DISEC TOPIC SYNOPSIS:

Regulating Artificial Intelligence in Weapon Production

I. Topic Background

The rapid advancement of technology in the form of artificial intelligence (AI) has drastically improved the life of many. In the past couple of years, AI has revolutionized countless industries and quickly made its way into the daily lives of people around the world. Along with this swift change came the unforeseen issues of the weaponization of AI. The lack of predictability in the growth and mass implementation of AI poses a serious threat to international security, for AI has transformed into a weapon of destruction.

Contrary to popular belief, the concept of AI dates back to as early as the 1900s. The idea of "artificial intelligence" premiered in a fictional play written by the Czech playwright, Karel Čapek, and it was defined as "the science and engineering of making intelligent machines." Since then, AI matured through computer programming languages and various coding projects. Today, most people associate artificial intelligence with OpenAI, where the generated content closely mimics human writing. The weaponization of AI started around the same time, when AI technology was used in the development of lethal autonomous weapons systems. These systems allow the accurate and swift killing of targets without human intervention. Thus, limitation and regulation on the usage of AI in the military has been a controversial issue. Moreover, because of this dangerous and lucrative advantage that AI brings, countries around the world have started the "AI Race" as countries pour immense amounts of federal funding to devise the most advanced AI systems. For example, the two prominent players of the race are the United States and China, for each country has increased their reliance on AI for military superiority. The danger of this race lies within the fact that, when countries try to "shortcut" each other, they ignore precautions and, oftentimes, disregard the readiness of the system itself, thereby leading to unpredictable consequences, such as mass destruction and the proliferation of deadly weapons. Therefore, the weaponization of AI calls for regulation through international laws in order to prevent the further growth of destructive competitions.

Additionally, the prevention of the AI race is scarcely addressed on the global stage even though it presents a major threat to international security. As of today, no legal regulatory framework exists for AI; the only international law that remotely addresses AI is Article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which isn't focused on the weaponization of AI but rather privacy issues of users online. Moreover, the challenge isn't to ban further research and development of AI, but rather to draw the line between weaponization and fair-usage. For example, AI has been incorporated into the system of defense in numerous countries around the world, such as the Israeli Iron Dome, the German MANTIS, and the Swedish LEDS-150—all instances of AI used in peace-maintainence. Therefore, the concern that must be emphasized is how AI should be used and developed in the future in the military setting.

Unfortunately, the weaponization of AI is growing at an unprecedented rate. Since 2021, more than 80,000 surveillance drones and almost 2,000 attack drones have been purchased on the world market, making it the new deadly war weapon. Now, countries such as the United

Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, and Japan have poured large amounts of national funding towards investment in AI in order to not fall behind in the "AI Race." The competition of acquiring more drones and the most advanced AI technology in the military subsequently leads to the issue of "Drone Wars," where remotely piloted drones are used as weapons of mass destruction. Some appearances of this type of warfare is seen in the conflict in Gaza and attacks launched by Hamas against Israel.

Due to immediate adoptions of artificial intelligence for efficiency and innovation into modern society, little regulation is imposed on these technology systems, resulting in the weaponization of AI internationally. Advancements in technology are meant to improve the standards of living for the people; in order to ensure that technology systems do not turn into a weapon of mass destruction, a combined global effort is desperately called for.

Case Study 1: Libya Operation Peace Storm

In March 2020, the Libyan Army—forces backed by the Turkish government—commenced Operation Peace Storm, targeting military leader Khalifa Haftar, who had previously carried out several attacks against civilians in Tripoli for three consecutive days. As part of the operation, Libya reported several damages inflicted on Al-Watiya base, where Haftar's forces were located: destroyed warplanes, seized aircraft parts, and the capture of fighters and mercenaries stationed at the base.[8]

Prime Minister of Libya Faiez Serraj reported that the attacks were carried out using "self-propelled guns" and "lethal autonomous weapons systems." After further investigation, these systems appeared to have little connectivity between the operator and munition during the attack. As a result, the United Nations Security Council has classified this as the first documented use of lethal autonomous weapons powered by artificial intelligence.[8] Since then, the United Nations has organized case studies, prompted debates, and even petitioned for legal action against the use of artificial intelligence in fully autonomous weapons systems. These quarrels include the attack at Tripoli, as experts call into question the amount of connectivity between the operator and the weapons during these attacks, especially as these attacks could be classified as lethal.

