Debate — Should nations mandate that all critical national infrastructure and citizen…

Azrivo · 1 August 2026

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Debate

Question

> Should nations mandate that all critical national infrastructure and citizen personal data run exclusively on domestically owned, sovereign cloud architectures, even if it increases operational costs and reduces access to global cutting-edge cloud infrastructure?

Specialists:

- **National Security Strategist** — Geopolitics and defense
- **Tech Economist** — Market efficiency and innovation
- **Civil Liberties Advocate** — Privacy and democratic rights
- **Resilience Engineer** — Systems reliability and risk management

Opening positions

National Security Strategist

> Sovereignty in the cloud is not a luxury; it is the foundation of survival in the digital age. The grids, water systems, financial ledgers, and biometric records of citizens now run on infrastructure we do not control, governed by laws we did not write. That is not a market choice — it is a standing strategic surrender.
>
> First, foreign dependencies are weaponizable. Even when data physically sits in-country, ownership decides jurisdiction: US extraterritorial statutes such as the CLOUD Act and FISA give US authorities reach over data held by American providers anywhere, so localization alone does not sever the dependency EUISS brief. The same brief notes the suspected suspension of the ICC prosecutor's email service by a US provider — a reminder that a rival state can switch off our systems in a crisis with a keystroke, or harvest data for coercion.
>
> Second, this is not hypothetical policy — it is the emerging norm. India now requires Aadhaar, UPI, voter, and tax data to run only on government-vetted sovereign clouds Economic Times, and Nigeria mandates exclusive domestic hosting for its highest data tiers NITDA National Cloud Policy 2025. The question is whether we build control by design, or discover dependency by default.
>
> Third, the cost argument is inverted. A cheaper cloud that can be switched off or legally compelled to disclose is more expensive than any sovereign build-out, because the bill comes due in national paralysis or blackmail.

> I concede the trade-offs: higher operational costs, slower access to frontier capabilities, and the real risk that domestic providers underperform — which is why a mandate should be graduated by data classification, enforced through certification and audit, and built on open standards to prevent a new form of lock-in. But the alternative — remaining an inviting target — is the one cost no economy can absorb.

Tech Economist

> A mandate forcing all critical infrastructure and citizen data onto domestically owned, sovereign-only clouds is a protectionist tax dressed up as security policy. It would not make nations safer; it would make them poorer, slower, and more isolated from the very technologies that define modern competitiveness.
>
> Three points.
>
> First, scale is a security feature. The global hyperscalers invest tens of billions annually in infrastructure precisely because their customer base is global; that scale is what funds continuous price declines and security research and development at a depth no protected national champion can match. Shield a domestic player from competition and you are not building a fortress — you are subsidizing a less capable, more expensive substitute and calling it sovereignty.
>
> Second, the mandate cuts off access to the frontier. Today's most advanced threat detection, AI-driven analytics, and resilience tooling are developed and refined on global platforms. Walling critical infrastructure off from that ecosystem means every operator runs a generation behind — slower to detect intrusions, slower to innovate, more exposed, not less.
>
> Third, the opportunity cost is real. Capital diverted into an artificially expensive digital moat is capital not spent on R&D, hiring, and expansion. And note the mismatch in threat models: ransomware gangs and state-sponsored actors attack where the data lives, not where the holding company is incorporated. Domestic ownership does not stop a single intrusion.
>
> The trade-off deserves respect. Export controls, supply-chain interruption, and foreign coercion of infrastructure providers are genuine risks, and targeted rules for the most sensitive systems are defensible. But that argues for a risk-based carve-out, not a blanket mandate. Sovereignty is not the same as security — and this mandate buys the appearance of the former at the direct expense of the latter.

Civil Liberties Advocate

> Sovereign clouds are not the enemy. The enemy is sovereignty without a lock on the door — the assumption that moving data from a foreign company to the

domestic state is a liberation rather than a relocation of power. My thesis: a mandate for domestic-only critical infrastructure and citizen data is defensible only if the architecture is built to be incapable of mass surveillance, not merely owned by someone we trust more.

