From Acquisition to Adoption: Integrating Commercial Tech for Warfighting Advantage

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Speakers

- Chris Brose, President and Chief Strategy Officer, Anduril
- Greg Levesque, CEO and Co-Founder, Strider Technologies
- Joe Felter, Director, Gordian Knot Center, Stanford University
- **Moderator:** Jim Sciutto, CNN

Sciutto

Steve, thanks to all of you as well. Hope you didn't rush your lunch. Good to have you gentlemen on the stage alongside me. Of course, we meant to have a DIU component to this, but one of the victims of the Defense Department's decision. But we have a lot of folks here plugged into Defense Innovation, and I think we're going to be able to dig deep. I want to start big picture if I can, because just from our pre discussion, a couple of you made the point that as we speak about technology for war fighting advantage, that we're already in that war. We're already in that conflict now. And I wonder if perhaps, Greg, I could start with you, tell us how and on which front, specifically.

Levesque

So, I mean, if you take a big picture view of what's happening geopolitically with China, Russia, Iran, industry and the emerging technology startups and ecosystem are dead center in their eyesight. We're seeing this across not just the United States, but the world. So we are already in the tech race that is happening every single day. A great example of that that we all know about is, is the deep seek announcement that came out right that is, I think, indicative of the competition that we're seeing and in what nation states like China are doing is they have built out entire apparatuses from an intelligence perspective to map out our industry players, map out the technologies that are being developed, and actually look at ways that they can disrupt them from a commercial perspective, but also keep them out of the hands of the US Government. And so things that we've seen are instances of new tech startups coming out of the gate. They go to DOD, provide a briefing to them about their new technology, and a Chinese venture firm pops up and offers them a very large valuation and a lot of money. That is purely an operation to neuter that technology and keep it out of the hands of going into the defense ecosystem. The same is happening too with AI quantum synthetic biology, and

corporations are now beginning to develop their own intelligence systems and operations to counteract that. In 2017 the US trade rep office pegged the cost of just China's IP theft in the United States at upwards of $600 billion per year. I can tell you, like confirm that is happening every single day. There's not a fortune 500 company that we've interacted with that has not been dealing with this problem for a decade or more.

Sciutto
Joe, if I could ask you to use your seat at Stanford to answer another big picture question. So if we're already in this conflict, who's winning it from a technology perspective?

Felter
Well, we're going to find out. Just to open up a little bit more, we're in a very different kind of war than the last time we confronted a near peer competitor. I talk about the Cold War in my classes at Stanford, I might as well be talking about the Civil War, World War One, they just glazed over. The Cold War was like so the last century, a few people, some gray hair out there with me, I remember the Cold War we prevailed in that that conflict, if you will, against a near peer competitor, and the defense, relevant technologies that we needed to compete and prevail certainly was an economic component. It was coming out of big defense primes, government labs and those places, and we could stay competitive and eventually win if we just developed an incrementally better large end system, a better aircraft carrier or submarine or fighter jet every 10 years. Fast forward to now. The War we're in right now is a very different fight, the type of technology that we need to compete and win in this conflict. It's coming out of the commercial technology base. It's, you know, AI, cyber autonomy, that that slew of technology that Chris, Chris Rose's world, and importantly, that that's coming out of the commercial technology base, not you know. So you can't have government directors to say, you know, you know, develop a better technology and develop better AI, develop better cyber now, we have to identify and adopt and deploy those commercial technologies at speed and scale if we want to prevail and win this conflict. So it's a whole different kind of fight, but we're still fighting it with legacy acquisition systems that helped us win the Cold War. So we need to close that gap, and we're doing it many important ways. We'll probably talk about that a bit more with you.

Scuitto
So it's gospel that you have to do or we have to do that faster. There has to be more integration, hand in hand with the technology sector, the private sector, and you have to leapfrog the old procurement system. You can't wait 10 years to approve a system and then five years to build a submarine, all that kind of stuff. You call, Chris Brose, what's

necessary, money, ball military. So I wonder if you could briefly define that, and then answer, is it happening?

