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UK Military Awards £48m in Contracts to US Defence Firm Anduril After Lobbying Drive

July 24, 2025

— Categories: *Breaking News*



A US defence technology firm with close ties to Republican donors has quietly secured at least £48 million in contracts from the United Kingdom government, following a targeted campaign to embed itself within the heart of British defence planning.

Anduril Industries, established in 2017 by Palmer Luckey and backed by billionaire investor Peter Thiel, has rapidly carved a place for itself in the UK defence space. The company is best known for its AI-powered surveillance towers and autonomous drones and has pitched itself as the next-generation solution for modern warfare challenges. Its UK advance

appears carefully orchestrated, involving high-level meetings, targeted hiring, and strategic alliances with trade groups and political figures.

In May 2023, Paul Hollingshead, a senior Anduril executive, addressed the London Defence Conference alongside Lord Dominic Johnson, then minister for investment. Hollingshead warned, “We find ourselves locked in a critical race, a race for upholding democratic values.” That appearance followed Johnson’s visit to Anduril’s California headquarters, where discussions focused on helping the firm present itself as a credible British partner to secure government work.

Strategic Influence

From early 2023, Anduril intensified its outreach in Westminster, holding 19 meetings with government officials, including 11 with senior Ministry of Defence (MoD) personnel. Records show the company paid for meals and gifted books to officials, including *The Kill Chain: Defending America in the Future of High-Tech Warfare*, written by one of its executives.

The firm has also hired at least 11 former MoD staff, including senior military figures, bolstering its insight into the UK’s defence procurement processes. Among these recruits is a former operations director for British Army helicopters.

Anduril’s Lattice platform, which collects and processes vast streams of battlefield data, is at the core of its technology offering. Defence analyst Noah Sylvia of the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) noted that such tools are essential today. “You’re getting all types of data, and it is simply too much for anyone to be able to handle... so you need automated systems that are able to sort through this data,” Sylvia said.

The company’s initial UK contract for a base protection system worth £3.8 million came in 2021. Since then, it has received further Ministry of Defence deals and was also hired by the Home Office in 2022 to deploy AI-powered sentry towers aimed at monitoring cross-channel migration.

Anduril has closely aligned itself with British policy shifts, joining trade bodies like TechUK, Make UK Defence, and ADS UK. It has also attracted praise from politicians such as Fred Thomas, Labour MP for Plymouth Moor View, who publicly noted, “Glad to see Anduril join because the defence industry needs to tap into manufacturing capacity.”

The June Strategic Defence Review focused on AI and autonomous technology and aligned well with Anduril's capabilities. Its UK chief, Richard Drake, told Politics Home the firm was "very much happy" with the document's direction.

Despite a change in government, Anduril's presence continues to grow. Prime Minister Keir Starmer has made defence spending a central issue, pledging "the largest sustained increase since the Cold War" at this year's London Defence Conference, an event sponsored by Anduril itself.

With a planned factory and backing from both government and industry groups, Anduril is securing its position as a central figure in the UK's future defence landscape.