# Gen. Masiello foresaw it (once again): the US Defense revolution speaks the language of data, artificial intelligence, and execution speed

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*"Whoever masters artificial intelligence, data, and dual-use technologies will dominate the battlefield of the future"*. This is not a phrase extracted from a NATO strategic report or a RAND Corporation paper, but a public statement by **General of the Army Corps Carmine Masiello**, Chief of Staff of the Italian Army, made months before the American military system was overwhelmed by the new tech wave. Masiello, considered one of the top innovators of the Italian military apparatus, had already issued a call against the **excessive bureaucratization of defense** and the slowness of decision-making processes, strongly advocating for a transition towards a **digital, rapid, and data-driven operational culture**.

Today, those warnings are being confirmed in the United States. The Department of Defense, under the impetus of the White House, has initiated a true revolution in military procurement. Palantir, Anduril, and SpaceX are displacing historical giants like Lockheed Martin and Boeing. The new face of war speaks the language of **data, artificial intelligence, and executive speed**.

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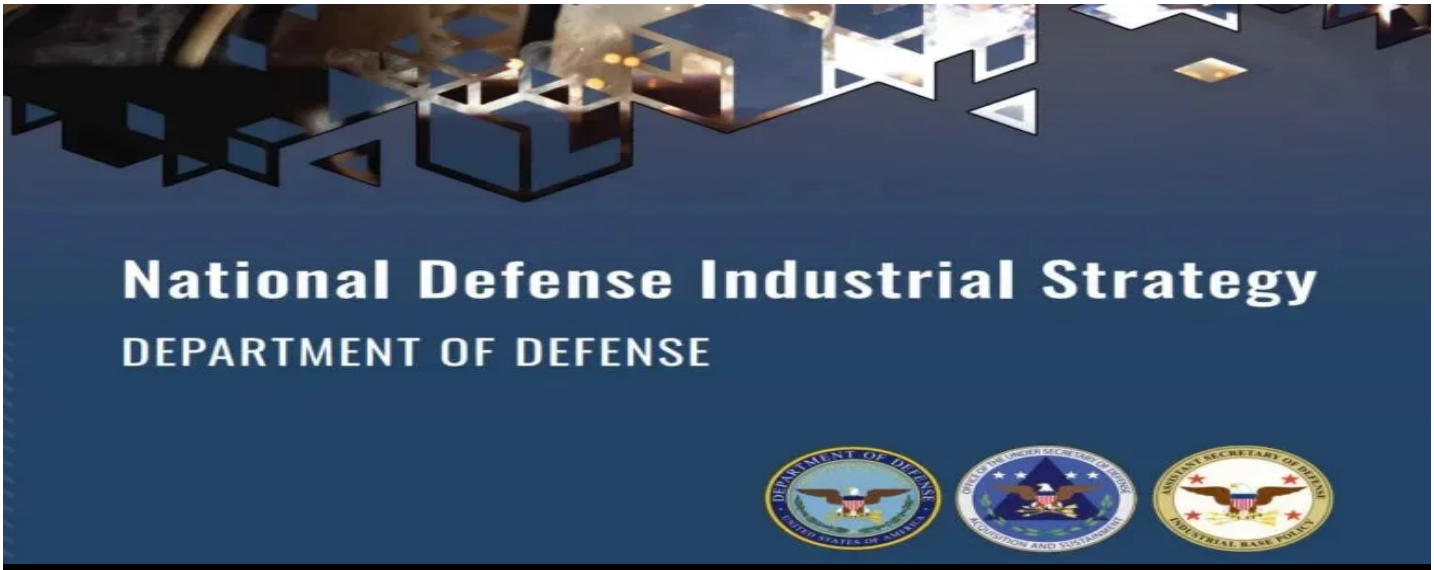
## Palantir and NATO: artificial intelligence takes command

The most powerful signal of this paradigm shift came on April 14, 2025, when **NATO signed an agreement with Palantir Technologies**, founded by Peter Thiel, libertarian financier and Trumpian ideologue. The subject of the contract: the **Maven Smart System (MSS)**, an artificial intelligence capable of analyzing in real-time all the data collected by member states, reducing the work of hundreds of analysts to a few minutes of automatic processing. A system that took **six months** to be approved and integrated: a record time, compared to the years normally required by military bureaucracy.

Value of the deal: about **400 million dollars**. But above all, symbolic value: the Western defense procurement system has decided to accelerate. Just as Masiello had long advocated, emphasizing the urgency to **streamline intermediate levels, fluidify decision-making chains, and encourage field experimentation**.