Brose
Yeah, thank you, and I appreciate you flagging that paper that I wrote for the Hoover Institute. I basically try to make sure that I bring my life back to baseball metaphors and references. So mission accomplished. What I talked about in that is really building off of what Joe said, which is, you know, when I look at the US military, or an allied military, you know, I think we have to kind of basically break it into two parts. There are the large, exquisite, expensive, sort of legacy systems, which are very important and still very relevant. Like I dismiss the notion that all this stuff is obsolete, long range bombers, nuclear submarines, things like that. They are very unique systems that we need to do very unique things. But they can't do everything, and our acquisition system cannot be basically optimized. Only to think about how you, you know, kind of develop and acquire those types of systems. So, you know what I was seeking to do, you know, with this sort of money ball concept. If you know, those of you who are familiar with Michael Lewis's book or watch the movie, you know, it's this notion of how you deal with disruption. How do you basically see yourself differently and put together, you know, kind of an offsetting capability that is affordable, that is achievable, that's capable of winning? And I think that's all this other stuff that we're talking about, right? It's autonomous systems, it's low cost mass producible weapons, it's AI enabled technologies, that have very different attributes than long range bombers and nuclear submarines. They need to be thought about differently in terms of how you define the requirements for them, how you develop them, how you buy them, how you refresh them and modernize them. But I think ultimately, you know, the vision, as I see it, is these two different kinds of military capabilities have inverse attributes, but they're inherently complementary. You'd need the new with the old. I think that is a key lesson of Ukraine. It's not that all the old stuff is obsolete. It's actually, if you pair the old stuff with the new stuff, all of it becomes wildly effective, you know, in a learning and adaptive military organization. So I think, with respect to how we buy this, we just need an entirely alternative pathway in the Pentagon, in allied defense ministries, for how we bring very large quantities of lower cost, more intelligent military systems to bear in our in our formations.

Sciutto
Greg, you're you made the point you have an intelligence background, that the Intel world has a similar problem and a similar need to accelerate, accelerate, perhaps to money ball intelligence. I mean is that, is that happening?

Levesque

Not fast enough, or not at scale. And I think this is a topic that doesn't get really addressed a lot publicly, given that it's an intelligence vertical. So I'm not going to talk a whole lot about, like, what we're doing in that space. There's a great piece by David Ignatius that just came out on that, but there's a lack of imagination, and there's a there's a bit of a failure of creativity to understand the fact that, look, everybody in this room has a cell phone that's, there is intelligence that can be collected from that, and it is being collected. I will tell you that we are seeing that our adversaries are ahead of that power curve in their use of modern technologies, ubiquitous technologies, to spot, identify, recruit talent to pinpoint where our operations might be happening, and this is something that I think we all need to begin to wake up to, because, as I said earlier, I mean, even as a corporate entity, Strider, right, we have been able to see how China is leveraging this technology to infiltrate our systems in our companies, and we really have no meaningful defense at the moment. On the flip side of that, we're not deploying the same types of approaches and models in our own intelligence operations at scale. Okay, so I think, I think we are in this inflection point, in a realization that, as saying, here we have legacy systems that are now confronting very abruptly, modern technologies that are being developed, deployed and utilized in a commercial context. And there's no frameworks for how those two things converge. So right now, it is a bit of a wild west domain.

Sciutto
So the Pentagon has a DIU, which is which, which preaches this gospel, right? And it is acting on it. And if Doug were here, and I know he wanted to be here, he would be explaining to us right now about how they're doing it. Joe, so I'm going to ask you to speak for your sense of how well the DIU is doing in this space. Is it accomplishing this transformation?

