CAFTA Should Be Rejected Just Like the EU Constitution

by Phyllis Schlajly *June 29, 2005*

Since democracy is the worldwide goal of the Bush Administration, we must face the stunning fact that the integration of different nationalities under a common European Union (EU) constitution was rejected by decisive democratic votes. President Bush can thank conservative leaders for saving him from the embarrassment of endorsing the EU constitution shortly before it was so soundly defeated in France and the Netherlands.

The EU constitution was defeated because Western Europeans don't want to be politically or economically or socially integrated with the culture, economy, lifestyle, or history of Eastern Europe and Muslim countries. Western Europeans recognized in the proposed EU constitution a loss of national identity and freedom to a foreign bureaucracy, plus a redistribution of wealth from richer countries to poorer countries.

Will the political and business elites in America hear this message and stop trying to force CAFTA (Central America Free Trade Agreement) on America?

The Senate Republican Policy Committee appears to be tone deaf. Its just-released policy paper argues that CAFTA should be approved because its purpose is "integrating more closely with 34 hemispheric neighbors -- thus furthering the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA)" which the 200 I Quebec Declaration declared would bring about "hemispheric integration."

Americans don't want to be "integrated" with the poverty, corruption, socialism and communism of our hemispheric neighbors any more than the French want to be integrated with the Turks and Bulgarians.

Just as the French and Dutch were suspicious of the dangers lurking in the 485-page EU constitution, Americans are wary of the dangers hiding in the 92-page CAFTA legislation plus the 31 pages that purport to spell out the administrative actions the U.S. must take in compliance. No wonder CAFTA's supporters are bypassing our Constitution's requirement that treaties can be valid only if passed by two-thirds of our Senators.

The Senate Republican policy paper argues that CAFTA "will promote democratic governance." But there is nothing democratic about CAFTA's many pages of grants of vague authority to foreign tribunals on which foreign judges could force us to change our domestic laws to be "no more burdensome than necessary" on foreign trade.

We have had enough impertinent interference with our lives and economy from the international tribunals Congress has already locked us into, such as the WTO (World Trade Organization) and NAFTA (No1ih American Free Trade Agreement). Americans don't want decisions from another anti-American tribunal any more than the French and Dutch wanted

their lives micro-managed by Belgian bureaucrats.

The EU political elite ridiculed the French and the Dutch for not realizing that globalism is on the march and we should all get on the train before it leaves the station. The French and Dutch woke up to the fact that the engineers of the EU train are bureaucrats in Brussels and judges in Luxembourg who invent regulations and judge-made laws without so much as a tip of their hats to democracy.

The pro-EU political bosses blamed the "non" vote by the French on worry about losing their jobs to the cheap labor of Eastern Europe and Turkey. But the worry was grounded in reality, and Americans are likewise correct to worry about how CAFTA will put U.S. jobs in competition with low-wage Central America where the average factory worker is paid about one dollar an hour.

CAFTA would even prohibit U.S. states from giving preference to American workers when taxpayer-funded contracts are granted.

CAFTA is not about free trade; it's about round-trip trade. That means multinational corporations sending their raw materials to poor countries where they can hire very cheap labor and avoid U.S. employment, safety and environmental regulations, and then bringing the finished goods back into the United States duty-free to undersell U.S. companies that pay decent wages and comply with our laws.

The promise that CAFTA will give us 44 million new customers for U.S. goods is pie in the sky like the false promise that letting Communist China into the WTO would give us a billion-person market for American agriculture. Or the false promise that NAFTA would increase our trade surplus with Mexico to $10 billion when, in fact, it nosedived to a $62 billion deficit.

Knowing that Americans are upset about Central America's chief export to the U.S., which is the incredibly vicious MS-13 Salvadoran gangs, the Senate Republican policy paper assures us that CAFTA will diminish "the incentives for illegal immigration to the United States." That's another fairy tale like the unfulfilled promise that NAFTA would reduce illegal aliens and illegal drugs entering the U.S. from Mexico.

By stating that CAFTA means the implementation of a "rules-based framework" for trade, investment and technology, the Senate Republican policy paper confirms that free trade requires world, or at least hemispheric, government. You can't have a single economy without a single government.

CAFTA may serve the economic interests of the globalists and the multinational corporations, but it makes no sense historically, constitutionally, or democratically. Americans will never sing God Bless the Western Hemisphere instead of God Bless America.