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# LMUN 2026

A Background Guide for:

**Disarmament and International Security Committee**



# **LMUN 2026**

**DISEC | Pulling back the curtain on the military-industrial complex: Addressing the role of defense contractors in modern warfare.**

**Chair: Claudia Escorriola**

**Co-Chair: Elena Gonzalez**



**Letter from the chairs:**

Dear Esteemed Delegates,

Welcome to LMUN2026, and a special welcome to the DISEC committee. We are truly honored to have each of you here, ready to engage with some of the most significant ethical issues of our time. I'm Claudia Escorriola, a junior at Lincoln School and your chair for this committee. Joining me is my co-chair, Elena Gonzalez, also a junior at Lincoln.

This year, our committee will focus on the role of defense contractors in modern warfare. Our discussions will cover the global implications of the military-industrial complex, examining both the legal precedents and ultimately arriving at a consensus. We encourage you to approach this topic with commitment and respect, encouraging all voices to be heard.

If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions during the conference, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We are available via email and are committed to maintaining open communication to support your success in this committee. Thank you for joining us, and we look forward to the invaluable insights each of you will bring to the debate!

Warm regards,

Claudia Escorriola ([cescorriola@lincoln.ed.cr](mailto:cescorriola@lincoln.ed.cr)) & Elena González ([egonzaleza@lincoln.ed.cr](mailto:egonzaleza@lincoln.ed.cr))

Your DISEC Committee Chairs



## **Topic Introduction**

The military-industrial complex, a concept created by the former US President Dwight D. Eisenhower in his 1961 farewell speech following the events of both World Wars, refers to the network formed by a nation's military and the defense industry that supplies it. This relationship produces a self-sufficient cycle where global conflicts propel an endless supply of arms, and in return, the demand for weapons drives global tensions.

Throughout the past few years, there has been a severe escalation in violence, such as events like the conflicts in Ukraine and Palestine, which have been fueling the unprecedented profits for defense contractors. The public has grown increasingly aware of how these industries lobby governments, pushing for an increase in defense budgets and the acquisition of modern high-tech weaponry, such as autonomous drones and hypersonic missiles, making sure they continue to benefit from warfare. This has resulted in nations rushing to restock their arsenals and obtain the newest and best weapons without comprehending the grave implications, causing a global arms race that prioritizes corporate interests over long-term peace. Some nations call for greater transparency; these efforts often fall short.

The goal must be to land in an international consensus that develops long-term resolutions to the issue presented. Delegates, by addressing and debating the influence of defense contractors, can work towards a future where security isn't dictated by profit, but by genuine commitment to peace and diplomacy.

## **Key Terms**

- **Military-Industrial Complex (MIC):** A public/private network made up of the government, national military, and private contractors. It began during the 20th century with both World Wars, intending to win the wars, but developed into a profit-driven mega-industry.
- **Power Elite:** In 1956, C. Wright Mills created the term “power elite” to refer to the military-industrial complex as an alliance of military, political, and economic players who are motivated by profits and seek to maintain this arrangement at all costs.
- **“Iron Triangle”:** A term utilized by critics to refer to the beneficial symbiotic relationship between the government (ex. Department of Defense), legislators (members



of Congress), and private defense contractors (ex. Boeing, Lockheed Martin, RTX, Northrop Grumman, etc.).

- **Arms Race:** The competitive acquisition of military resources and capabilities between countries. It refers to a rival relationship that is often measured by military expenses.
- **Lobbying:** The lawful attempt made by individuals or interest groups (lobbies) to influence government decisions to benefit their interests, such as the defeat or creation of certain regulations and legislation.
- **Revolving Door:** The common occurrence where heads of state agencies, after completing their term, enter the very same sector they were regulating. It may look like defense contractors hiring former government officials, such as defense ministry officials, as lobbyists, and/or legislators who receive funding from defense contractors and may vote towards funding those same firms.
- **Strategic Geography:** A nation's political, economic, and/or security advantages due to its geographic location. For example, Eastern European nations are seeking NATO thanks to their strategic location.
- **Regulatory Capture:** A form of conflict of interest where an official or legislator is "captured" by a specific firm, becoming merciful with that firm while in office in order to be hired by it after leaving and be able to become a lobbyist. It often involves unlawful behavior and fraud, and is seen as "pure corruption". One of the leading causes of the revolving door phenomenon.
- **State Capture:** The domination of private, often corporate, powers in policy and regulation-making. Could be seen as the repetitive occurrence of regulatory capture in a state. This subject has become highly relevant in economic research, alongside the revolving door, particularly after the 2008 crisis.
- **Bureaucratic Capital:** The assets or advantages accumulated by a bureaucrat while in office that benefit them after leaving and joining a firm. These assets may take the form of investments in good relationships with lower-level bureaucrats; developing extensive regulations that, as one of the creators, provide them with insider information, such as loopholes; among other forms.