Felter
Obviously the short answer is yes, and I was with, you know, Ash Carter, this, I think, is finally realizing Ash Carter's vision for it. You know, now, over 10 years ago, some great leadership under Raj Shah, Mike Brown, and now with Doug Beck. But it's been a long road. It's been over 10 years, and we're finally get to the point where it's getting the resources, I know Jane Harman identified, it's getting a billion dollars, which it's a lot more than used to have, and it can do, do more.

Sciutto
But that’s still a fraction of the…

Felter

It’s still a fraction. It's a rational point, something percent of the budget. But right now, DIU, again, if Admiral Paparo was here, he could tell you about DIU being embedded in Indo-Pacific Command, for example. It is a direct report to the Secretary of Defense, which is, which, which is key, and which, I think, constrained it in previous DIU use, and it also has a lot more flexibility with the color of money, it can really spend much more effectively and efficiently. So Doug will tell you that they've got, they've got a ways to go, but they've made some great, great progress. I think Ash Carter would be proud of it today. A lot of examples that you know, counter us, this, if I could reel off a few, but maybe it's a little more detailed than you want, but they are getting down there, embedded with a warfighter, reporting directly to the Secretary of Defense, and having some flexibility with their colors of money. And they're really having an impact and building capabilities out there, getting that commercial tech deployed at speed and scale and have an impact. So give more money, they'll do a little better, but they're doing pretty well, and we should be and we should be proud about everyone who's responsible for that.

Sciutto
So I had him come speak to my class at Yale this spring about this, and he gave a couple of examples of where diu is making progress and moving cutting edge weaponry quicker through procurement, and he mentioned a couple in the drone space specifically. But I wonder, Chris, can you describe some weapon systems where we're seeing this bear fruit?

Brose
Yeah, I mean, I'll give you a personal example with Andrew. You know, I think the answer is, you know, is DIU changing the Pentagon? That was never DIU's job, right? DIU is helping the Pentagon move faster, access a lot of the commercial technology that's out there, and then connect that back to the institutions of the Pentagon that really buy things and deploy things and operate them at scale, the Army, the Navy, Air Force, et cetera. Andrew got started on counter drone work through diu. Shout out. Scott Sanders, who's here, who led that effort for us. This was something that was enabled by DIU, that basically put us immediately out into the operational environment and the Central Command Middle East AOR and we saw a lot of the problems that are now headline news five, six years ago, as a result of being out there, embedded with the war fighter, having to build and rebuild and fix and refix and redeploy our systems to deal with an incredibly fast moving pace of technology and an equally fast moving threat, from the standpoint of Iranian one way attack drones and other things. So it's absolutely contributing in that regard, and that has enabled us to then begin doing a lot of the work that we're doing on counter drone at scale with the military services, with other combatant commands, other government agencies, you know, but for the fact that we

got started on a production contract or a prototyping leading the production contract with DIU, that wouldn't have happened.

Felter
And DIU, it can't do it all, and what it's doing can be scaled. It can be scaled to services. So it's leading in a lot of these areas, and hopefully other organizations like the services and can get on board and have some more approach to getting that commercial tech deployed.

Sciutto
Let's talk, if we can, about Ukraine, because I don't want to overstate, but I certainly don't want to understate, because I've watched with fascination the rapid progression of drone technology there, and how Ukraine, what is it? 70, 80% of the casualties on the front lines are now from drones. And how Ukraine did this, largely on their own right. And you know, with all the attention early in the war about waiting for whatever weapon system that we were going to grant them and at what time, and I'm not diminishing the use or value of those weapon systems, but, but just what they've done on their own on the front end. I mean, listen, they made the Black Sea unfriendly territory for the Black Sea Fleet without a navy because of their drone technology. What else have we learned from there? And is it crap? Maybe, Greg, you want to pipe in, given that, I'm sure the Intel world has been watching it very closely, ours and Russia's and China's, what have they taught us?

