The Outrageous WTO

by Phyllis Schlafly January 9, 2008

Google Ads are provided by Google and are not selected or endorsed by Eagle Forum

WTO now stands for World Trade Outrage rather than its original name, World Trade Organization. The WTO just ruled that the Caribbean nation of Antigua and Barbuda can freely violate American copyrights and trademarks in order to punish the United States for our laws prohibiting internet gambling.

Congress passed the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act in 2006 after finding that "internet gambling is a growing cause of debt collection problems for insured depository institutions and the consumer credit industry." The social and financial costs of gambling would be greatly increased if we permit internet gambling.

The WTO ordered this punishment because it says U.S. laws interfere with free trade in "recreational services." The foreign tribunal ranks free trade as more important than the intellectual property rights Americans have enjoyed since our Constitution was written.

The WTO's 88-page decision issued in December contained the panel's remarkable admission that "we feel we are on shaky grounds." But that didn't stop the Geneva tribunal from issuing its ruling anyway.

We have every right as a nation to protect our people against the corruption and loss of wealth that result from gambling on the internet. It is shocking for an unelected foreign tribunal to tell our 435-member House of Representatives, our 100-member Senate, and the President of the United States that they lack the power to protect our people.

Even American supremacist judges would not have the nerve to authorize stealing copyrights and trademarks as a remedy for one side in an unrelated dispute. But the WTO granted what has been called a "piracy permit" that allows a small Caribbean nation to "pirate," or steal, U.S. property rights.

The response in Washington was to announce an attempt to revise the conditions under which we joined the WTO in 1994. That's a non-starter because these changes in the WTO treaty would require the approval of all 151 members, most of whom don't like the U.S. anyway.

The WTO has ruled against the United States in 40 out of 47 major cases, and against us in 30 out of 33 trade remedies cases. After the WTO ruled that the U.S. cannot divert tariff revenue to U.S. companies that are injured by foreign subsidies to their competitors, Vice President Dick Cheney provided the tie-breaking vote in the Senate on December 21, 2005 to kowtow to the WTO.

For many years, opponents of the WTO have predicted that this foreign bureaucracy would massively interfere with our sovereignty. This new ruling is crazy, unjust and impertinent, but without a lot of public protest, it looks unlikely that our "free trade" President or Congress will do anything to protect us from the WTO.

How is a foreign tribunal in Geneva able to put the United States in such a box? It's because the internationalist free-trade lobby cooked up a sleazy deal to force the WTO on us back in 1994 during the week after Thanksgiving when Americans were preoccupied with Christmas shopping and festivities.

The deal to lock us into WTO consisted of three parts. First, the 14-page WTO agreement was surreptitiously added, without debate or publicity, to the 22,000-page revision of the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) implementing legislation, and was voted on under "fast track" rules which allowed no amendments or changes, severely limited debate, and forbade any filibuster.

Second, the Treaty Clause in the U.S. Constitution for ratification of treaties was ignored, and WTO was declared passed by Congress as a non-treaty. Third, the GATT/WTO agreement was passed in the December lame-duck session with the votes of dozens of Congressmen who were looking for lucrative jobs representing foreign interests because they had already been defeated in the Republican landslide of November 1994.

The WTO is not "free trade" at all, but is a supra-national body in Geneva that sets, manages and enforces WTO-made rules to govern global trade. The WTO includes a one-country-one-vote legislature of 151 nations (we have the same one vote as Cuba), an unelected multinational bureaucracy, and a Dispute Settlement Board which deliberates and votes in secret and whose decisions cannot be appealed or vetoed.

WTO is a direct attack on our sovereignty because it claims it can force us to change our laws to comply with WTO rulings. Article XVI, paragraph 4, states: "Each Member shall ensure the conformity of its laws, regulations, and administrative procedures with its obligations." The WTO has the final say about whether U.S. laws meet WTO requirements.

In this presidential season, the WTO should make easy target practice for any candidate to speak up and defend our sovereignty against the globalists who, under the mantra of "free trade," willingly allow the WTO to tell us what laws we may or may not adopt.