

**Good News
for Men and
Women**

Search

Web

NewsMax.com

Powered by Google



**\$79 Value.
Yours
FREE.**
[CLICK HERE NOW!](#)

Chinese Company Completes World's Largest Port in Bahamas

Christopher Ruddy and Stephan Archer

January 19, 2000

Bahamas – The same Chinese company that recently took operational control of the Panama Canal is currently completing construction of the largest container port in the world in Freeport, Bahamas – just 60 miles from Florida. [View Photos of the Port](#)

Several U.S. military experts say that the activities of Hutchison Whampoa Limited, a Hong Kong-based conglomerate, in both Panama and the Bahamas, pose a significant risk to U.S. national security.

Officials for Hutchison Whampoa have heatedly denied any links with the Red Chinese government, but several established connections – including new evidence uncovered by NewsMax.com – suggest the Chinese government has a keen interest in the company's activities.

One port facility that has captured the interest of the Chinese government is Hutchison Whampoa's sprawling port facility in the tourist destination of Freeport on Grand Bahama Island.

Strategically Located Near U.S. East Coast

According to the company's Web site, the port is located at one of the most strategic spots in the world because "Freeport is the closest offshore port to the east coast of the United States, at the cross-roads of routes between Europe and the Americas and through the Panama Canal."

In 1995, Hutchison Whampoa entered into a 50-50 partnership with the Grand Bahama Development Company, a privately owned Bahamian company, to develop and expand the small Freeport facility that had catered to cruise ships.

CONSERVATIVE T-SHIRTS

THOSESHIRTS.COM



Since then, Hutchison has helped dredge and expand the port, making it capable of handling the largest container ships on the high seas.

According to Michael Powers, Hutchison Whampoa's General Manager for the Freeport development, the container port is simply a "dedicated deep water trans-shipment hub."

'Hub' Port for Container Shipping

Large container ships coming from several directions can off-load their container boxes, which can be re-routed on to other large or small container ships for delivery. The port operates, he says, much like Miami airport might serve as a "hub" for travelers going to destinations around the globe.

Already the port is doing a brisk business in container shipments, Powers said, and has the capacity to become the world's largest container port. He said the company also plans to make the port the world's largest cruise ship destination port. Already, Disney cruise lines will soon make Freeport a port of call.

The company has ambitious plans to create the largest air cargo facility on land adjacent to the port. Hutchison has a 50 percent stake in the Grand Bahama Airport Company, which owns one of the largest airport runways in the world – more than 11,000 feet long. According to Powers, the runway is capable of handling the world's largest cargo and military aircraft.

On 800 acres of wooded land adjacent to the airport, Hutchison plans to create the Grand Bahama Sea-Air Business Center – a center that could potentially allow for 8 million square feet in warehouse space.

Communist China Ties Disturbing

While Hutchison Whampoa has a sterling reputation as a commercial enterprise – and has not been linked to any illegal activities such as drug or gun smuggling – the firm's ties to Communist China have raised concerns.

Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., and former U.S. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger have expressed concerns about Hutchison's influence over the Panama Canal.



Lott has described the Hong Kong firm as "an arm of the People's Liberation Army."

Hutchison Whampoa's chairman, Li Ka-Shing, is also a board member of CITIC – the China International Trust and Investment Corporation. U.S. intelligence sources have described the firm as a front for China's governmental State Council.

Congressman Dana Rohrbacher, R-Calif., has stated that CITIC has been used as a front company by China's military to acquire technology for weapons development.

Closely Tied to Beijing Rulers

A recently declassified report by the United States Southern Command's Joint Intelligence Center, prepared in October 1999 and obtained by the government watchdog Judicial Watch, said that "Hutchison Whampoa's owner, Hong Kong tycoon Li Ka-Shing, has extensive business ties in Beijing and has compelling financial reasons to maintain a good relationship with China's leadership."

The military intelligence report also warns that "Hutchison containerized shipping facilities in the Panama Canal, as well as the Bahamas, could provide a conduit for illegal shipments of technology or prohibited items from the West to the PRC, or facilitate the movement of arms and other prohibited items into the Americas." [View the Actual Secret U.S. Military Report](#)

John Meredith, the group-managing director for Hutchison Port Holdings, told NewsMax.com that comments made about Hutchison have often been erroneous and "outrageous."

