BACKGROUND GUIDE

DISEC

DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE

AGENDA

Formulating Policies for the Reduction of Military Expenditure amidst an Era of Military Industrial Complex

EDITION XII

CHIREC MUN '24

Represent • Reason • Resolve

LETTER FROM THE
EXECUTIVE BOARD

Dear Delegates!

We are very pleased to welcome you to the simulation of the ***UNGA: DISEC*** at ***CHIREC MUN 2024***. It is an honour to serve as your Executive Board for the duration of the conference. This Background Guide is designed to give you an insight into the case at hand, so we hope this acts as only a ***catalyst*** for furthering your research, and not limited to just this guide. Please refer to it carefully. Remember, a thorough understanding of the problem is the first step to solving it.

Do understand that this Background Guide is in no way exhaustive and is only meant to provide you with enough background information to establish a platform for beginning the research. Delegates are highly recommended to do a good amount of research beyond what is covered in the Guide. The guide cannot be used as proof during the committee proceedings under any circumstances.

We understand that MUN conferences can be an overwhelming experience for first-timers but it must be noted that our aspirations from the delegates are not how experienced or articulate they are. Rather, we want to see how one manages the balance to respect disparities and differences of opinion and work around this while extending their foreign policy to present comprehensive solutions without compromising on their self-interests and initiate consensus building.

New ideas are by their very nature disruptive, but far less disruptive than a world set against the backdrop of stereotypes and regional instability due to which reform is essential in policy making and conflict resolution. At any point during your research, do not hesitate to contact the Executive Board Members for clarifications or in case you need help in any other aspect. We look forward to a fruitful discussion and an enriching experience with all of you.

Regards,

Eswar Chava
Chairperson

Prabhas Adabala
Vice Chairperson

Sriram Kalluri
Rapporteur

IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER

A few aspects that delegates should keep in mind while preparing:

1. **Procedure:** The purpose of putting in procedural rules in any committee is to ensure a more organized and efficient debate. The committee will follow the UNA-USA Rules of Procedure. Although the Executive Board shall be fairly strict with the Rules of Procedure, the discussion of the agenda will be the main priority. So, delegates are advised not to restrict their statements due to hesitation regarding procedure.

2. **Foreign Policy:** Following the foreign policy of one's country is the most important aspect of a Model UN Conference. This is what essentially differentiates a Model UN from other debating formats. To violate one's foreign policy without adequate reason is one of the worst mistakes a delegate can make.

3. **Role of the Executive Board:** The Executive Board is appointed to facilitate debate. The committee shall decide the direction and flow of debate. The delegates are the ones who constitute the committee and hence must be uninhibited while presenting their opinions/stance on any issue. However, the Executive Board may put forward questions and/or ask for clarifications at all points of time to further debate and test participants.

4. **Nature of Source/Evidence:** This Background Guide is meant solely for research purposes and must not be cited as evidence to substantiate statements made during the conference. Evidence or proof for substantiating statements made during formal debate is acceptable from the following sources:

a. **United Nations:** Documents and findings by the United Nations or any related UN body is held as a credible proof to support a claim or argument. Multilateral Organizations: Documents from international organizations like OIC, NATO, SAARC, BRICS, EU, ASEAN, the International Court of Justice, etc. may also be presented as credible sources of information.

b. **Government Reports:** These reports can be used in a similar way as the State Operated News Agencies reports and can, in all circumstances, be denied by another country.

c. **News Sources:**

1. Reuters: Any Reuters article that clearly makes mention of the fact or is in contradiction of the fact being stated by a delegate in council.

2. State operated News Agencies: These reports can be used in the support of or against the State that owns the News Agency. These reports, if credible or substantial enough, can be used in support of or against any country as such but in that situation, may be denied by any other country in the council. Some examples are – RIA Novosti (Russian Federation), Xinhua News Agency (People's Republic of China), etc.

Please Note:** Reports from NGOs working with UNESCO, UNICEF and other UN bodies will be accepted. ***Under no circumstances will sources like Wikipedia, or newspapers like the Guardian, Times of India, etc. be accepted. However, notwithstanding the criteria for acceptance of sources and evidence, delegates are still free to quote/cite from any source as they deem fit as a part of their statements.

• Read the entirety of the background guide in the order it was written. Make sure to highlight the names of specific treaties, documents, resolutions, conventions, international bodies, events and any other specific incidents so that you can get back to them later and do a lot more thorough research.

• Understand some of the basic details regarding the country that you've been allotted whether this be the capital, current affairs regarding geopolitical situation, political hierarchy etc. While not strictly necessary, you never know when this can turn out to be handy. Geography Now's A - Z Country List has been a particularly helpful resource for this.

