



The

DATAFICATION

of

WAR

Palantir, AI and Algorithmic Violence

KILLING.BY.CODE / ONE

Contents

Introduction	p2
1 Palantir: Origins, Leadership and Ideology	p3
1.1 Alex Karp	
1.2 Peter Thiel	
1.3 Louis Mosley	
2 Palantir's UK Footprint: MoD and Wider Society	p6
3 Key Software products	p9
3.1 Artificial Intelligence Platform (AIP)	
3.2 Gotham	
3.3 Foundry	
3.4 MetaConstellation	
3.5 Palantir Edge AI	
4 Palantir in Violence, Conflict and War	p12
4.1 Ukraine	
4.2 Israel	
5 Conclusion	p14

Drone Wars UK is a small British NGO established in 2010 to undertake research and advocacy around the use of armed drones and other military technologies. *Killing by Code* is a short series of briefings on the military use of AI.

Published by Drone Wars UK

Written by Matthew Croft

May 2025

Design by Chris Woodward

www.chriswoodwarddesign.co.uk

Cover photo by Markus Spiske on Unsplash

Drone Wars UK

Unit 34

Wincombe Business Centre

Shaftesbury, SP7 9QJ

info@dronewars.net

www.dronewars.net

Introduction

It is often suggested that the quality of human life is fundamentally shaped by the technologies available at a given time. The same reasoning has long been applied to warfare, with the First World War giving a brutal demonstration of this dynamic. Innovations in firepower, artillery, logistics, and communications rendered pre-war offensive doctrines obsolete and forcing states to orchestrate new methods of action under industrialised conditions.

A similar shift emerged at the end of the Cold War. Andrew Marshall, Head of the U.S. Department of Defence Office of Net Assessment – an internal Pentagon think tank – argued that new technologies were driving a ‘Revolution in Military Affairs’.¹ His analysis foresaw the rise of *network-centric warfare*, where networked sensors and ‘shooters’ could accelerate the targeting cycle dramatically – compressing the time between detection, decision, and destruction.

Today, with the rise in geopolitical uncertainty and intense competition for military-technological supremacy; private technology companies working alongside states, are pushing towards a new technological transformation on the battlefield: the development of military AI and Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems that promise to reshape the methods of war.

Military AI firms are increasingly exerting more influence over domestic defence sectors. These for-profit corporations are increasingly playing a key role in military ecosystems, mobilising R&D and facilitating the transfer of civilian technology to military applications. This interdependency with the state, indicates the growing militarisation of digital technologies, as well as their importance as military contractors.²

With algorithms, Large Language Models, and autonomous systems permeating throughout the military domain, modern warfare is becoming increasingly reliant on data sets. Military advantage need not only rely on industrial output and hardware but on high-quality data and software. Whether that is to train military AI models that assist in the planning, or the use of data to execute combat missions with AI-assistance, warfare in the age of AI is experiencing a *datafication*.

Palantir is integral to this story. The company has been embedded within US national security structures since its founding in 2003 and is one of the most opaque yet influential corporations today. Put simply, Palantir is a private company which builds software for the military, intelligence agencies and transnational corporations to understand masses of data (data analytics).³

This short briefing explores Palantir and their algorithmic and data systems. It examines the company’s origin and leadership; their footprint in different institutions within the UK and elsewhere; its key software and data analytic platforms and ends by looking at their involvement with the Israeli and Ukrainian governments during times of profound violence and war.

1 Jacek Bartosiak, The Revolution in Military Affairs: The Concept is Becoming Relevant Once Again, *Geopolitical Futures*, 15 November 2019, <https://geopoliticalfutures.com/the-revolution-in-military-affairs/>

2 Andrea Coveri, Claudio Cozza, Dario Guarascio, Big Tech and the US Digital-Military-Industrial Complex, *Intereconomics*, 2025, 60(2), 81-87, <https://www.intereconomics.eu/pdf-download/year/2025/number/2/article/big-tech-and-the-us-digital-military-industrial-complex.html>

3 Stijn Bronzwaer, The West is superior and must always win. This is how Palantir views the world, NRC, 10 October 2025, <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2025/10/10/the-west-is-superior-and-must-always-win-this-is-how-palantir-views-the-world-a4909001>

1 Palantir

Origins, Leadership and Ideology

Peter Thiel and Alex Karp co-founded Palantir in the aftermath of 9/11, partly using funding from Q-Tel, the investment arm of the CIA.⁴ Palantir's corporate identity is steeped in Lords of the Rings mythology – the very name refers to the *palantiri*, the seven 'seeing stones' through which characters in Middle Earth communicate and observe distant events. This mythos is deliberately woven into Palantir's organisational culture: its London office is named *Grey Havens*, its Palo Alto building *The Shire*, and its Washington headquarters *Minas Tirith*. These references serve as a metaphor for the company's conception as a guardian confronting 'dark forces' in defence of western civilisation.

