

Sanctions Are Weapons

By Ava Roth

Many citizens are affected due to the crossfire of global leaders with the power of sanctions. In this year's debate at Model United Nations San Antonio XXIV (MUSA), the high school delegates discussed the effects of sanctions in the World Trade Organization (WTO). The committee debated whether a sanction is a punishment and how to properly use a sanction without harming the citizens of the country involved.

Countries, such as Venezuela, spoke out about how sanctions have affected their economy greatly. Venezuela has suffered from imposed sanctions on oil trade, and stated, "Sanctions are used as blackmail and are economic warfare." Venezuela had a strong opinion against sanctions and they clearly stated, "Economic sanctions are a threat to human rights."

France was highly vocal during the debate and disagreed with Venezuela's statement, "Tariffs are a threat to human rights." France stated, "I believe that sanctions are not bad since it is supposed to change a country's policy." France also expressed, "That you cannot hurt a country without hurting the citizens involved." In response to France's statement, China asked: "How would you effectively impose a tariff on a country without hurting the citizens?" None of the delegates were able to come to a proposed solution to this problem.

The World Trade Organization delegates came to a proposed solution of organizing a panel of unbiased UN representatives to analyze a sanction before it is passed. This solution will make sure that the sanctions are appropriate and effective for the countries involved. However, the way to deflect a large sanction that will make a country lose money drastically is to have other trade opportunities and not rely on one large trade source. For example, Venezuela relied on oil exports greatly and received a sanction on their main sources of trade causing the economy to drop.