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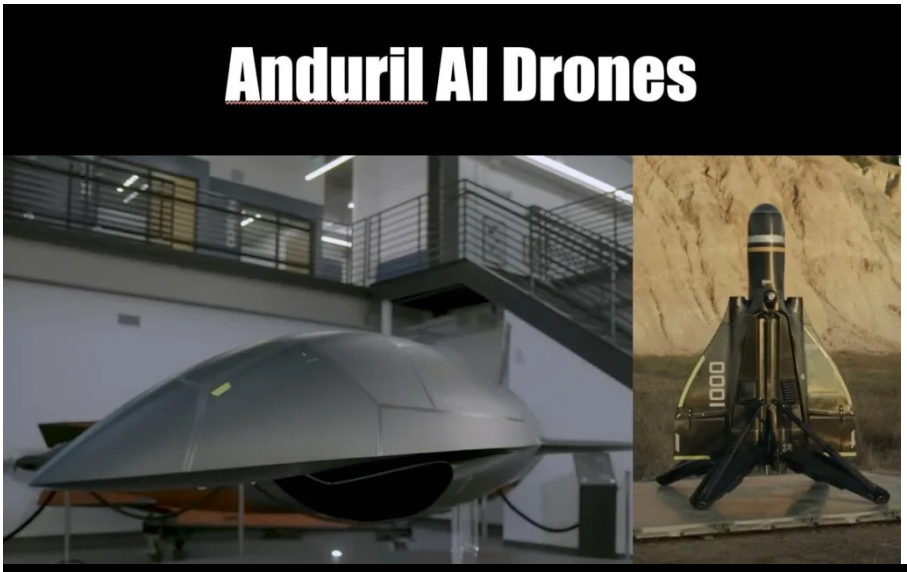
## The “five sisters” and the decline of the monopoly

Palantir, however, is just the tip of an iceberg. The crisis of the so-called “military-industrial complex,” a concept coined by Dwight Eisenhower in 1961, is now evident. Until 2024, the Pentagon was dominated by **five major contractors**: Lockheed Martin, RTX (formerly Raytheon), Northrop Grumman, General Dynamics, and Boeing, which shared almost all the contracts.

Yet, the war in Ukraine has pushed the American administration to open the taps of innovation. The new strategic document of the DoD – **Defense Industrial Base Strategy 2024** – is clear: it is necessary to build **a more dynamic, diversified, and resilient industrial ecosystem**, capable of reacting to global crises and high-intensity conflicts.

Precisely in this perspective, one of the most radical shifts has occurred: the choice of the American Air Force to entrust **Anduril Industries** and **General Atomics** with the **Collaborative Combat Aircraft** (CCA) program, beating Boeing, Lockheed Martin, and Northrop Grumman in the competition. The contract provides for the production of at least **1000 intelligent drones** to accompany piloted fighters in high-risk missions, with an estimated cost of **30 million dollars per unit**.

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## Trump reforms the Pentagon: speed and competition

The technological revolution has found a strategic ally in **Donald Trump**. On April 9, the former president signed an **executive order** with an unequivocal title: *“Modernize Defense Acquisitions and Encourage Innovation in the Industrial Base”*. The measure takes immediate effect and mandates a radical review of procurement procedures. Objective: **reduce time, increase flexibility, reward risk and efficiency**.

Here too, the warnings of Gen. Masiello echo, who as early as 2023 had harshly criticized the excessive regulatory rigidity in Italy and the difficulty of quickly experimenting with new solutions. Masiello promoted the use of dual-use technologies, strengthened relations with the national industry, and supported innovative programs in the field of terrestrial robotics and C4I systems. But in Italy – unlike the USA – **bureaucracy hinders**, and the risk of being left on the sidelines is real.

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## Palantir's “18 theses” and the new war doctrine

Strengthening the change of course is the **ideological manifesto of Palantir**, the so-called *“18 theses”* drafted by CTO Shyam Sankar and posted – according to internal legend – on the Pentagon metro. The text calls for a **Protestant reform of the military system**: no more monopolies, no more mediations, free rein to competition and transparency.

It reads: *“The only requirement is to win. We must rid ourselves of the priestly class of procurement. Innovation is painful, but necessary”*. The target is clear: the conservative, slow, and self-referential public procurement system. A target against which General Masiello has also taken a stand in Italy, supporting the adoption of **“fast procurement”** tools for the Armed Forces and the introduction of **integrated experimental cells between military, industry, and universities**.

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## Musk, Thiel, and war as enterprise

Meanwhile, Palantir allies with **Anduril and SpaceX** of Elon Musk for the **Golden Dome** project, a next-generation space shield. The three companies are creating a technical-industrial axis with geopolitical ambitions. Investments are multiplying: **$450 million raised by Anduril in one year**, **Palantir's stock quadrupled on the stock market**, **Ghost-X drones already in use in Ukraine**, **AI towers at the Mexican border**.

But the stakes are higher: **shaping the strategic doctrine of the 21st century**. Palantir executives openly speak of a “Second Cold War” with China, while simulating **attacks in the Chinese Sea** and releasing videos where Ukraine transforms into “Palantir,” a digital nation defended by the algorithm.

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## And Italy?

Italy, which has advanced skills and an integrated industrial system (from Leonardo to Fincantieri, from Iveco Defence to Elettronica), **risks marginalization** if it fails to grasp this paradigm shift. Gen. Masiello, with his forward-looking vision and defense of innovative programs, has paved a path. But bold political and regulatory choices are needed, capable of unlocking resources and authorizing experiments outside traditional frameworks.

As he said in a recent interview: *"We cannot face future wars with the tools of the past. A new decision-making culture is needed, capable of recognizing the value of speed, synergy, and boldness"*.

The transformation underway in the United States is not a simple technological update: it is a **systemic restructuring** of the way wars are thought about, financed, and fought. Palantir, Anduril, and SpaceX are just the beginning. Europe – and Italy – must decide whether to observe, imitate, or participate.

But one thing is certain: **Gen. Masiello foresaw it, once again**.

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**News link:** https://tomdispatch.com/a-new-military-industrial-complex-arises/