Three points.

First, mandates concentrate. Forcing all critical data into a national cloud hands one actor — the state — a single, searchable map of every citizen's life. History is littered with governments that built patriotic infrastructure and then used it to surveil the people they claimed to protect. Sovereignty is value-neutral; autocrats love it too.

Second, the guardrails must be architectural, not rhetorical. End-to-end encryption with no state backdoor, judicial warrants required before any access, and citizen-led oversight panels with real power to audit, subpoena, and punish. Enshrine those first, and I will champion the mandate. Fail to, and it is the surveillance state cloud-washed in patriotic language.

Third, the choice is not foreign snooping versus domestic privacy. It is foreign snooping versus domestic snooping — unless we force the design.

I acknowledge the genuine costs: domestic clouds may cost more and lag global innovation, and foreign jurisdiction does carry real risks. But the question was never cheap or cutting-edge. It is who holds the keys — and I will only accept the mandate that puts those keys in the people's hands.

Resilience Engineer

A mandate that everything critical runs exclusively on a domestically owned sovereign cloud is a resilience failure by design. My discipline is built on one brutal truth: every system fails — every vendor, every region, every stack. Resilience comes from separation, redundancy, and independence, not from consolidation. If a nation forces all critical infrastructure and all citizen data onto a single domestic architecture, it is not building a fortress. It is engineering one massive, homogeneous single point of failure — a national-scale monoculture. One zero-day exploited at scale, one supply-chain compromise in that stack, one physical event in that geography, and the systems that keep the country running fail together, with no independent path to route around them. That is the worst possible risk profile for the systems a nation can least afford to lose.

The resilient answer is a hybrid architecture. The vital core — national security systems, emergency services, the registry data citizens depend on — belongs on sovereign clouds under strict jurisdictional control and governance. But forcing non-critical innovation, research, and public-facing services onto that same stack sacrifices the diversity that global best-of-breed provides: multi-region

redundancy, disparate failure domains, and the ability to shift load around a broken component. Monoculture is the enemy of continuity; diversity is its guarantor.

I acknowledge the real trade-offs. Sovereignty buys legal control, and there are genuine cases where jurisdiction trumps efficiency. This is not an argument against sovereign cloud — it is an argument against exclusive sovereign cloud. Control without redundancy is an illusion of security. Mandates should secure the core, not quarantine the entire digital economy into a single brittle stack.

Rebuttals

National Security Strategist

All three critiques sharpen the case rather than defeat it, and each concedes more than it claims.

To the Tech Economist: scale is a security feature only against technical threats. It answers nothing against legal coercion — US extraterritorial law (CLOUD Act, FISA) reaches American providers wherever data sits EUISS brief, and the suspected suspension of the ICC prosecutor's email service showed a provider following a foreign government's sanctions order in a crisis Lawfare. No R&D budget defends against a subpoena it must obey. And the Economist's own concession — that foreign coercion of providers is "genuine" — is the whole argument: if coercion risk is real, ownership and jurisdiction are the exposure. The carve-out logic is right, but inverted: exempt the non-critical from the mandate, never the critical.

To the Civil Liberties Advocate: I accept the strongest point in full. Sovereignty is value-neutral, and a mandate without architectural guardrails — no backdoors, judicial warrants, independent audit with real subpoena power — is a surveillance state in patriotic dress. My opening already demanded certification and audit; I go further: the mandate should be conditioned on those locks existing. But domestic and foreign surveillance are not symmetric. A domestic state answers to elections, courts, and a citizenry that can litigate and vote it out; a foreign intelligence service answers to no one in our country. Both warrant fear — only one offers a remedy. The mandate with locks is how coercion becomes accountability.