Levesque
I think they're showing a pathway for how you can begin to more cleanly integrate commercial capability into what are traditional weapons and intelligence platforms and systems on the Intel side right? A lot of this success is due to the intelligence is flowing into the systems that have been created in Ukraine for targeting purposes. And I think that's a that's a unique moment that we're in to begin to look at that, how it's how it was developed, the partners that were involved in it. I mean, we're talking large cloud infrastructure, open source intelligence that's feeding into this, along with classified SIGINT, etc. So this is a fusion that's coming together in a pretty unique way, where it's traditionally, in many respects, siloed, and that is what happens in wartime. Right? When you're in a war, you have to begin to integrate and combine, combine these capabilities together for a clear mission and a clear objective. I think a lot of what we're chatting through here in the United States and other places is we are still acting as if the war hasn't started. So there is a lack of clarity around the intention behind what companies like us are doing and where to orient that capability in practice today. I think all of us on stage would say the war has already begun. It is here. It's real. And so that's, I think, what we are now looking at Ukraine to say, when it becomes kinetic,

right? What does that then mean? We should be developing these programs, systems, strategies, concepts, before it goes kinetics.

Brose
To that. Jim, I completely agree with all that. And would just add another point of what it's teaching us. And then there's another question of whether we're adequately learning these lessons. Is the importance of scale. I think for basically the past generation, we have been optimizing the American military to be like, relatively small, very expensive, very exquisite. We're going to win through technological overmatch against, you know, adversaries that aren't exactly that sophisticated. When we go to war, we're not going to shoot a lot of weapons. We're not going to lose a lot of vehicles. The war is not going to last a long time. If you actually look at that in the context of American history, it's a total anomaly. And I think what Ukraine is showing is really kind of where we are now going in this quote, unquote New Year of great power competition, which is Back to the Future, the volume of systems that they are needing to produce, regenerate, lose, produce, regenerate, is almost inconceivable, I think in like a US DoD Pentagon context, I mean, Tim Ray spoke eloquently on these questions of scale earlier Today, I think we're off by an order of magnitude the number of military systems that we need to build, right? I mean, we've had years and years of war games where we run out of all of our critical munitions in the first eight days of the war. That's a little easier to believe when Ukraine goes through an entire decades worth of, you know, anti tank and anti aircraft weaponry in the first several months of combat against Russia. So the things that we're thinking that we're going to go to war with are not rapidly producible. They're not rapidly replaceable. And when we shoot them all, or when we lose them, we're not going to get them back quickly. And I think the lesson from Ukraine is, you know, in addition to all of this legacy capability, that's very important, boy, we better start creating this Moneyball military, or sort of complementary set of capabilities that are defined by the ability to mass produce them, to lose them quickly, to replace them, fast, to change them and adapt them as new circumstances. Threats and technology force you to.

Sciutto
The thing is, I've been hearing that for years, right, particularly when it comes to munitions, right? They talk about, let's say, the nightmare scenario of a conflict over Taiwan, how quickly any ship, missiles, you name it, would disappear hours, days, et cetera. We just passed an enormous, big, beautiful bill. I mean, is there any money in there for being put in the right places?

Brose

I think the answer is yes. And I think to be determined, you know, I think there's a lot about that bill that people are still digging through. I think how exactly all of those dollars are going to get, you know, kind of laid out is still a work in progress under the Department of Defense. But, you know, my sense is that when you have this conversation, which I agree, it's been ongoing for years, but it feels like, you know, we're starting to converge a little bit more around the idea that we do need these complementary set of capabilities. I think the challenge is great. We now agree. So show me the programs that are really delivering on the scale that we need, right? And that's not DIU's job, right? That is, have the military services change themselves, like, I think, you know, Dan Driscoll and the army is doing an enormous amount to change the army. I think the Air Force is doing a lot, but I think we're still a far cry from the ability to do this. And what I would tell you is, like, I don't think it's going to cost an enormous amount of money. You know, like in the overall scheme of the defense budget, I'm not saying we got to allocate half of it to this stuff. Like, actually think we could change on the timeline that we need to the degree that we need with probably, like, 2%. It's just a question of, then, how do you marshal that in the service of new programs that accomplish those objectives?

