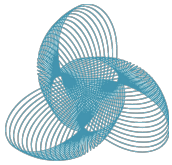

Deera Editorial

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SIGHT

The decisive layer of modern military power has migrated. For most of the twentieth century the question of national defense was, in the first instance, a question of platforms—how many tanks, how many ships, how many aircraft. These remain necessary. They are no longer sufficient. The platforms that matter most in 2026 are not vehicles but the software environments that command them: the data-fusion layers, the autonomy stacks, and the analytical ontologies that turn dispersed sensor inputs into decision-ready intelligence. This article describes the global shift in plain terms, sketches the Gulf's active and growing role within it, and introduces SIGHT, a sovereign data-fusion platform under development at Deera that translates this frontier into a capability a GCC state can own.

I. THE SOFTWARE-DEFINED BATTLEFIELD

The transition is most visible in the contracting record. In March 2026 the United States Army awarded Anduril Industries a single enterprise contract with a ceiling of twenty billion dollars, consolidating what had previously been more than a hundred separate procurement actions for the company's Lattice software platform and the autonomous systems that orbit it (DefenseScoop). The Department of War's own framing of the award was unambiguous: "The modern battlefield is increasingly defined by software," the Pentagon's chief technology officer for the Office of the Chief Information Officer said in announcing the agreement (TechCrunch). Anduril, founded in 2017, was at the time of the award reported to be raising a four-billion-dollar round at a sixty-billion-dollar valuation (Wikipedia, "Anduril").

The same pattern recurs at Palantir Technologies, the older incumbent of the category. The company reported quarterly revenue of 1.4 billion dollars for the fourth quarter of 2025, a year-over-year growth rate of seventy percent, with total contract value reaching a record 4.3

billion dollars in a single quarter (Wikipedia, “Palantir”). Palantir’s Gotham platform, originally built for the United States intelligence community, is now in operational use with the Ukrainian armed forces and was used by the International Atomic Energy Agency to verify Iran’s compliance with the 2015 nuclear agreement (Wikipedia, “Palantir”). In December 2025 the United Kingdom Ministry of Defence awarded Palantir a 240-million-pound three-year contract (Wikipedia, “Palantir”). Each of these awards is a contract for software.

In Europe the equivalent capability is being assembled by Helsing, a Munich-based defense AI company founded in 2021 and valued at twelve billion euros after a six-hundred-million-euro Series D in mid-2025 (Sacra). Helsing’s flagship products include Centaur, an artificial-intelligence co-pilot under test aboard the Saab Gripen E fighter, and Lura, an autonomous deep-sea system designed for underwater threat detection. In February 2026 the German Bundeswehr awarded Helsing an initial 269-million-euro deal for HX-2 loitering munitions, with a framework option valued at as much as 1.46 billion euros (Sacra). The point of naming all three companies is not to compare them. It is to observe that three of the most consequential defense procurements of the past twelve months—in Washington, London, and Berlin—have been, in each case, contracts for software platforms with hardware as their downstream expression.

The architecture these systems share is more important than their individual differences. Each is built around a software environment that ingests data from heterogeneous sources—radar, electro-optical sensors, signals intelligence, open-source feeds, financial transactions, biometric records—and resolves that data into a single ontology against which queries can be run, alerts can be generated, and autonomous platforms can be tasked. The ontology is the thing. Once a state has built a coherent map of its own data, the platforms that act on that map become commodities. Until it has built one, no quantity of platforms produces a coherent operational picture. This is the central insight of the software-defined era.

II. THE GULF IS ALREADY BUILDING

The most significant Gulf development of 2025 in this category was the November announcement of the Edge–Anduril Production Alliance, a jointly-owned production, sales, and sustainment vehicle established between the Emirati state-owned Edge Group and Anduril Industries (Edge Group, “Joint Venture”). The alliance opens with the Omen, a hover-to-cruise autonomous air vehicle co-developed by the two companies, of which the United Arab Emirates has agreed to acquire the first fifty units (Edge Group, “Joint Venture”). The Omen is operated through Anduril’s Lattice Mission Autonomy software, which is in this case licensed for use in a Gulf production base. The agreement was announced at the Dubai Airshow alongside forty-one other systems unveiled by Edge across autonomy, smart weapons, propulsion, and space technologies (European Security & Defence).

