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### Sink the Dubai Ports Deal! (by R. Cort Kirkwood)

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by R. Cort Kirkwood  
March 20, 2006

(Posted February 28, 2006) Our ports are gateways to America, and it does not make sense to put them under the control of a foreign power -- particularly an Islamic regime tied to al-Qaeda. [Click here](#) for an online letter to Congress to block the Dubai ports deal.]



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### CURRENT ISSUE

Like most Americans, President Bush knew nothing, if you believe his tubdrummers, about the infamous plan to cede control of six major American seaports to the United Arab Emirates. Technically, a company called Dubai Ports World (DPW) will run the ports, but given that DPW is state owned, it's a distinction without a difference. If the deal goes through, an Islamic regime will control shipping on the eastern seaboard of the United States.

Bush isn't the only one who pleaded ignorance of the deal. Michael Chertoff, the ballyhooed minister of Homeland Security, also claimed hirelings kept him in the dark. What the president knew and when he knew it will remain a mystery, but whatever he knew, he knows enough now to threaten vetoing a suggested congressional measure to investigate the deal. This veto threat comes from a supposed conservative who naively thinks "Islam is peace" and who has never uncapped the veto pen during his five years in office. Not once has Bush seen a spending bill cross his desk that could be cut by a mere penny. But suddenly he sees a bill that merits the veto.

The Bush administration would put a despotic Islamic regime, whose potentates and bankers boast significant ties to al-Qaeda terrorists, in charge of American shipping. If that seems impossible, clearly it isn't. The deal is yet another plot, approved in secret, which would undermine American national security and sovereignty for the benefit of the transnational political and commercial plutocrats who manage government and business across the globe.

#### The Ports Deal

For Bush, the scandal began when the British company that manages at least six major American ports, Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation, was sold to Dubai Ports World for \$6.8 billion. Dubai is one of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which owns DPW, which in turn will manage shipping in New York, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Baltimore, New Orleans, and Miami.

Among the operations DPW will manage, the [New York Times reported](#), are "the cruise-ship terminal on the West Side of Manhattan"; the New York City Passenger Ship Terminal; and "one of the biggest cargo terminals in New York Harbor," the Port Newark Container Terminal. It is "the third-largest cargo terminal on the Port Authority's property." Before selling it, the British company owned 50 percent of the container terminal, the *Times* reported; a Danish company owned the other half, which means UAE, through DPW, now controls half of that operation.

Prior to the latest acquisition, DPW purchased port facilities in the Dominican Republic and Europe from CSX, an acquisition that conferred control of 29 ports across the planet. The latest purchase also gives DPW control of two other ports that haven't made much news: ports in Beaumont and Corpus Christi, Texas. Those ports, observed former Reagan official Frank Gaffney, who runs the neo-conservative Center for Security Policy, move heavy armor and helicopters for the U.S. Army. Representative Ted Poe (R-Texas) is rightly concerned about the UAE's controlling American



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military shipments: "They would have access to every manifest regarding shipping, all cargo going out, what's on it, where it's going and all incoming shipping coming back to the port."

Unsurprisingly, the government secretly sanctioned the deal. "The Dubai purchase was approved by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States," the *Times* reported, "which does not usually disclose information about its deliberations." And just to ice the deal for the high and mighty elites, "in mid-January, President Bush nominated a senior executive of Dubai Ports World, David Sanborn, to run the Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration. Mr. Sanborn had been running the company's operations in Europe and Latin America."

One marvels that Bush appointed an executive of DPW to a marquee position in his administration, yet knew nothing of the deal that the executive's employer was consummating to establish financial control of major American ports. Also, Bush's Treasury Secretary, John W. Snow, was formerly the chief executive officer of CSX, which sold its container handling division to DPW in 2004.

But GOP connections to DPW aren't the only reason the ports deal is suspect. Clan Bush is tightly plugged in to the UAE through several outlets, not least of which is the Carlyle Group, the planetary investment company long known for its relationship to both presidents Bush and former Secretary of State James Baker. Both presidents have worked for the group, and it recently hauled in a cash infusion of \$100 million from the state-owned Dubai Investment Corporation.

And if that isn't enough, presidential brother Neil Bush, the *Gulf News* reported, has earned plenty of frequent flyer miles jetting to Dubai. On October 14, 2001, just after the attacks of 9/11, Bush landed in Dubai to meet with several high UAE officials, not least of whom was Sheik Mohammed ibn Rashid al Maktum, whose importance will be clarified in due course. In January 2002, Neil Bush resurfaced in Dubai to broker the products of his educational software company, Ignite!.