• Use a search engine of your choice to create as many tabs as possible for the highlighted terms from your background guide. Wikipedia or a YouTube video act as a great way to get a brief summary of the incidents at hand but such sources (especially Wikipedia articles) cannot be used in committee as sources.

• Delve into deeper research regarding the particular position of your allocation with the agenda at hand. Try searching for the voting stances of your allocation in related conventions and understanding the reasons for voting as so. UN Press Releases are also a helpful source for this matter.

• Find the website for the foreign ministry of the country you have been assigned alongside the "Permanent Mission of COUNTRY to the United Nations" website and search for a key term relating to the agenda, this should often give you statements from recent press conferences or UN committee sessions that can act as valuable sources of information in forming a position.

• Keep a handy copy of the Charter of the United Nations, whether as a .pdf file extension or a physical copy works. This contains the founding principles of the United Nations and contains articles that lay out the mandate of the six bodies that the United Nations is primarily divided into. Spend some additional time researching the specific mandate and functions of the committee that you have been assigned.

• The Executive Board may ask for the source of a statement that a delegate makes in committee either during a Point of Order circumstance or if said statement stands to be of interest to the Executive Board. Therefore, it is recommended that delegates keep track of their sources when making / disputing a claim and also ensure their validity. Please do remember that while you as a delegate are allowed to cite any source you wish during committee.

HIERARCHY OF EVIDENCE

Evidence can be presented from a wide variety of sources but not all sources are treated as equal. Here's the hierarchy in which evidence is categorised:

Tier 1: Includes any publication, statement, resolution, or document released by any of the Nations' official organs or committees; any publication, statement, or document released by a UN member state in its own capacity. The evidence falling in this tier is considered most reliable during the simulation.

Tier 2: Includes: any news article published by any official media source that is owned and controlled by a UN member state. E.g.: Xinhua News (China), Times of India (India), BBC (United Kingdom) etcetera. The evidence falling in this tier is considered sufficiently reliable in case no other evidence from any Tier 1 source is available on that particular fact, event, or situation.

Tier 3: Includes: any publication from news sources of international repute such as Reuters, The New York Times, Agence-France Presse, etcetera. The evidence falling under this tier is considered the least reliable for the purposes of this simulation. Yet, if no better source is available in a certain scenario, it may be considered.

FOREIGN POLICY AND FOREIGN RELATIONS

Foreign policy, in simple terms, is what your country aims to achieve in regards to the issue at hand or in general with its relations with other countries.

1. What role must foreign policy play in your research?

Understanding the foreign policy of your country must be a checkbox that you tick off at the very beginning of your research. Your foreign policy should dictate everything from the arguments you make, the reasoning you give for making those arguments, and the actions you take in the Council.

2. Where do I look to find foreign policy?

Most of the time, foreign policy is not explicitly stated. It must be inferred from the actions and statements issued by the country. Reading the meeting records from previous meetings of UNSC (or any other UN body where your country might have spoken on the issue) is a great place to start. If such records are unavailable, look for statements from your country's Foreign Ministry (or equivalent like Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry for Foreign Affairs etcetera) and top leadership (PM, Pres., Secretary of State, Defence Minister).

Foreign Relations on the other hand refers to the diplomatic ties that one country has with another and considers elements such as the mutual presence of embassies, consulates, ambassadors & diplomatic dialogue. More often than not, foreign policy is what will be of your primary concern during your MUN but it is important to also consider any extremities in your allotted country's foreign relations.

RULES OF PROCEDURE

ROP, or rules of procedure are the set rules to be followed whilst in committee session. Rules of procedure are generally the same for all simulated conferences, and some parts can be amended based on the executive board of that specific conference. Since the ROP is universally followed, the link below will take you to a cheat sheet which you can use for future reference as well. [ROP]

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

The United Nations General Assembly is one of the six important organs of the United Nations (UN), and the primary deliberative, strategy making and representative organ of the UN. The first committee of the General Assembly is the Disarmament and International Security Committee. It deals with disarmament, global challenges and threats to peace that affect the international community and seeks out solutions to the challenges in the international security regime.

MANDATE OF DISEC

The committee considers all disarmament and international security matters within the scope of the Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any other organ of the United Nations; the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments; promotion of cooperative arrangements and measures aimed at strengthening stability through lower levels of armaments. The Committee works in close cooperation with the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament. It is the only Main Committee of the General Assembly entitled to verbatim records coverage.

The mandate of the General Assembly allows it to discuss any matters that are within the scope of the UN charter allowing it to exercise deliberative, supervisory, financial and elective functions of any regard throughout the charter. However, it does not have the power to enforce an action upon any sovereign state but can solely recommend a course of action to the Security Council, members of the United Nation or both, except as provided in article 12 of the UN Charter. Apart from providing recommendations, the General Assembly is tasked with a multitude of different functions which include: the election of judges to the International Court of Justice, the selection of members for the Economic and Social Council, the selection of non-permanent members for the United Nations Security Council, the appointment process for the Secretary General and the budgetary process for the United Nations to name a few.