However, despite the utilization of artificial intelligence weapons systems, Libya voted in favor of the 2023 Draft Resolution L.77, which raised concerns on the negative consequences of fully autonomous weapons systems.[9] Likewise, Libya is a member of the African Group that emphasizes support for a legally binding instrument on autonomous weapons systems, including but not limited to those that utilize AI in lethal decision-making. These legal frameworks include establishing "meaningful human control" over decisions that cost human lives, thereby suppressing the use of AI in these decisions. Seeing the nature of Operation Peace Storm as strategic conflict de-escalation, the United Nations Security Council saw no need to intervene in Libya's autonomous weapons usage.[7-9] Libya has not yet enacted any legal framework specifically targeted toward the use of AI in weapons systems, especially as the weapons used

did not damage any critical infrastructure or inflict significant human casualties, unlike other conflicts of concern.[9]

Case Study 2: Presence of AI in Civil War in Myanmar

Myanmar's coup in February of 2021 has sparked an ongoing civil war. Throughout the war, there have been many reported cases of human rights violations carried out by Myanmar's military controlled government. This violence is further exacerbated with the use of AI. The government has been utilizing AI to identify the "opposition" and pairing this information with drones to eliminate anyone who is deemed an enemy of the state.

Reports suggest that Myanmar is using AI facial recognition of rebel fighters as a cover up to carry out strikes on the Rohingya, an Islamic minority systematically persecuted by the government. Drones linked with this AI software have carried out discriminatory attacks on civilians. Other reports suggest that the algorithm used by the military is highly inaccurate with a framework with the purpose of carrying out random attacks on civilians. Since the start of the conflict in early 2021, there have been an estimated 2,000 drone strikes in Myanmar; however, experts believe that the real number is significantly greater.

These acts of blatant violence against civilians is driven by the lack of regulations on AI in drone warfare. The Burmese government has taken advantage of this fact, mass producing drones in an attempt to wipe out ethnic minorities and oppress free will. To truly crush all opposition, Burmese drones with an alternative algorithm, designed to target highly populated areas with precision are used. Even so, reports show that the accuracy of these drones are intentionally programmed to be off. The Burmese government has, moreover, reportedly used AI drones in suppressing protests. Myanmar's vast surveillance network directly feeds information to drones who run the calculations to launch precise attacks of large gatherings. The drone strikes with this algorithm causes serious infrastructure damage and massive amounts of loss of life.

Artificial intelligence does have its benefits in the modern world; nevertheless, when advanced technology systems are weaponized, they can be used to fuel ongoing human rights violations and targeted attacks on minorities and other ethnic groups.

II. Past UN Involvement

- In 2017, a letter from the Future Life Institute United Nations, which was also signed by 126 CEOs and founders of artificial intelligence corporations, who implored states to stop the autonomous weapons competition:
    - As of today, the only international law concerning the regulation of AI only places restrictions on violations of privacy.

- However, the UN Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) has a special Amended Protocol governed by the Group of Governmental Experts:

    - Officials meet annually to discuss weapons that pose harm to international security.
    - In the most recent meeting in 2023, officials met to discuss the issues of the autonomous weapons system, yet a uniformed agreement on how it should be regulated on an international level was not reached.

- On December 24, 2024, per recommendation of the First Committee, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 79/230, titled "Artificial intelligence in the military domain and its implications for international peace and security":
    - The first attempt at addressing the threat that AI poses on the global stage;
    - Opens up the conversation for stricter enforcements and regulations;

- A substantive report, (A/80/78), submitted by the Secretary-General dealt more specifically on the impacts of AI aside from the development of Autonomous Weapons Systems:
    - Contains the views and perspectives not just on the global level but also on the regional level through opinions and insights given by organizations, such as the Red Cross, Member States, and leaders of industries.

- The United Nations Institute of Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) also developed briefing material for negotiators and researchers.

- In a discussion initiated in 2017 by the GEE, 10 fundamental principles were laid out of concern for the rapid growth of AI in military settings:
    1) non-delegation of human responsibility
    2) accountability for the use of force in accordance with international law
    3) weapons reviews before deployment
    4) incorporation of physical, non-profliferation and cyber security safeguards,
    5) risk assessment and mitigation during technology development
    6) consideration for the use of emerging technologies in the area of LAWS in compliance with IHL
    7) non-harm to civilian research and development and use
    8) the need to adapt a non-anthropomorphic perspective on AI
    9) the appropriateness of CCW as a framework for dealing with the issue
    10) non-harm to civilian research and development and use

III. Bloc Positions

Western Bloc

AI weapon systems are mass produced in the Western bloc, primarily the United States and NATO. Due to heavy use of these systems in Western militaries, the Western bloc focuses primarily on promoting the responsible use of AI weapon systems through adopting regulations and frameworks.The Western bloc has established extensive guidelines on the exportation of these weapon systems to other countries. AI weapon systems serve as a preventive measure in the Western bloc, so these nations should focus on finding a balance between military power and following an ethical framework.

