
HMDC Presents...
SPECPOL: Corporate Surveillance, Accountability, and Privacy
Mei, Daniel. You are delegates in the SPECPOL committee. We must prepare.
We are ready, Coach.
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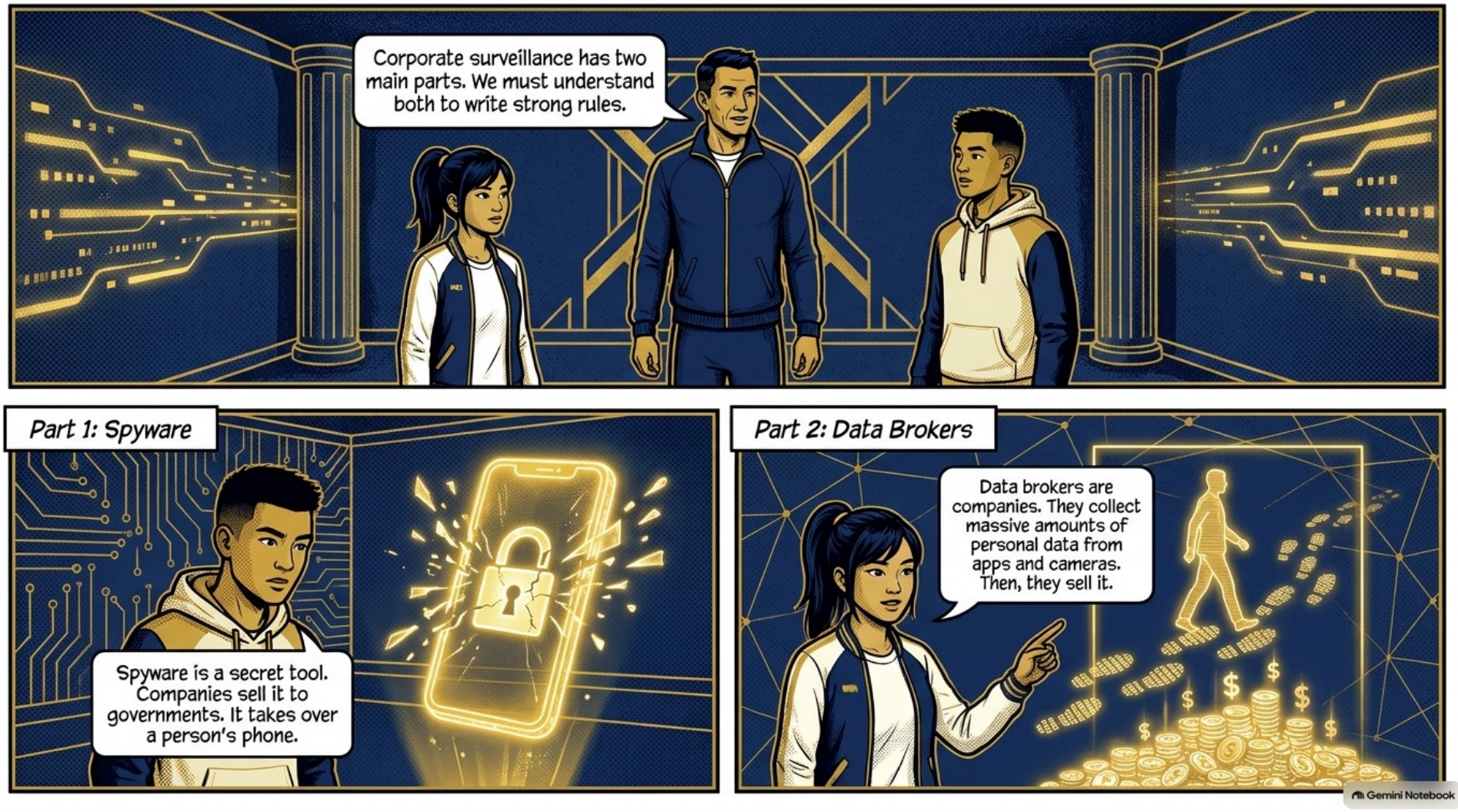
Corporate surveillance has two main parts. We must understand both to write strong rules.
Part 1: Spyware
Spyware is a secret tool. Companies sell it to governments. It takes over a person's phone.
Part 2: Data Brokers
Data brokers are companies. They collect massive amounts of personal data from apps and cameras. Then, they sell it.
