

## **Opening Keynote – Public Affairs Council 250th Anniversary of the United States**

**Delivered by Dante Disparte on April 22, 2026**

Good morning,

It's a privilege to be here with this community of leaders — people who operate at the intersection of business, government, and society — especially at a moment as consequential as this one.

Two hundred and fifty years ago, a bold experiment was set in motion. Not perfect, not complete — but enduring. The United States was founded not just as a nation, but as an idea: that governance could be accountable, that power could be constrained, and that progress could be debated, contested, and ultimately shared.

**That experiment has never been static. It has required constant renewal — through conflict, through compromise, through reinvention.**

And that brings us to today.

Because if the last 250 years were about building the architecture of democracy and markets, the next 25 will test whether those systems can adapt fast enough to keep pace with a world defined by technological acceleration, geopolitical fragmentation, and rising expectations from society.

And right at the center of that tension — between continuity and change — is the work that all of you do.

**Public affairs is no longer a support function. It is not a communications layer applied after decisions are made. It is not a defensive posture in response to risk.**

Public affairs is strategy.

It is the discipline that translates complexity into clarity. It is the function that aligns corporate ambition with societal legitimacy. And increasingly, it is the difference between institutions that endure — and those that fall behind.

We are living in an era where the boundaries between public and private interests are not just blurred — they are deeply intertwined.

National security is economic security.

Financial systems are geopolitical instruments.

Technology platforms are governance structures.

And corporate decisions — about supply chains, data, capital allocation, and people — are shaping outcomes that were once the exclusive domain of governments.

That reality places a profound responsibility on this room.

Because whether we say it explicitly or not, corporations today are actors in the public square. And with that role comes an expectation: to contribute to stability, to reinforce trust, and to operate with an awareness that long-term success is inseparable from the health of the societies in which we operate.

This is where public affairs becomes indispensable.

At its best, public affairs is not about managing headlines — it's about shaping outcomes.

**It asks harder questions:**

- How do we ensure innovation is not outpacing governance?
- How do we align global business models with national priorities without retreating into fragmentation?
- How do we build trust in institutions — both public and private — at a time when skepticism is often the default?

**And perhaps most importantly:**

How do we ensure that the next chapter of economic growth is also a chapter of shared progress?

Because if there is one lesson from the American story over the past 250 years, it is this: alignment between economic dynamism and societal inclusion is what sustains legitimacy over time.

When that alignment weakens, trust erodes.

When trust erodes, systems fracture.

And when systems fracture, progress stalls.

Public affairs professionals are the stewards of that alignment.

You are translators — between sectors, between stakeholders, between competing priorities.

You are navigators — helping organizations operate in a world where the map is constantly changing.

And increasingly, you are architects — designing the frameworks that allow innovation, regulation, and growth to coexist.

That's not a small mandate.

But it is a necessary one.

Because the challenges ahead are not incremental — they are structural.

**We are entering a period where:**

- Artificial intelligence will redefine labor, productivity, and decision-making
- Financial systems will be re-architected by digital assets and programmable infrastructure
- Supply chains will be reshaped by resilience, not just efficiency
- And geopolitical competition will increasingly play out through economic and technological channels

None of these shifts can be addressed by any one sector alone.

They require coordination.

They require trust.

And they require a shared understanding that the success of one system depends on the stability of the broader ecosystem.

This is where corporate and national interests must converge — not in theory, but in practice.

Because a strong economy depends on stable institutions.

And stable institutions depend on responsible corporate leadership.

That alignment doesn't happen automatically.

It is built — deliberately — through engagement, through policy development, through advocacy that is not just persuasive, but constructive.

And that's where your work matters most.

The future of public affairs will not be defined by how well we react to policy — it will be defined by how effectively we help shape it.

It will not be measured by access alone — but by impact.

**And it will require a shift in mindset:**

From short-term positioning to long-term value creation

From transactional engagement to strategic partnership

From risk mitigation to opportunity design

In other words, public affairs must evolve at the same pace as the world it seeks to influence.

Now, let me be clear — this is not about blurring the line between public and private roles.

It is about recognizing that the challenges we face demand a higher degree of coordination, accountability, and shared purpose.

And it is about ensuring that as businesses grow and innovate, they do so in a way that reinforces — not undermines — the systems that make that growth possible.

That is the essence of alignment.

And that alignment is not just good for society — it is good for business.

Because trust is not a soft asset.

It is a competitive advantage.

It determines access to markets, resilience in times of crisis, and the ability to scale innovation without friction.

Companies that understand this — and invest in it — will lead.

Those that don't will find themselves navigating an increasingly complex environment without a compass.

**So as we reflect on 250 years of American history, it's worth asking:**

What will the next 250 years require of us?

Certainly, it will require innovation.

Certainly, it will require growth.

But above all, it will require stewardship.

Stewardship of institutions.

Stewardship of markets.

And stewardship of the trust that connects them.

That is the work of public affairs.

It is not always visible.

It is not always immediate.

But it is foundational.

Because at the end of the day, the success of any organization — any economy, any nation — depends on its ability to align interests, manage change, and build a future that people believe in.

And belief — just like trust — is earned.

**So my challenge to all of us is this:**

Let's elevate the practice of public affairs to meet this moment.

Let's move beyond incrementalism and embrace the strategic role this function is meant to play.

Let's ensure that as we unlock the future — through technology, through capital, through innovation — we do so with a clear sense of responsibility to the broader system we are shaping.

Because the next chapter of this 250-year experiment will not be written by any one institution alone.

It will be written through collaboration — between public and private sectors, between policy and innovation, between ambition and accountability.

And the people in this room will help write it.

That's not just an opportunity.

It's an obligation.

And it's one worth rising to.

Thank you.

## **About Dante Disparte**

Dante Disparte is the Chief Strategy Officer and Head of Global Policy and Operations for Circle, a financial technology firm and the issuer of the world's leading regulated digital currencies. In this role, he leads global strategy and operations, market expansion, regulatory policy, public affairs and corporate communications. Dante serves on the board of the Atlantic Council, and The Economic Club of Washington, D.C.

Prior to joining Circle, Dante was a founder of the Libra Association and has more than two decades of experience as an entrepreneur, business leader and global risk expert, most recently as founder and chairman of Risk Cooperative. Dante served as an appointee on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Advisory Council, the U.S. federal emergency response agency.

Dante is a frequent speaker and commentator on business and political issues shaping the world. His views on risk, economic competitiveness and technology are regularly featured in leading media and publications such as Harvard Business Review, BBC, Forbes, and Diplomatic Courier, where Dante serves on the editorial advisory board.

Dante is a graduate of Harvard Business School and holds an MSc. in Risk Management from the NYU Stern School of Business and a B.A. in International and Intercultural Studies from Goucher College, from which he received the highest alumni achievement award for public service. He is the co-author of "Global Risk Agility and Decision Making" (Macmillan, 2016) and was recognized as one of the 40 leaders under 40 by the Washington Business Journal and in the inaugural Powermeter 100 list. Dante is a life member of the Council on Foreign Relations, a member of the World Economic Forum, and the Bretton Woods Committee.

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