While most decisions are based on a simple majority system, a few such as appointing a new member to the General Assembly require a two-thirds majority instead. While during the beginning of the General Assembly's session it does hold a general debate where any member may participate and raise an issue of international concern, most work is done in its six main sub-committees:

- Disarmament and International Security (colloquially referred to as DISEC)
- Economic and Financial (colloquially referred to as ECOFIN)
- Social, Humanitarian and Cultural (colloquially referred to as SOCHUM)
- Special, Political and Decolonisation (colloquially referred to as SPECPOL)
- Administrative & Budgetary
- Legal

Their names are for the most part self-explanatory of the issues that they focus on and are open to all members of the United Nations, each of these committees convene after the General Debate has ended each year and take action via the form of resolutions that are then sent to the General Assembly for voting. Some are unanimous with the support of all members whereas others are highly controversial and amount to heavy amounts of deliberation before consensus is reached.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

In simplest terms MIC (Military Industrial Complex) alludes to the partnership of the Defence Industry (Defence Contractors, Arms Dealers) and the Military of a country. The extended term MICC (Military Industrial Congressional Complex) was expanded to include the congress (government, politicians, executives). The concept points towards the relationship between these 3 powerful organs, the military, defence industry and politicians and how they influence public policy to fuel conflicts, prolong arms race and in some situations even create conflict. These 3 organs are the largest benefactors of wars, conflicts and stockpiling of weapons, hence regardless of the taxpayer's opinion they impose the view that there lies a necessity for military action and military preparation.

Read the following extract from a speech in 1961:
"...A vital element in keeping the peace is our military establishment. Our arms must be mighty, ready for instant action, so that no potential aggressor may be tempted to risk his own destruction. Our military organisation today bears little relation to that known by any of my predecessors in peacetime, or indeed by the fighting men of World War II or Korea.

Until the latest of our world conflicts, the United States had no armaments industry. American makers of ploughshares could, with time and as required, make swords as well. But now we can no longer risk emergency improvisation of national defence; we have been compelled to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions. Added to this, **three and a half million men and women are directly engaged in the defence establishment. We annually spend on military security more than the net income of all United State corporations.**

This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence-economic, political, even spiritual-is felt in every city, every state house, every office of the Federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.

We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defence with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together…"

This is an excerpt from President Eisenhower's farewell address on Jan 17th, 1961. Dwight D. Eisenhower served two terms as the 34th President of the USA from 1953 to 1961. Eisenhower served as a five star general in world war II before he served his Presidency terms during the testing times of late world war and early cold war stages. He is not new to and neither is he scared of conflicts and wars, yet he sensed a large threat looming over the world in terms of rapid military expansion.

The MIC refers to the network of individuals and institutions involved in the production of weapons and military technologies and the political and economic influence they wield. The term was first coined in the context of the United States, but was later generalised for other countries as well. Basically, MIC represents the vested interests within the state and industry in expanding the military sector and in increasing military spending, using external threats as the justification.

The essence of MIC started developing around the beginning of the twentieth century, when mass production of weapons, vehicles and other military technologies took place. At the end of World War I, the majority of countries did not completely immobilise. Instead, there was a shift toward faster integration of technology into military usage. This resulted in strengthening relationships between the military and private companies. In the interwar period (1918-1939) many countries spent aggressively on improving their military capabilities in preparation for possible future conflict.

During World War II there was a thorough advancement of weapon technologies, notably including nuclear weapons. The stature and importance of a country started being tied to the country's military capabilities. Post WWII as well military demands continued to influence the economy. The Cold War fuelled a relentless arms race between the two superpowers: Soviet Union and USA. This period of unconventional conflict with the ever-imminent threat of a nuclear war, caused an atmosphere where there was a perceived need for constant procurement of military goods and services including large naval, air, and land forces.

By this time the MIC has already grown to shape up for a huge part of the global economy and influence. Whether there lies an impending threat of large-scale conflict or not, the defence industry keeps growing, the number of people involved in the military industry keeps rising. As long as the MIC continues to have this level of influence over policies there will always remain an excuse for strengthening military capabilities.

The Military-Industrial Complex is also very often extended to talk about the intertwining relationship with a third party, namely the congress. An extended term (MICC) Military Industrial Congressional Complex is also used for this purpose, it is also often referred to as the iron triangle. It represents how throughout the years a very strong association has formed between policy makers, defence contractors and the military. It has grown to a stage where they are all interdependent and they all hold significant influence over one another.