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Spyware harms specific targets, like journalists and political opposition figures.
At least 189 journalists were targeted with Pegasus spyware. (Source: United Nations Human Rights Office, August 4, 2022)
This is a global threat. At least 74 governments bought spyware tools, and 30 of them were democracies.
Source: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 14, 2023
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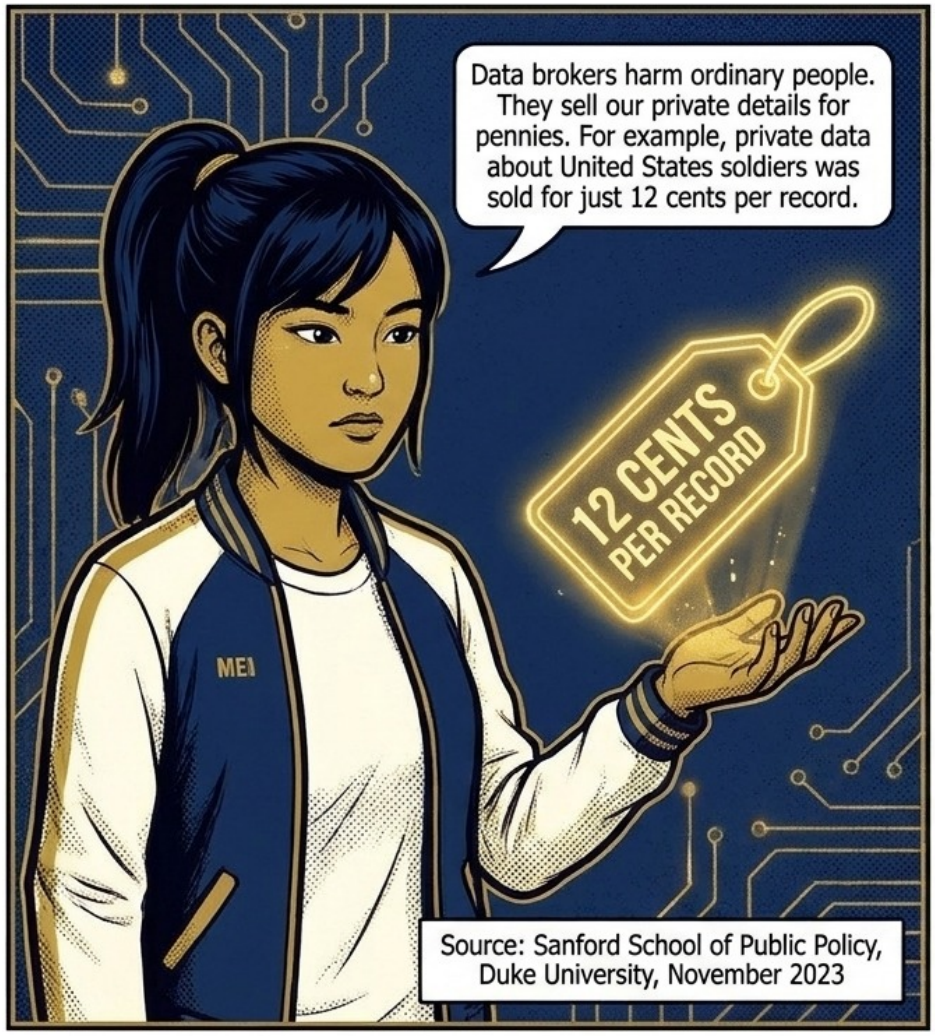
Data brokers harm ordinary people. They sell our private details for pennies. For example, private data about United States soldiers was sold for just 12 cents per record.
