from Phyllis Schlafly October 7, 1993

FOREIGN BUSYBODYISM ABOUT CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Do you think the United Nations should be able to mandate the "right" of children to refuse to do their homework? Or to be force-fed a curriculum of multiculturalism and other trendy leftist propaganda?

That's what may be in the works in the name of "children's rights" as a result of a proposed United Nations Treaty on the Rights of the Child.

Wrapped in reassuring rhetoric, this treaty proposes to protect the rights of the child but against whom? That's the $64,000 question, and it's hard to come up with any answer other than against parents.

If a child's rights are to be enforced against his parents, then who will be assisting the minor child in this endeavor? It's hard to come up with any answer other than government lawyers.

Now that's what we need isn't it? Staffs of government lawyers to file lawsuits on behalf of children against their parents and ACLU lawyers to bring test cases to expand the scope 9f the treaty as far as they can! If you think the courts are in a crunch now or that families are in disarray, that's nothing to what it will be if this UN Treaty were ratified.

Article 14 of the treaty grants children freedom of religion. Does that mean the government will assist a child in joining a cult or in selecting a different church from the one his parents attend? And, does this mean at any age?

The treaty grants children the right to "rest and leisure" in Article 31. Does that mean that a child can refuse to clean up his room or carry out the garbage because they interfere with his right to leisure?

Children are granted the right to express their own views freely in all matters under Article 12. Does this mean that a child can freely use profanity in talking to his parents at the dinner table?

Article 13 of the treaty gives children the right to receive information of all kinds through the "media of the child's choice." Does this mean that children have the right to watch television instead of doing their homework?

In Article 30, the treaty guarantees a child the right to use his own language. Does that mean a child can refuse to speak English in school?

The UN Treaty on the Rights of the Child is a blatant grab for power over the U.S. education system, an open attempt to dictate what our children will learn and how they will learn it. Article 28 prescribes the content of what must be taught to all children in several sensitive areas.

These include global education (anti-American "one worldism" in a new wrapper), multiculturalism (a catch-phrase that has come to mean a curriculum of anti-family, anti-traditional values), "equality of the sexes" (that sounds like feminist ideology), and environmentalism (a subject heavily laden with unscientific propaganda).

The American people would never permit Congress or the Federal Government to dictate this type of "education" to local school districts. Yet, the UN Treaty implies that its provisions apply to private as well as public schools.

In several sections, the UN Treaty imposes on the government the obligation to "strive to ensure," to "render appropriate assistance," and to "take all appropriate measures" so that children may enjoy certain economic benefits. Article 4 states that the government "shall

undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures" to implement "economic, social and cultural rights."

Furthermore, the government "shall undertake such meas res to the maximum extent of their available resources." These expensive responsibilities include "health care services" (Article 24}, social security (Article 26}, and an "adequate" standard of living, nutrition, clothing and housing (Article 27}.

Does this language require our government to impose new taxes - or go further into debt -- in order to carry out these obligations? The costs would be very high, and the tax-spending liberals are already salivating.

A new international bureaucracy would, of course, be instituted as the mechanism of control and compliance. The treaty would set up a Committee on the Rights of the Child consisting of ten "experts" chosen by secret ballot from a list of nominees submitted by the governments that sign the treaty.

There is no assurance that any American could be on the committee, nor even that any expert would be friendly to American institutions and traditions. This is not merely an expensive exercise in international busybodyism; the treaty is full of mandatory words such as "rights" and "obligations."

This UN Treaty on the Rights of the Child poses a real and present danger to the integrity of American families and our process of self government, as well as to the pocketbooks of taxpayers. President Clinton should not sign this treaty, and if he sends it to the Senate for ratification, the Senate should reject it.