Palantir's leadership openly embraces the language of warfare, crisis and existential threat to frame the company's public image.⁵ Co-founder Alex Karp told the World Economic Forum that Palantir exists to 'disrupt', and to enable partner institutions to become 'the very best in the world and, when necessary, to scare enemies and, on occasion, kill them.'⁶

Karp, perhaps Palantir's most visible leadership figure, has articulated a worldview in which survival of western civilisation depends on technology companies co-habiting with governments to develop advanced capabilities. Karp has argued bluntly in interviews that technological superiority must scare adversaries into submission.⁷ His ideological orientation informs Palantir's unconditional support for key U.S. allies like Israel, the UK and Japan, where its technologies have been integrated into security and defence infrastructures.

1.1 Alex Karp, CEO

The ideology of its founders are crucial if we are to understand the strategic direction of Palantir. Alex Karp has a PHD in philosophy from Goethe University in Frankfurt where he rubbed shoulders with the famous political theorist Jurgen Habermas, with his thesis supervisor being the Freudian social psychologist Korola Brede. Karp's book *The Technological Republic* is a sort of treaties that argues for the abandonment of 'frivolous' consumer products in the pursuit of 'national projects' that strengthen 'Western civilization' to the detriment of its perceived enemies.⁸

4 Erik German, Meet the CIA-backed venture fund behind Palantir, Anduril—and a spy tool that might be on your phone, *Fortune*, 29 July 2025, <https://fortune.com/2025/07/29/in-q-tel-cia-venture-capital-palantir-anduril/>

5 Raluca, Csernaton, Dennis Broeders, Lise Anderson, Marijin Hoijtink, Ingvild Bode, Jon Lindsay, Elke Shwarz, Myth, Power and Agency: Rethinking Artificial Intelligence, Geopolitics and War, *Minds and Machines*, 2025, 35(37), 1-26 <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11023-025-09741-0>

6 Michael Eby, Palantir's Idea of Peace, *The Nation*, 27 May 2025, <https://www.thenation.com/article/culture/alex-karp-palantir-tech-republic/>

7 Edward Targett, Palantir CEO Signs off Year with Nod to West's 'organised Violence', *The Stack*, 04 February, <https://www.thestack.technology/palantir-ceo-signs-off-year-with-nod-to-west-organised-violence/>

8 Michael Eby, Palantir's Idea of Peace, *The Nation*, 27 May 2025, <https://www.thenation.com/article/culture/alex-karp-palantir-tech-republic/>

In the book he launches a scathing critique of Silicon Valley, starting with Google's withdrawal from Project Maven - the pentagon AI weapon-building initiative. Karp's underlying mission is to advance American hegemony through the rejection of frivolous consumer products towards building superior military technology enabling the US to retain technological supremacy and thus global primacy. This is his moral crusade.

The book idealizes the Manhattan Project, projecting a rather romantic view of the perceived marriage between science and government. The establishment of the atomic weapons age through the Manhattan Project initiated a new geopolitical age - and Palantir seeks to emulate this. While his critiques of consumer capitalism are not unfounded, he frames the contemporary age as a civilisational crisis and existential threat to the West and argues that technology companies must work in tandem with US-aligned governments to shore up their military-technological superiority. He fundamentally calls for a 'Manhattan Project for AI'.

1.2 Peter Thiel, Chairman

Peter Thiel, co-founder of PayPal and tech oligarch, is a 'techno-libertarian' with a strong aversion to progressive politics and a pronounced scepticism of democracy.⁹ Like Karp he is not an engineer, but a radical thinker with a degree in philosophy from Stanford University. Unlike Karp who styles himself as a 'liberal pragmatist' Peter Thiel is far more 'edgy' with his libertarianism.

His professor of ethics Jean-Pierre Duput recalled that Thiel's intellectual ambition was 'to demolish America, he was rooting for chaos to destroy... democracy'.¹⁰ In his own writings, Thiel envisions a society governed by a narrow elite of wealthy entrepreneurial men in which technology and the sanctity of the individual reign supreme. Thiel has been closely intertwined with Trump's political movement since 2016, becoming the first prominent tech oligarch to endorse his presidential campaign.¹¹ He has since played a key role in influencing Trump's decision to select his business partner and mentee, J.D. Vance as his running mate, having provided significant financial backing for his 2022 Senate bid.¹² He is equally significant in the tech world with his unrelenting libertarian world view influencing the likes of Elon Musk, Sam Altman and Mark Zuckerberg - all of whom, to varying degrees, share a belief that technology and individual initiative take precedence over the state which they regard as, at best, an impediment, at worst, an adversary.

