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### [Goodbye Dubai](#) (36 comments )

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The ports takeover by a state-owned company in Dubai is the perfect example of why concern for people--and not profits--should dictate policy when it comes to homeland security.

I realize that is a lot to ask of this administration.

**Our ports are already a national security nightmare, and outsourcing control of them to this United Arab Emirates company will only further compromise our nation's entry points.**

There's a lot that stinks about this deal. It was reached in secret, without consultation, apparently, from any external experts, including the head of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. Why was it approved so quickly? Why wasn't Congress briefed, and why didn't President Bush know?

Moreover, just one month ago, [the president nominated an executive at Dubai Ports World to run the Transportation Department's Maritime Administration](#). Not only would the UAE have unfettered access to America's ports, it would control the controller.

This rotten, \$6.8 billion deal is a new milestone in Bush's corporate agenda gone wild. I could go on and on. But let's move on to solutions.

The president or Congress must insist that P&O Ports, the London-based company that currently operates the six major ports in question, offer its U.S. operations for sale to experienced, reputable U.S.-based port companies.

In its request for bids, P&O indicated it would only consider those for its entire worldwide operations. That's wrong. There are three U.S. companies -- Seattle-based Stevedoring Services of America; Oakland, Calif.-based Marine Terminals Corporation; and Elisabeth, N.J.-based Maher Terminals, Inc.—that have the resources to operate our ports. And these companies should be given that chance.

If a U.S. company—with American security interests in mind—does not operate these ports, then the federal government should.

For years the [Teamsters Union has called for stronger security at our nation's ports and fought to secure safe working conditions for drivers](#) who haul goods

from ports to locations across our country. Increased union membership is a key component to our port-security issue. Port drivers are intimately familiar with port-security systems and know its vulnerabilities.

As the former head of U.S. Customs and Border Protection said in Tuesday's [Washington Post](#), unions play an important role in port security.

With union representation, workers have a voice in the workplace that enables them to speak out about port security initiatives and ensures that they have jobs that reward them and respect their hard work.

Furthermore, I am disturbed by the Bush administration's willingness to ignore the obvious increased security threats of opening our nation's ports to the UAE while invoking dubious concerns about supposed terrorist risks in depriving U.S. citizens employed by the Homeland Security Department of their right to form and join unions.

Union members were both victims and heroes during the 9-11 tragedy. Treating union members as a security risk while, at the same time, outsourcing vital operations of the nation's ports to companies based in countries known to harbor terrorists raises serious questions about the administration's true agenda.

But then again, this administration has always been quick to sacrifice individual rights in the name of security while refusing to do the same when it comes to Big Business.

