



**GA Background Paper Topic A**

Committee: GA

Topic: Enhancing Transparency in Military Spending to Foster Trust and Reduce Armament

Written by: Daniel Sanchez and Dario Garcia

Moderator: Dario Lorenzo Garcia Esparza

Director: Daniel Sanchez Enriquez

**Secretariat note:** all delegates that are participating as in these committee must make two position paper one for topic A and one for topic B

### **Letter to delegates**

We are excited to welcome you to the General Assembly committee of this MUN. We are honored to serve as your Chair for this discussion that hits on the challenges many countries face today regarding transparency in military spending.

My name is Dario Lorenzo Garcia Esparza, and I am here with my partner and your director, Daniel Sanchez. We are both passionate about international relations, global justice, and the role of diplomacy in building a better future. With your creativity and dedication, we believe this committee will offer a meaningful and unforgettable experience. This process can be demanding, but the knowledge gained and personal growth that come from it are very rewarding. Remember, every challenge is also an opportunity for growth, and your commitment will shape how far you go.

If this is your first time, you may encounter some difficulties. However, your moderator, director, and fellow delegates are here to support you. We look forward to seeing the ideas, energy, and innovation you will bring to this committee. Our goal is to create a productive and respectful environment where every voice matters. We truly anticipate this Model of the United Nations and hope you have a fantastic time.

Regards,

Daniel Sánchez & Dario Garcia

### **History of committee**

The United Nations General Assembly is one of the six chief organs of the United Nations and remains the sole body whereby all 193 Member States have equal representation. The UN Charter, established in 1945 in the aftermath of World War II, called for a global forum for multilateral dialogue, collective decision-making, and international cooperation. Its inaugural session took place on January 10, 1946, in London, with representatives from the original 51 Member States marking the birth of a new era of diplomacy centered on inclusivity and peaceful engagement.

Over the decades, the General Assembly has evolved into the chief deliberative, policy-making, and representative organ of the United Nations. It works on the principle of "one country, one vote." It

provides a unique platform for all countries to engage in shaping global norms and responses to pressing challenges, regardless of their size, economic strength, or political power. Although the resolutions adopted by the GA are not legally binding, they carry significant moral, political, and symbolic weight. This often influences international agendas, helps mobilize action, and guides the conduct of states.

Historically, the General Assembly has played a vital role in decolonization efforts, the creation of new international treaties, global economic development, and the promotion of human rights. It remains a forum where international crises are debated openly. For example, this summer, President of the General Assembly Philémon Yang opened a special session with condemnation of continuing violence in Gaza after over 20 months of conflict. He criticized the UN Security Council for not making sure that peace and security were guaranteed, adding that the humanitarian situation was "unacceptable" due to disastrous shortages of food, water, and medical supplies. His comments highlighted the critical role the General Assembly can play as a moral voice when other international mechanisms are mired in political deadlock. Yang emphasized a high-level meeting next September in New York to revive the efforts toward a two-State solution, illustrating the consistent focus of the General Assembly on multilateral diplomacy and resolution of conflicts.

### **History Of the topic**

Corruption and the lack of transparency in military spending are global, deeply rooted in centuries of unchecked authority and a lack of oversight. As far back as the 18th and 19th centuries, monarchies and fledgling nation-states financed huge armies with minimal financial scrutiny. Military commanders and private contractors often acted with impunity, profiting from loosely monitored expenditures and opaque procurement practices. This environment laid the foundation for corruption within defense establishments worldwide.

But by the 20th century, most especially during the Cold War, it became a problem. The U.S.-Soviet arms race gave defense budgets unprecedented growth. Large-scale spending was justified as essential to national security, making military procurement and research often opaque to concerned citizens. The technical sophistication of developing armaments, together with secrecy, provided ideal conditions for corruption, mismanagement, and inflation of contracts. And at the same time, health, education, and infrastructure segments within the domestically based economy often found themselves with tiny budgets in comparison with those of military expenditures.

A series of high-profile scandals has brought the systemic nature of defense corruption to light. In the Philippines, for instance, the so-called "Pabaon" scandal of 2011 revealed that top military officials had illicitly pocketed millions of dollars from the defense budget. In several post-Soviet states, such as Ukraine and Russia, the absence of strong institutional controls, coupled with embedded patronage networks and close ties between military elites and private arms dealers, have facilitated the entrenchment of defense corruption. Even in developed countries, like the United States, major defense contractors have been charged with bribery, fraud, overpricing, and supplying substandard equipment.