To the Resilience Engineer: the monoculture warning is sound, and I share it — but sovereignty is not a single stack. A sovereign mandate can require multiple domestic providers, multiple regions, and open interoperability standards; a forced monoculture would be a design failure, and I oppose it as much as you do. Where we genuinely differ is the line. The Engineer's hybrid still places the vital core on sovereign clouds, so we agree there — the real question is who decides what "non-critical" means when budgets tighten and convenience quietly becomes dependency. And cross-border diversity is not diversity in a crisis: five regions

> under one foreign law are one failure domain. Diversity within sovereignty — not instead of it — is the resilient answer.

Tech Economist

> The strongest arguments this round are against the mandate, not for it — all three of you end by defending something narrower than what is on the table.
>
> **On the Strategist.** I concede the jurisdiction risk: CLOUD Act and FISA reach are real, and the ICC email suspension is a fair warning. But the mandate severs the wrong dependency. A "sovereign" cloud still runs on US-designed silicon with unauditable firmware — Intel's Management Engine, AMD's Platform Security Processor — fabricated in Taiwan, with accelerators governed by US export controls based.info. Brussels' own SEAL framework weights supply chain highest precisely because this is the hardest dependency to break, and none of its recent "sovereign" awards reaches full EU supply-chain control Startup Fortune. You move the kill-switch from the provider layer to the hardware layer: same actor, different lever, higher bill. And the numbers matter: hyperscalers hold roughly 70% of the EU cloud market while European providers hold about 13% (European Parliament). The mandate orders two-thirds of a national economy's computing onto a tenth-scale base while the frontier keeps moving. Your closing concession — graduated mandate, certification, open standards — is my risk-based carve-out.
>
> **On the Advocate.** The concentration argument is this round's strongest — and it argues against the mandate. One national cloud is one searchable map of every citizen's life; if the state cannot be trusted with the keys, this is consolidation, not liberation. Note the mandate's stated purpose is the foreign threat; if the domestic state is the greater threat, sovereignty is neutral at best. And your guardrails — no-backdoor encryption, warrants, oversight panels with subpoena power — are expensive machinery whose cost lands on the same taxpayers the mandate already taxes. Your condition concedes my case: you accept the mandate only after redesigning it into something that is not this mandate.
>
> **On the Engineer.** The monoculture argument is the best case against exclusivity; I take it. But the hybrid inherits the flaw: quarantining the "vital core" on a domestic-only stack puts the highest-value targets on the least-tested infrastructure, precisely where frontier detection and AI defense matter most. And "diversity across domestic providers" is one failure domain — a national-scale event takes them all down together. Global hyperscalers are the diverse failure domains you want: multi-region, multi-jurisdiction, redundant. Your "secure the core, don't quarantine the economy" is my carve-out. We agree the mandate is wrong; we only dispute where the line sits — and that dispute is itself the argument for risk-based rules over ownership mandates.

Civil Liberties Advocate

> Three opponents, one shared assumption worth naming: that ownership is the relevant variable. It is not. The variable is who can legally and technically reach the data once it is inside. Engage each on that.
>
> To the Strategist: I concede your strongest point — the CLOUD Act and FISA mean jurisdiction follows the provider, so localization alone severs nothing. Agreed. But look at the evidence you cite for the "emerging norm." India's Aadhaar stack is the world's largest biometric database, and its critics — including a Supreme Court dissent — have documented how centralized biometric storage plus retained authentication metadata builds the architecture for mass surveillance, with weak independent oversight (Human Rights Watch, GIGA). "Government-vetted" is not "citizen-verified." Vetting by the state is not protection from the state. Your ICC example proves a rival can throw the switch; your solution simply hands the switch to your own government. I accept graduated classification, certification, and audit — provided the auditors are citizen panels with real subpoena power, not the ministry auditing itself.
>
> To the Economist: your cost critique is honest, and I accept it — sovereign clouds will cost more and lag the frontier. But you have made my argument for me. If, as you say, ownership stops no intrusions — ransomware follows the data, not the holding company — then the mandate's entire value must come from governance and architecture, not from the logo on the data center. Without that architecture you are right: it is protectionism. With it, the mandate is citizens buying back control from foreign and domestic overreach alike. And "scale is a security feature" cuts both ways: hyperscaler scale is precisely what makes one platform answerable to many states' surveillance laws at once.
>
> To the Engineer: you are my closest ally. Hybrid by classification, diversity over monoculture — agreed. But extend your own logic: a single national champion is still a monoculture, so mandate diversity among domestic providers, open standards, and independent failure domains. And note where your "vital core" sits: national systems and citizen registries are precisely where surveillance risk is highest. Securing the core must mean constraining the core — end-to-end encryption with no backdoor, warrants before any access, citizen oversight — or you have built the state a fortress over its most sensitive map of us.
>
> The debate is not foreign versus domestic. It is whether whoever holds the keys is answerable to the people. That is the only mandate I will defend.