12 CENTS PER RECORD
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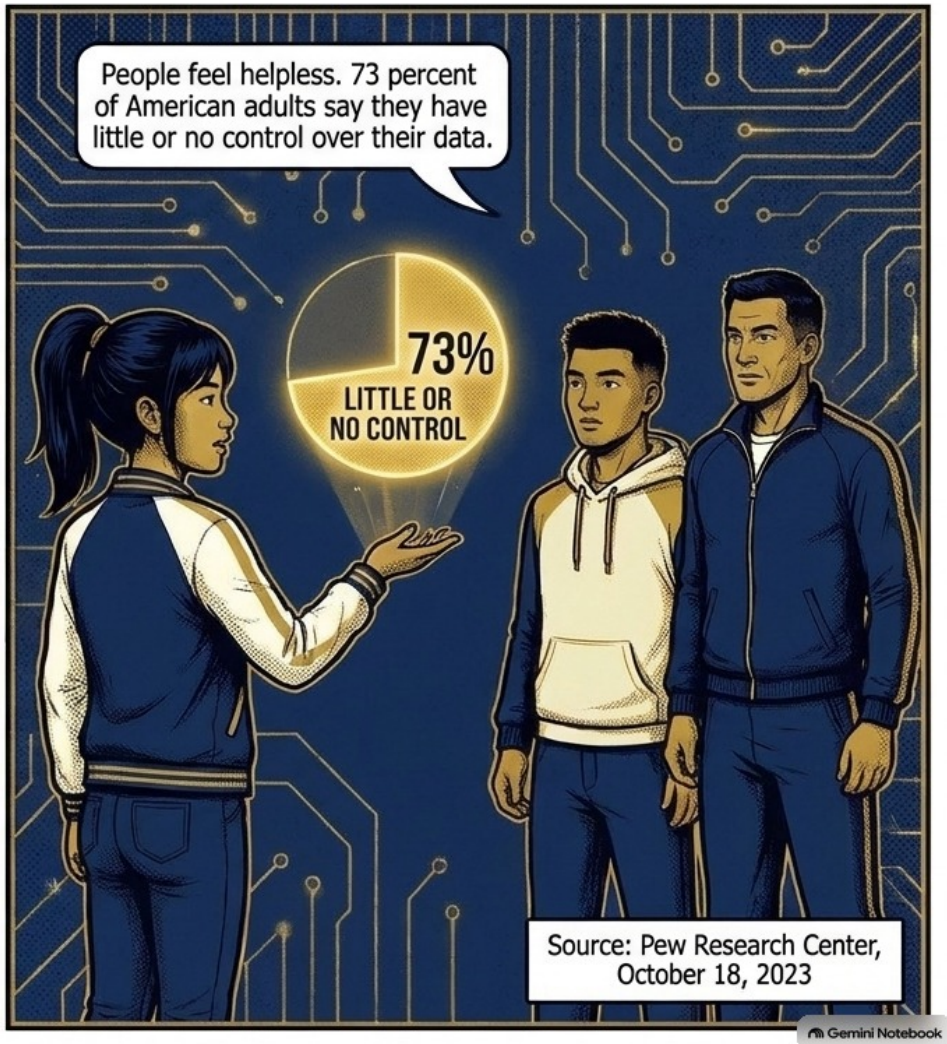
Source: Sanford School of Public Policy, Duke University, November 2023


People feel helpless. 73 percent of American adults say they have little or no control over their data.
73%
LITTLE OR NO CONTROL
Source: Pew Research Center, October 18, 2023
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The UN Record: Human Rights
In 2011, the UN approved the Guiding Principles. These are rules companies may choose to follow. They are voluntary.
2011
In 2013, the General Assembly passed its very first digital privacy resolution.
2013
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By 2024, the UN officially named the private surveillance industry as a major threat to human rights.
2024
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The UN Record: Treaties
The UN agrees quickly on security. The Cybercrime Convention was adopted in 2024. It relies on each country's own laws to protect people.
Cybercrime Convention
But rules for companies are much harder. The UN started writing a Business and Human Rights Treaty in 2014. It is still unfinished.
