



AP PHOTO  
Iranians chant during a rally to support Iran's nuclear programs on Friday in Tehran, Iran.

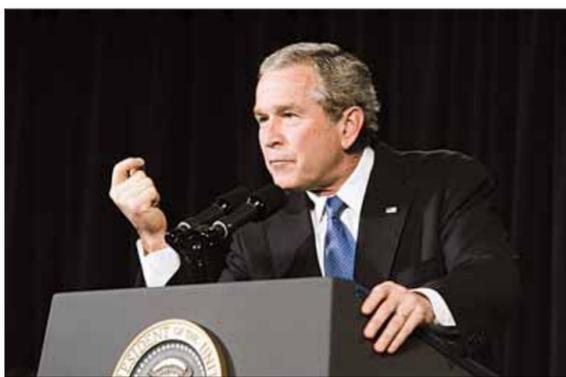
# Bush concerned about port deal collapse

## Politicians want broad legislation for U.S. ports

By LIZ SIDOTI  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON  
President Bush said Friday he was troubled by the political storm that forced the reversal of a deal allowing a company in Dubai to take over operations of six American ports, saying it sent a bad message to U.S. allies in the Middle East.

Bush said the United States needs moderate allies in the Arab world, like the United Arab Emirates, to win the global war on terrorism. The president said he had been satisfied that security would be sound at the ports if the Dubai



AP PHOTO  
President Bush speaks about the DP World ports deal at the National Newspaper Association Government Affairs Conference on Friday in Washington.

deal had taken effect. "Nevertheless, Congress was still very much opposed to it," Bush said. He made his remarks to a conference of the National Newspaper Association, which represents owners, publishers and edi-

tors of community newspapers. "I'm concerned about a broader message this issue could send to our friends and allies around the world, particularly in the Middle East," the president said. "In order to win the war on ter-

ror we have got to strengthen our friendships and relationships with moderate Arab countries in the Middle East."

"UAE is a committed ally in the war on terror," Bush added. "They are a key partner for our military in a critical region, and outside of our own country, Dubai services more of our military, military ships, than any country in the world."

"They're sharing intelligence so we can hunt down the terrorists," Bush said. "They helped us shut down a worldwide proliferation network run by A.Q. Khan," the Pakistani scientist who sold nuclear technology to Iran, North Korea and Libya, he said.

After a storm of protest in the Republican-controlled Congress, DP World announced Thursday that it would transfer six U.S. port operations to a U.S. entity.

The move spared Bush from a veto showdown with GOP lawmakers.

Yet the issue highlighted by the DP world controversy, U.S. port

security, shows no signs of going away.

Shortly after Bush's appearance, the administration announced a postponement in the next round of negotiations aimed at reaching a free trade agreement with the UAE, but wouldn't say whether it was related to the fallen ports deal.

The office of U.S. Trade Representative Rob Portman said merely that the next round of talks were put off to allow both sides more time to prepare.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said of the controversy, "The problem of the political moment has passed, but the problem of adequate port security still looms large."

Republicans and Democrats alike welcomed DP World's decision to give up its aspirations to manage significant operations at the six ports.

They warned, however, that the move doesn't negate the urgent need for broad legislation aimed at protecting America's ports.

## Russians propose more talks on Iran

By EDITH M. LEDERER  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

### UNITED NATIONS

Russia proposed more talks on Iran's nuclear program as the five U.N. Security Council powers Friday considered a statement to pressure Tehran to clear up questions about whether it is trying to build atomic weapons.

The U.S. was skeptical about the idea, saying it was time for tough action after three years of failed negotiations.

Ambassador John Bolton and other senior American officials have suggested that if the Security Council does not take tough action, Washington might look elsewhere to punish Iran, possibly by rallying its allies to impose targeted sanctions. "We are going to press for as vigorous a response in the council as we can get, and hope that that gets the Iranians' attentions," Bolton said Thursday.

"This is a test for the council. And if the Iranians do not back off from their continued aggressive pursuit of nuclear weapons, we will have to make a decision of what the next step will be."

Diplomats have indicated they will move slowly, focusing initially on a presidential statement that will likely ask Iran to comply with demands by the IAEA, the U.N. nuclear watchdog. The agency triggered council action by sending a Feb. 27 report on Iran's activities to the council.

One of Iran's senior clerics warned the Security Council to be careful before making any further decisions on Iran's nuclear program.

## Dubai issue could make Arabs wary of investing with U.S.

By JIM KRANE  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

### DUBAI, United Arab Emirates

The ports controversy is likely to send a chill among Arab businessmen, making them cautious about investing in the United States amid fears of an anti-Arab bias in the world's biggest market.

The backlash may not be long term: Many analysts said Friday that the United States is too tempting an investment for the oil-rich Gulf businesses. But the postponement of trade talks between Washington and the United Arab Emirates may be the first sign of discontent.

The United States played down any connection between the delay of the talks, which had been due to start Monday, and the ports controversy. Neena Moorjani, spokeswoman for the U.S. Trade Representative, said both sides just needed more time to prepare.

Still, the development prompted speculation that the government of this U.S. ally wanted to show its displeasure, at least symbolically.

On Thursday, DP World — owned by Dubai, one of the seven emirates that make up the UAE — announced it would give up management of six U.S. ports after American lawmakers raised an

**"This anti-Dubai venom is about race, religion and prejudice ..."**

Matein Khalid  
Dubai investment banker, on what was really behind port issue

uproar over security concerns.

For many in the region, the dispute is a reflection of what they see as U.S. anti-Arab sentiment and a particular slap to the UAE, a U.S.-friendly nation.

"This anti-Dubai venom is about race, religion and prejudice, not ports, security and politics," Matein Khalid, an investment banker in Dubai, wrote in the Khaleej Times. Blocking the DP World deal "will strip bare our illusion that an Arab, a Muslim, can ever be a friend of America again."

Eddie O'Sullivan, Dubai-based editorial director of the Middle East Economic Digest, said the outcry that forced DP World to back down was a sobering moment.

Other Gulf investors will likely review their deals in the United States for fear they could come under scrutiny as well and may shy away from future investments, he said.

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