

# Geopolitical Risk & Reputation

April 2024



# What's the greatest threat to business?

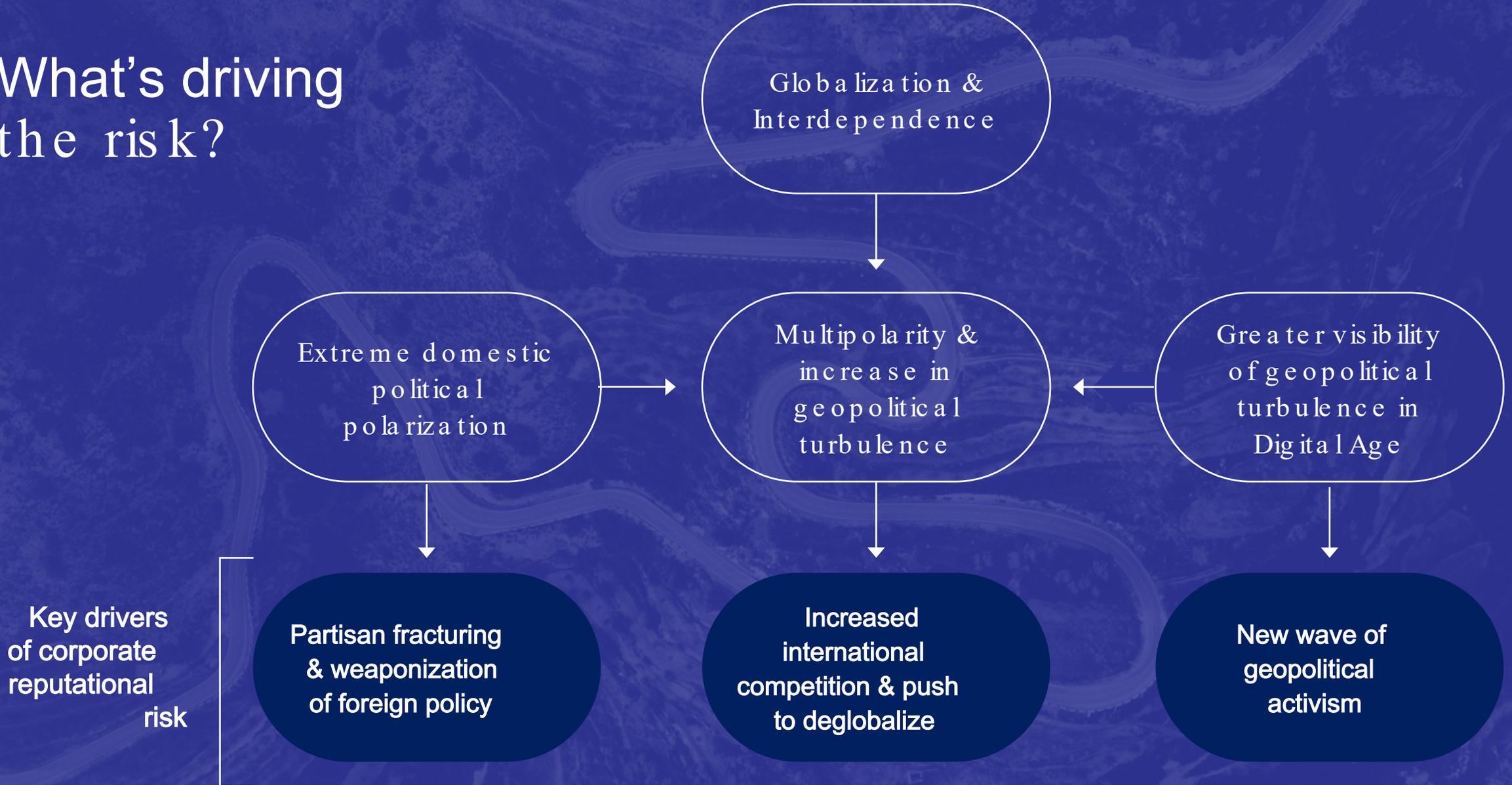
I think in the near term, **I would point to the geopolitical risks.** There's a war going on in Ukraine. There's a war going on in the Middle East, and there's potential trouble in Asia.”