Business and Human Rights Treaty
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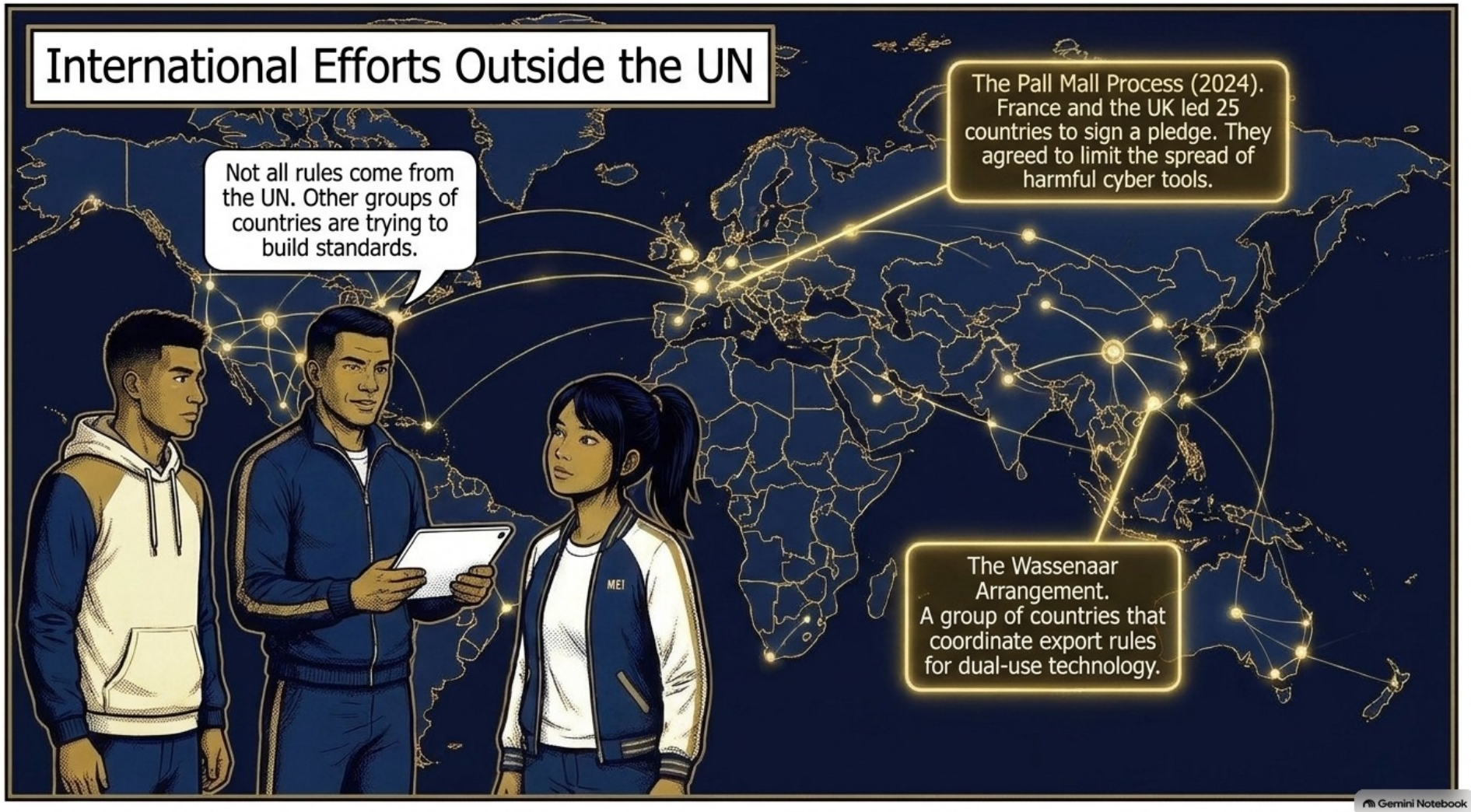
International Efforts Outside the UN
Not all rules come from the UN. Other groups of countries are trying to build standards.
The Pall Mall Process (2024). France and the UK led 25 countries to sign a pledge. They agreed to limit the spread of harmful cyber tools.
The Wassenaar Arrangement. A group of countries that coordinate export rules for dual-use technology.