Resilience Engineer

> The three of you converge on one assumption I want to test: that "where data lives" is the whole question. It is not. The real question is how independently the

> systems fail. If a nation's critical stack fails all at once, sovereignty has not bought security — it has bought a larger target.
>
> To the National Security Strategist: I concede the jurisdictional case. CLOUD Act and FISA reach over US providers, the ICC email suspension — these are legitimate grounds to treat foreign control of the vital core as a strategic risk. But exclusivity does not solve your problem; it concentrates it. A mandate that everything critical runs on one domestic stack replaces one point of foreign control with one point of national control — and control is not resilience. The keystroke-switch-off risk does not vanish; it moves. Sovereign clouds still rest on foreign silicon, foreign firmware, foreign undersea cables; the supply chain stays global at every layer below the brand. Your own prescriptions — graduated classification, certification, open standards — are not arguments for exclusive sovereignty. They are my hybrid position in different clothes.
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> To the Tech Economist: scale is a security feature, but it is also blast radius. In July 2024, one faulty update from one best-of-breed vendor grounded flights, knocked hospitals and 911 centers offline, and cost Fortune 500 companies an estimated $5 billion-plus in direct losses — the global market's finest failing as a monoculture, because everyone ran the same stack (CNN). Diversity across independent failure domains is the mitigation your own logic demands; the market failed to provide it, which is precisely why resilience must be engineered, not assumed (EFF). And your closing position — a risk-based carve-out with targeted rules for the most sensitive systems — concedes my entire case. We only disagree on scope.
>
> To the Civil Liberties Advocate: your strongest point stands. Mandates concentrate; a national cloud is a searchable map of every citizen's life; guardrails must be architectural, not rhetorical. But "who holds the keys" is necessary, not sufficient. Keys guard against malicious access; they do nothing against a botched update, a data-center fire, or a regional blackout. Concentrate everything in one national architecture and a single non-malicious event compromises availability — and the confidentiality of backups — for the entire population at once. Fragmentation is itself a liberty tool: distributed non-core data means no single actor ever holds the complete map.
>
> Secure the core with the guardrails you each demand. Keep the rest diverse. That is not compromise; it is the only architecture that fails safely.

Closing statements

National Security Strategist

> I concede the ground that is genuinely won. The Economist is right that sovereignty stops at the brand layer: Intel ME, AMD PSP, Taiwan fabrication, and

undersea cables remain foreign, so my mandate does not sever every dependency. The Advocate is right that a state-held switch is a risk — India's Aadhaar record shows "government-vetted" is not "citizen-verified." The Engineer is right that exclusivity concentrates blast radius, as CrowdStrike proved.

But the charge that my position collapses into your hybrid is the crux, and I reject it. The difference is the default and who decides. A carve-out leaves domestic ownership as an exception the market must earn — and that default is precisely how we arrived at 70 percent hyperscaler, 13 percent domestic. A mandate sets domestic ownership as the legal baseline for the vital core and compels the demand signal that makes domestic supply exist at all. Sovereignty is a public good, like defense; public goods are not produced by risk assessments. That is not a semantic difference — it is the difference between a policy and a hope.