Thiel was born in Germany, spent much of his childhood in apartheid South Africa, which according to Le Monde, is where he first developed a disdain for multiculturalism, progressive politics and a fundamental scepticism of democracy.¹³ In an essay, he described the American constitutional system

9 Raphelle Bacque, Damien Leloup and Alexandre Piquard, Peter Thiel, the Libertarian Billionaire Waging War on Government, Le Monde, 22 July 2025. https://www.lemonde.fr/en/summer-reads/article/2025/07/22/peter-thiel-the-libertarian-billionaire-waging-war-on-government_6743617_183.html

10 ibid

11 Eoin Higgins, Peter Thiel, Trump's Man in Silicon Valley. Rolling Stone, 23 February 2025. <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/owned-book-peter-thiel-trump-tech-silicon-valley-1235276868/>

12 Ryan mac and Theodore Schleifer, How a Network of Tech Billionaires Helped J.D. Vance Leap into Power, The New York Times, 17 July 2024. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/technology/jd-vance-tech-silicon-valley.html>

13 Raphelle Bacque, Damien Leloup and Alexandre Piquard, Peter Thiel, the Libertarian Billionaire Waging War on Government, Le Monde, 22 July 2025. https://www.lemonde.fr/en/summer-reads/article/2025/07/22/peter-thiel-the-libertarian-billionaire-waging-war-on-government_6743617_183.html

as preventative of ambitious individuals that could restore the 'old republic'.¹⁴ In 2009 he wrote that 'I remain committed to the faith of my teenage years: to authentic human freedom as a precondition for the highest good... I no longer believe that freedom and democracy are compatible'.¹⁵ In his 2014 book *Zero to One*, he asserted monarchy as the best form of government which tracks with his relationship with Curtis Yavin, a reactionary blogger advocating for a CEO-style monarchy.¹⁶

1.3 Louis Mosley, Executive Vice-President and head of business in UK and Europe

Graduating from the University of Oxford in 2006, Mosley's early career was in politics, working as a Conservative Party activist and researcher most notably serving as a research assistant to Rory Stewart in the early 2010s.¹⁷ Since his appointment as Head of Palantir UK, Mosley has become the visible public voice in the UK for Palantir, giving interviews on AI, defence and government digital transformation. His father was the elder son of Oswald Mosley, the leader of the British Union of Fascists in the 1930s. His grandmother was from a famous family, known for their contrasting political views: Jessica Mitford was a communist, civil rights activist and journalist; Unity Mitford was a devotee follower of Hitler, moving to Munich and attempting suicide when Britain declared war on Germany. It would be totally wrong to equate any of his family's views with Louis Mosley of course, this is just to illustrate that he is descended from a highly politicised, aristocratic lineage whose legacy has played a visible role in Anglo-American history. It seems he will go on to have greater influence albeit a very different role in shaping the country's future trajectory.

His relationships with the higher echelons of the labour government are clear. Speaking to *The House* magazine, Mosley stated that he has met with Keir Starmer multiple times, further noting he had spent significant time with Defence Secretary John Healey, remarking that they both get it - referring to the transformational role that artificial intelligence will have across UK institutions.¹⁸ Mosley is an important figure in Palantir's UK operations, confirming their technologies are being used on HS2. He also confirmed the MoD's 'journey' towards developing a programme analogous to the United States' Project Maven. Surprisingly, in an interview with Times Radio, Mosley states the company would not be bidding for the contract to establish Labour's proposal of a mandatory ID, further stating he raised 'personal concerns' about the policy.¹⁹

14 Peter Thiel, *The Straussian Moment*, 2007, <https://gvern.net/doc/politics/2007-thiel.pdf>

15 Peter Thiel, *The Education of a Libertarian*, *CATO*, 13 April 2009. <https://www.cato-unbound.org/2009/04/13/peter-thiel/education-libertarian/>

16 Raphelle Bacque, Damien Leloup and Alexandre Piquard, Peter Thiel, the Libertarian Billionaire Waging War on Government, *Le Monde*, 22 July 2025. https://www.lemonde.fr/en/summer-reads/article/2025/07/22/peter-thiel-the-libertarian-billionaire-waging-war-on-government_6743617_183.html

17 Mark Wilding, *How Palantir Infiltrated the State*, *Prospect*, 12 November 2025 <https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/politics/democracy/government/71511/how-palantir-infiltrated-the-state>

18 Sophie Church, *Palantir Boss Louis Mosley: Keir Starmer 'Gets' AI, 'You Could See in His Eyes'*, *The House*, 05 April 2025. <https://www.politicshome.com/news/article/palantir-boss-interview-keir-starmer-gets-ai>

19 Mark Wilding, *The State of Palantir: Inside the American Tech Giant's UK Takeover*, *Liberty Investigates*, 12 November 2025. <https://libertyinvestigates.org.uk/articles/the-state-of-palantir-inside-the-american-tech-giants-uk-takeover/>

2 Palantir's UK Footprint MoD and Wider Society

Palantir's data analytic platforms span a wide range of products used in different government institutions. Within the US, its client base includes major intelligence agencies like the CIA, FBI and NSA as well as the Department of War (formerly Department of Defence), law enforcement bodies including ICE as well as financial and regulatory authorities and public-health institutions. The Canadian Department of National Defence has a \$14.4 million contract within Palantir while Palantir software is said to have become the backbone of Australia and Japanese defence modernisation.²⁰ Ukraine and Israel have both used Palantir Technologies products in ongoing armed operations. Palantir's reach is truly global, yet the exact details of their operations with governments are kept deliberately opaque and shielded by national security exemptions.