FEDERAL RESERVE CHAIR JEROME POWELL

INTERVIEW ON 60 MINUTES, FEBRUARY 4, 2024



# What's driving the risk?



# A year in proof points

**Newsweek**

How Chinese Censorship Is Going Global—With Help From US Companies

**The New York Times**

*Companies Are Caught in the Israel-Hamas War's Crossfire*

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Geopolitics in the C-Suite**

More Than Ever, U.S. Foreign Policy Depends on Corporations – and Vice Versa



**TikTok aside, Congress has its eye on the U.S. money going into China**

**FORTUNE**

**How the EU wants to police human rights abuses in global supply chains for every firm with 500 workers and \$162 million in revenue**

**The New York Times**

*From Wall Street to K Street, Companies Gauge the Risks of Doing Business with Saudi Arabia*

**SEMAFOR**

**China is increasingly imposing exit bans on employees at foreign firms**

**THE WALL STREET JOURNAL**

**China Is Becoming a No-Go Zone for Executives**



**Rights group warns major carmakers over risk of forced labor in China supply chains**



**Saudi Arabia is serious about its Jan. 1 deadline for companies to move regional headquarters to Riyadh – or lose out on government contracts**

**The New York Times**

*The Brutality of Sugar: Debt, Child Marriage and Hysterectomies*

**FORTUNE**

**Over 300 U.S. companies still operate in Russia – and risk being complicit in the Kremlin's war crimes**

**FINANCIAL TIMES**

**Geopolitical risks overshadow economic optimism in Davos**



**US VC firms investing billion in Chinese AI, military and tech firms: CCP select committee**



# Geopolitical risks abound in 2024

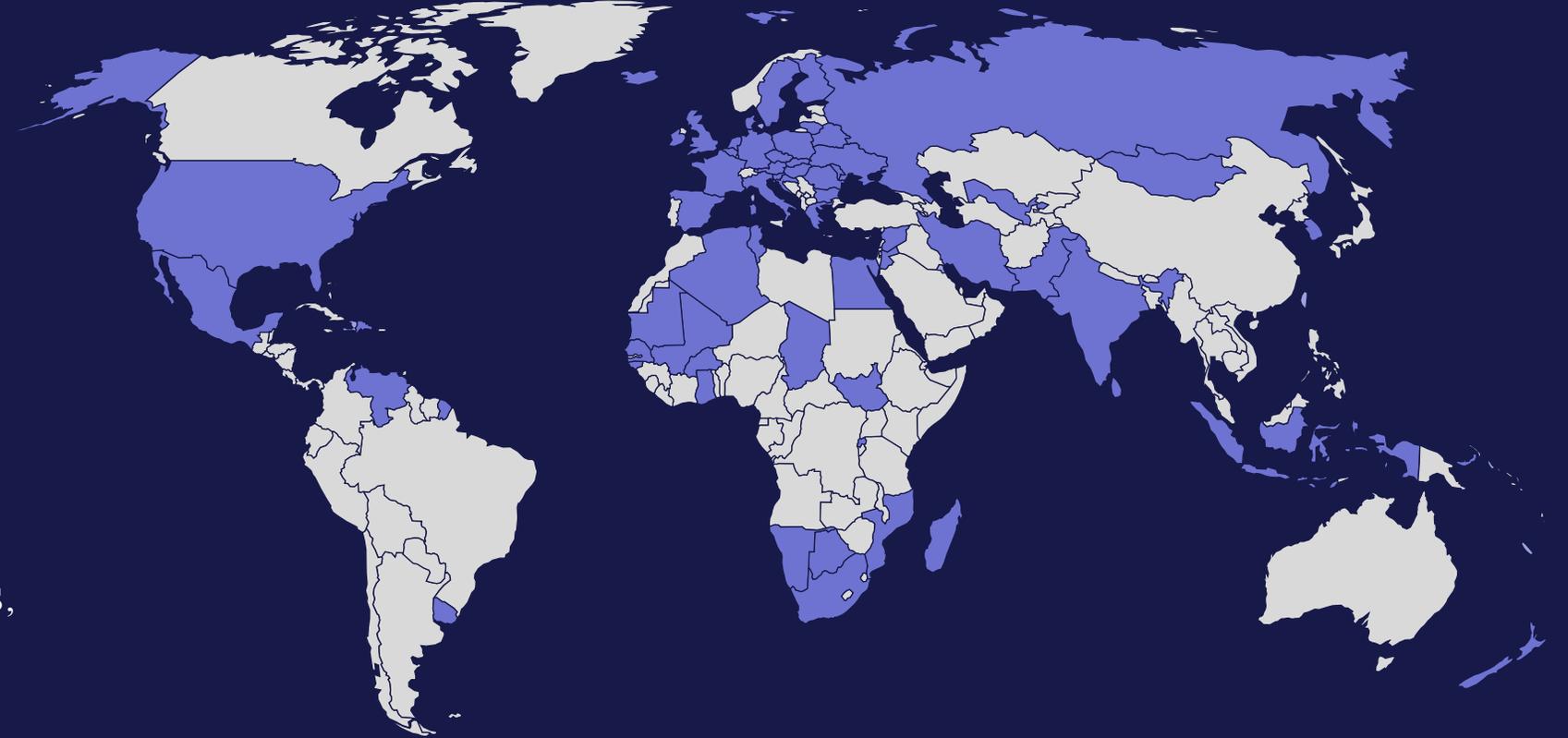
US-China Relations	Cybersecurity	Climate Shocks	Global Elections
Israel-Hamas War	Unregulated AI	Energy Security	Supply Chain Disruptions
Russia/Ukraine	De globalization	Middle East Instability	Mass Migration