Again, despite these personal and political links to the UAE, Bush knew nothing of the ports deal.

Aside from all this, the *Times* reported, the deal never received the 45-day review required by U.S. law "when the acquiring company is controlled by or acting on behalf of a foreign government." Bush officials, apparently, did not believe the company's owner, a foreign government, warranted that review. The Committee on Foreign Investment was created specifically to review such transactions, but in any event, the *Times* reported, American officials conducted "a comprehensive evaluation of the management structure at Dubai Ports World, its operations abroad, and its security plans."

In his defense, Bush stated that "the people responsible in our government have reviewed this transaction" — a Clintonian circumlocution even the Republican toadies on Capitol Hill did not accept. Thus, they sallied forth to support legislation, which Bush promised to veto, to postpone the sale.

### **The United Arab Emirates**

Average Americans are tugging their chin whiskers, wondering whether Bush and his crew are rowing around with one oar. Politicians right and left are incensed, as are the families of those killed in the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. And with good reason. Despite what supporters of this deal say about the UAE's present commitment to the war on terrorism, Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda used the UAE, a small country on the Persian Gulf bordering Saudi Arabia and Oman, as a logistical and financial base of operations for the attacks. Even worse, after the UAE's alleged conversion to our side, it did not cut ties with terrorists.

A few facts: the U.S. State Department says it is unsafe for Americans to travel there, and if they do so, "should exercise a high level of security awareness.... Americans should maintain a low profile, vary routes and times for all required travel, and treat mail and packages from unfamiliar sources with caution."

Aside from that, the UAE, particularly its capital city, Dubai, was a stomping ground for al-Qaeda terrorists prior to 9/11. The UAE, unlike practically every other nation on Earth, recognized the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan.

As well, reported the national commission that studied the attacks on 9/11, "at the beginning of February, Bin Ladin was reportedly located in the vicinity of the Sheikh Ali camp, a desert hunting camp [in Afghanistan] being used by visitors from a Gulf state. Public sources have stated that these

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visitors were from the United Arab Emirates.”

The CIA planned to strike bin Laden at the camp, but decided not to do so, the 9/11 commission reported, because “policymakers were concerned about the danger that a strike would kill an Emirati prince or other senior officials who might be with Bin Ladin or close by.” In a report published two months after 9/11, the *Los Angeles Times* divulged who visited the camp in the late 1990s: “Among the reported visitors were high-ranking UAE and Saudi government ministers. According to U.S. and former Afghan civil air officials, the hunters included Prince Turki al Faisal, son of the late Saudi King Faisal. He headed that nation’s intelligence service until late August, maintaining close ties with Bin Laden and the Taliban. Another visitor, officials said, was Sheik Mohammed ibn Rashid al Maktum, the Dubai crown prince and Emirates defense minister.” Sheik Maktum is the man who feted Neil Bush, the president’s brother, just about a month after the 9/11 attacks.

Some of those visiting hunters, the *Los Angeles Times* reported, “heaped donations on their Taliban hosts, officials said — and on Al Qaeda leaders who occasionally joined them.” Nevertheless, the strike against bin Laden was off. One top agent in the field at the time, the 9/11 commission reported, “believes today that this was a lost opportunity to kill Bin Ladin before 9/11.”

In short, because a top official of the UAE was with bin Laden, American officials could not assassinate him. Even worse, it appears UAE officials tipped off bin Laden to the CIA’s surveillance, the report concluded.

“On March 7, 1999, [counterterrorism official Richard] Clarke called a UAE official to express his concerns about possible associations between Emirati officials and Bin Ladin. Clarke later wrote in a memorandum of this conversation that the call had been approved at an interagency meeting and cleared with the CIA. When the former Bin Ladin unit chief found out about Clarke’s call, he questioned CIA officials, who denied having given such a clearance. Imagery confirmed that less than a week after Clarke’s phone call the camp was hurriedly dismantled, and the site was deserted. CIA officers ... thought the dismantling of the camp erased a possible site for targeting Bin Ladin.”

The 9/11 commission concluded that UAE might have been a hindrance, not a help, to American counterterrorism efforts. “The United Arab Emirates was becoming both a valued counterterrorism ally of the United States and a persistent counterterrorism problem,” the report said. “From 1999 through early 2001, the United States, and President Clinton personally, pressed the UAE, one of the Taliban’s only travel and financial outlets to the outside world, to break off its ties and enforce sanctions, especially those relating to flights to and from Afghanistan. These efforts achieved little before 9/11.”