A huge monopoly has formed in the defence industry, most major contracts are split up between a few big companies. As a result, these companies have only grown stronger in influence and larger in money power. The military industrial firms give campaign contributions to politicians, in turn these elected members of congress eventually support these large companies to receive defence contracts and projects. What is extremely worrisome is this kind of partnership between contracting companies and congress members (referred to as the iron triangle) not only influences where contracts go, but are pushing towards more military investment and more funding in military projects as this would result in mutual benefit.

The decisions of this coalition take place keeping in mind the interests of involved parties, not necessarily the national interests. When people, with such high influence in military, economy and politics have a coalition that serves their own interests and not that of the people, then that precisely spells disaster.

Throughout history there are multiple occasions where there can be seen a direct influence of the MICC in conflicts and wars. Few examples would be Vietnam war, Iraq war, Cold war arms race, the war on terror etc. It is very hard to attach a solid proof of how and where the MICC directly influenced the conflict. Although proof might be hard to identify, even to a 10-year-old the relationship between the MICC to conflicts is very observable.

Before Eisenhower, there were multiple others who tried conceptualise the relationship between military, industrial societies, politicians, economic interests and public policies:

1. Major General Smedley Butler was a highly decorated Marine Corps officer who became an outspoken critic of American military intervention and the economic interests behind it. His book "War is a Racket" (1935), is one of the most famous critiques of the military-industrial relationship. Butler argues that war primarily serves the interests of wealthy industrialists and financiers, rather than those of the nation or its citizens. He also proposed many reforms to ensure war did not become an incentive for economic benefits. Some of these proposed reforms are:

- Holding national referendums for wars. Since the taxpayers are the ones bearing the cost of wars, they should also play a role in deciding whether the country should go to war.
- Involving the on-ground soldiers more in the decision-making process. These are the people who actually risk their lives, they are willing to sacrifice their lives, but wouldn't support unnecessary wars.
- Cap on military for war situations to ensure wars don't become an incentive for such companies involved in the process.
- He also advocated for the nationalisation of war industries to prevent profiteering. He argued that by taking control of arms production and other war-related industries, the government could eliminate the profit motive from war.
- Greater transparency and public oversight of military spending and contracts, this would enable the public to hold the authorities accountable.

Butler discusses how **propaganda is used to manipulate public opinion** and garner support for wars. Governments and businesses create narratives that portray wars as noble and necessary, hiding the true motives of profit and power.

He also states that companies that produced weapons and military equipment, such as DuPont and Bethlehem Steel, were **known to lobby government officials to support military expenditures and actions** that would increase demand for their products.

He suggested that some companies might even engage in activities that fomented conflict or instability to create a demand for their products. This could include supplying arms to multiple sides in a conflict or lobbying for intervention in regions where they had economic interests.

2. Thorstein Veblen (1857–1929) was an American economist and sociologist. One of his significant works "Imperial Germany and the Industrial Revolution" (1915) gave an early insight on the relationship between military organisations and industrial societies. Veblen explored how industrial and economic interests could drive militaristic policies. He suggested that the economic benefits of military production for industrialists led to a vested interest in maintaining and expanding military capabilities. Veblen was critical of the way military and industrial interests shaped societal values and priorities. He warned that the glorification of military achievements and the pursuit of economic gains through militarism could lead to societal harm, diverting resources from social welfare to military expenditures.

3. Senator Gerald Nye led the Nye Committee (or the Special Committee on Investigation of the Munitions Industry) from 1934 to 1936. This committee investigated the role of the arms industry in influencing U.S. entry into World War I. **The Nye Committee uncovered evidence that arms manufacturers, whom they termed as the "merchants of death" had lobbied aggressively for U.S. involvement in World War I to boost their profits.** The committee's findings suggested that these companies had exerted undue influence on government policy.

***Delegates should read in detail about at least a few of these works to understand in detail the depth of this relation and the kind of magnanimous impacts it has.*

MICC'S EVOLVING
ROLE OVER TIME

MICC has largely evolved and changed with time based on multiple social and political factors.

Pre - World War II Era

The early 20th century saw rapid industrialization, which was leveraged for military purposes. Technological advancements in transportation, communication, and weaponry created the foundation for a closer relationship between industry and the military. World War I highlighted the important role of industrial capacity in modern warfare. As mentioned above there were multiple proofs that came to surface showing that arms manufacturers and other benefiting parties lobbied and pushed the government towards involving more in the war.
Although World War I ended most nations still felt there was a threat of another wide scale conflict. Hence, there was a shift towards integrating new technologies into military applications, leading to strengthened ties between the military and private companies.

World War II Era

The lead-up to World War II saw significant rearmament efforts, and governments invested heavily in expanding their military capabilities. World War II spurred major technological advancements, including radar, jet engines, and nuclear weapons. The collaboration between military needs and industrial innovation was pivotal in the development and deployment of these technologies.

