PS for 2/7/91

United Nations Trap on Rights of the Child

Some advocacy groups are urging the United States to ratify a new treaty called the Convention on the Rights of the Chi1d. ff its text were proposed as new federal legislation, it would be unacceptable to the American people because it gives the Federal Government such a broad grant of power over our children and schools, and it would be unconstitutional because of vagueness.

The U.N. Convention on the Child is based on the concept that a child's rights originate with the U.N. Treaty itself or with the government, in contrast to the U.S. Constitution which spells out, rights which individual Americans can assert against government. This U.N. Treaty, which assumes that government is the source of the listed "rights," can only diminish the status of existing American rights.

The Treaty purports to give the child the right to express his own views freely in all matters, to receive information of all kinds through media of the child's choice, to freedom of religion, to be protected from interference with his correspondence, to have access to information from national and international sources in the media, to use his own language, and to have the right to "rest and leisure."

Does this mean that the government will help the child to enforce these rights against his parents? Does this mean that the child can decline to do his homework and household chores because they interfere with his "right" to rest and leisure?

Does this mean that a child has the right to use his native language in school and cannot be required to speak English? Does it, mean that a child can demand the right to television in order to receive media reports from national and international sources?

Does this mean that a child can assert his right to say what he wants to his parents at the dinner table? Does this mean that the government will assist the child to select a different church from the one his parents attend?

What will it mean to enforce the provision that makes "primary education compulsory and available free to all"? Will this provision make it compulsory to give subsidies to private or religious schools, **or** will it ban private and religious schools?

The U.N. Treaty prescribes school curriculum with a specificity that Americans would never permit congress to do. It calls for teaching children “the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations”; respect for “the national values of… the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own” (a controversial curricular approach known as “global education” and “multiculturalism"); “equality of sexes” (a concept which is subject to controversial interpretations in the United States); and “the development of respect for the natural environment” (certainly one of the most controversial issues in the United States, particularly in the 1990 U.S. elections).

The U.N. Treaty imposes on the government the obligation to “strive to ensure,” to “render appropriate assistance,” and to “take all appropriate measures” to the “maximum extent of their available resources” so that children may enjoy certain economic benefits. Does this Treaty require our government to impose new taxes to carry out these obligations?

The U.N. Treaty requires us to “ensure the development of institutions, facilities and services for the care of children.” The Treaty even obligates the government to ensure “standards” for child care institutions, services and facilities (something which even the current liberal Congress voted down).

What does the U.N. Treaty mean when it requires universal legal standards for the care and protection of children against neglect, exploitation, and abuse? Will the United Nations decide that it is “neglect” **not** to establish government daycare centers, **or** that, it is “neglect” to put children in daycare centers where they are exposed to more illnesses?

The U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child is vague and contradictory on the fundamental issue of whether or not an unborn child is accorded any rights. Article 6 states that every child has a “right to life,” but Article 15 purports to establish the child’s right to “privacy,” the operative word used by the Supreme Court to create the right to abortion.

Of course, all these grandiose U.N. Treaty goals would not be complete without the establishment of a new internationa1 bureaucracy and mechanism of control headed by a committee of ten “experts.” There is no assurance that any American will be on this committee of experts, not even any assurance that there will be even one “expert” friendly to American institutions and traditions.