

Palantir will not be participating in UK's digital ID plans, says UK head.



2nd October 2025: Palantir's UK Head Louis Mosley speaks to Times Radio's John Pienaar

(Full Transcript)

(00:00) Digital ID is not one that was tested at the last election. It wasn't in the manifesto. >> Yeah. So, we haven't had a clear resounding public support at the ballot box for its implementation. And as you said, we're seeing a wide divergence of views and a lot of controversy around it. So, it isn't one for us.

(00:20) Louis, good to see you. Thank you so much for coming in. >> Thanks, John. Um Let me ask ask you this first of all. The importance of tech and AI in defense, it's grown exponentially when it comes to drones, when it comes to intelligence gathering, when it comes to weapons and targeting. And so, I naturally assume has the competition to devise and deliver ever more advanced systems.

(00:44) Yes, well, Palantir, we're a company that sits at the middle of that technology revolution that you're seeing unfold in warfare. I think the the biggest lesson from Ukraine is all of those technologies that you mentioned have become existentially important on the

battlefield. And for powers like the UK that want to ensure their long-term defense, we need to start investing deeply in them.

(01:09) We have been now for a couple of years, but that needs to ramp up. >> Yeah. And we're seeing Europe as a whole come together in Copenhagen today to do precisely that. Right. And this technology, it is not just important, it's not just more important, it's now more urgent, isn't it? And the And the way we've seen Russia of late testing NATO's borders and border defenses it makes it more urgent.

(01:32) I mean, how does a company like yours respond to that? I think that's exactly right. It's The war in Ukraine has driven, if you like, a new arms race where these technologies have improved immensely over the past 3 years. And in fact, you see in Ukraine a often 6-8 week cycle of improvement where the technology you were fielding 6-8 weeks ago becomes obsolete and you need a new generation.

(01:56) And that's happening across that whole stack from the hardware in the drones all the way up into software and models. Right. I just want to broaden out into the into the the relationship between tech and AI and government, the administration of of public services, for example. And it's good to have you here because a few days ago I was talking to the to the guy who is the tech minister for the government of Ukraine.

(02:20) And he was telling me how the Ukrainian government have have developed this extraordinary new app which seems to do the work of I don't know how many government departments. And I guess that is I mean, for Ukraine, that's a pretty good thing because they need more as many people as they can on the front line, men are in uniform, not sitting behind desks in the the equivalent of Whitehall.

(02:40) But we're looking there at the future of the administration of government, of the working of the state everywhere. I I think if you're referring to the D app, which I think is the one, it's a very very impressive development. And a little bit like what the Estonians did, the Ukrainians have followed and created a a a way to engage with the the state and all kinds of services ranging from ordering a new

passport to obtaining a divorce certificate can now be done online. Yeah.

(03:10) I've got to ask you then, Louis, about a about ID, digital ID, which is now, as you know, probably more than I do, a very very big big story. And if you caught the New Times app, which is now available, it's called the State of It, recommended very very highly. They were discussing private doubts about digital ID among government ministers.

(03:31) You know, privately, obviously, this is not stuff they discuss very publicly. And there's pressure in politics from the left and the right with deep worries and opposition to the idea of digital ID. I do want to ask you, what is your view on that question? Well, this these these proposals to introduce a new form of digital ID in the UK are ones that we have been widely linked to online.

(03:56) Um so, many people are talking about Palantir's involvement with that program. And I want to say that we will not be participating in that. You will not. So, tell me why. Uh well, it's a it it's actually the answer is on a couple of levels. Um one is I have actually personal concerns about um about digital ID. Uh that's both on a technical level.

(04:19) I think uh there were other ways of addressing the challenge that we have with engaging with government services online. I think there are ways to improve that that wouldn't require a wholesale new form of ID. Uh and I think it does open up the risk of misuse as well. But also, it's a problem on a corporate level.

(04:36) So, Palantir have long had a policy that we will help democratically elected governments to implement the policies they've elected to deliver. And that does mean that often we are involved in the implementation of very controversial measures. However, digital ID is not one that was tested at the last election.