He said the firm's involvement at the port in the Bahamas is simply a trans-shipment service.

Just Cranes, That's All

"We have no pilots. We have no tugs. We have no boats. We have no ships. We have no containers. All we have is cranes," he said.

Meredith angrily denied any connection between the firm and the Chinese government.

"We're a public company in Hong Kong. We're not an arm of anybody," said Meredith. He pointed out that less than 1 percent of all Hutchison investors are Chinese.

"I'm British for starters. I don't even speak the language. It would be very difficult for someone to instruct me as to what to do," he said

"We've had the most outrageous comments made about what we've got down [in Panama] – missile silos and all sorts of rubbish. Anybody can come and investigate," added Meredith.

No Chinese on Payroll

According to Powers, Hutchison employs about 500 Bahamians. Only five managers are not Bahamians, mostly British nationals. None are Chinese. Bahamian officials told NewsMax.com they have noticed no increase in Chinese nationals at the port or on the island.

Despite the strong claims made by Hutchison that China has no interest in their Bahamian port, evidence suggests otherwise.

A review of the visitor's log by NewsMax.com at the company's main office in Freeport shows that Chinese government officials have been frequent visitors to the port facility.

According to the log, China's ambassador to the Bahamas, MA Shuxue, has visited the port facility at least a half dozen times in the past few years. He has also accompanied groups of Chinese government officials. On other occasions Chinese governmental or commercial representatives have also paid visits without the presence of Ambassador Shuxue.

Chinese Hold Frequent-Visitor Record

The visitor logbook indicates Chinese officials have visited the port more often than officials from any other country, including the United States.

[View Photos of Entries by Chinese Officials in the Visitor Log](#)

The logbook also shows that on June 2, 1999, the Cuban ambassador,

Lazaro Cabeza, also paid a visit to the facility. Cuba is a strong ally of China's.

"If they have no connection to Hutchison and the port, if they are not interested in this company, why is China sending its ambassador there?" asks retired Admiral Thomas Moorer. "Why are other Chinese officials showing up there? Why is Castro's ambassador going there?"

Moorer, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, also served as former commander in chief of the Pacific and Atlantic Fleets.

"Of course the Chinese military sees the benefit of having a base, a future base, so close to the United States," Moorer said, adding, "What China is trying to do is get a kind of maritime position worldwide, and they need a home base – so to speak – in every ocean."

They Even Wanted Long Beach

"Not only are the Chinese in the Bahamas, they're in Panama and the Spratly Islands right off the Philippines. They tried to get Long Beach," Moorer said.

"There's no question about the fact in my mind that the Chinese military forces are affiliated with Mr. Li, who in turn runs Hutchison Whampoa," added Moorer.

Moorer said while the port facilities appear harmless today, they could be used as a staging ground by the Chinese at some future point if hostilities were to arise in the Korean peninsula or over Taiwan.

The Bahamian government said they are pleased with Hutchison's activities, however.

Bahamians All in Favor

Lindy Russell, the parliamentary secretary in the office of the prime minister for the Bahamas, said that Bahamians are excited about the economic development the port brings to the island nation.

Besides development of the port, Hutchison has other investments on the island including a 370-acre resort in Lucaya, Grand Bahama, which

includes a 49-acre beachfront site.

Russell said that U.S. officials have expressed concerns to him regarding human cargo of Chinese labor possibly coming through the ports. They had no concerns about the actual operation of the port, Russell said.

Additional Links:

[View Photos of the Port](#)

[View Photos of Entries by Chinese Officials in the Visitor Log](#)

[Read the Text of the Secret U.S. Military Report on Hutchison Whampoa](#)

[View the Actual Secret U.S. Military Report](#)

[Go to China Hot Topics for More on China](#)

[Go to Panama Canal Hot Topics for More on the Canal](#)

[Free Offer with Vortex](#) — Get Audiotape of Admiral Moorer's Briefing on "The China Threat"

E-mail This Article to a Friend

[Printer Friendly Version](#)

[E-mail a Comment to NewsMax.com](#)

[Reprint Information](#)

SITES TO CHECKOUT

[Home](#) | [Money](#) | [Jokes](#) | [Links](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Search](#) | [Cartoons](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Contact](#) | [Shop](#)

All Rights Reserved © NewsMax.Com