### **Introduction to the topic**

In 2023, global military expenditure rose to the highest ever level of \$2.4 trillion according to data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. This marked the eighth consecutive year of rising defense budgets worldwide, highlighting the growing priority many governments place on military capability amid geopolitical tensions, regional conflicts, and emerging security threats. Yet the steady increase in spending has not been matched by equivalent improvements in transparency or accountability.

In many countries, defense budgets are among the least scrutinized sectors of national expenditure. Poor reporting practices, secret procurement procedures, combined with weak parliamentary oversight, provide ample opportunities for corruption. Such opacity can result in inflated contracts, diversion of funds, favoritism in procurement, and illicit trade in weapons. More broadly, it can enable the government to justify disproportionate military spending at the expense of social development.

Lack of transparency in military spending is not solely a domestic issue of governance; it poses direct risks to international peace and security. In regions already suffering from political instability or armed conflict, opaque defense spending can accelerate arms races, reinforce mistrust between neighboring states, and complicate diplomatic efforts toward conflict resolution. Globally, it undermines progress in disarmament, non-proliferation, and confidence-building measures, since states cannot reliably ascertain the capabilities or intentions of one another.

Therefore, transparency and accountability of the defense budget are highly important. Transparency in procurement processes would avoid inflated contracts, ensure ethical behavior of military personnel and contractors, and restore public confidence in national defense institutions. Further, such accountability can be enhanced by international monitoring mechanisms through reporting standards, peer reviews, and cooperation with international organizations such as the UN or regional bodies. Greater openness in military spending reduces corruption and contributes to global peace, stability, and responsible use of public resources.

## **Key players**

1. **United States:** With the status of one of the globe's biggest spenders in the military sector, the United States plays a pivotal role in military spending transparency debates. The United States defense budget far outweighs the others, and its military spending is ever subject to local and worldwide scrutiny due to its magnitude and because it experiences some distinct challenges.
2. **Russia:** Russia also spends heavily on the military, and its defense spending and procurements have been criticized for lack of transparency. Corruption and transparent military spending are also perennial issues in Russia, with claims about defense contract mismanagement and politicization.

3. United States: The United States is the world's largest military force and the largest NATO contributor with multinational defense obligations. The United States has collaborated in enhancing defense spending transparency, especially in the area of defense procurements and defense contracts.
4. China: Its defense expenditure in China continued at a high rate driven by its military modernization plan and its expanding role in the security issues in the world. Nevertheless, the failure to be transparent in fully spending its military budget and its procurement policies remains bothersome.
5. France: France is among the largest military powers in Europe and a key contributor in the defense policies in the European Union and in NATO. The government in France has been pressed for more transparency in its military expenditure, particularly in the conditions of its interventions in the Middle East and Africa.

## **UN ACTIONS**

The United Nations has been important in encouraging transparency and accountability in defence spending as aspects of broader anti-corruption campaigns and confidence-building between states. Some significant measures that can help representatives make recommendations include attempts by the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), both of which are committed to reducing spending on the military and bringing transparency to defense budgets. The UN Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which regulates conventional weapons trade globally, recognizes the transparency of arms transfers. The treaty calls on states to provide comprehensive reports of weapons imports and exports so that they can be able to track military expenditures along with preventing illicit trade in weapons. The UN Security Council has also addressed the link between military expenditure and regional security, mostly in conflict zones. Various resolutions of the Security Council, such as Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security, demand transparency in the budget of the military and peacekeeping missions so that the money is invested in constructing peace and security instead of conflict.

On the solutions side, the committee will have to push themselves to promote international cooperation for harmonized reporting channels like the OECD Government Financial Statistics (GFS) platform to facilitate countries to track and report military expenditure accurately. Also, promoting more involvement of civil society in tracking defense budgets exercises and insisting on independent audit of military expenditure would foster accountability. The delegates should consider tabling confidence-building measures in regional and bilateral fora, urging governments to commit themselves publicly to transparent defense budget practices. Finally, suggesting the creation of a UN-led international military expenditure observatory could provide for independent verification and encourage the states to voluntarily publish data on their defense spending, decreasing the secrecy and confidence-building in the international community.

## **Current status**

Current global military spending is at an all-time high, and transparency is needed, which currently is short of voluntary reports and private equity control of the arms trade. Some of the most significant initiatives include the UN voluntary system of reporting military spending, with very little participation and sporadic reporting, and initiatives such as studies and calls for improvement by Transparency International on good government and data access. The focus is on increasing transparency and confidence-building measures to build trust and, hopefully, reduce arms, but significant hurdles exist.