# And globally, it's a year of elections

This year, countries that are home to more than half the world's population — 4.2 billion people — will hold elections.

Some may significantly impact geopolitics—including those in the US, EU, UK, Taiwan, India, Mexico, Ukraine, and South Africa.



So what does this mean  
for global businesses?

---



Geopolitical turbulence isn't just a risk to your operations  
and bottom line.

**It's also a risk to your reputation.**



Today, **geopolitical power is infinitely distributed.**

It spans **governments, business, media, and the increasingly empowered masses of digitally platformed citizens primed to praise or pillage on command.**



For brands to get —and stay —ahead in this age, it's not enough to monitor **foreign markets, elections, and regulations.**

They must also **track culture, media, and public opinion.**

The head and tailwinds generated by all these forces—both internationally and domestically—**are increasingly consequential to reputation and success.**



When geopolitical tensions spike, **multinational corporations are now expected speak, act, and even influence outcomes.**

But knowing when and how to do this is a high-stakes gambit. And requires companies to have a strategy in place to monitor, react and respond in realtime.



# To manage reputational risks companies must build geopolitical capabilities in 3 core areas



**Intelligence**



**Strategy & Planning**



**Response**



## 1 Situation Reporting & Issues Tracking

Always -on tracking of dynamic or emerging geopolitical events or issues, capturing key developments, forecasts, and implications for your business and reputation.

## 2 Media Monitoring & Social Listening

Tracking the conversation through traditional and social media and analyzing it to understand volume, sentiment, cadence, engagement rate and reach of content.

## 3 Narrative Intelligence

Ability to identify and analyze domestic/foreign interference or mis/disinformation associated with your brand/industry/supply chain and predict outcomes. This includes pinpointing the geographic origins and the human or AI-generated nature of interference.

## 4 Competitor Media Monitoring

Real-time tracking and analysis of competitor responses to breaking or chronic geopolitical events.



## Strategy & Planning

### 1 Stakeholder Mapping

Ability to identify and develop an engagement strategy for high -risk critics and high -value surrogates for your brand in connection with geopolitical trends or events.

### 2 Scenario Planning

Ability to model likely geopolitical shocks, potential outcomes, and develop communication strategies or campaigns that will help your company prepare, protect and respond.

### 3 Simulations

Ability to run real-time simulations of geopolitical crises to determine capacity gaps, protocol weaknesses, technology needs, etc.

### 4 Media & Influencer Relations

Mapping and cultivation of key media and influencer relationships with relevant reporters and influencers in key markets.



### 1 Crisis Response

War room, rapid response capability to manage incoming and outgoing messaging during a high geopolitical event. Ability to measure the impact of corporate responses and opinion of stakeholders (consumers, investors, employees). -stakes

### 2 Executive Readiness

Executive readiness to engage with foreign and domestic government officials (hearings), media, NGOs, foreign publics, employees, or investors on geopolitical topics.