(04:56) It wasn't in the manifesto. Yeah. So, we haven't had a clear uh resounding public support at the ballot box for its implementation. And as you said, we're seeing a wide divergence of views and a lot of controversy around it. So, it isn't one for us. That is a a really

interesting and important statement from a company of the importance and size of Palantir.

(05:17) And I guess, you know, maybe the reasoning behind it maybe summarizes Palantir's keeping out of politics, but not everything governments do is in their manifesto. To that extent, governments do what governments do and they're answerable at the following general election and sometimes in between. But you are making a political judgment there on the the validity, the democratic validity of this particular program.

(05:38) Well, I think I would characterize it as it's it's a program that needs to be decided at the ballot box, not in the company boardroom. And we haven't had that clear public mandate, if you like, that this is a program that the British public want to see implemented. >> I can't remember that it may be I may be just not not recalling it.

(05:55) I can't remember another example of a major corporation which deals very closely with the government taking a decision like that. Well, I I think it sticks very closely to the policy we've always had. We work for democratically elected Western-aligned governments to deliver the policies they've been elected to deliver.

(06:14) And this is not one that has had that public mandate and support at the ballot box. And it is, as we're seeing, a very controversial one. Right. Louis, have you told the government this is how you feel, that you will not be taking part, you will not be tendering for any part of the digital ID program, which is the first anyone's heard of it? >> Well, uh That's a process that the government will undertake in I guess in due course when when they they pursue the market engagement.

(06:38) So, we won't participate in that market engagement. >> Does that also mean that you're turning your your back as a company, as a corporation, on what could be a very very important, lucrative piece of business? Well, well, we we we'll see, potentially. But like I said, this is you know, we are sticking to what has always been our long-standing policy on this.

(06:57) >> Okay. Look, you know the tech. You understand my sudden interest in this subject. You You know your industry better

than I do. Is the view you just shared with me and with us, is that widespread in your industry or you in some way out there at the frontier? I can't speak for others. You'd have to ask them yourself, John.

(07:13) >> In general terms. Don't name the companies. >> suspect that, rather like we're seeing emerge in the public, there will be a wide divergence of views on this one. Right. Um this is again I'm asking you I guess to speculate. Um among the other views privately expressed by ministers about the digital ID program, which at least one senior politician said this wasn't going to happen.

(07:33) It would just be too too difficult. Do you think it's going to happen? Well, I I think as I said, one of my concerns about it is the technical feasibility of it or maybe better expressed, the technical necessity of it. No doubt, we have all had the experience of engaging with parts of government where the online experience leaves something to be desired. Right.

(07:50) It needs improvement. However, we are in a world now where there are, I think, at least a dozen unique identifiers for each of us in government. We have passports, we have driving licenses, we have unique tax codes, we have national insurance numbers. Now, each of these sits in a silo and doesn't talk to the other, isn't harmonized.

(08:09) There's no way for government to easily jump from one to another. That could be achieved in the back end with relatively little effort and I think would go a long way to improving that citizen experience. >> Yeah. I don't see the need for an additional form of identification on top of the many that already exist. >> Right.

(08:28) And just finally on this, the worries about data security, I mean, how real, how worrying are they? They they are always worrying. Any digital system is at risk and needs to be protected, needs to be secured. And of course, the more of these you have, the greater your surface area of risk. >> Right. Okay, last question then. And again, thanks for coming in.

(08:48) The the conversation I had with the the technology minister from Ukraine, it kind of implied, as I as I said, a huge pairing down of

the size of the the state by way of personnel, people behind desks. Is that where we're headed? I think that we'll see a big a big change in the types of jobs that people do when delivering public services.

(09:10) And I think some of those roles will undoubtedly disappear, but I think others will be created. So, I think on a net basis, we may not see an enormous change. However, I think the areas of public service that will see an enormous benefit are typically frontline. So, it will be teachers and doctors and such like who will find their day-to-day jobs enormously improved and augmented by technology, particularly by AI.

