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Headline: THE TREATY CON

Leaked email reveals Government plans to hoodwink voters

# THE TREATY CON

**THE Government has hatched an elaborate plan to deceive voters over the forthcoming EU treaty referendum, the Irish Daily Mail can today reveal.**

A leaked email shows that ministers are planning a deliberate campaign of misinformation to ensure that the **Lisbon Treaty** vote is passed when it is put to the public as required by the Constitution.

Foreign Affairs Minister Dermot Ahern has even been personally assured that the European Commission will 'tone down or delay' any announcements from Brussels 'that might be unhelpful'.

Alarming, the email says that ministers ruled out an October referendum, which would have been better procedurally, because they feared 'unhelpful developments during the French presidency - particularly related to EU defence'.

This suggestion will raise grave fears that the State's constitutional commitment to military neutrality could be undermined by the treaty - a rehashed version of the failed EU constitution.

The memo was sent to the British government by Elizabeth Green, a senior UK

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## Treaty may march us into 'European army'

From Page One

diplomat in Dublin, following a briefing from Dan Mulhall, a top official in the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Its aim was to relay to her political masters in London the lengths to which the Government here was going to in its bid to ensure a 'Yes' vote in the referendum.

Ireland is the only EU state which is allowing voters a say on the treaty, and European heads of state are terrified that they will reject it.

Campaigners have warned that the new treaty could remove Ireland's powers to decide its own tax rates and social policies.

However, the most controversial aspect is the likelihood that it will be used to advance the concept of a 'European army', which would violate the principle of neutrality that has long been a foundation-stone of the State.

France is particularly keen to advance the notion of an EU force, which critics fear could be ordered into action over Irish objections by a majority vote of EU heads of state.

Already concerns have been raised that soldiers who are part of the Irish peacekeeping force being sent to Chad could be compromised by French political and military objectives in the area.

The leaked email admits that this is one of the issues which needs to be kept from voters, saying that the possibility of the French speaking out on this issue meant that the referendum could not be delayed until the autumn. It states: 'Mulhall said a date in October would have been easier from a procedural point of view.

'But the risk of unhelpful developments during the French presidency - particularly related to EU defence - were just too great. (Nicola) Sarkozy was completely unpredictable.'

The Irish official was also worried that the latest World Trade Organisation talks, which have already aroused the fury of farmers, could turn the voters against the new treaty. Farmers and suppliers are planning a one-day shutdown this week to protest at the tack being taken by EU trade commissioner Peter Mandelson.

The email said that Mulhall was concerned about 'a WTO deal based on agricultural concessions that could lead the powerful farming association to withdraw its support'. However, Government ministers appear to be basing their hopes on the fact that the treaty cannot be read or understood by most voters - and that launching a quick referendum would stop them from doing so.

'Most people would not have time to study the text and would go with the politicians they trusted,' it said.

And it pointed out that the Government plans to keep people from analysing the details, saying the 'aim is to focus the campaign on overall benefits of the EU rather than the treaty itself'.

It goes on to explain the details of the Referendum Bill, which it says, was 'agreed following lengthy consultation with Government lawyers and with the political parties'.

However, it admits that the bill is 'largely incomprehensible to the lay reader'.

The memo refers to plans to fool

Daily Mail (London)

April 14, 2008 Monday

## **THE TREATY CON;**

### **(1) Leaked email reveals Government plans to hoodwink voters (2) Treaty may march us into European army**

**BYLINE:** John Lee, Michael Lea

**SECTION:** IRE; Pg. 1

**LENGTH:** 871 words

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This suggestion will raise grave fears that the State's constitutional commitment to military neutrality could be undermined by the treaty – a rehashed version of the failed EU constitution.

The memo was sent to the British government by Elizabeth Green, a senior UK diplomat in Dublin, following a briefing from Dan Mulhall, a top official in the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Its aim was to relay to her political masters in London the lengths to which the Government here was going to in its bid to ensure a Yes vote in the referendum.

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Most people would not have time to study the text and would go with the politicians they trusted, it said. And it pointed out that the Government plans to keep people from analysing the details, saying the aim is to focus the campaign on overall benefits of the EU rather than the treaty itself.

