 was just **$410 million**, a fraction of the pandemic highs.[33] This suggests that the "infrastructure" of educational AI is being captured by Big Tech (Google, Microsoft, Amazon) rather than being disrupted by nimble startups. The classroom of the future is being built by the cloud giants.

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5. Socio-Economic Shifts: The Inequality of Abundance

The promise of "abundance economics"—where AI dramatically lowers the cost of goods and services—is colliding with the rigidities of legacy social systems. The most critical data points this week concern pensions, basic income, and the gendered impact of an aging, automated society.

5.1 The Pension Crisis: A Gendered Failure

The **OECD's *Pensions at a Glance 2025***, released on November 27, 2025, provides a sobering counter-narrative to the "future of work" optimism. The report highlights a persistent and structural **gender pension gap** across OECD countries.[34]

Deep Dive: The report argues that while technology may be "future-proofing" industries, social systems are failing to future-proof women. The gap is driven by legacy earnings disparities and career interruptions (primarily caregiving) that are penalized by contribution-based pension systems. As life expectancy increases—another form of abundance—the financial security of older women is deteriorating relative to men.

Future Implication: The transition to an AI-driven economy may exacerbate this. Administrative and support roles, which are heavily feminized sectors, are among the most exposed to "agentic" displacement (as seen in the HP restructuring). If these roles are

automated without a redesign of pension credits for care work, the gender pension gap in 2050 could be catastrophic, creating a demographic of elderly women living in poverty amidst a society of technological abundance.

5.2 Universal Basic Income: From Utopia to "Transition Capital"

The debate around Universal Basic Income (UBI) has shifted this week from theoretical utopianism to pragmatic crisis management.

- **Manchester, UK:** A groundbreaking proposal for a "Basic Income pilot" was launched, aiming to provide a regular payment to *everyone* in Greater Manchester to end absolute poverty.[35] This is framed not as a "post-work" dividend, but as an "income floor" to provide stability in a volatile labor market.
- **Compton, CA Results:** A new study on a guaranteed income program in Compton found complex results: participants used the money to **pay down debt**, improving their balance sheets, but actual *household income* (excluding the transfer) and *spending* decreased.[36]
- **Minneapolis, MN:** A pilot showed improved mental health and employment stability.[37]

Synthesis: These pilots suggest that UBI is increasingly viewed by policymakers as **"Transition Capital"**—liquidity that allows workers to survive the "churn" of reskilling and displacement described in the WEF report. It is becoming a necessary component of the "flexible" labor market required by the AI economy.

5.3 Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI): The India Model

While the West debates UBI, **India** is aggressively exporting its "Digital Public Infrastructure" (DPI) model. On "Constitution Day" (November 26), India highlighted its "India Stack" (Aadhaar identity, UPI payments) as a model for the Global South to achieve "sovereign abundance".[38]

Significance: DPI represents an alternative path to "future-proofing." Instead of relying on corporate platforms (like Amazon or Google) to manage identity and payments, the state provides a "public rail" for digital transactions. This model is gaining traction in Africa and Asia as a way to ensure that the benefits of the digital economy are widely distributed and not captured solely by Silicon Valley or Beijing. It is a vision of abundance that is *public* rather than *proprietary*.[40]

6. Case Studies: Regional & Cultural Spectacles

The global transition is not uniform; it manifests differently across cultures and regions. Three case studies from this week illustrate the diverse reactions to the abundance shock.

6.1 Governance Spectacle: Albania's AI Minister "Diella"

In perhaps the most surreal development of the week, Albania appointed an AI system named **"Diella"** as its "Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence".[41] Initially a virtual assistant on the e-Albania platform, Diella has been elevated to a cabinet-level role tasked with addressing corruption in public procurement.