(09:31) They will see their productivity increase. And that ultimately will make them more valuable. All right. Louis, I'll leave you there for now. I really mostly loved talking to you. Thank you. >> Thank you, John.

Palantir UK Head Louis Mosley on AI, Warfare, and the End of American Unipolarity

14th November 2025: Palantir's UK Head Louis Mosley speaks to Bloomberg's Tom Mackenzie

(Full Transcript)

00:00 Louis, thank you very much for your time. How do you characterise this moment in time when it comes to defence tech software, given all of the global challenges that we face?

00:12 I think we're living through two big global changes. One is geopolitical and the other is technology. The interesting thing is they're happening at once.

00:20 So you've got the world moving to a much more, well, let's call it the moment of American unipolarity is over.

00:30 There are now adversaries, particularly China, that are near peer or even potentially stronger than the US in certain ways.

00:39 So that's a fundamental geopolitical shift. But at the same time, you're seeing a revolution in artificial intelligence, technology which will change every aspect of our lives,

00:48 not least defence and military. And I think that will play out over a very short period of time.

00:53 This could happen in five to ten years. And it's of the scale of the Industrial Revolution, but will play out over a much shorter period of time.

01:01 How does the AI component play into Palantir? It's central, clearly, to what you do.

01:06 How does generative AI and large language models, how are you building them into your products, particularly when it comes to automated defence software and solutions?

01:14 So we provide the software layer in which you deploy the models.

01:19 So the LLMs are held, if you like, in harnesses by our software so that they can be used in secure, auditable and transparent ways.

01:28 And that means you can get the maximum value from them.

01:31 The best way of thinking about an LLM is like a unit of cognition.

01:33 So all of the workflows, all of the daily tasks that involve some element of human cognition, those are what you might be able to replace over time with LLMs.

01:43 Now, of course, you need to do that in a way that's very secure, that's very transparent, that's very auditable.

01:47 But that's what we're embarking upon now.

01:50 So our software is being deployed by a number of allies in the West, broadly defined, to do precisely this.

01:58 And what you're seeing is an exponential improvement in their productivity and in the efficiency of what they've traditionally done.

02:05 So if you were to take, for example, targeting, so that's the process of identifying something that you want to shoot at and then running through that whole process of shooting at it

02:14 and then checking that it's had the effect that you intended, that process in that was perfected in the US during the war in Iraq, you would have these target targeting cells.

02:26 And typically they would comprise thousands of people who were doing discrete tasks in that complex chain.

02:33 They have been able to now reduce that down to what took 20,000 people to 2,000 people.

02:38 They can now do a 20.

02:40 So it's 100 X improvement in the productivity of a targeting cell.

02:44 So that's here and now.

02:46 What does that look like then in five years' time, given how rapidly AI is innovating?

02:52 And if scaling continues as we expect, what does defense software look like in five years?

02:58 How agentic will it be and how do you keep humans in the loop?

03:00 So I think the question of how you keep humans in the loop is going to be a policy question.

03:07 Technologically, unfortunately, I think we're moving in a direction where much of the process can be automated.

03:14 So lots of this could be done by agents.

03:16 And so the big question that we're all going to have to confront is where do you insist on having a human in the loop?

03:21 And I think in the West, we're very clear about the importance of maintaining that.

03:25 My concern is that adversaries may not be.

03:27 What specifically does Palantir put in place to ensure that there aren't disastrous errors in the deployment of this software?

03:38 What mitigating factors are built in?

03:41 Well, you could think of our software as the mitigating factor.

03:43 So we are the harness in which you run the model so that you can do that transparently, securely and auditively.

03:51 And the audit is the key thing.

03:52 It means you can know and you can go back in time to check when a decision was taken, what did the decision maker know at that moment in time?

03:59 What was the context in which they made the decision and so forth?

04:01 And in the end, that's the safeguard.