It goes on to explain the details of the Referendum Bill, which it says, was agreed following lengthy consultation with Government lawyers and with the political parties.

However, it admits that the bill is largely incomprehensible to the lay reader.

The memo refers to plans to fool campaigners over the date and states: Irish have picked 29 May for voting but will delay an announcement to keep the No camp guessing.

The Taoiseach and (Dermot) Ahern saw a slight advantage in keeping the No camp guessing.

It has since been stated that the referendum will be held on June 12 although it is not clear from the email whether this is the correct date or whether the May 29 option is still being considered as a possibility in order to destabilise the No campaign.

The email adds that the EC was doing its best to keep any bad news from the Irish voters and that Mr Mulhall had maintained that other partners including the Commission were playing a helpful, low-profile role.

It added that during a trip to Dublin, Vice-President Margot Wallstrom had told Dermot Ahern that the commission was willing to tone down or delay messages that might be unhelpful.

The leaked message also points out that most Irish media have been supine on the issue, saying: Mulhall remarked that the media had been relatively quiet on the ratification process so far. We would need to remain in close touch, given the media crossover.

A Government spokesman refused to comment on the leaked email last night merely saying: The date is as set by the Taoiseach, there is no change in that.

Comment Page 14

**GRAPHIC:** Ahern: Was given assurances Sarkozy: Too unpredictable

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

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April 16, 2008 Wednesday

The Treaty con Part 2;  
Brussels memo warns senior EU officials to keep sensitive issues quiet until after Lisbon Treaty is voted on in Ireland

**BYLINE:** John Lee

**SECTION:** IRE; Pg. 6

**LENGTH:** 521 words

BRUSSELS bosses are demanding that politically sensitive issues are hushed up until after Ireland's vote on the Lisbon Treaty.

The plot revealed in a letter between senior European Union officials provides further evidence of a high-level attempt to fool Irish voters before they cast their ballots.

The letter from Jo Leinen, chairman of the EU Parliament Committee on Constitution Affairs, says it would be highly advisable that any document concerning the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon which addresses politically sensitive matters be examined when it becomes sufficiently clear that the Treaty will enter into force.

However, the Treaty of Lisbon will only enter force if it is ratified by a referendum to be put to the Irish electorate in June.

Ireland is the only EU state which is allowing voters a say on the treaty, and European heads of state are terrified that they will reject it. The leaked letter will cause huge embarrassment to the EU and the Irish Government coming just two days after the Irish Daily Mail revealed details of a memo from an official at the British Embassy in Dublin.

With the EU President Manuel Barroso arriving here tomorrow, the negative publicity on the Lisbon Treaty will make it an uncomfortable visit.

The letter, headed Committee on Constitutional Affairs, the Chairman is addressed to Reimer Boge, President of the Committee on Budgets, but a similar letter is understood to have been sent to a number of senior EU officials.

The letter sent by Mr Leinen, a German MEP, opens: Allow me to draw your attention to the outcome of a discussion that took place at the meeting of co-ordinators of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs in February, concerning the precautions that ought to be taken by Parliament in conducting the preparatory work for the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon.

It was acknowledged that given the politically sensitive nature of some of the issues at hand, a degree of caution needs to be exercised.

In particular it would not appear appropriate to deal with politically sensitive aspects in preparatory documents concerning the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon while important discussions concerning the ratification of this treaty are still going on in the Member States.

The letter says that efforts to keep politically sensitive issues quiet are being co-ordinated at the highest levels of the EU.

Sinn Féin MEP Mary Lou McDonald said yesterday: Over the coming weeks I am sure that many EU leaders will be scrambling to our shores to lobby for a Yes vote in the referendum.

It is obvious that EU leaders are trying to bury key issues, which they believe would negatively impact on the referendum. These will be resurrected very quickly following the vote.

Meanwhile, it emerged yesterday that veteran politician Proinsias de Rossa was assaulted after a political meeting on the treaty.

Gardaí said they were investigating the assault on the former Labour MEP which happened at around 10.30pm outside Liberty Hall.

Labour leader Eamon Gilmore said Mr de Rossa had suffered cuts and was left shaken by the incident.

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**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

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**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Papers