## **Historical Context**

The necessity for a strong defense industry was born due to the 20th-century global conflicts. Before World War I, the US did not have a permanent national weapon manufacturer, but the mass production demand of World War I and World War II brought concern to officials and created a necessity. This developed into the military-industrial complex (MIC) during the Korean War and the Cold War, where private contractors were contractually obligated to supply the military, developing an essential relationship between the US military and its suppliers.

The gravity of this alliance did not go unnoticed. In his 1961 farewell speech, former President Dwight D. Eisenhower warned against the MIC's potential for the "disastrous rise of misplaced power", fearing it would compromise democracy and promote intentions not in the nation's best interest, such as the nuclear arms race between the US and the Soviet Union. The following events reinforced this skepticism. During the Reagan years, excessive defense funding lacking strategic plans led to extensive corruption and "absurd expenses", such as \$640 toilet seats and \$435 hammers.

In the late 20th century, the MIC further consolidated its power through massive Defense Industry Mergers, taking the American defense market from eight contractors to only three major players: Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, and Boeing. The government often encouraged these mergers, even subsidizing them; an example of this is the \$340 million subsidy for the Lockheed-Martin Marietta merger. Following the post-9/11 surge in spending, the US MIC solidified its international domination, with defense budgets skyrocketing and the MIC becoming a "potent political force" whose a top priority for nations worldwide.

The MIC functions through an "Iron Triangle" made up of government officials (DOD), legislators, normally from military-dependent districts, and private defense contractors, mostly the major three firms. An issue concerning the MIC is the "Revolving door" phenomenon, where former government officials enter the very industry they once regulated with plenty of bureaucratic capital. This leads to economic distortions, such as abuse of power and over-regulation.

Early efforts to limit military growth were put into practice. In 1977, Congress enacted legislation (10 USC 2687) to effectively stop the executive branch's power to individually close military bases, which led to the creation of the complex BRAC process as a legislative promise to control excess defense infrastructure. International agreements, such as the 1987



Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, served as a past solution to an arms race. However, the US withdrew in 2019, which led experts to experts fearing the demise of the treaty might spark a new and impairing arms race. The undeniable reliance on the MIC presents an international risk, given that it serves as a major diplomatic tool; it may destabilize regions and sabotage the growth of upcoming democracies that may become reliant on military culture.

### **Committee Background**

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC)—also known as the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly—was established in 1945 as a forum for all UN members to discuss issues regarding global security, disarmament, and peace. This committee was established in the aftermath of World War II as one of the main committees of the United Nations when it was first established, and mainly focused on managing the use of atomic energy and limiting weapons of mass destruction.

One year after its establishment, the Cold War emerged as a result of post-war tension between the USA and the Soviet Union. The DISEC Committee played a significant role in this conflict, given that it served as a forum for the United Nations to monitor the escalating arms race centered on nuclear weapons. In 1946, DISEC recommended the UN’s first resolution, consisting of addressing the challenges posed by atomic energy as a response to the nuclear annihilation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the prior year. This framework was established aspiring to ensure atomic energy was used for peaceful purposes only.

Following the establishment of this resolution, major arms control agreements were adapted. This included the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), established in 1970 to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and destructive technology; the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), in which the United States and the Soviet Union agreed to limit the number of nuclear missiles in their arsenals; and the Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT), an agreement between the U.S., the Soviet Union, and Great Britain to ban nuclear weapons tests.

Throughout the years, DISEC has proposed numerous treaties regarding arms disarmament. Due to its limited authority, DISEC is only able to recommend and propose potential resolutions to the Security Council, which holds the power to implement them. However, DISEC has addressed issues related to disarmament and the regulation of the military-industrial complex by fostering resolutions that encourage the reduction of armaments.