04:03 There's a human in the loop taking the decision, but the software captures everything that the human knew at the time.

04:08 And so, for example, if it's a question of collateral damage, was that something that was available as information to the decision maker at the moment when they took that step?

04:18 You've worked very closely, of course, Palantir, in Ukraine for a number of years since that conflict.

04:23 What has Palantir learned?

04:25 What has your team learned by operating, working with Ukrainians, particularly when it comes to the pace of digital transformation on the battlefield?

04:32 Ukraine has been the R&D lab for AI in a military context for the last three years.

04:39 It is the absolute bleeding edge of military technology.

04:42 There is no substitute for a real battlefield.

04:46 You can build things in the laboratory, you can test them, but you don't know whether they really work until you've seen it on the battlefield.

04:54 And Ukraine, sadly, is where that is currently happening.

04:58 I would pay enormous credit to the Ukrainians here.

05:01 They have been phenomenally innovative.

05:05 They're ingenious in many ways.

05:07 Part of that is circumstance, that they have not had all of the equipment and resources that they would have liked, and so they've been forced to innovate.

05:15 But that has led to an extraordinary acceleration in military technology, where you're seeing major leaps every six to eight weeks,

05:25 where tactics and procedures have to change because of some fundamental technological discovery or progress.

05:32 And I think the only historic analogy that I'm aware of is the development of radar during the Second World War,

05:39 where every bombing raid back and forth across the channel led to some fundamental discovery in radar.

05:44 You're seeing something similar occur today in artificial intelligence in Ukraine.

05:48 You've signed pretty significant contracts with the M.O.D. here in the U.K.

05:52 You're investing here in the U.K.

05:54 How does that position Palantir to grow and lock in future contracts of that size and scale, not just in the U.K., but on the continent?

06:01 The U.K. is, we believe, the country outside of the U.S. and China that has the best quality and quantity of the kind of engineering talent that you need to build software like ours.

06:15 So the U.K. can be an epicenter of defense, military technology development.

06:22 It has all of those ingredients.

06:25 So that's why we're very keen to make a significant investment here.

06:27 We want to tap that talent in effect.

06:29 We already have a thousand people in London, and that is our second largest office globally,

06:33 but we want to grow that significantly over the next five years.

06:37 And the U.K. is the premier military power in Europe.

06:41 It's a key pillar of NATO.

06:43I think it has the potential to be a key bridge into the rest of the continent,

06:50but also act as that security guarantee for many other countries.

06:54Talking of the continent, Germany is obviously stepping up its spending significantly on defense.

06:59As are other members of NATO, European members of NATO.

07:03What does that mean for Palantir?

07:04Are you starting to see the funds flowing from that, or is that a 2026 story?

07:09Are the Germans engaging?

07:10I think it's yet to come, as you say.

07:12I think this is more in years to come.

07:15But we have a significant presence in Germany.

07:18We have had for a number of years.

07:19We work both with the German government, but also with a number of very large German blue chips, big corporates.

07:26And so we are very keen to help Germany as it begins this journey to remilitarization.

07:32And to be clear, you expect the ramped up defense spending overall in NATO,

07:36and particularly those European members, you do expect to be able to tap into that

07:40and take advantage of that and be a player.

07:43I think we have a key value to offer all the countries in the West broadly defined

07:49as they bring their militaries into the 21st century.

07:54Is the focus on sovereign defense holding things back when it comes to your operations in Europe?

08:00There is the argument that to be truly sovereign,

08:03the contracts have to go to European headquartered defense companies.

08:08And clearly you are not European headquartered, though you have a big presence here.

08:11How much of that is a headwind?

08:13So I don't think it is a headwind, or at least we haven't picked that up yet.

08:17The question of sovereignty is a very complex one.

08:20I think the most important aspect of sovereignty is for nations to be able to control the capabilities they have.

08:28 They need to have independence over how they're used, when they're used, and so forth.

08:33 There cannot be an ability for a third country to prevent another country

08:38 from using the military capabilities they have in the way that they wish to.