Here in the UK, in September 2025 the government announced a new 'strategic partnership' with Palantir to boost military AI innovation.²¹ Palantir will base its European HQ in London and will 'invest' up to £1.5bn in the UK defence sector, acting as a 'mentor' to UK defence companies. Palantir clearly wants to be central in the government's ambition of being a leading power of defence innovation in NATO. According to the government press release:

'Palantir and the UK military will work together to transform lethality on the battlefield, supporting the development of data and AI-powered capabilities across data analysis, intelligence, decision support and targeting systems. This will see the government delivering on a key theme of the Strategic Defence Review and Defence Industrial Strategy: to make the UK the leading edge of innovation in NATO.'



UK Defence Secretary John Healy (left), greeting Palantir CEO Alex Karp. Image credit: MoD

²⁰ Murad Hemmadi, The Defence Department had a \$14M contract with Palantir for data management software, *The Logic*, 18 September 2025, <https://thelogic.co/news/palantir-department-of-national-defence-contract-canada>;

²¹ Ministry of Defence and The Rt Hon John Healey MP, *New Strategic Partnership to Unlock Billions and Boost Military AI and Innovation*, Ministry of Defence: Press Release, 18 September 2025. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-strategic-partnership-to-unlock-billions-and-boost-military-ai-and-innovation>

Palantir appear particularly keen to be involved with the development of the UK's Digital Targeting Web that was announced in the Strategic Defence Review.²²

According to MoD figures, in the financial years of 2020/21 - 2024/2025, Palantir's UK subsidiary received £190m from Ministry of Defence.²³ Within this range one of their most lucrative contracts worth £75m was an 'Enterprise Agreement' which integrated 'Palantir[s] software tool-set to accommodate... MoD demand'.²⁴ Naturally these operations are shielded by national security exemptions and so are opaque to the outsider - most of the details of these contracts are not in public view or incredibly vague.

It wasn't until after these statistics were recorded that Palantir received their most lucrative contract yet. On the 30th of December (financial year 2026), Palantir received a contract worth up to £240m over 4 years to provide 'data-analytics'.²⁵ This was a direct award with no competition.²⁶ This cosy relationship between the MoD and Palantir extends beyond apparent special treatment; shortly before the £240m deal was signed, the firm hired several MoD officials, including Barnaby Kistruck, the ex-director of industrial strategy, prosperity and exports.²⁷ Across the whole public purse, Open Democracy, reports the company has live contracts north of £500m.

Given Palantir's close relationship with the Trump administration - notably Chair, Peter Thiel's involvement since 2016 - British taxpayers could be said to be helping to fund Thiel's political contributions to the Republican Party. While he proclaimed he was sitting out of the 2024 election, it has since been reported that he donated \$850,000 to finance Republican incumbents.²⁸ In this way, the British taxpayer is helping to support an administration that makes Britain less secure - antithetical to the very reasons used to justify the British state's relationship with Palantir. A movement that under Trump has threatened Denmark over Greenland, struck Iran de-stabilising a region and the wider global economy with a complete disregard for international law, and norms.

22 Matthew Croft, Collateral Damage: Economics and ethics are casualties in the militarisation of AI, Drone Wars UK, 20 August 2025, <https://dronewars.net/2025/08/20/collateral-damage-economics-and-ethics-are-casualties-in-the-militarisation-of-ai/>

23 MOD Trade, Industry and Contracts: 2021, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mod-trade-industry-and-contracts-2021/mod-trade-industry-and-contracts-2021#methodology>

MOD Trade, Industry and Contracts: 2022, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mod-trade-industry-and-contracts-2022/mod-trade-industry-and-contracts-2022>

MOD Trade, Industry and Contracts: 2023, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mod-trade-industry-and-contracts-2023/mod-trade-industry-and-contracts-2023>

MOD Trade, Industry and Contracts: 2024, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mod-trade-industry-and-contracts-2024>

MOD Trade, Industry and Contracts: 2025, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mod-trade-industry-and-contracts-2025/mod-trade-industry-and-contracts-2025>

24 Ministry of Defence, 'Palantir Technologies UK Ltd / UK MoD Enterprise Agreement'. Contracts Finder, 13 April 2023. <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/notice/ac82a048-4e00-46f0-8a8f-be81beed-dcca?origin=SearchResults&p=1>

25 Ministry of Defence, MOD Palantir Enterprise Agreement, Find a Tender, 23 January 2026. <https://www.find-tender.service.gov.uk/Notice/006344-2026>

26 David Allen Green, How Palantir Captured the Ministry of Defence, Financial Times, 20 February 2026. <https://www.ft.com/content/5207928a-13e8-4832-8c6f-2e78740c16c9>

27 Ethan Shone, The Great Ministry of Defence-to-Palantir Pipeline, Open Democracy, 24 January 2026. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/palantir-ministry-defence-hire-four-officials-2025-record-defence-contract-240-million/>

28 Dan Friedman and David Cord, As Palantir Cashes In On Trump 2.0, Peter Thiel is Bankrolling Republicans Again, Mother Jones, July 2025, <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2025/07/peter-thiel-republican-donations-palantir-federal-contracts-house-control-trump/>

What is more, the Swiss research organisation WAV and Rupublik Magazine revealed that Switzerland rejected a deal with Palantir after an internal report by the Swiss army found that US intelligence would be able to access data that their government would share with Palantir.²⁹

