Global Arms Trade, Human Rights, and Development

At the end of this session, you should be able to understand

- Global militarization and arms trade and its effect on national and international (in)security, human rights, and development
- Possible solutions against weapons proliferation, arms trade, and global militarization and its obstacles

What is Peace? (UNESCO definition)

- Peace is a value to be realized in conditions of justice, equity, respect for human rights, non-violent conflict resolution, tolerance of diversity, human harmony with the biosphere, and democratic procedures for achieving these conditions.
- These values form a Culture of Peace

Cost of International Arms Trade

- One third of poorly resourced countries spend more on arms than on education
- Two thirds of poorly resourced countries spend more on arms than on health
- Cycles of underdevelopment are maintained by the arms trade:
  - debt ➔ poverty ➔ overpopulation ➔ disease ➔ deforestation ➔ conflict/war ➔ arms trade ➔ debt ➔ poverty….

Lack of Transparency of the “deadly business” in Arms

- Only 7 countries currently publish data on small arms exports
- Example: UK shipment to Indonesia reported “an export licence was granted for 6 water cannons plus associated equipment”
- Associated equipment were in fact 310 armoured personnel carriers

The Costs of Militarism

- Global military spending exceeds $1 trillion annually
- U.S. defense budget for 2000 was $291 billion or about $2,000 for each person in the United States
- Factors underlying military spending
  - The Cold War era confrontation U.S. vs. Soviet Union
  - Post-Cold War redefinition of U.S. hegemony ➔ "Bush Doctrine"
    - remain unchallenged superpower
    - pre-emptive & preventive strikes
    - unilateral if necessary, multilateral if possible
  - Military-industrial complex = political alliance involving the federal government, the Pentagon & U.S. defense industries

The Costs of Militarization

- Military spending takes away from civil projects/tasks
- Material resources
- Human capital
- Taxes
- Investment
- A society’s infrastructure suffers from cuts & neglect
  - Education, welfare, health….
  - Transportation and communication networks, energy/power grids…
  - Environmental protection, water safety….
  - Legal system/prisons, updating voting machines…
  - Peaceful space exploration, other technologies….
- Foreign policy options & global activities are reduced
  - Peaceful foreign aid, training, emergency relief….
  - United Nations dues & other contributions to international organizations….

Suggested Strategies to control legal & illegal Arms Trading
- Strengthen the UN’s control over international arms trading
- Give poor countries a better voice in the exclusionary 5-member club of the Security Council
- Pressure governments of arms exporting countries to act against this “war against children”
- Establish an International Police Force integrated with national forces to address illegal trading and implement existing international laws utilising the International Criminal Court
- Include into control & transparency regime banks, brokers, shipping agents, money launderers, manufacturers, multinational companies
- Control borders and transportation
- Loans for weapons for poor countries to be subject to UN approval
- International weapons branding system to control flows

Report of UN Secretary Kofi Annan (July 2000)
- Urges arms companies to set up a code of conduct to prevent arms dealing with parties which are responsible for “gross violations of the rights of children”
- Suggests that the industry should establish a monitoring system to ensure that its weapons are not used to violate children’s rights

Responses to Proposals of Conventional and WMD Arms Control
- Lack of will & interest among “big players” to follow through with an international arms control regime, arms registration, economic conversion
Reasons:
- Supplier cartels and Military-Industrial Complex reject government intrusion into “free trade” ➔ political alliance involving the federal government, the Pentagon & U.S. defense industries
- No interest of hegemonic state(s) to give up WMD monopoly & control of arms trade
- International treaties are seen as obstacles to "national security" What is questionable about this assumption? What will other states learn from this?
  - Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (revoked by U.S. government under GW Bush)
  - Chemical Weapons Convention (not signed by U.S. gvt. under GW Bush)
  - Biological Weapons Convention (not signed by U.S. gvt. under GW Bush)
  - Treaty Banning Antipersonnel Mines (not signed by U.S. gvt. under GW Bush)
- Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (canceled by U.S. gvt. under GW Bush
- International Criminal Court (not signed by U.S. gvt. under GW Bush
- Kyoto Protocol on global warming (not signed by U.S. gvt. under GW Bush
- Exception: U.S. helped to improve safeguards in former Soviet Union by providing money & technical expertise. This was seen as supporting U.S. "national security"

Summary: Globalization & Violence
- Character of war may change, as it has in the past, but causes of war will not disappear in a world that still is relying on the rule of the strongest and NOT the rule of law
- New forms of violence will appear
- New actors that can wield force (symmetric and/or asymmetric) will rise
- Globalization means many more entities have access to tools of violence, and are likely to use them for profit as well as political power.