The institutional context behind that announcement is worth pausing over. Edge Group, founded in 2019, reported 2025 revenues of approximately 4.9 billion dollars, with seventy-six percent of sales drawn from exports and an international order backlog of 21.1 billion dollars (Edge Group, “Dubai Airshow”). At the same Dubai Airshow Edge signed agreements with Lockheed Martin, Leonardo, L3Harris, Korea Aerospace Industries, Hanwha, and Indra, and finalized a seven-billion-dollar cooperation deal with an Indonesian counterpart (Edge Group, “Dubai Airshow”). These are not the figures of a regional system integrator. They are the figures of a defense-industrial firm that has, in six years, become a credible global exporter.

Adjacent moves in the wider region complete the picture. Saudi Arabia’s Public Investment Fund has continued to underwrite a domestic defense-industrial base under the General Authority for Military Industries, with stated targets for indigenous content tied to the Vision 2030 agenda. The United Arab Emirates has, through G42 and adjacent vehicles, built sovereign artificial-intelligence infrastructure that is now the regional benchmark. Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, and Qatar are at varying stages of the same transition. The point, in each case, is that the Gulf is not a market awaiting a foreign supplier. It is an active builder of indigenous capability, often in partnership with Western primes but increasingly on terms set by the regional actor rather than imposed by the exporter. The question facing each Gulf state is no longer

whether to build sovereign defense software. It is which problems to assign to which platforms, and on what terms of data residency and operational control.

III. WHAT SIGHT IS

SIGHT is Deera's working name for a sovereign data-fusion platform designed to address the same class of problem that Gotham, Lattice, and Centaur were each built to address, scoped to the operating context of a single GCC partner state. The platform is, at this stage, a proposed architecture rather than a deployed system; what follows describes the architecture and the research methodology that produces it. Three design principles structure the work.

The first is a sovereign data residency floor. Every byte of data ingested by SIGHT, every model weight learned from that data, and every audit trail of every query made against the platform are held within infrastructure under the physical and legal jurisdiction of the partner state. No data is exfiltrated to a foreign vendor's cloud, no model is updated through a remote pipeline owned by a third party, and no software dependency is permitted to break under the conditions of an export-control change. This is a higher standard than the "data residency" offered by most commercial cloud providers. It is the standard that the term originally meant when applied to classified infrastructure, and it is the precondition without which the rest of the platform is not worth building.

The second is a layered ingestion architecture organized by the legal authority that governs each data source. SIGHT is designed to receive four broad categories of input: state-administered systems data (border-crossing records, port and customs telemetry, immigration biometrics); open-source intelligence (multilingual press monitoring, social-media signals, public registries, sanctioned-entity lists); judicially authorized investigative data (criminal records, court filings, financial-intelligence-unit reports); and commercial telemetry contributed under contract (industrial sensor feeds, logistics-network data, communications-infrastructure metadata). Each layer lives in a separate enclave with its own access-control regime; queries that cross enclaves are logged at the audit layer and require dual authorization. The architecture is not designed to remove human authority from the analytical

loop. It is designed to make every act of authority traceable to the individual official who exercised it.

The third is an analytical layer that makes the data queryable in operational terms. Above the data enclaves sits an ontology—a formal model of the entities, relationships, and events that the platform is designed to reason about. The ontology is what makes a question like ‘show me every entity that has transacted with a sanctioned counterparty in the last ninety days and has also moved goods through a designated port’ a single query rather than a multi-week investigation. It is also the layer most foreign vendors decline to expose to their customers, because it is the layer in which the vendor’s expertise is encoded. SIGHT is built on the opposite premise: the ontology is co-developed with the partner state and remains the partner state’s property in perpetuity.