Sciutto
So Joe, how are our adversaries doing, specifically China, and I mean, it's a different system, right? They don't have to go through an appropriations process, but how are they doing another are they ahead of the game? I think they're certainly closing the gap, and they have a lot less constraints than we do.

Felter
I mean, certainly continuity of leadership. I mean, Xi Jinping is arguably an emperor for life. He can look out to 2049 and say, I want to get here, and have these incremental goals to get there. We have a little different political system here, and that creates some challenges. They don't have to deal the same challenge, like with IP or their state owned enterprises, they just have a lot more efficient and effective ability to identify goals and objectives and marshal their national resources to get after them. I think we still have huge advantages, and I hope to have a chance to chat before the end. As far as our human capital, I just feel like when you want to talk innovation, there's nowhere better than with all respect to our international folks, the US just does it better than our adversaries, and we just have to find ways to harness that, but China is closing the gap. They have gotten ahead in some technology areas, and they're closing almost every technology area. So, you know, game on. You know, we are on notice, and we have to, you know, we have to respond just like China. They're using a whole government approach to include advances technology. We have to respond with the whole government approach. And I think we have a lot that we can do better. So they're not

ahead, but they're they're closing, and we need to have this wake up call, and let's not, let's, let's learn from the lessons of, you know, several 100,000 dead Russians, and not wait for 5000 sailors to be, you know, the bottom the ocean, the Taiwan Strait, before we have that wake up call, the Epiphany, we need to to make some progress.

Sciutto
Those war game scenarios, whenever I read them, scare the hell out of you.

Levesque
Look, I think we actually are behind in some ways. And I'll give you maybe one, just one point on that we are behind in understanding the intention. You don't build intermodal amphibious assault platforms for fun. Okay, and we still are sitting here acting like this can all be negotiated. So I'm of the viewpoint that the competition is beyond a commercial one. Okay? This is not for market share. This is for the technological dominance of the future. This is for the emerging system that we are already all talking about, and we can all see and feel it, the legacy system is not working, so now it is up to us to reimagine what that looks like. It's not simply a reform of an acquisition process. So it starts first in grounding ourselves in what is the reality of the situation that we are in, and how do we understand the intention of our adversaries, which I'm going to tell you, they are sharing with us and on the commercial front right, like you see this, in the intelligence we have it, we know what it is. There is a lack of ability to action it because of the legal constructs we have from the from World War II. Look to charge someone with economic espionage today in our country, which is happening every single day, you literally need a piece of paper or some kind of document that shows that they were tasked to go do that. That's not how the world currently operates in reality. And so look, while, while, I do think we have a lot to be optimistic about, and I think we are in a position of strength. We're not going to stay there forever if we don't begin to reimagine and adapt.

Sciutto
You know, it just seems to me that the last several years have had so many instances of missing what's right before our eyes, right, as relates to Russia or China, and even what, what they say, right, what the leaders say about what their intentions are. Chinese leaders have been quite, quite public and definitive about what their intentions are in terms of taking over supremacy from the US, et cetera. So it's anyway. Let's hope we're learning some lessons there. Chris, I was speaking to one of your colleagues prior who made the point that one difference is today in terms of speeding up innovation and development is that with VC money, you do companies do the R&D to develop the product. They don't wait for specs to do it, which slows things down. Can you explain how that process is different, and is it happening now?

