

## Statement on the President's Proposal to Allow the United Arab Emirates to Take Over a 30-Year Port

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### Statement on the President's Proposal to Allow the United Arab Emirates to Take Over a 30-Year Port Security Contract

President George W. Bush continues to defend a questionable deal that would allow Dubai Ports World, a company owned by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) government, to manage operations at six major U.S. ports, including Newark. The original lease with P&O Ports was signed in December 2000 and scheduled to last for 30 years. Congressman Steve Rothman's statement follows:

"This deal is an outrage. The United States & not the United Arab Emirates & should be responsible for the safety of Americans and I strongly support legislation to keep port security contracts in the hands of the U.S. government and U.S. companies.

"This lease that the Dubai Ports World hopes to acquire was initially signed before 9/11. We are in a different world now and must reevaluate all of our security contracts. President Bush should not outsource American security. There are more than enough American workers and American companies who are capable of inspecting containers and providing port security.

"Further, this deal raises larger questions about President Bush's homeland security priorities. For instance, more than four years after 9/11, only six percent of containers entering our ports are physically inspected. We should be inspecting every container. We also must adequately fund the Coast Guard's port security efforts. President Bush and the GOP leadership in Congress have left critical gaps in the funding, equipment, and personnel necessary to protect our ports despite opposition from myself and other Democrats.

"Given this record on port security, the President can not ask us to simply 'take his word for it' on a deal of this magnitude. It was wrong for him to approve such a major, questionable deal without going to the American people first, without notifying Congress, and without consulting the governors and mayors who actually own the ports in question. His actions reveal, once again, that we need new leadership in Congress that will force President Bush and his Administration to act in the light of day&mdash;and not behind closed doors."

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