Analysis: Critics have labeled this a "propaganda fantasy" by Prime Minister Edi Rama, designed to distract from deeper governance failures.[43] Constitutional scholars argue that a non-human cannot hold office. However, the move signals a dangerous trend: the **"Avatarization" of Politics**. By delegating anti-corruption to an AI, the state attempts to depoliticize difficult decisions, masking human accountability behind algorithmic opacity. It represents the ultimate "techno-solutionist" mirage: the belief that an algorithm can solve the deeply human problem of political corruption.[44]

6.2 The Rust Belt Renaissance: Michigan's Nuclear Revival

In the American Midwest, the demand for AI compute is driving a physical industrial revival. The **Palisades nuclear plant** in Michigan received fuel for a historic restart—the first time a decommissioned US nuclear plant has been brought back online.[45]

This is not happening in a vacuum. The Michigan legislature is simultaneously advancing bills (HB 4125) to create **nuclear education grants**, explicitly linking the state's workforce development to the energy needs of the AI economy.[45] This illustrates the "re-industrialization" of the Rust Belt. The "future of work" in Michigan is not just coding; it is nuclear engineering, welding, and grid management. AI abundance requires physical power, and that power is bringing jobs back to legacy industrial zones.

6.3 The Creative Revolt: The UK Copyright Wars

In the United Kingdom, the tension between "generative abundance" and "human creativity" has reached a boiling point. The government's consultation on AI and copyright, which is closing in late November 2025, has ignited a fierce battle over a proposed "text and data mining exception".[47]

Artists and rights holders are revolting against the proposal, which would allow AI companies to scrape copyrighted work for training purposes unless rights holders explicitly "opt out." High-profile protests this week, including a silent track released by Paul McCartney to protest "copyright grabs," highlight the cultural backlash.[49] This conflict underscores a fundamental question of the abundance era: **Who owns the raw material of intelligence?** If human creativity is treated as a free natural resource for AI mining, the cultural economy risks collapse.

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7. Policy & Ethics: The "America First" AI Agenda

The release of the **"America First AI Agenda"** by the America First Policy Institute (AFPI) on November 24, 2025, provides the ideological blueprint for the incoming US administration's tech policy.[6] This document is essential for understanding the future regulatory landscape.

7.1 The Four Pillars of American AI

The agenda outlines a distinct philosophy that contrasts sharply with the "Responsible AI" frameworks of the Biden era or the EU:

1. **Energy Dominance:** AI is framed primarily as an energy problem. The agenda calls for "Gold Permits" to fast-track data centers and unleash nuclear/fossil fuel production.
2. **Anti-China Hegemony:** A zero-sum view of global AI. The goal is not "safe" AI, but "dominant" AI. "America must lead" to prevent authoritarian values from setting global standards.
3. **"Anti-Woke" Algorithms:** The agenda explicitly calls to "evaluate AI for false/deceptive outputs and woke ideology," signaling that the "Culture Wars" are extending into the

weights and biases of neural networks.

4. **Radical Deregulation:** A rejection of the "precautionary principle." Innovation speed is prioritized over safety evaluations, with a call to remove "burdensome" safety testing requirements that slow deployment.

Ethical Implication: This agenda creates a bifurcated global ethical landscape. US AI will be optimized for **speed, energy intensity, and libertarian speech norms**, while EU AI will be optimized for **safety, privacy, and fairness**. This divergence will make global AI governance effectively impossible, leading to a "Splinternet" of AI models.

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8. Outlook: Trajectories for 2026

As we look toward 2026, the data from this week crystallize into three primary trajectories that will define the next year.

8.1 The Year of the Agent

2026 will be the year AI moves from "chatting" to "doing." The HP restructuring is just the first tremor. We expect a wave of Fortune 500 companies to announce similar "AI transformation" layoffs, replacing entire departments (customer service, QA, entry-level coding) with autonomous agent networks. The "efficiency metric" of the future will be **Revenue per Watt of Compute**, not Revenue per Employee.

8.2 The Energy-Compute Nexus

The limiting factor for AI growth in 2026 will not be chips—supply chains are stabilizing—but **power**. The restart of Palisades and the Genesis Mission's focus on grid optimization confirm this. We predict the emergence of "Compute Zones"—geographic areas (like Michigan or Texas) with abundant energy that attract all AI investment, leaving energy-poor regions behind.

8.3 The Great Regulatory Arbitrage

Capital will flow violently toward deregulated jurisdictions. The EU's "rollback" is likely too little, too late to stop the drain of capital to the US. The "America First" agenda will attract massive global investment, strengthening the US dollar and tech dominance, but at the cost of deepening social polarization and environmental strain.

Actionable Insight: For policymakers and leaders, "FutureProofing" now means securing **physical sovereignty** (energy, chips, data infrastructure) and building **social resilience** (transition capital, portable benefits) to withstand the inevitable shocks of the Agentic Era. The time for pilot programs is over; the structural adjustment has begun.

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