## **Current Situation**

The military-industrial complex's power over today's world continues to be fueled by the increase in defense budgets, technological advancements, and geopolitical tensions throughout the years, further aggravating conflicts around the world. A relevant case of this is Ukraine, whose defense industry rapidly expanded since the war with Russia began, growing from a \$1 billion sector in 2022 to over \$35 billion in 2025. The country's network of weapon manufacturing broadened to over 900 companies, mostly private, significantly boosting ammunition and missile production to support the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian conflict. Of greater concern is the Russian forces' military spending increase from \$79 billion in 2022 to \$143 billion in 2025, and Russia has heavily relied on external suppliers for resources such as artillery shells and drone technology. This military expansion is driven by high demand for advanced technology and weaponry amidst persistent conflict. However, this growth also raises concerns about the perpetuating war economy that relies on continued conflict and international military aid.

Similarly, the MIC in Israel is deeply integrated into its military to expand its military power. However, the Palestinian territories have fallen victim to these technologies. Israel's advanced weapons, such as drones and AI targeting systems, have given Israeli defense companies a competitive advantage in the global arms market. This integration of militarism in Israel's economy creates structural incentives to maintain the ongoing conflict, while Palestinians bear the human and infrastructural costs of Israel's military innovation by lacking a comparable military industrial complex. Regardless, major US defense contractors have greatly benefited from this conflict. Lockheed Martin, RTX, and General Dynamics supply the Israeli military with advanced weaponry, including bombs, missiles, and components for defense systems like the Iron Dome. These companies' stock prices have risen as well as their profits. Tech giants such as IBM, Amazon, and Palantir Technologies have provided technological services used for targeting and surveillance, and companies like Caterpillar and Volvo also provide heavy machinery used in home demolitions and the development of illegal settlements.

Some may argue that defense contracting drives technological innovation, supports advancements in artificial intelligence, autonomous drones, and other advancements for training. It also sustains national security capabilities and provides jobs in key industrial regions.



However, the MIC fosters a spur in arms race during global tensions, causing conflicts to escalate, as well as inducing unchecked corporate influence on military systems and lobbying, prioritizing profits over peace. Challenges such as a lack of efficient defense spending, a compromised supply chain, limited transparency and international cooperation, and geopolitical instability encouraged by military competition float to the surface and become unmanageable when such an unstable system is at work. This industry is constantly growing and evolving due to artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and Industry 4.0 manufacturing, among other factors, and there's no actual way to stop it. Plus, unexpected global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic revealed weakness in the system, by compromising the supply chain and interrupting logistics. So, in order to mitigate the unchecked power of the military-industrial complex, these issues at hand call for the need for international oversight to promote transparency, arms control, and diplomatic conflict resolution.

## **Block Positions**

### **Military-Industrial Powers**

This bloc seeks to maintain its military and economic dominance. They oppose international regulation, considering the MIC as an essential economic benefactor that provides jobs and superiority. They justify this by referencing other competition and the necessity of a defense industry as deterrence, even though history has shown issues of corruption and high costs. Policies include advocating for an efficient arms market with allies and prioritizing transparency over spending caps.

### **Non-Alignment Movement**

The Non-Alignment Movement, commonly known as NAM, is made up of over 120 member nations that seek to promote independence and oppose imperialism and colonialism. Their interest lies in prioritizing development by reallocating resources away from imported arms, which mostly produce debt. They prioritize their right to sovereignty and oppose the “abuse of power” driven by the MIC core. Their policies include demanding a global registry of defense contractors lobbying and advocating for a binding International Arms Trade Treaty.

### **Arms Control Advocates**



This bloc's interest is to ensure ethical regulation and accountability for the MIC, highlighting Eisenhower's warning about "unwarranted influence". They prioritize human rights over profit, especially nowadays with the alarming proliferation of new technologies, such as autonomous weapon systems. Policies include pushing for an International Auditing Body to monitor defense contractors and the MIC as a whole, and advocating for a "cooling-off" period for defense officials to control lobbying.

### **Security Dependents**

This bloc's interest is protecting the ability to deter future threats to their national security by guaranteeing a stable and timely stream of military supplies and technology from MIC powers. Defined by their geographical vulnerability, they justify their great military spending as a necessary cost for survival, submission to the MIC's influence to protect the security of their country. They oppose spending caps that could potentially take away their ability to respond to escalating conflicts. Policies include advocating for prioritized military aid channels and seeking joint agreements to reduce their dependency.

