



Espionage 2.0: the National Security Agency transforms toward Artificial Intelligence and China

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As reported by the **Washington Post**, the **National Security Agency (NSA)** of the United States is moving toward the deepest internal transformation of the past decade. Designed by the agency director and Army General **Joshua M. Rudd**, the new organizational architecture aims to redefine Fort Meade's strategic priorities, focusing aggressively on **artificial intelligence, China, and cybersecurity**.

The five new pillars of Fort Meade

Announced to senior leadership last week, the reform calls for the creation of **five new internal organizations**, each led by a "mission director" with effective powers equal to those of a deputy director. The new strategic departments will focus on:

1. Artificial Intelligence

2. **China**
3. **Cybersecurity**
4. **Warfighting Support**
5. **Global Intelligence**

This configuration aims to overcome the fragmentation of the past to directly reflect today's geopolitical and technological threats. Among the notable changes is also the reorganization and significant strengthening of the **Tailored Access Operations (TAO)** — the elite unit of offensive hackers founded in 1997 to strike the world's most complex digital targets —, which will fall under global intelligence benefiting from a budget increase at the beginning of the new fiscal year in October.

The geopolitical front and strategic priority on China

The choice to dedicate a specific department to **China** testifies to how much the **center of gravity of U.S. intelligence has shifted** toward great power geopolitical competition.

The NSA, as **Washington's premier electronic espionage and global interception agency**, needs to centralize resources and analytical capabilities to monitor and counter Beijing's growing technological and cyber power. In this arena, the **relaunching of TAO represents the leading offensive operational instrument**: a digital armed wing that will receive greater resources to penetrate the most protected foreign infrastructures, confirming that competition with China is waged primarily on the invisible terrain of cyberspace.

The technological revolution and Artificial Intelligence

Since his appointment in March, General Rudd — who wears the "dual hat" of NSA director and chief of the *U.S. Cyber Command* — has imposed very strong acceleration on the **artificial intelligence** front.

White House conversations between Rudd and the administration were dominated precisely by AI-related topics, pushing for a massive increase in the federal budget allocated to IT infrastructure and computing capacity. At the operational level, the agency introduced internal tools such as the desktop software "**Ask Mary**" and demonstrated an unscrupulous openness towards the private sector, going so far as to **bypass Pentagon prohibitions** in order to

integrate advanced commercial models (such as Anthropic's *Mythos* model) into its own activities.

Tight timelines and internal tensions

The roadmap imposed by Rudd is described by officials as extremely aggressive: the new mission directors will have to present their reorganization plans by the end of September, with a rollout planned for mid-October and the goal of achieving **full operational capability by January 2027**.

The speed of this change — which affects an agency with over 30,000 employees, even larger than the CIA — is nevertheless generating strong tensions and concerns among Fort Meade veterans. The fact that new top officials can be chosen from outside the agency and Rudd's own admission of proceeding "with reversible decisions" in the face of operational uncertainty suggest a complex transition, destined to profoundly shape the future of American national security.