



Written by on June 8, 2008

Learning a Lesson From the EU

EU leaders produced an EU Constitution in 2004 and sent it the member states for ratification. French and Dutch voters rejected it handily for the solid reason that they didn't want to be ruled by bureaucrats in Brussels. Because the constitution had to be approved by all 27 EU nations, the referenda in France and Holland effectively killed it. Disappointed but far from defeated, EU leaders matter-of-factly continued to tighten the strings over Europe as if nothing had occurred.



Because they want formal approval of their actions, the Eurocrats produced a substitute document and dubbed it a "treaty" instead of a constitution. Signed in Lisbon in December 2007 by the heads of state of the 27 nations, this new Lisbon Treaty must also be ratified by all EU countries in order to gain legitimacy.

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Growing numbers of British opponents of the EU eagerly looked forward to a promised referendum about the treaty. However, newly installed Prime Minister Gordon Brown told the nation the promise they had been given referred only to a constitution, not to a treaty. On March 5, the House of Commons supported Brown's highhanded refusal to grant a referendum by a margin of 311 to 248. Many in Britain are outraged.

Ratification of the treaty by national parliaments has already occurred in several EU states. But in Ireland, a referendum is scheduled for June 12. It won't ask directly for approval or disapproval of the Lisbon Treaty, just for a change in the Irish Constitution that would allow the treaty to become superior to Irish law. Campaigns for and against the matter focus not on the treaty itself, but on whether the people are willing to surrender sovereignty.

Stealth has marked every step in the growth of the EU, which in earlier forms was presented as a "free trade" arrangement. Started merely as the six-nation Coal and Steel Commission, it became the European Economic Commission (popularly known as the Common Market), then the European Commission, then the European Union. And stealth is blazingly evident in the promotion of the new Lisbon Treaty. Former French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing served as the chairman of the commission that produced it. He stated in October 2007, "The difference between the original Constitution and the present Lisbon Treaty is one of approach, not of content." Current French leader Nicolas Sarkozy stated the following month, "There will be no treaty if we had a referendum in France, which would then be followed by a referendum in the United Kingdom."

Belgium's Foreign Minister Karel de Gucht stated in June 2007 that "the aim of this treaty is to be



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unreadable. The Constitution aimed to be clear, whereas this Treaty had to be unclear. It is a success." Former Italian Prime Minister Giuliano Amato served as the vice chairman of the Treaty Commission. Of his colleagues, he stated in July 2007, "They decided that the document should be unreadable."

Whether this obvious subterfuge will sway Ireland's voters will soon be known. Prime Minister Brian Cowen favors the treaty but Ireland's largest labor union is opposed. Most voters remain undecided.

The 2004 constitution bluntly stated that it "shall have primacy over the law of Member States." The Lisbon Treaty contains the same attitude, though cleverly cloaked with "unreadable" text. And, just as the rejected constitution expressed subservience to the Charter of the United Nations, the Lisbon Treaty is full of references to the UN, such as "respect for" the charter, "in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations," "cooperation with the UN," etc. Without doubt, the European Union is a huge step toward global governance dominated by the United Nations.

In our nation, the 1994 NAFTA pact was deceitfully sold to Congress and the American people as a simple trade agreement. Using it as a springboard, plans have now been laid for an integration of nations that will effectively function as a North American Union (even if it is not given that name), tying Canada, Mexico, and the United States politically and militarily.

Americans should learn from Europe's experience. Even if Ireland's voters reject the step that would allow their leaders to approve the Lisbon Treaty, the EU will proceed to tighten its grip over the 27 nations. It may be too late for them. But it is not too late for the people of the United States to forestall, and reject, any proposal to take us down the same path Europe has been taken. Resistance in Ireland and elsewhere across the Atlantic will help U.S. citizens to be wary of being taken down that same path here.



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