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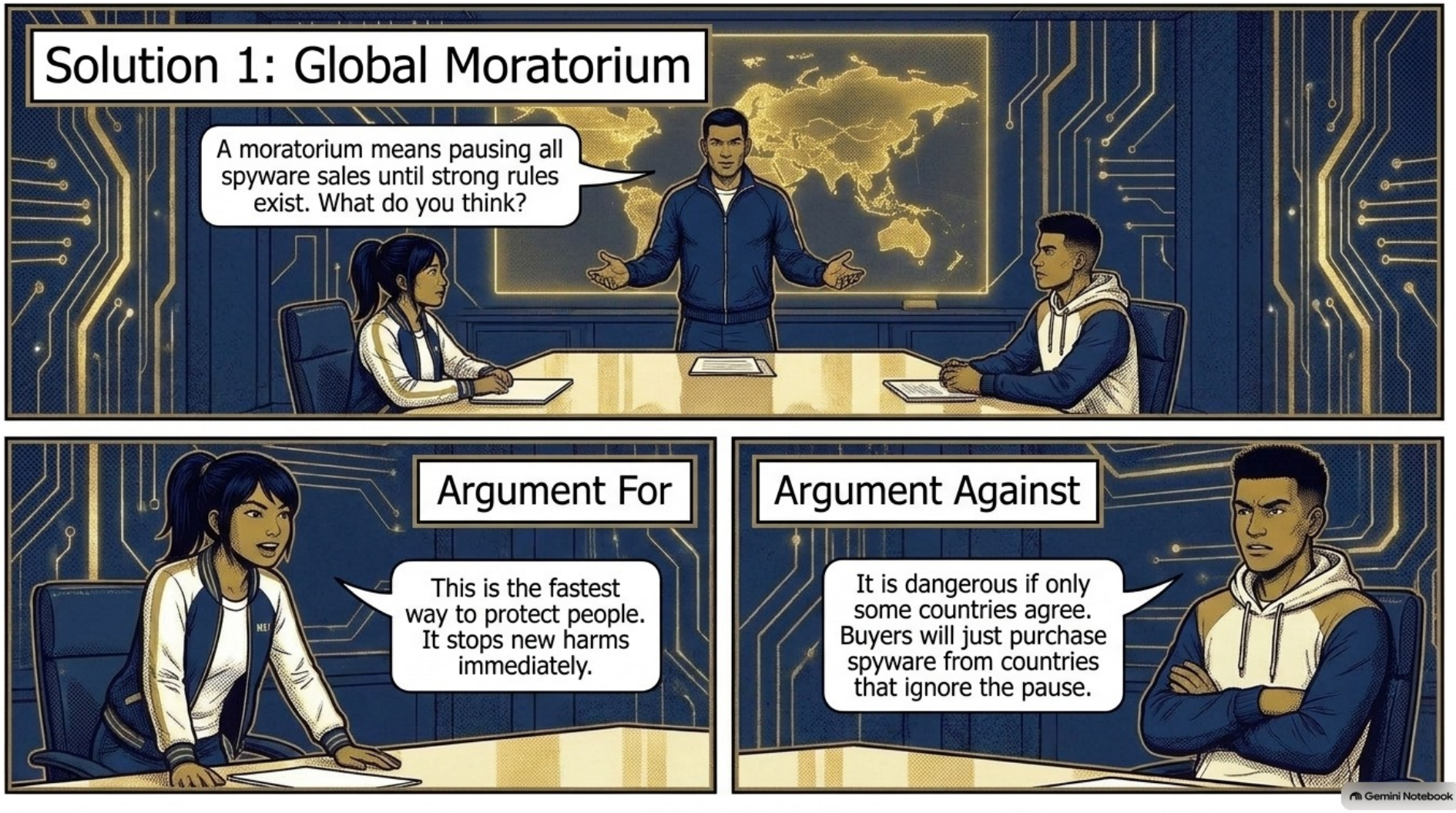
Solution 1: Global Moratorium
A moratorium means pausing all spyware sales until strong rules exist. What do you think?
Argument For
This is the fastest way to protect people. It stops new harms immediately.
Argument Against
It is dangerous if only some countries agree. Buyers will just purchase spyware from countries that ignore the pause.
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Solution 2: Export Controls
Human Rights Check
Approved
Denied
Governments can force companies to get a human rights permit before selling surveillance tools abroad.


Argument For
Many countries already have export license systems. We can use tools that already exist.


Argument Against
Joining international export groups is a choice. Also, these systems were built for military security, not for protecting human rights.
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Solution 3: Binding Treaty
Making international laws that force companies to answer for harms.
BINDING TREATY
Argument For: A treaty creates clear, binding laws. Companies can no longer hide behind voluntary guidelines.
Argument Against: These treaties take decades to write. Many wealthy countries refuse to sign them, making them weak.
