Beware of Global Taxes for Global Entitlements

November 9, 1995 by Phyllis Schlafly

"It's not sustainable for member states to enjoy representation without taxation," Prime Minister John Major told the United Nations at its birthday celebration. He thought he was demonstrating British wit in making a play on the great slogan of the American Revolution. We are not amused.

The United Nations has a big problem: the tax-cutting Republican Congress is disinclined to continue financing those overpaid foreign bureaucrats in the lavish style to which they have become accustomed. So their solution is to impose a global tax that would produce billions or even trillions of dollars without any Congressional action.

The so-called Independent Commission on Population and Quality of Life has issued a report listing dozens of innovative global devices to tax people, corporations, and international business activities. These include taxes on aviation traffic and freight, ocean freight and cruises, aviation fuel, telecommunications frequencies, communications satellites, international postal items, and trade in goods and services.

The global tax idea was first publicly launched at the UN World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in March 1995. James G. Speth, the Clinton-appointed head of the UN Development Program, called for a global tax on speculative movements of international funds, the consumption of non-renewable energy, environmental permits, and the arms trade.

James Tobin, 1981 Nobel Prize winner in Economics, has called for a tax on spot transactions in foreign exchange. The UN bureaucrats are licking their chops at Tobin's prediction that "the revenue potential is immense, over $1.5 trillion a year," and they are now enthusiastically using Tobin's prestige to advocate what they call the "Tobin tax."

The Commission on Global Governance, a "private" group with government and foundation funding, published a volume this year entitled "Our Global Neighborhood." Stating that "it is time for a consensus on global taxation for servicing the needs of the global neighborhood," this report calls for taxes on flight-lanes, sea lanes, and ocean fishing areas.

This report also brags that "the idea of safeguarding and managing the global commons, particularly those related to the physical environment, is now widely accepted. And the notion of expanding the role of the United Nations is now accepted in relation to military security."

Another model for a global tax is hidden in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, a UN treaty the Clinton Administration is trying to get the Senate to ratify. This treaty sets up a global taxing authority called the International Seabed Authority to collect fees and royalties imposed on American mining firms.

An outfit called Worldwatch Institute issued a report this year called "Partnership for the Planet." It calls for a global tax to finance "the transition to a sustainable society -- including environmental programs, social initiatives, and peacekeeping efforts."

Just as the new Republican Congress is trying to put a lid on welfare and Medicare entitlements, the UN is planning to saddle U.S. taxpayers with global entitlements. The Oxfam Poverty Report proclaims that "international aid should be seen as a financial entitlement, and as part of a compact between citizens in the industrial and developing worlds."

UN bureaucrats and advocates must be having lots of fun dreaming up ways to tax Americans to support their notions of "global neighborhood" and "sustainable human development." The Ford Foundation produced a study last year called "Renewing the United Nations System," which advocates an annual "United Nations lottery, administered by a special authority under the Secretary-General."

The Ford Foundation also financed a report called "The United Nations in Its Second Half-Century," which calls for allowing the UN to have Special Drawing Rights from the International Monetary Fund. Rationalized as a "levy on the utilization of the global commons," this proposal would enable the UN to bypass Congress in accessing U.S. taxpayers' money.

Other wealthy liberal foundations that have helped orchestrate the demand for a global tax include the MacArthur and Carnegie Foundations. The World Federalist Association, now headed by former presidential candidate John B. Anderson, weighs in with a recommendation for UN taxes on international travel and postal service.

Bella Abzug, who was so visible in the recent UN Women's Conference in Beijing, also serves as a member of the advisory council of the Global Commission to Fund the United Nations. It comes as no surprise that she endorses global taxes as a way to finance and enforce the radical feminist agenda that she presented at the UN conferences on population and women's issues.

Americans had better wake up and expel the UN before it succeeds in any of its arrogant global taxing plans. Congress should hold hearings on the outrageous global tax schemes exposed by researcher Cliff Kincaid for Americans for Tax Reform.