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## **Dubai Ports World contract controversy must focus attention on lack of real U.S. port security**

*American port security "full of holes" says dockworkers' president, joins calls for 45-day investigation of contract*

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA**— The ongoing controversy over a pending federal approval of contracts with Peninsular and Oriental Steamship Navigation Co. (P&O) and its parent company Dubai Ports World to provide terminal services at six east coast ports must focus our nation's and the Bush administration's attention on the serious inadequacies in security at our ports, according to the president of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), which represent 60,000 dockworkers, warehouse workers and others along the west coast.

ILWU International President James Spinosa is joining with bipartisan calls in Congress and asking the Bush administration to direct the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) to conduct a full 45-day investigation of the contract with P&O.

"This is a global economy, and we have global employers in the longshore industry in America," said President Spinosa. "However, we should not rush to open the doors of our industry to companies owned and operated by foreign governments where serious concerns exist regarding terrorist activities and funding. It establishes a dangerous precedent."

More importantly, the controversy over this particular contract detracts from what is the real concern of dockworkers and millions of Americans who live in close proximity to our nation's ports: the lack of real improvements in port security since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 focused national attention on the vulnerability of our ports.

In September and October of 2004, the ILWU completed a survey of all marine terminal facilities in the nation's busiest ports at Los Angeles and Long Beach to assess whether facilities were complying with the Coast Guard Regulations for port security. On the basis of this survey and the first-hand observations of its Port Security Committee at major container ports along the west coast, the ILWU has repeatedly appealed to federal authorities to enforce port security regulations—but to no avail.

(more)



“American ports are just full of holes. Our members see them everyday,” Spinosa said, “In the four-and-a-half years since our country was attacked, the ILWU has repeatedly demanded that specific, federal port security regulations passed since 9-11 be strictly enforced. We have provided detailed accounts of which regulations are not being enforced in letters to and meetings with the United States Coast Guard leadership. Yet, this administration refuses to adequately fund port security so that the Coast Guard can enforce regulations that protect our ports. There has been nothing but foot-dragging and excuses from this administration about port security funding. As a result, ports and our communities are no safer today than before 9-11. This administration’s failure to protect American ports is just shameful.”

At every turn, this administration chooses commercial interests over real port security. Without proper enforcement of federal port security regulations, cargo containers can and do harbor stowaways—as occurred recently at the Port of Los Angeles—or even deadlier contents like dirty bombs. More ominously, unsealed and empty containers enter our marine terminals without checking for contraband or unconventional weapons that could easily be placed in these containers. Additionally, the Pacific Maritime Association has provided no formal port security training to longshore workers and very little training on terminal evacuation procedures.

The ILWU continues to demand that the following regulations outlined in the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002—which went into effect on July 1, 2004—be fully enforced as enacted in order to protect the health and safety of port communities:

- Thoroughly screen all vehicle drivers and riders at every port terminal gate (CFR 105.265(b)(3)).
- Check seals on cargo containers upon their offloading and entering dockside storage (CFR 105.265(b)(4)).
- Identify containers accepted for temporary storage in restricted areas before they are picked up (CFR 105.265(a)(5)).
- Restrict cargo from entering terminals that does not have a confirmed date for loading (CFR 105.265(a)(6)).
- Create and maintain a continuous inventory of all dangerous goods and hazardous substances from receipt to delivery (CFR 105.265(a)(9)).
- Routinely check cargo, transport units and storage areas within a terminal for evidence of tampering (CFR 105.265(b)(1)).
- Check that information on cargo, containers, and trucks carrying them matches their delivery note (CFR 105.265(b)(2)).

*The ILWU represents 60,000 working women and men in five states (California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Hawaii) and is affiliated with ILWU Canada. Through more than 60 locals ILWU unites longshore workers, warehouse workers, watchmen, clerks, ferry and tugboat workers, tourism industry workers and agricultural workers.*