Post-World War II Era: Official conceptualization of MIC
The onset of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union led to a continuous focus on military preparedness and technological advancements. The arms race necessitated continuous investment in defence capabilities. As already mentioned, in 1961, President Dwight D. Eisenhower famously warned of the growing influence of the MIC in his farewell address, highlighting the potential dangers of an unchecked alliance between the military and industry.

The protracted conflict in Vietnam saw an escalation in military spending which benefited defence contractors. The Vietnam War also led to significant public scrutiny and protest against the MIC. The high cost of human lives and the large economic losses of the war, along with revelations about war profiteering, fuelled a wide array of anti-war movements and calls for greater accountability.

End of Cold War Era
Towards the 1980s, the cold war started peaking and the arms race was at its largest. There was a significant military build up and substantial investments were made in research and development. The cold war ended in 1991 when the Soviet Union was dissolved. Initially there was a reduction in defence spending, but this initiative didn't last for too long. The MICC remained resilient and prepared for new global threats. There always remained a conflict or threat to serve as an excuse for spending tons of money and effort towards bolstering military strength.

Current Era
With the rise of cyberthreats, information warfare, newer technologies like UAVs and assistive technologies using AI, the MICC remains ever-evolving and ever-involving in terms of military, policy and economy. It is to an extent where it is not an overstatement to say that the citizens of a country cannot be sure whether the MICC is protecting them from dangers, or if they are creating dangers so that they can exploit the public in the name of protection.

THE GROWING INFLUENCE OF MIC ON
PUBLIC POLICY

A fundamental question arises with regard to why there should be deliberation on how to reduce military expenditure. One might argue a country spending more on its military is a good thing. The following points can be used to back that particular argument:

1. More expenditure on military means a more advanced army, navy and air force which translates to better protection and security in case of invasions or other threats to a country.
2. A government spending a substantive amount on its military will amount to a growth in its GDP if a majority of the expenditure is directed towards companies which are registered and run in said country and their manufacturing and R&D sectors are based there.

One overlooked argument renders the above points moot in terms of excess military expenditure being good for the people of a country. And that is the impact of MIC on public policy and policy-making decisions. This deals with how the MIC affects and possibly disrupts the flow of good public policy and introduces a legion or issues and raises a ton of concerns regarding how it initiates a chain reaction which has echoing repercussions in a nation and the world as a whole.

ROLE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS IN
PRO-MIC LOBBYING

In every democracy, parliamentarians play the role of making policies which pave the way for how a country is governed. In current society which lies on an extreme end on the non-ideal spectrum, policies are defined by what benefits the men with wealth and not what benefits the common man. Many such cases can be seen and studied where policies which benefit weapon dealers and defence contractors have been given importance over policies which would have uplifted the lives of citizens.

Defence contracting companies and other organizations which profit from war and military expenditure affect public policy in the following ways

1. These organizations invest massive sums in aiding party representatives who lobby to push agendas which are beneficial to said organisations. These policies more often than not do not represent public interests. A short list of such incidents is:

- The Bofors Scandal of 1986 (India)
- The F-35 Fighter Jet Program and the F-22 Raptor Program Controversy pertaining to defence contracts of Lockheed Martin (USA).
- The G-36 Rifle Controversy (Germany)

Electoral Bonds and Campaign Contributions by Defence Contractors also play a major role in Pro-MIC Lobbying as political parties depend on them for funding

MIC'S INFLUENCE ON
DISARMAMENT

To start this section off, let us first understand and define what we mean by disarmament. Disarmament refers to the reduction or elimination of a country's military forces and weapons. While disarmament can tip the scales in favour of global stability and peace, the MIC often poses significant challenges and threats to these efforts. In this section, let us highlight how the MIC shapes public policy, resists disarmament efforts, and perpetuates global arms races, ultimately undermining global peace and security.

1. The MIC takes up the role of marketing and advertising specific policies and ideas which work in their favour and provoke governments to increase expenditure on military and defence contractors. One such case study is M.A.D or Mutually Assured Destruction. This particular doctrine has been milked to the maximum possible extent by the Pro-MIC spokesmen. Mutually Assured Destruction is the idea that if one nuclear superpower uses its arsenal on another, the latter will retaliate will equally brutal force, hence assuring mutual destruction of both the nations. The MAD theory suggests that the absolute confirmation that the use of nuclear power by a nation will ultimately result in its own destruction will stop them from doing so. In conclusion, this theory has been used time and time again to persuade governments and private organisations that the only way to achieve global peace is not disarmament, but the polar opposite of it.

2. **The downfall in upholding of the INF (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces) Treaty signed in 1987:**

The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which came into effect in 1987, successfully eliminated an entire class of nuclear missiles from nuclear arsenals worldwide. However, the success of the treaty in the long term was undercut by the influence of the MIC.

