

## First Political Debates the Fate of Child Soldiers

On the first night of the McKendree Model United Nations Invitational, the First Political Committee wasted no time in choosing order of topics. The delegates caucused to discuss resolutions, beginning with Africa, and then commenced with Panama's resolution discussing child soldiers. Panama noted in their resolution that there are countless child soldiers in Africa, either fighting for rebel war lords or used as sex slaves. In the operative clauses, the resolution suggested the creation of agencies or boarding schools to support these children by providing them with a home and education. The delegate from Iraq expressed his concern that the resolution had nothing new to offer, as this committee discusses similar topics every year. In the following pro speech, the delegate from Guatemala conceded although the topic of child soldiers is common, it is the most pertinent issue in Africa at this time.

Following a brief caucus, the delegate from South Africa said he thought this resolution contained strong preambular and operative clauses. The delegate

thought the idea of creating boarding schools was something he had not heard before. Several delegates voiced their concerns that placing hundreds of children in a boarding school makes it a blaring target for war lords. After several speakers, the delegates concluded that this threat was minimal, and no action was taken at this time. Other delegates stated that measures needed to be taken to prevent these children from becoming child soldiers in the first place, and the committee quickly passed amendment 1st/I/1C to solve this problem. During the debate, the committee called for many caucuses, after almost every other speaker. During these conversations, the committee created three amendments to the operative clauses and although the deliberation seemed almost equally split; Guatemala stated that she "hoped the resolution will pass tonight." At 8:15 pm, resolution 1<sup>st</sup>/I/1 passed, setting the tone for what will most likely be a very productive committee.

By: First Committee Reported