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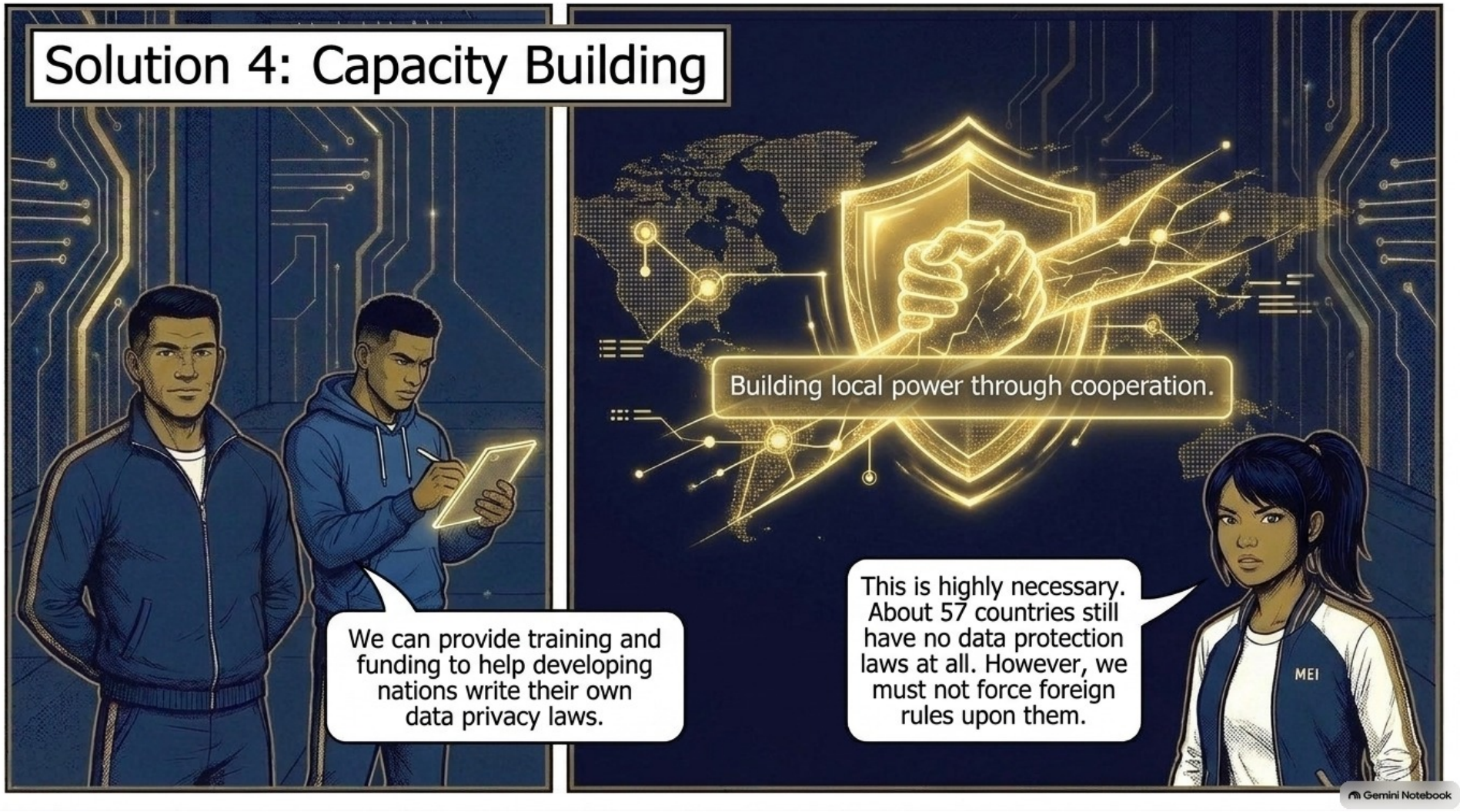
Solution 4: Capacity Building
We can provide training and funding to help developing nations write their own data privacy laws.
Building local power through cooperation.
This is highly necessary. About 57 countries still have no data protection laws at all. However, we must not force foreign rules upon them.
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MUN Skills: The Core Trade-off
In the SPECPOL committee, you face a difficult challenge. You cannot protect only one side.
Security.
Nations have a duty to keep citizens safe from severe threats.
S
P
Privacy.
Citizens have a human right to communicate safely without harmful surveillance.
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Your solutions must protect human rights while respecting a nation's need to remain secure.
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MUN Skills: Writing a Speech
Mei, how do you construct a speech for the committee?
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Keep it simple. Speak in short, plain sentences. Do not use complex words.