Both Russia and USA accused each other of violating the treaty. This was further given a push by Pro-MIC lobbyists lobbying for a modernisation and not an elimination of the existing nuclear arsenals.

The final blow was delivered in 2019, when both the United States of America and The Russian Federation pulled out of the treaty. This can be considered a major blow to disarmament efforts and the MIC has a big part to play in it, as the demolition of this treaty increases their chances at getting defence contracts to modernise present nuclear arsenals and lines the pockets of industrial giants.

ROLE PLAYED BY PMCS IN THE MIC

PMCs have been very popular with governments in the Post-Cold War era for a multitude of reasons such as:

1. They allow governments to carry out operations without being held accountable to international judicial organisations.
2. They prove to be cost-effective at time because hiring PMCs for specific, regulated tasks saves governments the financial burden of maintaining long standing armies or specialised military segments.
3. PMCs provide specialized training in areas such as counterinsurgency, urban warfare, and special operations. They often train local forces in regions where the host nation's military capabilities are limited.

On the other hand, many concerns have been raised regarding the operational conduct of PMCs. There have been many instances of use of excessive force and abuses of human rights by PMCs which have been brought to light by international humanitarian organizations. They also pose a challenge to governments in the form of jurisdictional controversies. A group which is not a part of any country's official military blurs the line in international jurisdiction laws.

Private Contracting Practices: The reliance on PMCs has led to a lot of changes in the defence contracting sector. MIC lobbying has pushed governments to allocate large portions of national budgets to private military contracting, which in turn gives PMCs opportunistic strongholds and helps them stay and flourish in business.

INSTANCES OF PMC AID AND INFLUENCE ON THE MIC

1. Hart Security in the Middle East:
Hart Security is a prominent British PMC with significant operations in Germany. They have also been found to run operations in middle eastern regions like Iraq and Afghanistan. The company's involvement in the middle east has promoted the German MIC by contracts which favoured German military personnel and equipment deployment

2. Risk&Co, a French PMC has taken similar strides but, in this case, bolstering the interests of the French MIC in the middle east by promoting the use of French military technology and services and supporting French foreign policy objectives.

Cold War Era – The most notable arms race in history

The most notable arms race occurred during the Cold War, where the United States and the Soviet Union took part in a dragged-out competition to develop and modernise their nuclear arsenals and other advanced military technologies. This period in time witnessed unprecedented growth and advancement in the MIC in both the superpowers.

Other arms races which took place in the 20th and 21st century include case studies with reference to

1. India and Pakistan
2. The USA and China

THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

1. The United Nations:

Since its formation in 1945, The UN has played a vital role in aiding disarmament as an initiative towards world peace. It has done this through pushing for various treaties like

i. Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

ii. Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

iii. Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention, CWC)

2. ASEAN:

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) fosters regional cooperation and dialogue on security issues. ASEAN aims to prevent an arms race in Southeast Asia and promote peaceful conflict resolution.

The ASEAN has taken several steps to further disarmament in its own jurisdiction. Some of these steps include

1. **Signing of the Treaty on The Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ). This treaty aims to establish Southeast Asia as a nuclear weapon-free zone and promotes the peaceful use of nuclear energy for the betterment of the world**
2. Establishment of the **ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)** to foster constructive dialogue between representatives of member nations and to better tackle issues of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation.

3. OSCE:

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) focuses on arms control, conflict prevention, and security cooperation. The OSCE's efforts help to reduce tensions and promote stability in Europe.

DISCUSSING TRENDS OF MILITARY SPENDING WITH EMPHASIS ON THE ROLE OF MIC IN IT

The total global military expenditure in 2023 amounted to $1799 billion, with the top 10 countries contributing to nearly 74% of this total. The United States and China were the two largest spenders, together accounting for a significant portion of the global total. Notably, all top 10 countries increased their military spending in 2023.

In 2023, the United States led global military expenditure with $916 billion, reflecting a 2.3% increase from 2022. The U.S. shifted focus towards enhancing research, development, test, and evaluation (RDT&E) for new weapon systems to counter advanced threats, moving away from counterinsurgency operations. The U.S. also allocated $35.7 billion for Ukraine, including $25.4 billion in military aid. China, the second-largest spender, allocated $296 billion, a 6.0% increase from 2022, marking its 29th consecutive year of rising military expenditure. Despite slowed growth, China remained a dominant force in Asia and Oceania. Russia's military spending reached $109 billion, a 24% increase from 2022, driven by the conflict in Ukraine and supported by sovereign wealth funds and state loans. India's military expenditure was $83.6 billion, up by 4.2%, focusing on personnel and operational costs amidst tensions with China and Pakistan, while boosting domestic arms production. Saudi Arabia spent $75.8 billion, a 4.3% increase, driven by higher oil revenues and increased global demand for non-Russian oil, accounting for 7.1% of its GDP.