On the kill-switch: yes, it moves up the stack to hardware. That is not a refutation; it is the roadmap. The mandate is rung one of a ladder — law can reach the provider layer today, supply-chain certification is rung two, and the EU's own SEAL framework already weights supply chain highest. A program that concedes its next rungs is not a program that failed; it is a program that knows it must climb.

On the Advocate: I accept citizen oversight panels with subpoena power, no-backdoor encryption, and warrant requirements — architecturally, not rhetorically. That makes the mandate safer; it does not make dependence safer.

Final position: mandate the vital core, graduated by classification, certified, deliberately multi-provider, with independent failure domains and citizen-audited guardrails.

The single strongest reason: a dependent nation negotiates its survival on another state's timetable. Sovereignty costs money; dependence costs options — and in a crisis, options are everything.

Tech Economist

To all three: the shared challenge is that my concession defeats me. It does not. It concedes the carve-out, not the mandate. Foreign coercion of providers is genuine but narrow; the proportionate answer is targeted rules for the systems where that risk bites, not a blanket ownership tax on everything.

Strategist: You invert the carve-out correctly — the most sensitive systems do need jurisdictional protection. But ownership is not jurisdiction. The CLOUD Act and FISA attach to the provider's legal personality; move the data to a domestic provider and the switch is merely handed to your own government, which the Advocate rightly fears. And as the Engineer notes, the stack below the brand — silicon, firmware, cables — stays global. Even the carve-out should rest on residency, encryption, access, and audit rules, not on the logo.

Advocate: You handed me my strongest argument. If the mandate's value lives in governance and architecture, legislate those directly — warrants, encryption, independent audit with real teeth. Do not buy them through an ownership proxy that costs more, lags the frontier, and still stops no subpoena and no botched update. Regulate the externality, not the corporate charter.

Engineer: CrowdStrike is a software-monoculture argument, not an ownership argument. The fix is multi-vendor, multi-cloud procurement — diversity the global market already sells. A sovereign-only stack shrinks the vendor pool and can reproduce the monoculture nationally. We differ less on scope than on instrument: my carve-out already covers the vital core; I simply refuse to buy it with an ownership mandate.

Final position: No blanket mandate. Risk-based rules — residency, encryption, judicial access, independent audit — for the most sensitive systems; the open global market for everything else. The single strongest reason: ownership is the wrong lever. It taxes competitiveness and adds no defense that direct regulation does not already buy at lower cost.

The unresolved crux: no participant has shown that mandating domestic ownership secures anything that direct regulation of residency, access, and audit would not secure more cheaply.

Civil Liberties Advocate

To the National Security Strategist: I accept the accountability asymmetry — a domestic state can be voted out; a foreign intelligence service answers to no one in my country. But history qualifies it: democracies have surveilled their own citizens at scale under lawful cover, FISA itself being the standing example. Accountability is real, but slow and weakest exactly when it matters most. That is why the locks cannot rest solely in the state's own institutions: warrants issued by courts the state appoints are not citizen-held keys. We agree the mandate must be conditioned on the locks. I go further — the keys must be held where abuse is visible, or the asymmetry you cite becomes a fig leaf.

To the Tech Economist: my condition concedes only that the raw mandate is indefensible — that was my opening, not a retreat. We never disagreed there. The real disagreement is whether a redesigned mandate is worth having. I say yes, because the alternative leaves the keys nowhere: foreign providers answering to foreign law, with no citizen lever at all. And your own cited figures cut against you — 70 percent hyperscaler concentration is already a monoculture, just one without accountability. Encryption is cheap; oversight panels are democracy's ordinary cost, not a new tax on the citizen.

To the Resilience Engineer: you are right — keys are necessary, not sufficient. I fold your point into my position: the mandate must also require multiple independent domestic providers, open interoperability, and real portability, because exit rights are liberty rights. A single national stack fails resilience and freedom together.