The methodology behind the architecture is the same five-stage research pipeline Deera applies to every project. Stage one is problem framing—the conversion of a broad concern (‘is our border secure?’) into the narrow, testable questions that an analytical platform can actually answer. Stage two is data architecture—the cataloguing of every source available to the partner state, the identification of gaps, and the design of the ingestion contracts under which each source enters the system. Stage three is model selection—the choice, for each class of question, between statistical inference, network analysis, simulation, and expert judgment. Stage four is analysis and stress-testing, in which every analytical result is deliberately challenged before it earns a place in operational output. Stage five is delivery—the translation of platform output into briefs, dashboards, and alerts that an operator can act on. SIGHT is the engineering manifestation of this pipeline. Each design decision in the platform traces directly to a decision made earlier in the methodology.

What SIGHT is not is also worth stating plainly. It is not a counter-drone system, although its outputs can task one. It is not an autonomous weapon, although it can be integrated with platforms that are. It is not a replacement for human judgment in matters of national security, and the architecture is designed to make that boundary visible at the level of every

individual query. SIGHT is, in the precise sense, a sovereign analytical platform: a system that makes a state's own data legible to its own decision-makers, on the state's own terms.

IV. THE SOVEREIGN CASE

The case for a sovereign-built platform of this kind, as distinct from a licensed deployment of a foreign equivalent, rests on four propositions that are independent of any particular Western vendor and that have become more, rather than less, salient as the global market for defense software has matured.

The first is data residency in the strict sense. Foreign-licensed analytical platforms, however carefully configured, are bound by the export-control regime and the political winds of the licensing jurisdiction. A platform whose model weights are owned by a foreign vendor is, in extremis, a platform that can be switched off by a foreign government. For the categories of data that SIGHT is designed to ingest—border records, financial-intelligence outputs, criminal-justice files—this is not a tolerable risk. The mitigation is not contractual. It is architectural. The system must be one whose continued operation does not depend on any external authority.

The second is regional context-awareness. The ontologies that govern Western platforms were trained on Western administrative data, written for Western regulatory regimes, and refined against Western threat models. They do not natively understand the structure of GCC commercial law, the conventions of Khaleeji Arabic in social-media text, the sponsor-system architecture of Gulf labor markets, or the specific financial-flow patterns that characterize regional sanctions evasion. A sovereign-built platform can encode these as first-class objects from the outset. The cost difference is real but smaller than the operational difference.

The third is institutional capacity. Every dollar spent on a foreign-licensed platform is a dollar spent on a capability that a partner state does not, at the end of the contract, possess. Every dollar spent on a sovereign-built platform produces, alongside the platform itself, a cohort of national engineers, analysts, and operators who can extend the system, debug it under stress, and transfer the methodology to adjacent ministries. The economic case for the second model becomes stronger, not weaker, over time. A state that purchases ten years of foreign software has

bought ten years of foreign software. A state that builds a sovereign platform has acquired a domestic discipline.

The fourth proposition is interoperability. A sovereign-built platform is not, in the design Deera proposes, a closed system. It is one whose external interfaces are designed for federation with allied platforms—Anduril's Lattice, Palantir's Gotham, Helsing's analytical layer—at the layers where federation is appropriate, while keeping the deeper layers under national control. The right metaphor is not autarky. It is a national grid that can connect to neighboring grids on terms set by the operator of each. This is what sovereign-built means in 2026; the alternative is to be the foreign vendor's tenant, in perpetuity, on infrastructure the tenant cannot leave.

V. CONCLUSION

The decisive question for any GCC state in this category is not whether to build sovereign defense software. It is who will build it, on what data, with what methodology, and under whose jurisdiction. The international companies that dominate the global market for analytical platforms have built remarkable systems and will continue to do so. They are not the only firms capable of building such systems for the Gulf. The methodology Deera applies to its research projects is the same methodology that, scaled to engineering, produces SIGHT: a five-stage pipeline that begins with a testable question and ends with a decision-ready output, conducted in a region whose primary sources the analyst speaks natively and whose operating context the analyst lives within. SIGHT is the working expression of that methodology in software. Its architecture is on the page. Its development is underway. Its use, in time, will be a matter for the partner state.

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