Time to Say Goodbye to the WTO

by Phyllis Schlafly July 22, 2011

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The World Trade Organization just ruled against the United States again. A "dispute resolution panel" of WTO representatives from Pakistan, Portugal and Switzerland ruled that U.S. laws requiring Country Of Origin Labeling (COOL) violate free trade.

It's time for the United States to wave goodbye to this impertinent new-world-order bunch of bureaucrats in Geneva (a sort of Economic United Nations) who think they can dictate our trade policies. That's unconstitutional anyway because the U.S. Constitution specifically gives Congress the power "to regulate commerce with foreign nations."

The WTO is based on the one-country, one-vote pattern. That means the United States has no veto and only one vote out of 153 nations, the same vote as Cuba or Grenada or Rwanda. The WTO's Dispute Settlement Board deliberates and votes in secret, decides trade disputes, and cannot be vetoed by any nation.

Americans want to know where our foods come from, especially since nearly two-thirds of the fruits and vegetables and 80 percent of the seafood we eat come from foreign countries where health and sanitary standards are not remotely equivalent to ours. And we have a right to know, despite impudent foreigners who seek to deny us that right, and some U.S. retailers who want to conceal, how many foreign meats are ground into hamburger.

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We've had media coverage of the deadly E.coli outbreak in Germany, but very little coverage of the production peculiarities common in Communist China, where fish is raised in waters containing raw sewage disguised with dangerous drugs and chemicals. Several years ago, China sold us pet food containing melamine, a chemical used to make plastics and fertilizers, causing hundreds of our dogs and cats to die.

Some news has leaked out about China's peculiar and life-threatening food manufacturing industry. Incidents include the 300,000 babies sickened by milk tainted with melamine, the 286 wedding reception guests who were hospitalized after eating pork contaminated with Clenbuterol (a drug that makes pigs grow faster), the watermelons that exploded because of overuse of a chemical, the raw pork that emits a blue light from phosphorescent bacteria, the meals that are cooked using oil dredged from sewers behind restaurants, the pork disguised as beef, and soy sauce made using human hair clippings.

A new U.S. food safety law requires the Food and Drug Administration to inspect 600 foreign food facilities within a year, and more thereafter. That doesn't reassure us in the slightest because it's just a drop in the bucket of the problem. The FDA inspects only one percent of imports from China.

The 2002 and 2005 Farm Bills required retailers to notify their customers of the country of origin of muscle cuts and ground beef (including veal), lamb, pork, chicken, and goat meat; wild and farm-raised fish and shellfish; perishable agricultural commodities; peanuts; pecans; ginseng; and macadamia nuts. The requirement on fish went into effect in 2005 and on all the other foods in 2008.

A couple of years ago, the WTO ruled against our Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act, which was designed to protect our people against the social and financial costs of internet gambling. Ruling that our law interferes with free trade in "recreational services," the WTO gave Antigua and Barbuda the go-ahead to punish us by violating U.S. copyrights and trademarks.

How did we get in this fix where foreigners presume to override the U.S. Constitution, our laws, and our sovereignty? It was a cozy political deal between the New World Order and free-trade activists in both political parties.

First, the 14-page WTO agreement was surreptitiously added to the 22,000-page revision of the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) legislation. No publicity was given to the WTO's Article XVI which obligates the United States to change our laws, regulations and administrative procedures to conform to WTO.

Second, Clinton and Congress bypassed the Treaty Clause in the U.S. Constitution (that requires a two-thirds vote in the Senate). They declared WTO passed as an executive agreement, which calls for only a simple majority in both Houses of Congress.

WTO was scheduled for a vote on October 5, 1994, but after a flood of phone calls from constituents urging a No vote, President Bill Clinton, House Speaker Tom Foley, and Republican leader Newt Gingrich cooked up a deal to pass WTO in the December 1994 Lame Duck session. That session included the votes of more than 80 Members who had been defeated in the Republican landslide of November 8, or were retiring.

Anybody who says the WTO means "free trade" insults the common sense of Americans. The WTO is not free trade at all, but is a supra-national body that sets, manages and enforces WTO-made rules to dictate global trade.

It's time to pull out of the World Trade Outrage.