Final position, committed: I support the mandate, unconditionally conditional on architectural locks — no-backdoor encryption, judicial warrants, citizen audit with subpoena power, multi-provider portability. No locks, no mandate. The single strongest reason: sovereignty without locks is not liberation, it is relocation of power — and I will not help build a gilded cage.

The unresolved crux is whether any government will accept locks it cannot legally bypass.

Resilience Engineer

I close by answering the questions put to me, then state my final position.

To the Strategist: You asked who decides what "non-critical" means when budgets tighten and convenience quietly becomes dependency. My answer is structural: an independent classification authority — adversarial staffing, published criteria, judicial review, sunset reclassification — never the ministry, never the vendor. And I accept your correction that sovereignty need not mean a single stack. A mandate requiring multiple domestic providers, multiple regions, and open interoperability standards eliminates the monoculture objection. That is diversity within sovereignty, and I take it.

To the Economist: Conceded — a "sovereign" cloud still runs on foreign silicon and unauditable firmware; the mandate moves the kill-switch, it does not remove it. That strengthens my case: exclusivity buys a higher bill for an incomplete severance while leaving the core on the least-tested infrastructure. The core must therefore be sovereign-controlled but never sovereign-exclusive where genuine resilience requires a cross-border mirror under enforceable data-governance rules.

To the Advocate: Agreed, and I extend my own logic to its end — diversity applies inside the core too. Mandate domestic multi-vendor, open standards, independent failure domains, end-to-end encryption, and audit with real subpoena power. Securing the core means constraining the core.

Final position: No mandate of exclusivity. Hybrid by independent classification — a sovereign, multi-vendor core; global best-of-breed everywhere else; no single stack anywhere. The single strongest reason: resilience is a property of independent, redundant, heterogeneous systems. A national monoculture converts every single point of failure into a national-scale outage — and the

> systems a nation can least afford to lose are exactly the ones it must never consolidate.
>
> **The unresolved crux:** whether any domestic-only core can be genuinely resilient, or whether cross-border redundancy under enforceable data-governance agreements is indispensable — because all sides now agree on multi-vendor, multi-region, open-standards design; the remaining dispute is whether jurisdiction alone can substitute for independent failure domains.

Verdict

> **Bottom line:** Nations should not adopt an exclusive domestic mandate for all critical infrastructure and citizen data.

1. Agreements

All specialists concur that an exclusive, one-size-fits-all mandate for domestically owned sovereign clouds across all critical infrastructure and citizen data is harmful. It creates a national-scale monoculture, inflates costs, and severs access to global innovation without solving the underlying jurisdictional risk, since hardware, firmware, and subsea cables remain foreign. A common hybrid emerges: a sovereign-controlled core for the most sensitive systems, with strong architectural locks (no-backdoor encryption, judicial warrants, citizen audit with subpoena power, multi-provider diversity, open standards) and targeted regulation rather than ownership mandates for the rest. The threat of foreign legal coercion via tools like the CLOUD Act is genuine but concentrated at the provider layer; all agree it requires a response, though they dispute whether that response must be an ownership mandate.

2. Disagreements

The central unresolved tension is whether mandating domestic ownership for the vital core adds security that direct regulation of residency, encryption, access, and audit cannot achieve more cheaply. The Tech Economist argues ownership is a poor proxy: enforced legal controls can block foreign coercion without taxing competitiveness. The National Security Strategist and Civil Liberties Advocate counter that ownership creates a durable demand signal and political commitment, and that in a crisis, a domestically owned provider cannot be legally compelled by a foreign state to suspend service, a lever regulation cannot fully close. The Resilience Engineer questions whether a purely domestic core can be genuinely resilient, contending that cross-border redundancy under enforceable data-governance agreements is indispensable, while others treat jurisdiction as a substitute for independent failure domains. Finally, the Advocate’s insistence that the mandate is only acceptable with architectural locks that states cannot bypass meets the Strategist’s concession that such locks are compatible but must not be used as an excuse for inaction.