The sharp increases in military spending showcase the sheer impact geopolitical tensions have on the excessive spending on military technology, which will be covered later. The most prominent example is the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, which has driven significant increases in the military expenditure for both States. Similarly, the strategic rivalry between the U.S. and China has spurred both nations to invest heavily in advanced military technologies and capabilities. Another massive area was the military spending as a share of GDP and government expenditure, which provided a much needed insight into national priorities. In 2023, Ukraine's military spending as a share of GDP surged by 11 percentage points to 37%, the highest among the top spenders. Russia also saw an increase in its military burden, reaching 5.9% of GDP.

GLOBAL ARMS RACE

A global arms race can be defined as the competitive acquisition of military capability between two or more countries over an undefined period of time. This race can have a tremendous effect on geopolitics, economies, and can also lead to heightened tensions, in areas that are already afflicted with conflict. One such example is the Cold War, in which an arms race ensuing between the United States of America and then USSR led to tensions peaking at an all-time high, with the risk of nuclear armageddon. This is a very important characteristic when considering the causes for the increase in military expenditure. Emphasizing more on this below:

GEOPOLITICAL TENSIONS

The most prominent catalyst for the current arms race is the geopolitical tensions around the world. Ongoing rivalries between Member States acts as an extrinsic motivator to develop weapons that are superior in capabilities than their counterparts. Landmark cases which have involved military intervention are prime examples of the same, i.e. to maintain a strategic high ground, either State is willing to increase their expenditure on military technology. For instance, the military spending in East Asia expanded 6.2% on the year to $411 billion in 2023 as China's growing geopolitical tensions continue to fuel an arms buildup in the area. This military buildup heightens tensions; however, it is under the guise of being in the best interest of national security, and is also described as an effective deterrent.

REGIONAL CONFLICT

Regional conflicts are no less impactful than major geopolitical tensions, significantly contributing to the global arms race by instigating affected States to bolster their military capabilities. Protracted conflicts play a major role in mobilising funds to develop military capabilities, the most recent example being the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian conflict, which has caused Ukraine's military expenditure to surge by 51% in 2023, along with involvement from States such as the United States, which has spent 16.8 billion USD to replace the stock of military equipment taken from United States inventories in 2023 alone.

Following the trend in the Middle East, the rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia drives both nations to enhance their military arsenals with both of them having spent 2.1% and 7.1% as a share of their GDP respectively, with the latter being the 5th largest spender on military expenditure for the year 2023. The situation worsens in places such as Yemen and Syria, where external parties the conflict further, an excellent example being the ex-Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) coming forward and saying that they had supplied light arms to Syrian rebels along the border, an already sensitive area, with further statements confirming their funding and training provided to at least 12 Syrian rebel groups. Israel also stands as the State with the 15th largest military expenditure, with 27.5 billion USD being spent on the same.

GLOBAL ARMS TRADE

The arms trade includes the manufacture and sale of weapons and military technology, and is both a cause and a consequence of a higher military expenditure and has devastating repercussions for civilians. On one hand, the arms trade is a cause of heightened military expenditure, because the arms trade requires an increased military expenditure to fund. Since exporting arms is a lucrative business, with an estimated minimum financial value of $118 billion in 2019, many countries continue to increase their military expenditure in order to increase their arms exports and therefore profit.

This arms trade has devastating consequences for civilians, with more than 500 people dying every day because of violence from firearms, which are often obtained by the arms trade. Several large exporters of weapons have exported arms to places where they risk being used in violation of international humanitarian law. This is against the Arms Trade Treaty, and many countries have failed to ratify or comply with it. For instance, the United Kingdom, France and other countries continued to supply arms to Saudi Arabia despite it committing several human rights violations. These human rights violations include indiscriminate airstrikes in civilian areas by the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen.

ISSUES RELATED TO
MODERNISATION

The modernisation of weapon stockpiles around the world impacts the state of ethical and humanitarian affairs, with these stockpiles boosting strategic superiority on one hand, but endangering the lives of countless civilians at the same time.

The development of precision-guided munitions, which are designed to strike targets with maximum accuracy, has been detrimental to the safety of civilians. The Saudi led intervention in the Yemeni civil war is a prime example of this, with these munitions having hit multiple civilian targets, further escalating the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, a popular instance of which came in 2018, where an airstrike led to the death of 29 children. The same can be said for drones, or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), which have become common in military operations due to their precision. However, drone strikes have also caused significant civilian casualties. A notable example is the U.S. drone strike in Kabul, Afghanistan, in August 2021, which mistakenly targeted a vehicle believed to be carrying suicide bombers from ISIS-K operatives but instead killed ten civilians, including seven children.