Brose
Yeah, I absolutely think it's happening. We're certainly a living example of it, right? I think the way the Defense Department's process works is, you know, first they will define a requirement for exactly the solution they think that they need, and then they'll go out and freely compete it. And then, you know, eventually award a contract to some company to build the very thing they said they had a requirement for, you know, on a cost plus contract where that company is basically given a guaranteed profit on the work that they do, regardless of whether that work is fast or slow, good or bad, et cetera. There's reasons for why that makes sense in some instances that I won't belabor today, but I think that's sort of assuming that the government always, in all instances, knows the solution that it needs. Like, if I operated that way. In my commercial world, I have the most amazing flip ton known to man, because I would have put those requirements on the street in 2007 and it would be killer right now. In 2025 there is something to be said for sharing your problems and allowing industry to come forward, and even come forward with capital and a desire to take risk, to say, Let us go build for you. The thing that you can't envision right now that needs to be true. That is something that Andrew has done from the very beginning of our company. It's something that we continue to do now, as we become a larger company with more capital, we have more capital to put against those types of bets now, at the end of the day, we're a business, right? So you want to make bets that are intelligent, that are aligned to problems that actually exists, that people actually care about, and that when you feel the solution, they're going to buy it. So that's a lot of the back and forth and engagement with the government. But there's a whole world of new business models, I think, that exist and are being created and are being tried. We're certainly leading the way on a lot of that for how the government can get out of the business of basically trying to give color by numbers solutions to industry, and actually get back to where we used to be, which is, I'm going to provide you problems and I'm going to reward performance and capability and schedule by what works. I'm going to field it quickly. I think there is now more money going into defense technology than ever before. As a company, I would submit we're spending more of our own independent capital than large defense technology companies, large defense primes. And I think now there is again, something that didn't exist five or 10 years ago, dozens and dozens of companies that are eager to do the same thing, that are doing the same thing, that are starting their own journey and scaling that's an enormous good news story for America. That is American innovation, competitiveness, capitalism at work. I think the real question becomes, is the government capable of meeting those companies where they're at putting, you know, the onus to them to say, I need you to build these things that matter, but when you do, I'm going to reward you through large production contracts that get that capability built and deployed at scale.

Sciutto
Joe, you had a thought?

Felter
Just doubling down on something Chris said about requirements and how that's, you know, the root of, really, a root of some of the problems we have in our acquisition. I know some early success stories, like Palantir. I had something called a four deployed engineer, I think years ago when I, when I first came across them, where they literally would put engineers embedded into, you know, tactical units to get direct feedback. I know DIU right now is embedding elements in COCOMs. Certainly I know I've met the one in New COCOM. You know, our program at Stanford, we turn students away if they want to take our Defense Innovation class. If they come with a solution, you've got to go through the customer discovery process, the beneficiary discovery process. So I think Chris is dead on. We've got to create more opportunities for the folks that are going to be tasked with coming up with a solution to really better understand the nature of the problem. I think we got some a long ways we can go in that respect.

Sciutto
Greg, I want to, I just want to do that on something you said earlier, that we are already at war in this space, and is that, are you saying that in the context of a rapid competition for the dominant weapon systems, in the event that superpowers or great powers would go kinetic, are you saying that already in certain fields… I mean, I imagine one would argue that in the cyberspace, there's already a low-grade war going on, perhaps in outer space, right, given the weapons that have been deployed. Can you describe more exactly about where and how and how deeply the powers are at war?

Levesque
Sure. So if you begin to kind of frame it in a China perspective, I'm going to focus on China just for a minute. Okay, they talk about, and this is classic, like Chinese policy documents and strategy they talk about achieving the quote, unquote commanding heights of these emerging frontier technologies. So I'm going to dial in on that part of it. But if you look at great power competition in the most holistic sense, military is one piece of it. Diplomatic, soft power, economic and technological domain is a core part of that cyber intelligence. If you go ask any intelligence officer if we're in some kind of a conflict with these, I mean, they're operating like we are. Yeah. Okay, so this, that's what I'm saying, is it's a low grade. It has not gone kinetic. But every single day there is, there are battles happening, and it's for these emerging technologies. It's for supply chains. It's for being able to understand how we operate and act. This is why China is buying up farmland near all of our military installations. Just this week in the state of Utah, where I'm based, we were able to pass legislation, and the governor actually came out and

said, We're stopping this, and they are no longer allowed to operate in this model at the state level. So that's really what we're seeing here, right? Like this pre staging has been going on for a while, and I think we're all now beginning to wake up to it in a more material way, because the scope and scale of it is so vast.

