

Pentagon seeks 'to reconsider' cloud contract to Microsoft (Update)

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Amazon argues it was shut out of the Pentagon deal because of President Donald Trump's vendetta against the company and its chief executive Jeff Bezos (R)

The US Department of Defense said Thursday it wants to reconsider its decision to award a multibillion-dollar military cloud computing contract

to Microsoft in a bidding process Amazon claims was tainted by politics.

A judge last month issued an order at Amazon's request temporarily blocking the US military from starting work on the Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure contract, or JEDI.

In a filing late Thursday in a federal court, government attorneys asked for the matter to be "remanded," or sent back, to the Pentagon "for 120 days to reconsider certain aspects of the challenged agency decision."

The Pentagon attorneys said the motion came in response to the judge stalling the awarding of the JEDI contract on the grounds Amazon Web Services (AWS) would "likely be able to show" that the department erred in evaluating its proposal.

"We are pleased that the DoD has acknowledged 'substantial and legitimate' issues that affected the JEDI award decision, and that corrective action is necessary," an AWS spokesperson said in a statement.

"We look forward to complete, fair, and effective corrective action that fully insulates the re-evaluation from political influence and corrects the many issues affecting the initial flawed award."

Amazon argues it was shut out of the deal because of President Donald Trump's vendetta against the company and its chief executive Jeff Bezos.

It is seeking testimony from the president and other top officials on the reasons for awarding the \$10 billion, 10-year US military cloud computing contract to Microsoft.

"DoD wishes to reconsider its award decision in response to the other

technical challenges presented by AWS," the government attorneys said in the filing.

A re-evaluation, the filing said, "is in the interests of justice because it will provide the agency with an opportunity to reconsider the award decision at issue in light of AWS's allegations, this court's opinion, and any new information gathered."



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Revamping the cloud

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An earlier court filing by Amazon detailed alleged errors that ended with Microsoft being chosen over its AWS cloud computing division, part of the technology group led by Bezos.

Bezos, who also owns The Washington Post, is a frequent target of the US president, who claims the newspaper is biased against him.

Amazon was considered the lead contender to provide technology for JEDI, with AWS dominating the cloud computing arena and the company already providing classified servers for other government agencies including the CIA.

Amazon argued in court documents that the Pentagon's choice of Microsoft was mystifying if not for Trump's repeated "expressed determination to, in the words of the president himself, 'screw Amazon.'"

Microsoft spokesman Frank Shaw told AFP Friday that the Redmond-based technology titan believes it fairly won the contract but that "we support their decision to reconsider a small number of factors as it is likely the fastest way to resolve all issues and quickly provide the needed modern technology to people across our armed forces."

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