The failure to kill bin Laden at the camp in Afghanistan left him free, ultimately, to mastermind and inflict the carnage in New York and at the Pentagon on 9/11. In these acts, too, the UAE helped bin Laden, officially or no, as more than one media outlet has noted in reports on the brouhaha over the ports deal. “Two of the hijackers in the Sept. 11 attacks came from the United Arab Emirates and laundered some of their money through its banking system,” the *New York Times* duly noted. “It was also the main transshipment point for Abdul Qadeer Khan, a Pakistani nuclear engineer who ran the world’s largest nuclear proliferation ring from warehouses near the port, met Iranian officials there, and shipped centrifuge equipment, which can be used to enrich uranium, from there to Libya.”

As the Associated Press observed two years ago, in a dispatch documenting the UAE’s continuing link to al-Qaeda, 11 of the 19 hijackers came to the United States through Dubai. At least half of the \$250,000 the hijackers used to stage their attacks came through wire transfers from banks in Dubai, also the conduits for money used in the attacks on the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998.

Three years after the attacks, AP reported, the UAE was still the “logistical hub” for bin Laden’s operatives. The UAE, a terrorism expert told the AP, “plays a key role for al-Qaeda as a through-point and a money transfer location.” And an expert on Islamic militants said the UAE wasn’t disposed to “trumpet” its help in the war against terror because its president “cultivates an image as a champion of Arab causes.”

If the devil is in the details, then regardless of the UAE’s role as a “valuable partner” in the war on terror, Bush’s approval of the sale of our ports to the UAE represents a deal with the devil where American security and sovereignty are concerned. And if those aren’t concerns enough for Bush and his understrappers, then perhaps the UAE’s dismal record on human slavery and child welfare needs considering. The UAE is a major destination for women sex slaves, the Bush State

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Department reported in June 2005, as well as [imported child slaves, stolen or purchased from other countries, who serve as camel jockeys](#). A law passed in April 2005 supposedly outlawed the practice, which features oil-rich sheiks gambling on the races, while the children, who run the risk of being trampled to death, train in the burning desert, live in hovels, and beg for water.

### The Larger Problem

Whatever happens with the ports deal, Americans need to know this latest scheme to undermine American national security and sovereignty is of a piece with nearly everything else this administration has done or failed to do. Bush not only refuses to stop illegal immigration from Mexico, but also suggests a "guest-worker" entitlement that would permit the alien horde to establish a permanent presence on American soil. He also supports handing Social Security benefits to these criminal aliens. The tsunami of illegal immigrants across the southern border poses a domestic security threat not just because so many are drug dealers, rapists, and murderers, but because Islamic terrorists can sneak across the open border unnoticed amid the tide.

Aside from that, the Bush administration hasn't stopped the unimpeded flow of government-authorized immigrants and visitors from Islamic countries. Frighteningly, columnist Joe Farah recently reported, Bush has sealed a deal with Saudi King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz to bring 10,000 Saudi "students" into the United States. It will also permit 25,000 such scholars to enter the United States legally, at the Saudi government's expense, over the next five years.

Apparently it hasn't occurred to the president or his spear carriers that these are exactly the kind of visas that some of the 9/11 hijackers possessed when they commandeered two jets and knocked down the World Trade Center, nearly razed the Pentagon with another, and crashed a fourth into the Pennsylvania countryside, having failed to direct their piloted projectile toward 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Then again, in the wake of the Patriot Act, the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, and the massive consolidation of police power in the hands of the Executive Branch, maybe it has occurred to them.

Thus does the government spend less time performing constitutional and legitimate duties, such as controlling immigration and providing for national security, and more time supporting a massive, intrusive, and unconstitutional "homeland security" agency with the authority to trace the activities of everyone in the country. Granted, the government isn't likely listening to phone calls from your grandmother, but it has arrogated unconstitutional, illegitimate powers to do just about anything in the name of a constitutional, legitimate function: national security.

In a sense, the furor over spying and wire-tapping Americans is the gun-control issue writ large: because the authorities will not, and in some cases cannot, control criminals, they impose gun-control laws on the law-abiding. In the same way, perhaps if the Bush administration were not waging an unconstitutional war in Iraq, it could spend more time and money controlling immigration here, which would obviate the unconstitutional, garrison-state security measures that harass law-abiding citizens.