It should be noted of course that Palantir's software is being deployed across a wide range of civilian institutions across the UK. Palantir was awarded a major contract with the NHS in 2023 totalling £330m despite significant opposition from the British Medical Association, patient-advocacy groups and privacy campaigners.³⁰ They are playing a core role in the development and operation of the NHS Federated Data Platform which seeks to integrate health data across England. Palantir built on their initial role during the pandemic, where its software underpinned the NHS Covid Data Store.³¹

Beyond the NHS, a recent Freedom of Information Request by Cicero saw that the Metropolitan Police had refused to confirm or deny the use of software developed by Palantir citing exemptions that allow authorities to withhold information in the interests of law enforcement and national security. It is important to note that the Metropolitan Police has previously trialled Palantir's software as early as 2010.³²

On the energy, infrastructure and industrial side, BP has a long running relationship with Palantir, spanning over a decade and was extended in 2024 - embedding AI within engineer decision-making chains³³. In the transport sector, Louis Mosley confirmed their involvement in HS2. Jacobs Engineering has a partnership with Palantir on infrastructure analytics and planning projects linked to UK government contracts.

One of their most significant partners, PwC has made a multi-million-pound investment in a 'strategic alliance' with Palantir that built upon their relationship not just as a client, but a delivery partner for Palantir's AI/data platforms. The publicly stated rationale suggests the alliance combines Palantir's software, and PwC's expertise enabling these technologies to be implemented at scale. PwC is acting as an integrator, strengthening Palantir's credibility in regulated, risk-sensitive environments like the public sector given their experience in auditing, compliance, project management and consultancy.³⁴

Although significantly involved in military projects, Palantir's technologies are not confined to the battlefield but are increasingly embedded within the everyday governance and management of civil life facilitating the full-scale integration of AI-enabled data analytics.

29 Ethan Shone, The Great Ministry of Defence-to-Palantir Pipeline, Open Democracy, 24 January 2026. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/palantir-ministry-defence-hire-four-officials-2025-record-defence-contract-240-million/>

30 Amnesty International, 'No Gaza genocide links in our NHS': Organisations urge NHS England to End £330m Palantir Contract, Amnesty International, 20 March 2026. <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/latest/no-gaza-genocide-links-in-our-nhs-organisations-urge-nhs-england-to-end-330m-palantir-contract/>

31 Greg Noone, Why Cant the NHS Quit Palantir, Tech Monitor, 24 July 2023 <https://www.techmonitor.ai/policy/why-cant-the-nhs-quit-palantir/?cf-view>

32 Cicero's Newsroom, Are UK Police Using Palantir Technologies, Cicero, 21 August 2025. <https://ciceros.org/2025/08/31/are-uk-police-using-palantir-technologies/>

33 Alex Lawson, BP Extends use of AI in Five-Year Deal with Spy Tech Firm Palantir, Guardian, 09 September 2025. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/article/2024/sep/09/bp-ai-deal-palantir-oil-gas-artificial-intelligence>

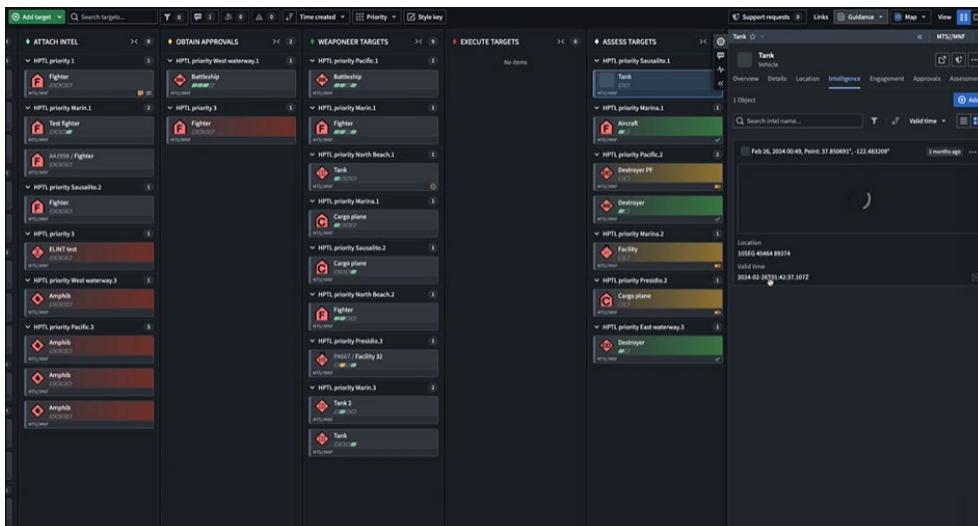
34 PwC, Palantir and PwC UK Sign a Multi-year, Multi-Million-Pound Deal to Accelerate AI Transformation as Preferred Partners in the UK, PwC: Press Release, 19 November 2025. <https://www.pwc.co.uk/press-room/press-releases/corporate-news/palantir-and-pwc-uk-sign-a-multi-year-multi-million-pound-deal.html>

Based on this, AIP seems to rest on two pillars: data integration and operational application. The former ensures the AI models use accurate datasets, the later refers to AIP's ability to assist and manage the use of lethal force.

