



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on June 18, 2025

## “Detachment 201”: Big Tech’s March Into the Military

Last week, the U.S. Army launched “Detachment 201: The Executive Innovation Corps.” Its mission? To “fuse cutting-edge tech expertise with military innovation.” That’s the Army’s language. The real message is simpler: Big Tech is embedding itself in the military’s core operating system.

### Silicon Ranks

In a ceremony staged just before President Donald Trump’s 250th Army anniversary parade, four Silicon Valley executives were sworn in as Army Reserve lieutenant colonels:



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- Shyam Sankar, chief technology officer at Palantir
- Andrew Bosworth, chief technology officer at Meta
- Kevin Weil, chief product officer at OpenAI
- Bob McGrew, former chief research officer at OpenAI, now at [Thinking Machines Lab](#).

These aren’t ceremonial appointments. [The Army says](#) these part-time officers will “guide rapid and scalable tech solutions to complex problems.” They won’t lead troops, but they will influence how wars are planned, fought, and optimized.

Each will complete a two-week training crash course — online and at Fort Benning — covering physical fitness, marksmanship, and basic soldiering. Unlike most new officers, they’ll skip the Army’s full commissioning course.

“There’s an urgency to change and transform the Army — and these guys are going to help,” [said](#) Col. Dave Butler, spokesman for the Army chief of staff. The broader effort, called the “[Army Transformation Initiative](#),” aims to make the force “leaner, smarter, and more lethal.”

The tech colonels won’t oversee weapons contracts or big-ticket acquisitions, Butler assured. Their focus will be strategic: how to recruit more engineers into uniform and inject innovation into military doctrine. Officially, “firewalls” will separate their Army roles from their day jobs. In practice, those walls may be more symbolic than secure.

The timing of the announcement was telling. It came as the Bilderberg Group [met behind closed doors](#) in Stockholm. Among attendees were Peter Thiel (a member of the steering committee), Alex Karp, Satya Nadella, Mustafa Suleyman, and Michael Kratsios — a who’s who of tech overlords with an increasing appetite for military influence.

### Augmented Combat Reality

If this were just a recruiting stunt, it might fade fast. But it isn’t. [The military’s alliance with Meta and Anduril](#) now includes \$21.9 billion for augmented- and virtual-reality tech for battlefield deployment.

**What’s at stake:** Anduril and Meta are co-developing XR (extended reality) gear — starting with the



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[EagleEye headset](#) — to enhance soldier situational awareness and command control. These headsets will blend real-time drone feeds, AI overlays, and 3D navigation cues directly into a soldier’s vision during missions.

**Battlefield value:** According to Anduril, such headsets will provide “enhanced perception” and “intuitive control of autonomous platforms” in real-world conditions. Meta’s Reality Labs and its AI models (like Llama) will be integrated to interpret and visualize vast battlefield data instantly.

**Strategic shift:** This XR partnership forms part of the Army’s pivot away from legacy prime contractors toward agile, software-driven defense systems. Microsoft was once the face of augmented reality (AR) for soldiers — but now Anduril has assumed the Army’s IVAS (Integrated Visual Augmentation System) program, and is partnering with Meta instead. Microsoft remains on board as a cloud provider via Azure.

In short, the military is no longer experimenting with AR in a lab. It’s building immersive frontline tools — tools that marry Silicon Valley consumer technology with lethal military AI.

## The Techno-military Bloc

This isn’t just about one Army initiative. A new axis is forming — not between nations, but between CEOs.

*Financial Times* reported in December that Palantir, OpenAI, Anduril, and a dozen other tech companies were joining forces to “leverage their products to provide a more efficient way of supplying the U.S. government with cutting-edge defence and weapons capabilities.”

While reports frame this as a competition with legacy contractors, it’s better understood as an upgrade. Companies like Lockheed Martin, Boeing, RTX, and Northrop Grumman still build the tanks, missiles, and aircraft essential to conventional warfare. What the new bloc offers is a digital command layer — platforms that guide, connect, and accelerate those traditional systems.

The Army still needs bombs and armor. But now, code determines where they go and whom they strike. Silicon Valley isn’t replacing the war machine. It’s embedding itself in its brainstem, guiding missiles, assigning targets, and calculating the human cost — or, more likely, ignoring it.

Take [Lavender](#), the Israeli AI targeting system reportedly developed by Unit 8200, Israel’s military intelligence division. Investigations suggest Lavender flagged over 37,000 Palestinian men as potential combatants during Israel’s Gaza campaign, using behavioral cues like SIM card swaps or frequent apartment changes. In many cases, approval to strike reportedly came in under 20 seconds, with minimal human oversight.

U.S. tech has played a pivotal role in enabling systems like it. Microsoft, Oracle, Google, Amazon, OpenAI, and Palantir [have provided](#) the Israeli military with AI models, cloud computing, data analytics, and intelligence platforms.

This is the future the techno-military bloc is engineering: detached, data-driven, and ruthlessly efficient. Efficiency becomes its own moral defense. Ethical questions are deferred — if asked at all.

## Trump’s Tech-military Complex

“Detachment 201” isn’t a test. It’s a seamless addition to an increasingly automated war apparatus. Trump’s 2026 defense budget surpasses \$1.01 trillion, the largest in U.S. history. But this isn’t just



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about scale — it marks a structural evolution. The material backbone of U.S. military power is not being scrapped; it's being modernized and digitally upgraded. That upgrade requires more funding, and it's drawing in a new class of contractors — many now in uniform and increasingly influential in shaping military priorities.

What's emerging is the privatization of command and control. Contractors no longer merely support the military — they are embedded within it. Firms like Palantir, SpaceX, and Anduril now help shape strategy while competing for the contracts to build its infrastructure.

Nowhere is this more visible than in Trump's proposed Golden Dome — a missile-defense system projected to cost \$831 billion over 20 years. Palantir, SpaceX, and Anduril are leading the race to build it — and to profit from it.

Yet the scale of the Golden Dome, paired with the absence of any credible modern missile threat to the U.S. mainland, suggests its true function lies elsewhere.

[Critics argue](#) it's not about deterrence, but surveillance: a global lattice of satellites, sensors, and predictive AI — not aimed outward, but omnidirectional. A Skynet-like monitoring grid optimized for total visibility.

## The Digital Citadel

To be clear, the technology, as dystopian as it is, isn't the core problem. The deeper issue is the logic behind it: a worldview that sees [threats everywhere](#) and international relations as risks to be managed, not mended. It's the same paradigm Trump once claimed he would dismantle. A self-styled deal-maker who promised to "get along with everyone" now presides over a strategic posture governed by code, not conversation.

This trajectory would have alarmed the Founders. They warned against the perils of standing armies, executive overreach, and endless war. Their concern wasn't sentimental — it was structural. They understood that militarism, once normalized, expands. Had they foreseen a future in which warfare was increasingly delegated to private algorithms and [surveillance outsourced to politically connected firms](#), they might have called it tyranny by machine.

What we are witnessing is not mere modernization. It is the institutionalization of corporatized governance in warfare, a merger of state power and private infrastructure. As Mussolini observed, such fusion defines fascism.

This isn't just a shift in defense strategy. It is the quiet construction of a security state whose levers of control are automated, opaque, and insulated from democratic oversight. The algorithm doesn't just execute policy. It becomes the policy.

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