The government now wants to scrutinize the private lives of all Americans: their financial transactions, their e-mail, their phone calls, and their political activities. Someday, the government may force real Americans to carry identification cards. Already, uniformed federal police search old ladies at airports and harass men who have received the nation's highest decoration for bravery — gumshoes confiscated a Medal of Honor from the late General Joe Foss, the former governor of South Dakota, who received his decoration from Franklin Roosevelt for his heroics as a fighter pilot in the skies over Guadalcanal.

Thus has Bush promised to veto a bill that would provide some measure of national security, and a cadre of internationalists and global elites who care nothing for American sovereignty support him. For instance, blithely dismissing the obvious national security dangers in the DPW sale, [the neo-conservative globalists at the Wall Street Journal pray he keeps this promise](#).

The *Journal* penned a sardonic, imperious, and disingenuous editorial that lampooned the justifiable reaction to the sale, implying that racial profiling and "politics" are behind it. A British company was running the ports until now, they reminded readers, and British citizens were responsible for the bombings in London last July. On the other hand, they said, having arrested a terrorist or two, the UAE is an ally in the war against terror. DPW will control only commercial operations, they averred, not security operations. A company in Florida that lost the bid to buy the British company filed suit to



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stop the sale to DPW. No wonder Miami's mayor, they concluded, objects to the sale, disguising his obvious political and commercial motives with faux distress over national security.

### The Elites and Their Plan

All of which means nothing. The glib rejoinder that a "British" company ran the ports and "British citizens" bombed the London Underground is a bird that won't fly. Just as the owners of DPW are not British, the bombers were not British in any meaningful way. They were Arab Muslims whose only claim to "citizenship" was a piece of paper. Culturally, religiously, and ideologically they were fiercely devout Muslims, and they acquired the opportunity to carry out their despicable and deadly deeds partly from the specious dogma, held by capitalist liberals at the *Journal* and multicultural leftists alike, that human beings are interchangeable cogs in the global gears and that anyone can be a "citizen" of any country.

However treasured an ally in the war on terror the UAE is, the *Journal* cannot speak for its citizens who are Muslim. Nor can it speak for DPW employees, Muslim or no. For the purpose of running our ports, unlike a British company, a company owned by an Islamic regime, particularly one with the UAE's record, cannot be trusted. Call that profiling or anything else, but the payroll of employees running these ports won't comprise British gardeners, Scottish pipers, and Irish poets.

Average Americans might wonder why any foreign company, state-controlled or not, is running an American port, the way companies from Singapore, Japan, and Denmark run them now. To the enlightened *philosophes* at the *Journal*, foreign control of U.S. assets is only natural; national sovereignty is obsolete. In the "global marketplace," goods and services and land and factories are sold like Corn Flakes to the highest bidder, creed and country of origin regardless. Americans are rightly dispossessed of their patrimony of wealth and culture, of their harbors and homes, of their very birthright of citizenship, by Mexican migrants and Meccan merchants whose only experience with America is Eminem and M&Ms.

Thus, this sale. It is another piece of the plan, which includes subverting national sovereignty via immigration and billion-dollar global transactions, to cede control of American business, government, and institutions to the corporate, political, and cultural elites who contrived and command the plan, and will augment their considerable powers at the expense of the consumers and taxpayers who unwittingly support the nefarious enterprise.

It mightn't matter to Bush and Wall Street's elite who runs America's harbors, industry, and commerce. But it might just matter to the average Joe, who wants physical security for his family, a job that pays a living wage, and an economy that flourishes — not wilts. Americans must ask themselves: "Would anyone approve this mad idea for the ports but a man who has gone mad, or a man who isn't mad at all but perfectly sane, whose loyalties lie not with his people and his country, but with a grandiose liberal abstraction that travels hidden under such disingenuous names as equality, democracy, rights, and freedom?"

Further, Americans must ask themselves: "Despite blustery claims from defenders of the Bush administration that Bush is doing what's right, is the administration loyal to U.S. citizens and doing what's right for them, or only to itself and to the rootless elites who empower it and thereby profit from the concentration of political and financial power among the few at the expense of the many?"

An empowering of the elites in our society would explain the threat to veto. Until the average American understands this truth and does something about it, he will toil in futility for Bush, Cheney, and the elites who are plotting America's demise.

*R. Cort Kirkwood has been writing about American politics and culture for more than 20 years.*

### What You Can Do

Readers are encouraged to contact their U.S. senators and representatives urging them to pass legislation blocking the Dubai Ports deal. To send your letter via e-mail [click here](#).

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