The Maven Smart System military targeting software developed by the US Department of Defense was largely developed by Palantir and relies on Palantir's AIP to combine data feeds from various sources into a single visual tool which interfaces with an LLM to select targets and develop plans for destroying them.

3.2 Gotham

On Palantir's website, Gotham is listed as one of their core operating systems and is presented as giving a "live common operating picture" by integrating historical data and real-time sensor data combining human and machine-generated insights'. Gotham is characterised as a 'decision-making platform for AI-enabled operations' designed to centralise heterogeneous datasets ranging from intelligence reports to sensor detections into a homogenous operating picture.³⁹ Its purpose is to provide analysts, military operators, and law-enforcement personnel with a unified, coherent picture of unfolding events.



A picture of Palantir's 'digital kill chain' in Gotham. Credit: <https://www.palantir.com/platforms/gotham/>

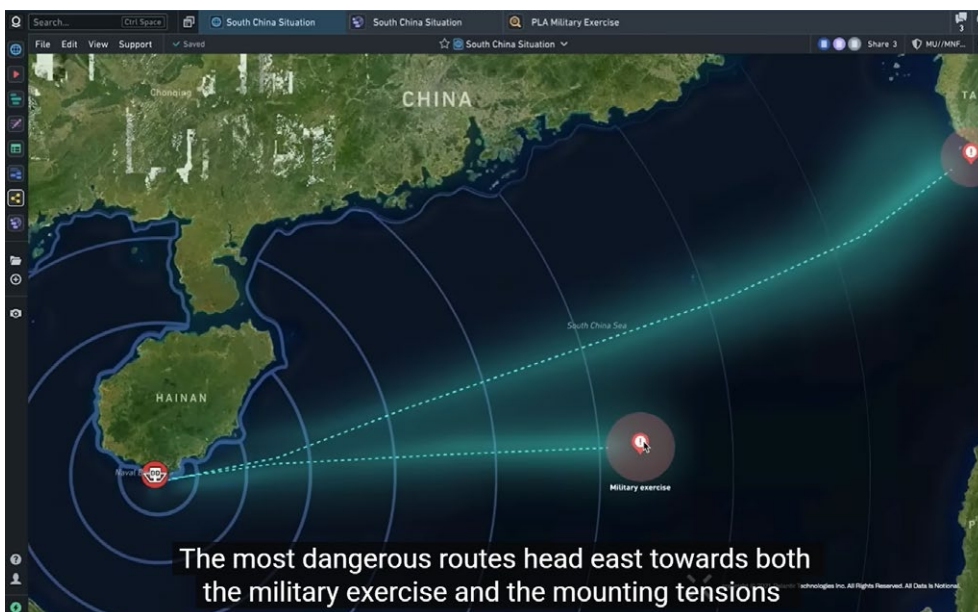


Illustration of Gotham's interface from Palantir. Credit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxKghrZU5w8>.

39 Palantir, Gotham, Palantir Technologies Ltd, <https://www.palantir.com/platforms/gotham/>

Although Palantir markets Gotham as ‘powering the kill chain’ by supporting targeting processes, the platform itself does not fire weapons. Rather, it offers data-driven targeting support, including AI-assisted identification, prioritisation, and pattern recognition.⁴⁰

Gotham’s ability to integrate with satellite systems, drone feeds and other deployed devices means that information feeds directly into the Gotham Interface.⁴¹ The precise mechanisms of these AI processes remain opaque, as the details of Gotham’s algorithms and their use by intelligence agencies, law enforcement, and defence ministries are not public.

3.3 Foundry

This body of software is one of the company’s flagship data integration and analytics systems that is marketed more towards civilian pursuits – specifically towards large businesses and public services.⁴² Foundry turns an organisation’s data, actions, decision rules and security controls into a single structured system that humans and AI can use together to run complex operations.⁴³ It can model how an organisation works, managing assets, people, processes, and supply chains. It can support planning, logistics, inventory and forecasting.

It is a general-purpose platform that can be used in different ways, rather than Gotham which is specifically designed for security and military operations. Whether that be for the NHS Federated Data Platform, streamlining HS2, enhancing the productivity of energy extraction in the case of BP.⁴⁴

3.4 MetaConstellation

MetaConstellation is Palantir’s geospatial intelligence platform built to coordinate, task and analyse data from large networks of satellites and terrestrial sensors. Unlike traditional satellite systems, which operate as isolated assets, MetaConstellation creates a ‘virtual constellation’ – a digital network that integrates imagery and sensor feeds from multiple commercial and governmental providers.⁴⁵ Through AI-enabled tasking, the system determines which satellites can fulfil a user’s request – for instance, tracking military units, monitoring coastlines, or assessing airstrike damage – and re-tasks sensors accordingly.⁴⁶ It then applies machine-learning models to analyse incoming data in near real time. A distinctive feature of MetaConstellation is its ability to incorporate on-orbit processing, enabling some AI models to run directly on satellites.⁴⁷ This means only relevant detections – the relevance of which decided by the AI model – are then filtered back to the operating picture.