1. Hook the audience with a striking fact.
2. State the exact problem your country sees.
3. Name one clear, specific solution.
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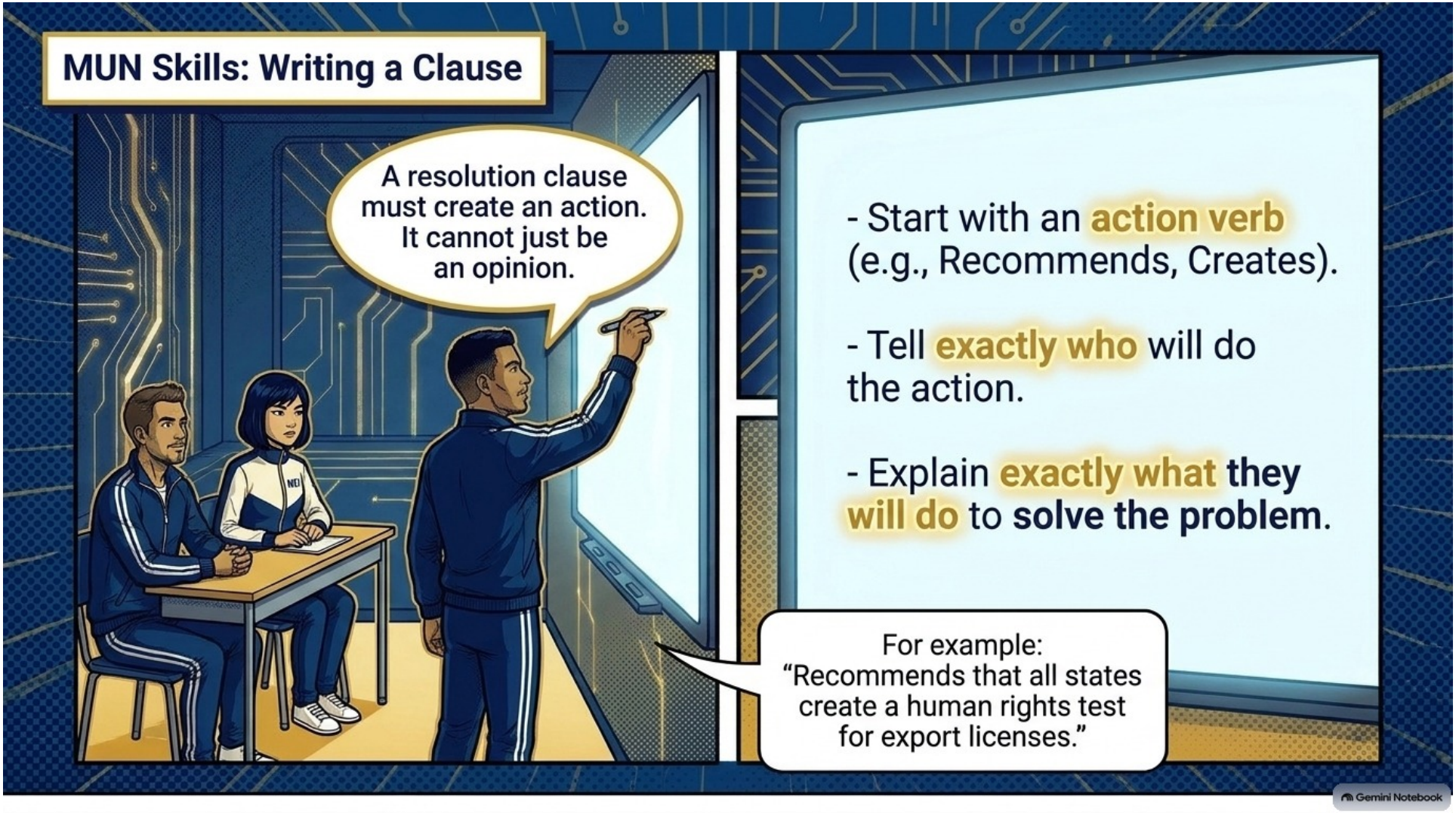
MUN Skills: Writing a Clause
A resolution clause must create an action. It cannot just be an opinion.
- Start with an action verb (e.g., Recommends, Creates).
- Tell exactly who will do the action.
- Explain exactly what they will do to solve the problem.
For example: "Recommends that all states create a human rights test for export licenses."
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Ready for Committee
You understand the harms. You know the solutions.
You possess the skills to debate.
We will balance security and privacy.
We are ready for Harvard MUN.
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Good luck in SPECPOL!
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