# Microsoft CEO defends Pentagon contract following employee outcry

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella defended the company's multimillion-dollar contract with the Pentagon to supply augmented reality headsets in an interview with CNN Business today. Last week, dozens of employees publicly criticized that same contract and called for the company to end its ties with the US military.

On Friday, a group of about 50 Microsoft workers published a letter demanding that the company pull out of its nearly $480 million contract to supply as many as 100,000 HoloLens devices to the US military. The company beat out other competitors like Magic Leap last November, ultimately winning its bid to provide the Defense Department with the headsets. The Pentagon described the project as a method of increasing "lethality by enhancing the ability to detect, decide and engage before the enemy" through the use of AR. It is likely the US military would modify the headsets to be used by soldiers, with support from Microsoft.

In an interview with CNN Business at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona on Monday, a day after revealing its second-generation HoloLens, Nadella pushed against the employee criticism. "We made a principled decision that we're not going to withhold technology from institutions that we have elected in democracies to protect the freedoms we enjoy," he said. "We were very transparent about that decision and we'll continue to have that dialogue [with employees]."

In the letter, which was circulated last Friday, employees

argued that Microsoft had “crossed the line into weapons development” by agreeing to supply the AR devices to the military. The employees said that the “intent to harm is not an acceptable use of our technology.”

This isn’t the first time Microsoft has faced internal criticisms over its work with the government. Last summer, hundreds of employees signed onto a letter calling out Microsoft for providing services to the US’s Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The employees called for Microsoft to end that relationship, but executives have continued to defend their work with the US government.

https://www.theverge.com/2019/2/25/18240300/microsoft-ceo-defends-pentagon-contract-ar-headsets-employee-outcry