08:42 And those are resolvable on legal level, technical level, and so forth.

08:47 So it's a process that countries are going to have to go through.

08:52 It's one that the West, broadly defined, went through in the 20th century

08:56 with nuclear technology, with aircraft, with very complex supply chains,

09:01 with many, many players from many different countries,

09:03 in order to guarantee that sovereignty and that ability to control its use.

09:07 I think as we're looking at the developments in artificial intelligence and in software,

09:12 we in the West are going to go through a similar process.

09:14 And to be clear, if you are a Ministry of Defence, you have a contract with Palantir,

09:21 you don't need to worry about a Trump administration or any U.S. administration

09:24 deciding that actually we're going to flick the switch and turn this service off.

09:29 No, that's exactly right.

09:30 The capabilities we provide to our customers give them that full control over the use of the capability.

09:36 It's their data, it's their logic, it's their instance of the software.

09:40 How does your relationship with NATO change and adapt over the next five years?

09:44 Well, we won an important contract with NATO at the beginning of this year

09:47 to roll out our software as the operating system at the NATO top level.

09:53 So that doesn't involve individual member countries of NATO, it's the NATO organisation itself.

09:58 But I think that gives us, obviously, a position from which we can start to support countries within NATO

10:04 that want also to develop their own sovereign version of that capability.

10:08When you see the kind of probing that Russian forces have been taking,

10:11whether it's via drones or via fighter jets or bombers, into NATO airspace,

10:18how does that tie into, does that directly affect how Palantir is thinking about operations?

10:23Do you get people picking up the phone and saying,

10:25we need a response now, there's a role for you here?

10:29They're thinking about a drone wall.

10:30Is there a role for Palantir there?

10:32There is, I mean, in the end, this is about being able to control your own airspace,

10:36about being able to maintain your own independence and sovereignty as a country.

10:39And that means you need awareness.

10:42You need to understand what is happening in all domains, in space, in air, on land, on sea.

10:48And our software is used by many countries to do precisely that.

10:50What is your relationship with the primes, the major defence contractors?

10:54Are you a threat to them or a partner?

10:57We do software.

10:58They traditionally do hardware.

11:00So I wouldn't see it as a competitive dynamic.

11:02I would see us as being partners.

11:04We do different bits of a larger puzzle.

11:08And in order for our common defence customers to succeed, they're going to need both.

11:12They're going to need cutting-edge hardware and cutting-edge software.

11:14Does Europe, does the UK, does Europe need to change, do they need to change the procurement rules,

11:19which are typically, it's a lengthy process?

11:23Is that holding us back?

11:24Yes, it is.

11:25And we're seeing the beginnings of moves in that direction.

11:29In the Strategic Defence Review that the UK published over the summer,

11:33they announced, for example, that contracts for artificial intelligence and software and new tech

11:38would be done in under three months.

11:40I think that's a very, very noble ambition.

11:42We have yet to see that happen.

11:45But it's a recognition of the reality that the technology that they're acquiring at the bleeding edge,

11:50the obsolescence of that technology can be measured in weeks and months.

11:54So if you're taking longer than three months to buy it,

11:56the thing you're buying might be out of date by the time you put it into production.

11:59So it's incredibly important to accelerate those procurement timescales.

12:04From the outset, Palantir's been very clear.

12:05You're not going to work with Russia.

12:06You're not going to work with China.

12:07Adversaries of the West.

12:09How do you think about a situation?

12:11For example, if you were to get an AfD in power in Germany, which Germany's own security services

12:17define as extremist, would that be a government that Palantir would work with?

12:23That's a very difficult hypothetical question to answer.

12:26We have a policy of supporting democratically elected governments to pursue policies that they have

12:32a democratic mandate to deliver.

12:35So we don't play party politics.

12:37We have provided our services and our software in the U.S., for example,

12:41to administrations of every different color and stripe over the last 20 years.

12:44That's what you're going about.

13:02Thank you for being on the ない tongue.