### 3 Earned & Paid Media

Ability to place earned and paid media in foreign outlets and platforms.

### 4 Messaging & Campaign Development

Proactive, creative, and strategic messaging campaigns on geopolitical issues that inform or rally critical stakeholders and mitigate risk.



# CASES





### WHAT WE DO:

DATA & INSIGHTS

STRATEGY

CREATIVE INTEGRATED CAMPAIGNS

MEDIA RELATIONS

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

BRAND SAFETY

STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

EXECUTIVE VISIBILITY

INFLUENCER ENGAGEMENT

### WHERE WE OPERATE:

#### NORTH AMERICA

- Atlanta
- Baltimore
- Boston
- Buffalo
- Chicago
- Dallas
- Denver
- Detroit
- Houston
- Los Angeles
- Minneapolis
- Montreal
- Nashville
- New York City
- Philadelphia
- San Francisco
- Santa Barbara
- Seattle
- St. Louis
- Toronto
- Vancouver
- Washington

22 OFFICES

#### LATIN AMERICA

- Bogotá
- Brasilia
- Buenos Aires
- Lima
- Mexico City
- Rio de Janeiro
- Santiago
- São Paulo

8 OFFICES

#### EUROPE

- Aberdeen
- Athens
- Barcelona
- Belfast
- Belgrade
- Berlin
- Bratislava
- Brussels
- Bucharest
- Budapest
- Cologne
- Copenhagen
- Dublin
- Edinburgh
- Frankfurt
- Geneva
- Glasgow
- Guildford
- Helsinki
- Kyiv
- Ljubljana
- London
- Madrid
- Manchester

43 OFFICES

13 OFFICES

16 OFFICES

- Milan
- Munich
- Nicosia
- Oslo
- Paris
- Podgorica
- Prague
- Riga
- Rome
- Sarajevo
- Skopje
- Sofia
- Stockholm
- Tel Aviv
- The Hague
- Vienna
- Warsaw
- Zagreb

#### MENA

- Abu Dhabi
- Amman
- Beirut
- Cairo
- Casablanca
- Doha
- Dubai
- Istanbul
- Kuwait City
- Manama
- Muscat
- Riyadh
- Tunis

18 OFFICES

#### SUBSAHARAN AFRICA

- Abidjan
- Accra
- Addis Ababa
- Dakar
- Dar Es Salaam
- Gaborone
- Harare
- Johannesburg
- Kampala
- Kinshasa
- Lagos
- Luanda
- Lusaka
- Maputo
- Nairobi
- Port Louis

#### ASIA PACIFIC

- Bangalore
- Bangkok
- Beijing
- Guangzhou
- Hong Kong
- Jakarta
- Kolkata
- Kuala Lumpur
- Melbourne
- Mumbai
- New Delhi
- Seoul
- Shanghai
- Shenzhen
- Singapore
- Sydney
- Taipei
- Tokyo



## Narrative Intelligence

**Problem:** In wake of a major accident, a transport client found the social conversation about the company and event is overrun with mis/disinformation.

### Solution:

- We employed **Blackbird AI** to pinpoint the sources and amplifiers of mis and disinformation and other damaging narratives.
- When the social media conversation was peaking, we **detected several Russian and Chinese propagandists** posing as concerned citizens.

