

# “Everybody Immediately Knew That It Was for Amazon”: Has Bezos Become More Powerful in D.C. Than Trump? | Vanity Fair

By May Jeong

August 14, 2018

May Jeong speculates on potential malpractice between the Department of Defense and Amazon, which, she argues, may be getting an edge in government defense contracts, including a new \$10 billion Pentagon contract called the Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure (JEDI).

Amazon insists that Bezos and Mattis did not discuss the cloud bid during the visit. But the defense secretary reportedly returned from the visit convinced that the Pentagon needed to turn its data over to a commercial cloud provider. A month after Mattis met with Bezos, on September 13, 2017, the Pentagon put out a memo citing the defense secretary’s visit to Seattle, which it hailed as an “epicenter of innovation.” The memo then called for a cloud bid that would cover all of the Pentagon’s data for its 2.3 million employees and service members. Amazon, it appeared, was suddenly in prime position to land a \$10 billion defense contract.

Much of the language of JEDI, in fact, seems specifically tailored for Jeff Bezos. “Everybody immediately knew that it was for Amazon,” says a rival bidder who asked not to be named. To even make a bid, a provider must maintain a distance of at least 150 miles between its data centers, a prerequisite that only Amazon can currently meet. JEDI also asks for “32 GB of RAM”—the precise specification of Amazon’s services. (Microsoft, by contrast, offers only 28 GB, and Google provides 30 GB.) In places, JEDI echoes Amazon’s own language: It calls for a “ruggedized” storage system, the same word Amazon uses to tout its Snowball Edge product.

[...]

If you think the JEDI contract is big, consider this: Last year, working for Bezos, Rung helped pass the so-called Amazon amendment, a provision buried in a defense authorization bill that will establish Amazon as the go-to portal for every

online purchase the government makes—some \$53 billion *every year*. President Trump may enjoy firing off incendiary tweets attacking Amazon. But Bezos is quietly finding new ways to bolster his empire with billions in federal tax dollars. And the Pentagon, it appears, is helping him do it.

Source: [“Everybody Immediately Knew That It Was for Amazon”: Has Bezos Become More Powerful in D.C. Than Trump? | Vanity Fair](#)