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Foreward: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

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THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

FOREWARD

Following the 1979 International Year of the Child, efforts began to develop a Convention on the Rights of the Child. Several model Conventions have been developed, culminating with the final United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on November 20, 1989.

The Working Group of the Commission on Human Rights completed the first draft of the Convention "first reading" in February of 1988. The second reading of the draft Convention occurred in November and December of 1988. In anticipation of the tremendous work to be done, the United Nations Secretary-General sponsored a technical review of the first reading of the draft Convention to make appropriate recommendations. However, various scholars were concerned that the technical review would not take all issues into consideration. Thus, they wrote a collection of essays addressing various issues surrounding the draft Convention on the Rights of the Child. These essays, published by Defense

for Children International-USA (DCI), were collected with the aid of Cynthia Price-Cohen (editor of the publication) into a volume entitled *Independent Commentary: United Nations Convention on The Rights of The Child*. All delegations to the United Nations received copies of the *Independent Commentary*. During the second reading, corrections to the first draft were made and individual governments were given the opportunity to review the draft Convention from the perspective of their government. While it is impossible to measure the actual impact of the essays upon the second reading of the draft Convention on the Rights of the Child, delegates gave the *Independent Commentary* serious consideration when developing possible alterations to the text of the draft Convention.

The following Article Series on the Draft Convention of the Rights of the Child is a compilation of the essays which appeared in the *Independent Commentary*. All of the author contributors to the Articles Series were contributors to the *Independent Commentary* and all have updated their articles to a certain extent.¹ However, Russell Barsh's Article did not appear in the *Independent Commentary*.

The final version of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, may be found in the Appendix following the Articles.

1. Although an original author, Ahilemah Jonet's article did not appear in the *Independent Commentary*. The article was separately distributed as an addition to the *Independent Commentary* during the drafting process.