Sciutto
Just in terms of speed or lack of speed, as you mentioned, the farmland I was in the US Embassy in Beijing, 2011 to 2013 so that's more than 10 years ago, and there was an incident. It was in Washington State, and they bought some property near a US, I think it was an Air Force installation. It was quite a controversy. That's more than a decade though, right? It doesn't give confidence that we're reacting quickly in response to these threats that have long been recognized. If a state is just passing legislation in 2025 right? What's happening?

Levesque
So I've been working on this for my entire adult life, okay? I think this is just one of these moments where there is almost a little bit of a psychological issue at play here, right? Like we can see what's going on. The question is, what should we do, and whose job is it to do it? What I'll tell you is, I can't answer that question for the government, but what I can say is industry is moving out. So back in 2017 I was part of the US trade group 301 investigation, right? That helped to understand the scope and scale of China's efforts to target industry. And at that time, this was pretty taboo topic within corporate boardrooms, but I'll tell you everyone that was dealing with it. And now fast forward to today. We are seeing the emergence of literally, nation state teams being set up in US corporations. We are seeing counter intelligence teams being stood up. This is not insider threat or cyber security. This is a recognition that corporations are playing on a nation state, global playing field, that they are being targeted, that their talent is being targeted. And that's that is the piece I think we all need to get our heads around. We in our country have a bifurcated view of our society. That's my view. We view government as its own domain and industry as its own domain. But we all know that is not reality. Our legal constructs actually forbid and create barriers between the two collaborating from an intelligence perspective, I'm not saying that that's good or bad. That is just the reality of the moment we're in. And so what? Why is industry moving out on this? Because the government can't support so if you're, if you're a US Corporation developing AI quantum technologies, and you're, you know, raising millions, billions of dollars to do this, you're going to build teams, and you're going to build systems to protect your assets and your people, because otherwise, what we're seeing is they're being offered. I mean, I'll give you guys one example. Okay, just bring it to life. We have a corporate customer working on quantum they had an engineer. We saw it in the intel that this person was going to be targeted, sure enough, over his corporate email,

offered $3 million just email them, corporate email, we'll give you $3 million if you bring the tech you're working on, come over here, build it up in this.

Sciutto
Foreign actor?

Levesque
Yeah, this was a nation state intelligence service. So look, this is why I'm sharing with you. This is not the rules of the Intel game have changed rapidly beneath our feet. It is across every element of our society. And so at Strider, our mentality and our view is we need an all of society approach and intelligence is the shared truth. Intelligence is the shared kind of platform for us to understand what's going on and then act in a way that drives our national security forward. So I like to say, look, national security, I think, is too important for us to leave to the government alone. We all need to be a part of that.

Sciutto
It does raise the question, though, right if corporations are making these decisions, I saw Sam Altman speak, I'm sure most folks here have seen him speak in some context, describing AI and aware of the potential dangers, etc, but also acknowledging the lack of oversight, right with enormous capabilities moving quite quickly. I don't want to impugn defense contractors or the work that you do. I'm just saying it'd be there's reason for oversight. Is it happening?