40 Mayu Unda, How LLMs and AI-Automation are Shaping the Modern Battlespace, Medium, 10 October 2025, <https://medium.com/%40mayuundawca/how-llms-and-ai-automation-are-shaping-the-modern-battlespace-9a3a25e6df60>

41 Palantir, Palantir Gotham for Defense Decision Making, Youtube: Palantir, 08 Jun 2021 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxKghrZU5w8>

42 Palantir, Palantir Foundry, Palantir Technologies Ltd, <https://www.palantir.com/platforms/foundry/>

43 Palantir, Ontology, Palantir Technologies Ltd, <https://www.palantir.com/platforms/ontology>

44 Palantir, Palantir Foundry for Energy, Palantir Technologies Ltd, <https://www.palantir.com/offerings/energy/>

45 Palantir, MetaConstellation, Palantir Technologies Ltd, <https://www.palantir.com/offerings/metaconstellation/>

46 Bruno Macaea, How Palantir is Shaping the Future of Warfare, Time, 10 July 2023. <https://time.com/6293398/palantir-future-of-warfare-ukraine/>

47 Palantir, MetaConstellation, Palantir Technologies Ltd, <https://www.palantir.com/offerings/metaconstellation/>

3.5 Palantir Edge AI

Explicitly, the company describes Edge AI as 'Palantir's AI orchestration and sensor fusion engine that runs on disconnected, remote endpoints'.⁴⁸ Simply put, Edge AI devices sense, process, classify and decide locally without needing human operators or server connection. On the website, it is marketed as software that enables 'autonomous decision-making'.⁴⁹ It is primarily applied to military contexts and is the organisation's most important software regarding the development of autonomous drones. With the ability to process data onboard, drones no longer need connection to a base or cloud to enable operations even when communications are disrupted. Edge AI removes dependence on digital infrastructure, so it becomes easier to deploy large numbers of semi/fully autonomous drones increasing the scale of force or surveillance. This is an important development in swarming capability - the ability of drones to self-organise and coordinate without centralised control.

4 Palantir in Violence, Conflict and War

For companies like Palantir, armed conflicts are prime opportunities to test their technologies under real-life conditions. This dynamic is acutely visible in the war in Ukraine and Israel's ongoing wars in the middle eastern regions where Palantir has embedded itself within state and military institutions. In both conflicts, the company uses warzones as laboratories for refining their data analytics, surveillance and AI-driven decision-making systems.

4.1 Ukraine

The Russia-Ukraine war has increasingly been framed as both a testing ground for new drones technology as well as an emerging AI war laboratory. As Time reports, Ukraine's Minister of Digital Transformation, Mykhailo Fedorov, has actively marketed the country as the world's premier 'technology R&D lab'.⁵⁰ Palantir has made full use of this opportunity, embedding its platforms across multiple military and state institutions.

On the military side, Ukrainian officials have been trained to use MetaConstellation which enables Ukrainian forces to communicate enemy positions and target identification (the digital kill chain). According to Karp, Palantir is 'responsible for most of the targeting in Ukraine. From the moment the algorithms set to work detecting their targets until these targets are prosecuted... [in] no more than two

⁴⁸ Palantir, Palantir Edge AI, Palantir Technologies Ltd, <https://www.palantir.com/offerings/edge-ai/>

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Bruno Macaeae, How Palantir is Shaping the Future of Warfare, Time, 10 July 2023. <https://time.com/6293398/palantir-future-of-warfare-ukraine/>

or three minutes'.⁵¹ The company has reportedly provided these services free of charge, further entrenching its role within Ukraine's wartime digital infrastructure.

Through-out the conflict, the war on the ground remains grindingly attritional, dominated by artillery exchanges, drone and trench warfare. For this reason, sweeping claims that AI is already 'revolutionising' the battlefield rightly invite scepticism. What appears more accurate is that Ukraine – together with technology partners like Palantir – is using the war to experiment, iterate, and validate new digital and AI systems under conditions that cannot be replicated elsewhere. Fedorov himself has stated that Ukraine 'is the best test ground for all the newest tech... because here you can test them in real-life conditions.'⁵² Alex Karp has echoed this sentiment, remarking that 'there are things we can do on the battlefield that we could not do in a domestic context.'⁵³

Palantir's software is also being used beyond the battlefield – supporting the aggregation of war crimes, de-mining operations, coordinating internally displaced persons and anti-corruption investigations. Ukraine's economy minister, Yulia Svyrydenko, stated that Palantir's platforms are guiding de-mining efforts through the development of predictive models that prioritise de-mining locations, aiming to restore 80% of contaminated land into economic usage within a decade⁵⁴. On war crimes, their platforms have been used to support prosecutions by integrating satellite imagery, troop-movement data and open-source intelligence.⁵⁵