Central to the problem is the voluntariness of international reporting agencies. The United Nations Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditure—designed to enhance transparency and confidence-building among states—is suffering from consistently low levels of compliance and often incomplete and sporadic reports. Simultaneously, rising dominance of corporate mergers and private equity in the arms market is degrading transparency as well. Such changes tend to hide necessary financial and operational information from the public, and thus money is difficult to trace and determine who actually gets to gain from world arms production and sales.

Initiatives to boost oversight and management are being undertaken against such threats. Of special interest is the work of Transparency International, which studies and makes recommendations for the aim of promoting transparency, reducing corruption risk, and enhancing public access to defense information. Measures of confidence-building such as mutual disclosure and improved data transfer are becoming widely accepted as indispensable tools in international confidence-building and facilitating arms control. But these efforts are confronted with daunting political and institutional barriers, and unless governments and industry players make more firm commitments to participating, real progress toward transparency is at a standstill.

# GA Background Paper Topic B

Committee: GA

Topic: evaluating the impact of classified military programs on global trust and accountability

Written by: Daniel Sanchez and Dario Garcia

Moderator: Dario Lorenzo Garcia Esparza

Director: Daniel Sanchez Enriquez

## History of committee

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Historically, the General Assembly has played a vital role in decolonization efforts, the creation of new international treaties, global economic development, and the promotion of human rights. It remains a forum where international crises are debated openly. For example, this summer, President of the General Assembly Philémon Yang opened a special session with condemnation of continuing violence in Gaza after over 20 months of conflict. He criticized the UN Security Council for not making sure that peace and security were guaranteed, adding that the humanitarian situation was "unacceptable" due to disastrous shortages of food, water, and medical supplies. His comments highlighted the critical role the General Assembly can play as a moral voice when other international mechanisms are mired in political deadlock. Yang emphasized a high-level meeting next September in New York to revive the efforts toward a two-State solution, illustrating the consistent focus of the General Assembly on multilateral diplomacy and resolution of conflicts.

## History Of the topic

The problem of classified military programs has been a large subject of global debate, as these operations often occur under the concealment of secrecy, limiting public observations and accountability. Historically, the rise of covert military operations can be traced back to the Cold War era, during which both superpowers, the USA and the Soviet Union, led a variety of surreptitious military activities to maintain national security and strategic advantage. These programs were often limited in secrecy, raising concerns about transparency, ethics, and international trust.

During the Cold War, covert military programs were the foundation of espionage and hegemony. In the United States, government agencies like the CIA had numerous top-secret programs involving political manipulation, spying, and sabotage in foreign nations. The Soviet Union, equally devoted to secrecy, had its own intelligence apparatus, including the KGB, for espionage, particularly on nuclear research and military technology. Their operations were usually secret from the public for national security reasons, but their effects were great, extending to international relations and even regional instability. Their ethical impacts, such as the infringement on human rights and the infringement on sovereign states, were not often discussed then.

With the post-Cold War world, the nature of secret war activities evolved with the emergence of such new technology as drones and cyber warfare. The War on Terror ushered in a new era of secret war, with more nations relying on targeted killings and intelligence-driven military interventions. While these programs were typically justified in terms of the necessity to combat terrorism and ensure national security, they still contradicted concerns about accountability, spying, and abuse of power. The secrecy of the operation typically led to violations of international law and strained diplomatic relations. With increasing global awareness of these secret programs, the question remains how to balance the need for secrecy with a greater need for transparency, ethical accountability, and observance of global standards.

### **Introduction to the topic**

Classified defense programs, or what are known as secret defense programs or covert military operations, are a central element of national security policies in the majority of countries. The programs are, by nature, covered in secrecy to maintain sensitive information related to national defense, intelligence activities, and strategic military influence. But this secrecy surrounding the operations can carry significant impacts on world trust, accountability, and international relations.

The debate surrounding such programs has centered on how national security and the international community's right to hold states accountable are balanced. Secrecy concerning such programs is often the cause of ethical issues, as suggested by queries about their legality and susceptibility to abuse. Publicity may cause suspicion, violate diplomatic relations, and break confidence between states.

One of the strongest examples of the impact of secret military projects on global confidence has been in the Cold War, and more precisely, between the large-scale use of secret missions by the United States and Soviet Union. Both superpowers have employed espionage, proxy warfare, and intelligence gathering, typically without notifying or discussing with other nations. This legacy of clandestine operations was continued through the post Cold War era, as the majority of governments across the world utilized secret military programs to advance their geopolitical interests.