Brose
I can assure you, oversight is alive and well. We deal with oversight from every which way, constantly. But look like the serious point that I'd offer is, you know, for Anduril, right? I mean, we're at the leading edge of building out AI enabled weapons, autonomous systems, like we are pushing the boundaries of technology. What I would submit is we do have a legal and policy and regulatory and ethical framework for how to think about bringing new and untested technology into military formations, integrating into testing and operations. We have done that before with lots of different technology. We've done it before with unmanned technology, with semi autonomous technology, rights and not necessarily everything is all new under the sun, I would argue, like, rather than say, like, “Oh my god, this stuff is all so new,” I know this isn't your point that we should just like, cast aside these frameworks for how we have done this very successfully in the past. I actually think we need to utilize those frameworks because they're actually very flexible, very capable for bringing these kinds of technologies through a process of testing, evaluating their capabilities and limitations, building trust in the, you know, systems, ability to do the thing effectively, safely, repeatedly, users, ability to trust that when they say to go do this thing, it does this thing. We've done that

a lot, and I think that what I worry about is not that, you know, we're moving too slowly, or moving too quickly and sort of willy nilly, just kind of, you know, building all this newfangled technology. It's that we're not going fast enough. We're not utilizing frameworks that we do have to move this through the process of testing, certification, Fielding and deployment to make the kind of military advantage and sort of Intel advantage that we desperately needed to provide us in this competition.

Sciutto
Okay, we had a lot of smart folks in this space, in the audience. So can I have two quick questions? Just keep it short, if you can, you were first up, please, and maybe direct your question at someone, if you have someone in mind.

Fralic
Yeah, Chris Fralic here the question to the middle gentleman from Strider, given everything he said about China, does it make any sense in the world that we let Tiktok continue in the United States?

Levesque
Not under Chinese ownership and control.

Sciutto
I think Congress passed a law.

Levesque
Yeah, yeah. I mean, I think, I think this is being like negotiated as we speak. I don't have any insight into those conversations, but the national security threat is real.

Sciutto
Over here. He was up. Trying to keep sense of order. If you're as quick as him, we could do another question.

Unnamed audience member
I'll be very quick, Ukraine had an amazingly effective execution and technologically and operationally delivering 100 drones 1000s of miles inside of Russia. How much do you fear that we're in that same exposed vulnerability from a major or a minor power right now?

Brose
Yeah, considerably. Look, I mean, I think, you know, all of us are familiar with the news reports of military or drone over flights incursions and military bases where we have

billions of dollars of aircraft parked on the ramp or ships at Port, weird things that are happening in New Jersey. You know, aside from other weird things that always happen in New Jersey, this is headlines again and again and again. And I think that we still have this kind of pre 911 mindset, that it couldn't happen here. This is impossible. An adversary wouldn't be that, you know, that ambitious, that capable. I think we're fooling ourselves, which is why, I think you know, as we really kind of look to the coming years here, whatever golden dome is going to be it needs to deal with the lower level kind of aerial threat that this country is under right now from all manner of UAS, other types of weapons, things that may or may not be originating from Chinese owned farmland. Like, we are not nearly the position of safety that we need to be in. And there are technical, technological solutions that can help us, that are available right now to do that.

Sciutto
Don't forget balloons, right? I think one more here. This will probably have to be our last.

Birgitta Tazelaar
Thank you very much, Birgitta Tazelaar, Dutch ambassador, what is your view on the allowing the NVIDIA H 20 chip to be exported to China, and maybe more broadly, the export control regime on semiconductor?

Levesque
I mean, look, this is a great point right which is the foundational elements of technology are what is being negotiated right now. So Jensen Huang went, went and met with President Trump, and got a license to go sell these into China. Our expert, our export control regime, our economic toolkit, in my view, is outdated. Slapping a company on a sanctions list is meaningless. You can create a new company overnight. When we block a transaction, I'm telling you literally, what will happen is you'll just is you'll just see another entity pop up down the street, and they will apply for and receive a confirmed application. This is happening all the time. So look, we need to also step back and say what is happening within industry. How does business operate? What are the constructs that guide their activity on a daily basis, because that's where our adversaries are hiding in place at the moment, as Chris noted too, to answer that first question around some of the domestic threats, look at the commercial activities of nation states in our country. These are… they're focused on strategic assets, ports, land, near bases. But we all look at it as we're American right? We look at it through a commercial lens. It's not commercial.

Sciutto
Chris, Greg, Joe. Thanks very much.