Clinton's Abuse of the Treaty-Making Power

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Annoyed with the Senate's refusal to ratify his various United Nations treaties, Bill Clinton is arrogantly trying to bypass the Senate by signing international agreements to implement them anyway. Each one cedes more U.S. sovereignty to some global organization, and we wonder if self-government can survive the final six months of his Administration.

Clinton knows that his proposed United Nations Convention (treaty) on the Rights of the Child will never be ratified by the Senate because it would be a codification of Hillary's plan to put the global "village" in charge of raising children instead of parents. But last week Clinton disembarked from the tall ships parade in New York harbor, walked into the United Nations, and made an end-run around that obstacle by signing two protocols to the unratified Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The first of these protocols, a pet project of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), would prohibit military service by minors. This encountered stiff resistance from the Pentagon because every year the U.S. Armed Services enlists about 50,000 high school seniors before their 18th birthday. Clinton worked out a compromise; he agreed not to send them into combat until their 18th birthday.

I guess the negotiators haven't seen "The Patriot" in which Mel Gibson gives guns to his 10- and 13-year-old sons when British soldiers threatened their family. In any event, the age at which we allow men to serve our country should be a U.S. decision, not one determined by a Clinton treaty or regulated by a commission of foreign bureaucrats, the kind of paper-pushers who expect Americans to do all the fighting and dying in their wars anyway.

The protocol's first paragraph makes its real purpose clear. It is "to achieve the purposes of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the implementation of its provisions."

The protocol is quite lengthy, nine pages of fine print. That gives the global commission lots of excuses to inject itself into U.S. laws and behavior.

Article 12, for example, requires that we submit, within two years, a report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Since that committee is a creation of Article 44 of the unratified treaty on the Rights of the Child, this is another way that Clinton's protocol locks us into the unratified treaty.

The second protocol that Clinton signed last week would make it a crime to sell children for sex, to engage minors in prostitution, or to use them for pornography. Again, the real purpose is to validate UN authority, not to protect children.

Of course, those acts are already crimes in the United States. The countries that engage in such behavior will not be deterred by some piece of paper that Clinton signed.

Furthermore, the UN committee set up to monitor compliance under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) recently ordered China (which has ratified that treaty) to allow women to sell their bodies as "sex workers." The UN committee calls prostitution a "reproductive right" over one's body.

Despite this ruling, HHS Secretary Donna Shalala said on May 31 that the Clinton Administration will continue to push for Senate approval of CEDAW. She added that the Clinton Administration is "quite frustrated on the inability to ratify CEDAW," for which she blames Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms.

While in Cologne, Germany, on June 20, 1999, Clinton announced that he and then-Russian President Boris Yeltsin had agreed to negotiate amendments to the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. This was a follow-up to the "Memorandum of Understanding" on the 1972 ABM Treaty signed by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on September 26, 1997.

This charade is a dishonest attempt to manufacture a new treaty that takes the decision about defending America against a missile attack away from Congress and cedes it to foreign countries, something that the Senate would never approve. Clinton is using the ploy of these new executive agreements to try to resuscitate the now-moribund 1972 ABM Treaty, which is actually null and void because the Soviet Union no longer exists.

Everything about this treaty-bypass ploy is hurtful to the United States. Clinton is pretending that the

successors to the former Soviet Union are four states -- Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine -- but the remaining 11 countries of the former Soviet Union would be free to develop and deploy ABM systems.

Clinton told the United Nations General Assembly on September 22, 1997 that he wants to take America into a "web of institutions and arrangements" that will set "the international ground rules for the 21st century." Unable to get the advice and consent of the Senate, he is using his last few months to try to bypass the Constitution and do it anyway.

Will Congress let him get by such underhanded actions?