

Commenting on the foreign affairs select committee report on the Lisbon Treaty, Shadow Foreign Secretary William Hague said:

“Although this report is from a Labour-dominated committee it makes such damaging criticisms of the Government’s case against a referendum that their argument now has no credibility.

“The report effectively accuses ministers of taking part in a stitch-up designed to cut out public debate. It makes it clear that the Government has not been straight about the impact the Treaty will have on the EU’s foreign policy powers. Above all, the report explicitly states that on foreign policy the Treaty is in substance exactly the same as the EU Constitution.

“Gordon Brown’s pretence that this Treaty is not in effect the EU Constitution reheated and renamed is now ridiculous. All of his arguments have been discredited. He made an election promise that there would be a referendum. He said that keeping manifesto promises was a matter of trust between him and voters. If Gordon Brown still insists on ramming this Treaty through all those fine words will be exposed as the most cynical spin.”

Notes to editors:

The report found that –

- ‘We conclude that the procedure followed meant that the 2007 Intergovernmental Conference mandate was agreed with little scope for UK public or Parliamentary debate and engagement. This sets an unfortunate precedent which is in our view damaging to the credibility of the institutional reform process itself’ (para. 38) and that there was ‘a failure of accountability to Parliament’ (para. 32).
- ‘The Government risks underestimating, and certainly is downplaying in public, the importance and potential of the new foreign policy institutions established by the Lisbon Treaty, namely the new High Representative and the European External Action Service. We recommend that the Government should publicly acknowledge the significance of the foreign policy aspects of the Lisbon Treaty’ (para. 67).
- ‘We further recommend that all amendments to the Treaty, including extensions of qualified majority voting, should be done by primary legislation and not simply by a vote of the House (para. 88).
- We conclude that there is no material difference between the provisions on foreign policy in the Constitutional Treaty which the Government made subject to approval in a referendum and those in the Lisbon Treaty on which a referendum is being denied (para. 219).
- Jack Straw’s test for a new Treaty: then Foreign Secretary and current Justice Secretary Jack Straw assured Parliament that that if a new Treaty had the

EU Constitution's proposed EU President and EU foreign minister: 'Those points are central to the European constitutional treaty, and of course I see no prospect of their being brought into force, save through the vehicle of a constitutional treaty' (Hansard, 6 June 2005, col. 1001). The new Treaty has the president and a renamed foreign minister.