STATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT WTO

July 21, 1994 *by Phyllis Schlafly*

In an extraordinary document, 44 state attorneys general have signed a letter addressed to President Clinton calling on him to convene a "State-Federal Consultation Summit" in August so they can air their concerns about the dangers of the proposed World Trade Organization (WTO). The WTO implementing legislation is scheduled to be voted on by Congress this year, even though the American people are still pretty much in the dark about what it means.

That's why the state attorneys general think it would be a good idea to shed some light on it before Clinton gives away our sovereignty to a bunch of Third World bureaucrats. The letter was written and circulated by Maine's attorney general, Michael Carpenter, and it includes an impressive and provocative series of questions.

Reminding Clinton that State attorneys general are the persons designated by law to defend state laws, they point out that WTO has "broad implications for State self-government." Of course, the rest of the world is completely unknowledgeable about our unique process of federalism, and most treaties deal only with national governments.

Ever since the treaty giving away our Panama Canal passed the Senate in 1978 by only one vote, the globalists have complained bitterly about the inconvenience of our Constitution's requirement that treaties are valid only if ratified by a two-thirds majority of our Senate. They are candid in their desire to ditch that constitutional constraint.

So, they devised a devious scheme to get around it: Have the President sign an executive agreement, which allegedly does not require Senate approval, and then put the implementing legislation through both Houses of Congress by a simple majority vote.

Then they added an additional tricky maneuver called "fast track." That means each House is allowed only 20 hours of debate on the agreement, and the Senate is forbidden to filibuster it. This piece of chicanery worked for **NAFTA,** so why not also for WTO?

Here are some of the important questions the state attorneys general want answered before Congress votes on WTO.

How will states be able to defend their laws against challenges from foreign governments, since only national governments will have standing before WTO panels? Can the states count on the U.S. Government to protect them from being forced by WTO to rewrite their state laws?

How can we put any due process guarantees into the WTO dispute resolution system, since all the WTO negotiations are now finished and the agreement provides that WTO dispute tribunals will meet and make their decisions in secret?

What effect will WTO rulings have on state laws covering pesticide residues, food quality, environmental policy, and consumer health safety? Which standards will govern, WTO's or the state's?

Will WTO invalidate procurement laws that favor in-state businesses in bidding for public contracts? Will WTO make illegal the so-called "unitary taxation," under which corporations pay taxes on their worldwide operations?

It's time for the American people to wake up and realize that Congressional passage of the World Trade Organization legislation will submerge U.S. sovereignty in a World Government Organization or "Economic United Nations." In the WTO, America will have only one vote out of 117 - the same vote as Cuba or Haiti.

Two-thirds of the 117 WTO nations hate America, vote against us most of the time, and plot to steal our money, our jobs and our technology. We would inevitably become the victim of foreign voting blocs that would gang up against us.

WTO would put the United States in a foreign organization where the Third World countries can make the trade rules, but they won't have to obey the rules they make for us. WTO would put the United States in a foreign organization where Americans will be assessed the biggest share of the costs, but we will always be outvoted on how our money is spent.

Of course, WTO will cost us money. It is expected to increase our taxes an estimated $14 billion over five years, and $40 billion over 10 years.

The concerns and suspicions of the state attorneys general are well-founded. WTO, indeed, would put the United States in a foreign organization that will make laws and trade rules that override U.S. federal and state laws and trade practices.

Under the WTO, not only will all disputes be decided by foreigners in a secret "Supreme Court of Trade," but we will have no appeal from those rulings. We will even be forbidden to take unilateral action to defend American interests.

The Clinton Administration signed on to this WTO agreement on April 15 at a meeting in Marrakesh, Morocco, which received only sparse coverage compared with the enormous media coverage given to the party Malcolm Forbes gave in Morocco in 1989. All members of Congress who care about preserving American independence and sovereignty should vote NO on WTO and send it back from whence it came.