As mentioned earlier, these military operations often lead to mass displacement of civilians, elevating already existing humanitarian crises. The Syrian conflict has displaced millions of people, with 7.5 million children in Syria will need humanitarian assistance in 2024, and 5.3 million people displaced internally, creating one of the largest refugee crises in recent history. The situation is more or less the same in Yemen too, with around 9.8 million children in need of humanitarian assistance, and 4.5 million people displaced internally.

These modernised weapon stockpiles also carry a massive risk, which is the involvement of non-state actors, and the very real possibility of them gaining access to these weapon stockpiles. As mentioned earlier, rebel groups were supplied with munitions by the IDF. Other prominent examples include Operation Cyclone, in which during the cold war, the Mujahideen (who later came up as the Taliban) were funded by the CIA from 1979 - 1989. Insurgents were armed with arms and ammunition in order to withstand the ongoing Soviet invasion. The CIA were authorised to spend up to $695,000 to support the Afghan insurgents, either unilaterally or through third countries, by providing cash or non-military supplies, along with the authorization of CIA propaganda operations in support of the insurgency.

The modernization of nuclear arsenals involves testing and developing new warheads, which have severe environmental consequences. With the secret testing of nuclear warheads between 2006 and 2017 by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at the Punggye-ri site near the North Hamgyong province, tens of thousands of North Koreans and people in South Korea, Japan and China could be exposed to radioactive materials spread through groundwater from an underground nuclear test site. Other tests have also shown increased cancer rates throughout the region, exemplifying the risks that these warheads carry.

LACK OF TRANSPARENCY IN RELATION TO
MILITARY SPENDING

A higher military expenditure has been associated with higher rates of corruption as per recent studies by experts in the field of economics. Corruption can affect military spending due to supply-side considerations as arms manufacturers may bribe officials to win contracts or foreign officials may bribe the officials of countries that import arms. For instance, Airbus, a global military aircraft provider, was recently found to have engaged in a corrupt scheme involving bribing foreign officials to enhance its business interests. As a cause of increasing military expenditures, corruption is an important factor to consider when forming solutions.

Beyond corruption, many countries including North Korea, Cuba, Syria, and Yemen, lack transparency about their military budgets and where they are allocated. Transparency in military expenditure is, on a global level, a means of building confidence. A lack of transparency can therefore cause distrust and jeopardise international security, even leading to the aforementioned security dilemmas and a heightened level of threat perception. Private entities in the arms trade, i.e. private defence contractors are some of the biggest contributors to the modernisation of weapon stockpiles across the world.

With the excessive funding they receive, companies such as Lockheed Martin, Boeing, and Northrop Grumman in the U.S, BAE Systems in the UK, and Thales in France become leading suppliers of advanced military equipment. They play a massive role in the global arms trade, with Lockheed Martin, the largest company in the field, recording a revenue of 67.571 billion USD, a 2.41% increase from 2022. The U.S.'s prioritisation of RDT&E spending highlights the significant role of private contractors in developing cutting-edge weapon systems. Another interesting observation to note, is that the top 5 companies in the field come from within the United States, with Lockheed Martin being one of them. Other top companies hail from China, the United Kingdom, the Russian Federation, and so on.

PAST INTERNATIONAL ACTIONS TO REDUCE DEFENCE SPENDING

1. UNGA Resolution 35/142 (1980)
2. UNGA Resolution 66/64 (2011)
3. UNGA Resolution 68/32 (2013)
4. UNGA Resolution 69/47 (2014)
5. UNGA Resolution 70/50 (2015)
6. UNGA Resolution 73/32 (2018)
7. UNGA Resolution 74/24 (2019)
8. UNGA Resolution 77/33 (2022)

REPORTS

- 2023 | A/78/158
- 2022 | A/77/159
- 2021 | A/76/129
- 2020 | A/75/140

RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL TREATIES

1. Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) (1970)
2. Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) Series (1994)
3. Arms Trade Treaty (2014)
4. Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) (1996)
5. Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)
6. Anti-personnel Landmine Convention (1997)

QUESTIONS A RESOLUTIONS MUST ANSWER (QARMA)

- How does military spending compare to other areas of national budgets such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure?
- What are the specific factors driving the increase in military spending?
- How does the military-industrial complex (MIC) influence national defence policies and military spending?
- How to measure the influence that the MIC has over important conflict related decisions?
- How do lobbying efforts and political contributions from defence-related industries affect governmental decision-making?
- How can decisions related to defence expenditure and military involvement be made more transparent, and have more public involvement while ensuring national security?
- How can reductions in military spending contribute to global and regional security?
- What diplomatic measures can be taken to ensure that reduced military expenditures do not lead to security vacuums or increased threats?
- How can advancements in technology and changes in military strategy contribute to cost-effective defence capabilities?
- What lessons can be learned from previous efforts to reduce military spending?