4.2 Israel

As one of the world's leading military and intelligence data analytics companies, Palantir has supplied Israel's military and intelligence agencies with the most advanced targeting capabilities. In January 2024, the Israeli Defence Ministry agreed a 'strategic partnership' with Palantir to supply Palantir technology to the country's war effort. The Executive Vice President of Palantir, Josh Harris, told Bloomberg that 'both parties have mutually agreed to harness Palantir's advanced technology in support of war-related missions'.⁵⁶ The Nation reported that this involved selling the AIP software that uses classified intelligence reports to make life-or-death determinations about which targets to attack. Like any AI model, it needs data and in this case in the form of intelligence reports on Palestinians in occupied territories.⁵⁷

In Michael Steinberger's new biography of Alex Karp, he writes that Palantir technology was instrumental in the Israeli pager attack in Lebanon, illustrating the embeddedness of their technology within Israeli covert operations.⁵⁸ Given

51 James Bamford, How US Intelligence and an American Company Feed Israel's Killing Machine in Gaza, The Nation, 12 April 2024. <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/nsa-palantir-israel-gaza-ai/>

52 Vera Bergengruen, How Tech Giants Turned Ukraine into an AI War Lab, Time, 08 February 2024 <https://time.com/6691662/ai-ukraine-war-palantir/>

53 Ibid

54 Ben Mascal, Palantir and Ministry of Economy of Ukraine Sign Demining Partnership, Palantir Technologies, 04 March 2024. <https://investors.palantir.com/news-details/2024/Palantir-and-Ministry-of-Economy-of-Ukraine-Sign-Demining-Partnership/>

55 Lisa Gordon, Palantir to Support Ukrainian Prosecutor-General's Investigation into War Crimes, Palantir Technologies, 24 April 2023. <https://investors.palantir.com/news-details/2023/Palantir-to-Support-Ukrainian-Prosecutor-Generals-Investigation-into-War-Crimes/>

56 Marissa Newman, Thiel's Palantir, Israel Agree Strategic Partnership for Battle Tech, Bloomberg, 12 January 2024, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-01-12/palantir-israel-agree-to-strategic-partnership-for-battle-tech?embedded-checkout=true>

57 James Bamford, How US Intelligence and an American Company Feed Israel's Killing Machine in Gaza, The Nation, 12 April 2024. <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/nsa-palantir-israel-gaza-ai/>

58 Michael Steinberger, The Philosopher in the Valley: Alex Karp, Palantir and the Rise of the Surveillance State, Simon and Schuster, 4 November 2025.

the 'strategic partnership' with the Israeli state on 'war-related missions' and Michael Steinberger's alleging involvement of Palantir in the 2024 pager attack, it seems that Palantir's platforms are increasingly integrated into Israel's war machine.

This support for Israel caused some serious internal issues with a number of employees leaving the company based on what the UN and other reputable international human rights organisations call a genocide.⁵⁹

5 Conclusion

The question of what Palantir does is a complex and opaque question. The contemporary utility of AI lies in its ability to conduct analysis using swathes of data. Claims that Palantir are providing the architecture for governments to 'understand' data, raises serious questions including about the security of that data and how it could be used. Palantir's ascendance illustrates the value of data, algorithms and software not just in the governance of everyday life, but as a core foundation of contemporary military and social power. The labour government is courting the company guided by the notion that they can deliver AI innovation and institutional regeneration.

With AI software becoming more embedded in military and civilian decision-making chains, (military) AI companies stand to wield a significant amount of domestic and international power. The 20th century philosopher Hannah Arendt was perhaps the chief critic of how massive data systems enable governance through surveillance, categorisation and administrative control. In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, she argues that domination does not just rely on ideology and violence but on the bureaucratic organisation of society into categories, which can be monitored, managed and acted upon. Categorisation and data analytics are intimately bound; It is far easier to act upon data when it is categorised. Categorisation gives data structure and differentiation (meaningful distinction within data sets) allowing operators to see trends, anomalies and relationships more clearly.⁶⁰ To reduce populations into statistical trends dehumanises - in the case of war, to reduce combatants to data points does not recognise their humanity, it is a form of abstraction that lowers the threshold of violence; they are no longer persons but numbers to be killed.

Palantir is leveraging their expertise in AI and data analytics across many different sectors: Healthcare, the economy, potentially policing and most definitely in defence. This in and of itself does not constitute totalitarian practise but it does deserve our upmost caution. Palantir is an atypical company compared to its counterparts in the defence sector, it not only seeks to reshape how states wage war but how they domestically govern.

59 Alex Koller, Palantir CEO Says His Outspoken Pro-Israel Views Have Caused Employees to Leave Company, CNBC, 13 March 2024, <https://www.cnbc.com/2024/03/13/palantir-ceo-says-outspoken-pro-israel-views-led-employees-to-leave-.html>

60 Oworkers, Data Analysis Vs Data Categorisation: What's the Difference, Oworkers AI + BPO Solutions, <https://oworkers.com/data-analysis-vs-data-categorization-whats-the-difference/#:~:text=The%20main%20aim%20of%20data,offer%20services%20in%2022%20languages.>

```
... ^(?:\{[\w\W]*\})\|[\w\W]
... n.data(a,b,c)}else
... if(k&&j[k]&&(e||j[k])
... void @!==(g[n.camelCase
... (Case)):b in d?b=|
... " " " "
```



Shining a spotlight
on military drones