### **Possible Solutions**

The regulation of the Military-Industrial Complex has been an ongoing challenge that requires innovative and cooperative strategies to eliminate its influence in modern warfare. Potential solutions are necessary to promote accountability, increase transparency, and ensure that the pursuit of national security does not lead to global instability. The first crucial approach is to strengthen international arms control and transparency mechanisms. The goal is to combat the MIC's tendency to foster an arms race acceleration by introducing robust and verifiable public oversight on weapon trade. Delegates may focus on securing and strengthening the transparency of arms trade, meanwhile encouraging protocols of established treaties such as the Arms Trade Treaty and the UN Register of Conventional Arms. Additionally, the application of said treaties can be enforced by making arms transfer mandatory to report and public for all nations.

Similarly, other solutions involve the urgent need to enhance domestic and corporate governance over defense contractors. This approach aims to reduce excessive lobbying and corporate influence, which often leads to inefficient defense spending and the prioritization of



profits over peace. To make this solution attainable, national governments must establish and enforce responsible defence governance standards, including stronger parliamentary oversight of arms-export licensing and a mandatory adoption of anti-corruption and anti-lobbying protocols for major defense contractors. International organizations such as the UN and non-governmental bodies like Transparency International are vital for setting and monitoring global integrity standards, counteracting the limited transparency which is frequently justified as “national security”.

Ultimately, resolving the MIC’s complexities requires multi-faceted approaches that carefully evaluate the roles of contributors, including vendor states, defense companies, global organizations, and any other entity responsible for the outbreak of war. It is essential to advocate for the strengthening of global governance in this domain by demanding real collaboration and ethical alignment among international organizations, vendor states, and defense companies.

### **Case Studies & Topics to Discuss**

The DISEC committee must tackle certain points of discussion to formulate an effective resolution. Firstly, the revolving door and regulatory capture are important topics of discussion that raise an ethical dilemma, given that high-ranking public officials enter into corporate positions and lobbying roles in the same defense companies they used to supervise after leaving their positions in the government. This raises serious concerns about unchecked corporate influence and conflict of interest, weakening government oversight and giving companies too much power over public spending. Additionally, the legal status and operational gaps of private military force is another topic that must be addressed. The increasing reliance on Private Military and Security Companies (PMSC) -private businesses offering armed security, military training, logistics, and protection—for tasks ranging from logistics to direct combat creates a critical legal gray zone within international law. Its lack of a universally binding and coherent regulatory framework makes accountability unusually hard to enforce, particularly in cases where PMSC workers commit Human Rights and Humanitarian Law violations. It is also an urgent necessity to discuss and establish the individual criminal responsibility of a person and the state's responsibility for such violations.

Lockheed Martin significantly contributed to the Iraq War by providing arms sales, lobbying, and logistical support. During the war, Lockheed secured massive contracts, including



\$77.4 billion for 187 military aircraft and a \$3 billion deal for F-16 jets to support Iraq's forces against Iran. The company reported a 47% profit increase in 2002 as the conflict escalated and a \$36.3 billion in armament sales by 2011, highlighting how extended engagements drive contractor revenues. Lockheed Martin continued to profit in Iraq even after the U.S. troop withdrawal through Foreign Military Sales, including a \$15.6 million contract in 2024 for integrated air defense logistics and a \$250 million agreement in 2025 for F-16 support.

Finally, the Wagner group, a private military company (PMC) founded by Russia, has demonstrated the evolving geopolitical role of PMCs in hybrid warfare. The Wagner Group operates by providing security, training, and combat support to regimes in exchange for lucrative resource contracts. Nonetheless, it has been widely accused of committing severe human rights violations and war crimes across diverse conflict zones such as Mali, the Central African Republic (CAR), Libya, Sudan, and Ukraine. The most documented incident occurred in Mali in 2022, where Malian armed forces and Wagner personnel executed 500 people. Additionally, reports claim instances of rape and sexual violence as a war tactic, and violence monitoring groups have noted that in both Mali and CAR, the majority of incidents were caused by Wagner's use of forces to target civilians, schools, and even hospitals.

### **Questions a Resolution Must Answer**

- How can countries distinguish between security needs and companies seeking profit in defense policy?
- How will the current war economy and arms race permanently affect global stability if the UN does not act now?
- How can past arms control frameworks established by DISEC be updated to regulate private Iron Triangle companies?
- What laws can be imposed to prevent the revolving door effect and limit regulatory capture?
- Should a mandatory Lobbying Disclosure or Integrity Index be integrated into the UN Register of Conventional Arms?
- What legal implementations should be implemented to ensure AI and autonomous drones remain under meaningful human control?



- How can countries protect industrial jobs and their economy without creating structural incentives to keep wars going?



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