## **Key players**

1. United States: United States is the most notable country in clandestine military activities due to its large intelligence and covert operations infrastructure, including the CIA, NSA, and special operations forces. Its global surveillance, cyber operations, and covert military actions set international standards. Major leaks, such as the Snowden revelations, reconfigured international debates about privacy and oversight, while making the U.S. a leader as well as a controversial actor in intelligence oversight

2. United Kingdom: Follows closely as a central member of the Five Eyes alliance, sharing intelligence networks and technologies with the U.S. while maintaining its own highly capable agencies, MI6 and GCHQ. Its cooperation in global surveillance programs enhances collective security but also subjects it to scrutiny over privacy and proportionality

3. France: Its independent intelligence and defense networks, notably the DGSE, which conducts classified operations across Africa and the Middle East. Its approach blends strategic secrecy with European Union oversight norms, allowing France to influence international expectations on the lawful conduct of covert missions.

4. Russia: Primarily through its aggressive use of military intelligence, cyber warfare, and disinformation campaigns that erode global trust and challenge accountability mechanisms. Its secrecy-heavy system demonstrates how classified programs can damage legitimacy when detached from transparency or international norms.

5. Australia: Australia stands out as a regional intelligence leader and a crucial Five Eyes member, operating advanced surveillance facilities such as Pine Gap and contributing to global security coordination. Unlike more opaque states, Australia's oversight frameworks and democratic safeguards give it a reputation for balancing national secrecy with accountability

## **UN ACTIONS**

The United Nations has taken several actions related to transparency and accountability in military activities, which can guide solutions for addressing classified military programs. Through initiatives such as the UN Register of Conventional Arms, established in 1991, the UN promotes voluntary reporting of arms transfers to build trust and reduce misunderstandings among states. The UN Office for Disarmament Affairs also works to strengthen confidence-building measures and supports treaties

like the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Biological Weapons Convention , which include mechanisms for monitoring secretive programs.

Additionally, the Group of Governmental Experts on cybersecurity and emerging technologies encourages transparency and responsible behavior in sensitive military and cyber operations. These actions align with Sustainable Development Goal 16, which emphasizes peace, justice, and strong institutions. Therefore, the committee should focus on promoting responsible secrecy, developing verification mechanisms, enhancing international cooperation, and ensuring that national security does not come at the expense of global trust and accountability.

### **Current status**

Nowadays, transparency and accountability in the military domain are important issues on a global scale, because of increasing technological development and changes in the geopolitical landscape. Although the United Nations encourages voluntary reporting regimes, such as the UN Register on Conventional Arms and the Arms Trade Treaty, weaknesses remain. One challenging barrier includes the increased complexity and non-transparency of emerging military technologies, including cyber warfare tools, AI in defence systems and autonomous weapons. These new technologies are frequently created in classified programs, and their explosive spread poses new challenges for arms control and international stability.

Additionally, 2 tensions between major powers, especially in areas with longstanding contention or security anxiety (such as East Asia or the Middle East), adds more challenges to openness. For security reasons and the argument that sovereignty must be safeguarded to protect valuable information about military operations as well, so it becomes an environment of distrust. In order to address these issues, international agreements and standards pertaining to military transparency are developing; however, comprehensive enforcement mechanisms are still lacking. Though they are significant steps, the UN's current initiatives, such as the Group of Governmental Experts on cybersecurity and confidence-building measures, have compliance and enforcement issues. States face a difficult balancing act in preserving national security while simultaneously promoting international trust and accountability due to the quick speed of technological advancement and the strategic significance of military secrecy.

When developing solutions to the problem of classified military programs, delegates should take into account how these factors affect the dynamics of current global security. Please take it into consideration delegates, it's in your hands to solve this crisis as soon as possible.

### **Questions**

1. How do emerging military technologies (like AI, cyber warfare, autonomous weapons) challenge existing transparency and accountability mechanisms?
2. What are the risks associated with countries withholding information on military activities under the guise of national security concerns?
3. How can the UN balance national security interests with the need for transparency and trust among states?

4. What are the implications of the rapid development of new military technologies on existing arms control agreements, such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Biological Weapons Convention?
5. How can the UN improve international cooperation in monitoring and verifying sensitive military programs while respecting state sovereignty?
6. What role can regional organizations and bilateral agreements play in supporting or supplementing UN-led initiatives on military transparency?
7. How can countries be incentivized to participate more actively in transparency measures, such as the UN Register of Conventional Arms or the Arms Trade Treaty?

### **Quorum**

1. United States
2. United Kingdom
3. France
4. Australia
5. Canadá
6. Turkey
7. Greece
8. Netherlands
9. Belgium
10. Colombia
11. Ethiopia
12. Thailand
13. Philippines
14. New Zealand
15. South Africa
16. Russia
17. Luxembourg
18. Italy
19. Norway
20. Denmark
21. Sweden

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