Eastern Bloc

Although AI weaponization in the Eastern Bloc is less transparent, many countries are bulk producing and selling weapons consisting of AI technology to other regions. With the misuse of these weapons being more common, such as cyberattacks, concerns of the weapons use on civilians emerge. Countries in this bloc should focus on de-escalation on the risk, internal stability and addressing international concerns of human rights violations. Military advantages and strategic necessity are essential focuses of the Eastern bloc that protects both the political and territorial borders while downplaying the ethical legitimacy of AI.

Latin American and Caribbean Bloc

As of now, artificial intelligence in weapons production is a relatively new concept to the countries of the South American bloc. Countries in this bloc should work together on forming regulations of these weapons and support sustainable relations instead of dominance.

SWANA and African Bloc

As tension rises in the SWANA and African bloc, the demand for high quality advanced weapons has significantly increased. Many countries in this bloc do not have the supplies of the economy to mass produce AI weapons; however, for the countries who are supplied the AI weapons or have the necessary funding to obtain such equipment, they hold immense political dominance within the region. In this bloc, countries prioritize negotiations with other countries in the region on maintaining peace.

IV. Possible Solutions

The growing popularity of AI has brought on unforeseen conveniences in daily life, as well as an unpredictable threat to the future of global peace. Due to the use of AI with malicious intent in the military, DISEC recommends the implementation of prevention measures through the form of legal frameworks that strictly prohibit the weaponization of AI out of humanitarian concerns for international security. To not give leverage to countries that seek to commit crimes against humanity, proper legislation should be implemented to result in official punishment and recognition of war crimes. While discussing potential solutions for this topic, the committee

recommends delegates to stick to their country policy as it is important to address the issue within the delegates' respective country. Aside from implementing preventative measures, the committee highly urges delegates to take into consideration the long-term solutions. Addressing the root cause of the weaponization of AI, the committee encourages delegates to take into account the economic factors behind the proposed solutions. In other words, the allocation of funds to a particular area associated with the solutions should be reasonable. Factors like political environment and economic well-being should all be considered prior to the proposal of the solution. Solutions are expected to not only be applicable to the delegate's country but also to the representing bloc.

DISEC urges delegates to address these three key issues in their solutions: international compliance to a proposed legal framework, establishment of ethical AI principles, and transparency of AI development. These three factors are the major causes of harmful competition in the weaponization of AI among the international community. To elaborate, international compliance creates the foundation for setting a legal framework in controlling AI, which is crucial to holding countries accountable to the same standard to avoid harmful competition and threats to security. In addition, the establishment of a set of ethical AI principles is a necessary step to ensure there is accountability and traceability behind the use of AI in the military setting. These principles should be agreed upon and adhered to by member states and individual weapons users alike. Last but not least, transparency in the process of AI development is a problem that must be addressed to ensure that countries can avoid engaging in harmful competitions, posing threats to international security.

In conclusion, consider the establishment of a legal framework, ethical principles, and transparency to target the issue of the growing threat of "AI Race." The weaponization of AI threatens the lives of ordinary citizens. Unfortunately, the lack of awareness and discussion around these issues is not only problematic and deadly for countries with advanced technology, but also for countries in every corner of the world.

V. Questions to Consider

1. What is the necessary level of "meaningful human control" required when using A.I. weapons systems?
2. Should weapons manufacturers or users be responsible for illicit harm caused by A.I. weapons systems?
3. What role should the United Nations play in regulating the development of A.I. military technology?
4. In what circumstances will the United Nations intervene, should there be competition between states involving the militarization of A.I?
5. How do A.I. weapons control agreements compare with the previous agreements on nuclear and chemical arms control?

6. What can the United Nations do to prevent the exploitation of developing nations through A.I. weapons systems?
7. What steps must be taken to promote education and awareness of the threats that artificial intelligence poses in conflict?
8. What security measures should be in place to prevent non-state actors or terrorists from hijacking A.I. weapons systems?
9. What risks do malfunctions in A.I. weapons systems pose, and how can they be prevented by member states?

VI. Works Cited

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