

Pentagon Red Team Expert Anthony Johnson Joins Purposeful Advisors

Former Pentagon advisor expands the firm's work on national security, dual-use technology, and regulatory risk facing technology companies

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-- [Purposeful Advisors](#) has added

Anthony "Tony" Johnson as a Senior

Advisor, expanding the firm's ability to counsel clients operating at the intersection of commercial innovation and national security. Based in Washington, DC, Johnson brings more than 30 years of experience at the highest levels of the U.S. defense and intelligence community, advising on strategic threats, vulnerability assessment, and allied partnerships—capabilities increasingly critical for companies whose technologies attract regulatory scrutiny, export controls, and foreign investment reviews.

“

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Elie Jacobs

Johnson's appointment addresses growing demand from companies developing dual-use technologies that face heightened compliance requirements and reputational risks tied to defense-sector connections. His background

includes service as Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of Defense and Special Advisor to the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence & Security, where he advised on intelligence enterprise governance, sensitive operations, and allied partnerships across NATO and Five Eyes nations. Previously, he directed strategic red team operations for a leading Pentagon advisory institution, conducting vulnerability assessments and scenario-based planning for senior defense leadership and the Defense Science Board.

“Tony has been a dear and respected friend of mine for more than a decade. I'm honored to have him join us as a Senior Advisor,” commented Elie Jacobs, Co-Founder of Purposeful Advisors. “At Purposeful, we don't just solve problems for clients—we help them see around corners. Tony is a foremost expert at identifying the kinds of risks that, once uncovered, make our clients more resilient and successful.”

The logo for Purposeful Advisors, featuring the word "PURPOSEFUL" in a large, bold, dark blue, sans-serif font, with a yellow horizontal line underneath it. Below this, the word "advisors" is written in a smaller, lowercase, dark blue, sans-serif font.

"In today's environment, companies working in AI, quantum computing, biotechnology, advanced materials, and autonomous systems face a level of geopolitical and regulatory complexity that communications firms focused on startup and scaleup companies simply aren't equipped to handle," said Frank De Maria, Co-Founder of Purposeful Advisors. "Tony spent years advising the Pentagon on strategic threats, running red-team exercises that challenged assumptions and exposed vulnerabilities, and building international defense partnerships. That's the perspective our clients need—someone who understands what triggers CFIUS reviews, can think like regulators, and helps companies build credibility while managing risk."



Anthony "Tony" Johnson joins Purposeful as a Senior Advisor

Johnson will advise Purposeful Advisors' clients on red team exercises, CFIUS preparedness, export control strategy, scenario planning, regulatory risk assessment, and stakeholder mapping for organizations whose innovations attract the attention of national security agencies. His work will help clients anticipate challenges, navigate export controls and foreign investment reviews, and position technology development within complex geopolitical contexts.

"Most companies building cutting-edge technology don't realize they're operating in a national security space until regulators come knocking," said Johnson. "I spent years at the Pentagon helping senior leaders anticipate threats and stress-test strategies before problems became crises. Now I'm bringing that same discipline to companies that need to think several moves ahead—not just about their technology, but about how it will be perceived, regulated, and potentially used by adversaries. Red teaming isn't just a Pentagon tool. It's how smart organizations build resilience."

Most recently, Johnson served as President & CEO of the Truman Center for National Policy, where he led an organizational transformation establishing research priorities spanning democratic resilience, alliance building, economic statecraft, and technology security. He is the Founder and Editor in Chief of Reconnecting the Republic on Substack – a strategic literacy platform focused on foreign policy, national security, and civic engagement – and the author of strategic analyses on defense strategy, security governance, and global security for leading institutions, including CSIS and New America. Johnson holds an M.A. in International Security

Studies from Georgetown University and executive education credentials from Harvard Kennedy School. He was awarded the Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service (2024) and was recognized as one of the CSIS Power 50: Most Influential in National Security (2022).

About Purposeful Advisors

Purposeful Advisors is a strategic communications and public affairs firm that helps companies build, protect, and enhance their reputations in an increasingly complex world. The firm provides tailored counsel in corporate positioning, crisis management, regulatory affairs, and strategic stakeholder engagement, leveraging a global network of seasoned professionals. With a deep understanding of the issues that shape public perception, Purposeful Advisors partners with businesses at every stage—from emerging startups to established global brands—to navigate challenges, mitigate risks, and seize opportunities that drive long-term success. For more information, visit www.purposefuladv.com.

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