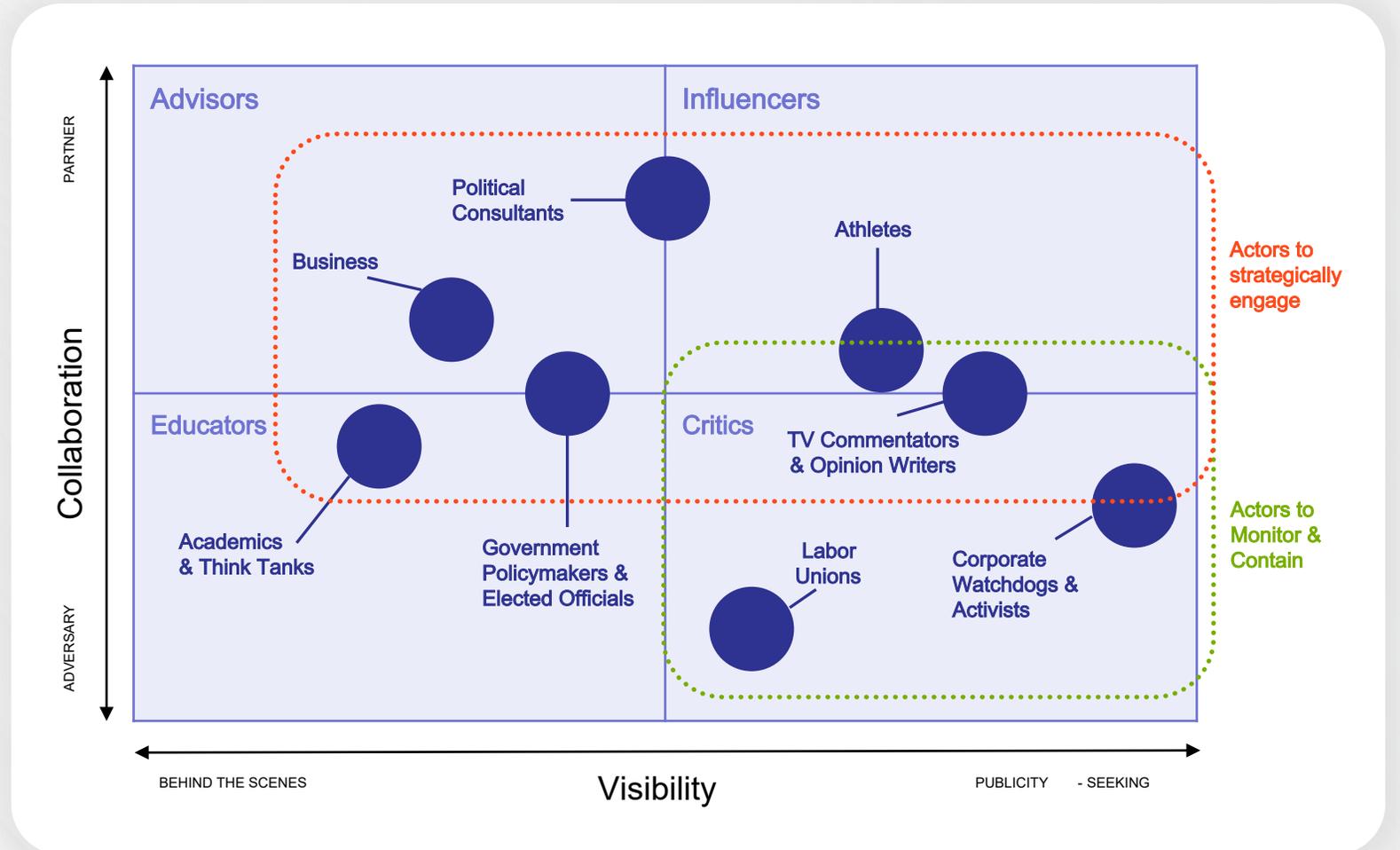


## Stakeholder Mapping

**Problem:** As a sponsor of the World Cup in Qatar, a major food & beverage client was navigating controversy over the country's human rights record.

**Solution:**

- A **media audit and narrative analysis** that distilled key media narratives that were shaping the conversation around the event.
- A **stakeholder map** identifying potential surrogates to cultivate and critics to contain.



## Issues Management & Advocacy

**Problem:** A technology company was being targeted by China with new legal tactics to gain advantage in IP disputes. The client did not want to be out front on the issue.

### Solution:

- We identified an expert to serve as a **surrogate advancing their argument through top-tier media coverage** in the Economist.
- Targeting key policymakers, we **drew the attention of the U.S. Government** and legal trade associations to bring about a multilateral response.

The logo for The Economist, featuring the words "The Economist" in white serif font on a red rectangular background.

China | Courting influence

# China is becoming more assertive in international legal disputes

Party leaders are using such cases to reshape legal and regulatory norms

## CASES RESPONSE

### Crisis Response Monitoring & Counsel

**The Problem:** In the aftermath of the Hamas invasion of Israel on October 7, companies were pressed to issue statements and take action.

#### Solution:

- We immediately stood up a media monitoring and social listening system to record **actions taken and statements issued by corporations and public reactions to them.**
- Analyzing these statements and emerging positions of **key stakeholder groups,** we were able to assist clients with their own response.

