

Google is redoubling efforts to be the military's cloud provider

Article

The news: Google is reportedly “aggressively” working to get the Pentagon’s attention in a bid to be considered for the Joint Warfighter Cloud Capability (JWCC), a multi-cloud/multivendor Indefinite Delivery-Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract that replaces the hotly contested \$10 billion Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure (JEDI), [per](#) The New York Times.

Why this matters: The DOD cloud contract was always considered to be a two-horse race between Microsoft and cloud rival Amazon. When Microsoft was initially awarded the JEDI contract, Amazon fired off a salvo of accusations and legal actions citing preferential agreements between Microsoft and the government.

- The Pentagon canceled JEDI in July, citing the desire for a multi-vendor solution in JWCC and thus revoking Microsoft’s earlier contract. Officials expected that **Google, Oracle, and IBM** could be included in the mix of vendors.
- In 2018, thousands of Google employees signed a letter protesting the company’s involvement in Project Maven, a military AI program that interpreted video images and could be used to refine the targeting of drone strikes. Google management caved and agreed to not renew the contract, which reportedly soured Google’s relationship with the military.
- Google later created guidelines for the **ethical use of artificial intelligence**, which prohibits its technology for weapons or surveillance, and hastened a shakeup of its cloud computing business.

The bigger picture: The Times reported that Google cloud CEO Thomas Kurian met with Air Force Chief of Staff Charles Q. Brown Jr. and other top Pentagon officials to make a case for Google’s involvement in JWCC.

- Google, in a written statement, said that it is “firmly committed to serving our public sector customers,” including the Defense Department, and that it “will evaluate any future bid opportunities accordingly.”
- The DOD said it would seek proposals from a limited set of companies that could meet its requirements for the military cloud modernization contract.

Why it could succeed: There are various components to the JWCC contract, which gives Google an opportunity to participate without negating its employee-driven ethical guidelines.

- Google’s reentry into the project will lead to vigorous competition, which gives the Pentagon renewed leverage and could result in multiple providers having to work together.
- Further, a multi-cloud, multi-vendor approach to a large defense project ensures that various stakeholders are kept in check, with no one company pulling all the strings.