

Dubai Ports World:

A US Global Partner in Security to Invest in America

The British firm P&O, which manages six U.S. ports among other world holdings, is being sold to Dubai Ports World (DP World) of the United Arab Emirates. The UAE company would control management of ports in New York and New Jersey, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New Orleans and Miami. The sale of the UK company to DP World should be confirmed by a UK court on March 2, 2006. The sale received approval from the U.S. Committee on Foreign Investments but has run into a hail of fire from neoconservatives.

"As I've had occasion to note over the past few years, Dubai is home to billions of mullahdollars, and the black market through which all manner of illegal arms shipments and money-being-laundered have passed." **Michael Ledeen, AEI**

"Critics claim that the UAE recognized the Taliban, and al Qaeda used it in 9/11 preparations." **Peter Brookes Heritage Foundation**

"From the very beginning in the 1970s, the UAE has been a key source of financial support for Saudi-controlled organizations like the Islamic Solidarity Fund, the Islamic Development Bank (IDB)" **Alex Alexiev, CSP**

Among Neoconservatives, the debate is no longer *whether* to scuttle the sale, it's whether *disinformation* or *bigotry* will do the best job. Oddly enough, DP World's record of investing in underdeveloped ports from Yemen to Romania has played a vital role in kick-starting moribund economies with desperately needed foreign direct investment. Neocons should hail DP World's role as an example of how to fight terrorism, conflict and desperation through economic development. Instead, pundits from Michael Ledeen to Alex Alexiev have reached into the mud and begun flinging with both hands. But what do experts say about DP World?

What do the Experts Say?

In 2005 DP World made a major commitment to a country that receives relatively little foreign direct investment: Yemen. DP World guaranteed investments of \$370 million for capacity expansion toward increasing the volume of containers to 1.5 million in 2007. The US Ambassador, along with other US representatives in the region, hailed the investment DP World.

"I've known DP World from the time I was Consul General in Dubai and can tell you that this is a major international company. They agreed to a guaranteed investment of \$300 million, over the course of thirty years, and 80% of the infrastructure build out is front loaded. That is, most will occur in the first five years of the contract. I believe this will guarantee a steady and dramatic increase in containers handled by the port, and that the contract is an indicator of how serious the Government of Yemen and the business community are in restoring Aden as a major port." **US Ambassador to Yemen Thomas Krajeski September 2005**

DP World sees working with the US to increase port security as a major component of its investment. The US has taken steps to ensure that the Port of Aden, site of the terrorist attack on the USS Cole, becomes the most secure port in the region in partnership with DP World.

"The US donated eight used medium sized boats from existing fleet stock last year. We also transferred four harbor craft, fast patrol boats that are highly maneuverable for security operations within the port, and for chasing down smugglers. Smuggling is a longstanding problem along the coast. We intend to transfer some larger craft in addition." **US Ambassador to Yemen Thomas Krajeski, September 2005**

DP World will no doubt take the same committed approach to security in US ports, working closely with the Coast Guard, Port Authorities and law enforcement to ensure port security. Contrary to the hype, fear and derision leveled by neocons with little experience in the private sector, simple corporate profits provide the motivation for world class security. When ports are attacked, everyone loses, including shareholders. DP World has not shown itself to be interested in any security lapse that leads to losses. DP World is a US partner in port security.

What are Neocons After?

Neoconservatives are incensed at DP World's move into the US market. Increasing US-Arab trade, slated to grow 27% this year, runs against the vision of turning the region into a "seething cauldron" in the name of a "war on terror".

"One can only hope that we turn the region into a cauldron, and faster, please. If ever there were a region that richly deserved being cauldronized, it is the Middle East today. If we wage the war effectively, we will bring down the terror regimes in Iraq, Iran, and Syria, and either bring down the Saudi monarchy or force it to abandon its global assembly line to indoctrinate young terrorists. That's our mission in the war against terror." **Michael Ledeen**

Unfortunately for Ledeen the other singers in the Neocon chorus, DP World offers the region, and the US, an engine of economic and trade growth that simply must be harnessed. No amount of bigotry and fear should be allowed to overturn the U.S. Committee on Foreign Investments well-considered acceptance of DP World.

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