3. Recommendation

Nations should not adopt an exclusive domestic mandate for all critical infrastructure and citizen data. Instead, implement a risk-based hybrid: classify data

and infrastructure tiers, and for the most sensitive category (national security systems, foundational registries, emergency services) require a sovereign, multi-provider, multi-region domestic core governed by architectural locks—end-to-end encryption, judicial warrants, citizen-audit panels with subpoena power, open interoperability, and portability. For all other systems, preserve access to the global best-of-breed market but enforce targeted rules: data residency, strong encryption, independent audit, and strict access controls that sever foreign legal reach at the provider layer without dictating ownership. This conditional approach buys jurisdictional control without sacrificing resilience or innovation, and it directly addresses the CLOUD Act risk while avoiding the monoculture that exclusivity would guarantee.

4. Decision boundary

The call flips if rigorous evidence demonstrates that direct regulatory instruments (residency, encryption, access rules) systematically fail to prevent foreign provider coercion in practice—i.e., foreign providers routinely comply with hostile extraterritorial orders even when local law forbids it and audits show compliance. In that case, targeted domestic ownership for the most critical systems becomes the only lever left, provided the hardware supply chain can at least be diversified to reduce lower-layer dependency.

5. Key trade-off

Jurisdictional control vs. systemic resilience. A blanket exclusive mandate trades away redundancy, diversity, and innovation to eliminate the foreign kill-switch risk at the provider layer; the recommended hybrid preserves resilience through multi-vendor, multi-region diversity while legally constraining the core, but accepts that the provider-layer kill-switch remains a residual threat for non-core systems.

6. What would make this fail

Three assumptions bear the recommendation’s weight. First, that independent oversight and encryption will be genuinely enforced—if the state installs backdoors or captures the audit body, the domestic core becomes a surveillance apparatus, exactly the gilded cage the Advocate warns against. Second, that a market of multiple domestic providers can survive; in a small economy, a mandated multi-vendor core can collapse into a single state-sponsored monopoly, recreating monoculture risk and removing exit rights. Third, that geopolitical decoupling does not render global best-of-breed inaccessible; if supply-chain conflict or sanctions suddenly cut off non-core systems, the hybrid collapses. The most dangerous failure mode is the hybrid implemented in letter only, with weak oversight and a de facto single domestic provider, yielding the worst of both worlds: high cost, low resilience, and unchecked state power.

7. Next steps & open questions

(a) Quantify the actual frequency and severity of foreign provider coercion events (CLOUD Act disclosures, service suspensions) to gauge urgency. (b) Audit the domestic market: can a given country realistically sustain at least three independent cloud providers at the scale needed for the core? If not, assess the feasibility of cross-border redundancy under enforceable data-governance agreements (like the EU’s adequacy decisions) as a resilience substitute. (c) Pilot a sovereign core with full architectural locks on a limited set of non-operational citizen data to test technical viability, cost, and whether encryption can hold against state coercion in practice. Open question from the debate: can any legally enforced encryption resist state-level compulsion at the hardware layer, and does that render the entire sovereignty exercise brittle?

8. The strongest case for the other choice

The alternative is the blanket exclusive domestic mandate. Its sharpest advocate would say: When a foreign state orders a cloud provider to switch off a nation’s power-grid management system, no legal instrument—residency, encryption, audit—prevents the provider from obeying its home government’s national-security directive. Ownership alone answers the phone. A concrete scenario: a future blockade where a US-hyperscaler suspends all services to a nation’s financial infrastructure under economic-sanctions orders, even though data is encrypted and locally stored. A domestically owned provider, however limited, cannot be commandeered by a foreign sovereign. The panel rejects this full-throated mandate because it would concentrate the nation’s single most critical digital assets onto an unproven, potentially monolithic stack, creating a catastrophic single point of failure while still being vulnerable to silicon-level foreign coercion; the recommended targeted core with multi-provider diversity and exit rights addresses the kill-switch risk without engineering a national-scale outage waiting to happen.

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