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Dubai ruler promises to sell U.S. ports

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16 March, 2006

THE ARTICLE

Dubai ruler promises to sell U.S. ports

The U.A.E. company that recently bought the shipping company that controlled 22 American ports has changed its mind. The Dubai-based DP World offered to sell its \$6.8bn share in P&O, which had controlled the ports, as a goodwill gesture towards the U.S. DP World is the world's third largest ports company. It wanted to increase its power in international shipping but American politicians were furious that a foreign company would control U.S. ports. Many Senators said the situation was a major security threat. Few Senators openly admitted fears of an Arab group controlling U.S. docks.

The White House said it was very happy that Dubai's ruler, Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, promised to sell the ports. A political storm had broken out in America. Lawmakers in the House of Representatives voted 377-38 against DP World running port terminals in America. Sheik Mohammed's action immediately ended American fears. Michael Seymour, head of DP World's U.S. group, said there was "already significant interest...from American buyers". He added any buyer must be "a wholly owned American organization". He stated a sale would take place within the next four to six months.

WARM-UPS

1. TAKEOVERS: How do you feel when companies from other countries take over companies from your nation? What examples can you think of? What do you think when companies from your country buy companies from other countries?

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

The U.A.E. / shipping companies / ports / Dubai / goodwill / foreign companies / security threats / promised / fears / American organizations / sales

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

3. FOREIGN INTEREST: With your partner(s), talk about your thoughts on companies from the countries on the left taking over industries (on the right) from your country.

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • USA | • Ports |
| • China | • Electricity |
| • Russia | • Car making |
| • Pakistan | • Garbage collection |
| • France | • Airports |
| • United Arab Emirates | • Television stations |
| • Venezuela | • Bakeries |

4. HEADLINE PREDICTION: With your partner(s), use all of the words in the "Chat" activity above to predict what the news article will be about. Once you have your story, change partners and compare your different versions. Who was closest to the real story?

5. BUSINESS OPINIONS: Do you agree with the following opinions about international business? Talk about them with your partner(s).

- International business is destroying the earth.
- Businesses should not be sold to other countries.
- There should be a maximum of 49% foreign ownership in any business.
- Multinational companies must find local partners.
- It's dangerous to sell ports and other infrastructure to foreign companies.
- Politicians should never get in the way of international business.
- International business rules are set by America and rich countries.
- International business takes the wealth and resources of poor countries.

6. GOODWILL: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "goodwill". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. A UAE company is going to sell 22 American ports. | T / F |
| b. The UAE company bought the ports for \$6.8bn in the 1970s. | T / F |
| c. The UAE company aims to be the world's third largest ports company. | T / F |
| d. Many US Senators openly expressed fears of US ports being Arab run. | T / F |
| e. The ruler of Dubai promised to sell the ports. | T / F |
| f. A political storm erupted among US lawmakers over the UAE control. | T / F |
| g. Any future buyer must be a wholly owned American organization. | T / F |
| h. The sale should take place in the next four to six weeks. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| a. bought | stake |
| b. based | 100 percent |
| c. share | angry |
| d. furious | operating |
| e. openly | inside |
| f. very happy | purchased |
| g. running | delighted |
| h. significant | honestly |
| i. wholly | located |
| j. within | major |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| a. changed | against DP World running port terminals |
| b. a goodwill | the next four to six months |
| c. It wanted to increase its power | owned American organization |
| d. the situation was a major | in international shipping |
| e. openly admitted fears of an Arab | broken out |
| f. A political storm had | security threat |
| g. voted 377-38 | ...from American buyers |
| h. already significant interest | gesture towards the U.S. |
| i. added any buyer must be a wholly | group controlling U.S. docks |
| j. a sale would take place within | its mind |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Dubai ruler promises to sell U.S. ports

The U.A.E. company that _____ bought the shipping company that controlled 22 American ports has changed its _____. The Dubai-based DP World offered to sell its \$6.8bn share in P&O, which had controlled the ports, as a _____ gesture towards the U.S. DP World is the world's third _____ ports company. It wanted to increase its _____ in international shipping but American politicians were _____ that a foreign company would control U.S. ports. Many Senators said the situation was a _____ security threat. _____ Senators openly admitted fears of an Arab group controlling U.S. docks.

power
mind
major
recently
largest
few
goodwill
furios

The White House said it was very happy that Dubai's _____, Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, _____ to sell the ports. A political _____ had broken out in America. Lawmakers in the House of Representatives _____ 377-38 against DP World running port terminals in America. Sheik Mohammed's action immediately _____ American fears. Michael Seymour, head of DP World's U.S. group, said there was "already _____ interest...from American buyers". He added any _____ must be "a wholly owned American organization". He stated a sale would take place _____ the next four to six months.

voted
within
promised
buyer
ended
ruler
significant
storm

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Dubai ruler promises to sell U.S. ports

The U.A.E. company that _____ bought the shipping company that controlled 22 American ports has changed its mind. The Dubai-based DP World _____ to sell its \$6.8bn share in P&O, which had controlled the ports, as a goodwill _____ towards the U.S. DP World is the world's third largest ports company. It wanted to increase its power in international shipping but American politicians were _____ that a foreign company would control U.S. ports. Many Senators said the situation was a major _____ threat. Few Senators openly _____ fears of an Arab group controlling U.S. docks.

The White House said it was very happy that Dubai's _____, Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, promised to sell the ports. A _____ storm had broken out in America. Lawmakers in the House of Representatives voted 377-38 against DP World running _____ terminals in America. Sheik Mohammed's action immediately ended American _____. Michael Seymour, head of DP World's U.S. group, said there was "already _____ interest...from American buyers". He added any buyer must be "a wholly owned American organization". He stated a sale would take place _____ the next four to six months.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'security' and 'threat'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "INTERNATIONAL TAKEOVERS" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about international takeovers and security concerns.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|------------|----------|
| • recently | • happy |
| • based | • storm |
| • third | • ended |
| • furious | • group |
| • security | • wholly |
| • openly | • place |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. Have you been following news of this story?
- c. What do you think of U.S. politicians voting over whether they wanted a UAE company to own US ports?
- d. What do you think of Sheikh Mohammed's goodwill gesture?
- e. Do you think American companies would have listened to the lawmakers of another country?
- f. Do you think American lawmakers would have voted if the buyers were not from an Arab country?
- g. Do you think the concerns expressed by the US about security are real?
- h. Do you think there should now be rules about the purchase of industries by companies from other countries?
- i. What do you think are the opinions of UAE nationals towards the actions of the US lawmakers and the Dubai ruler?
- j. Do you think American companies buy ports in other countries?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Would you have voted for or against the purchase of the ports by the UAE company?
- d. What is your image of the UAE?
- e. What does this incident suggest about America and free trade?
- f. Would you disagree to the countries neighboring yours buying parts of key industries in your country?
- g. Which countries would you object to buying parts of key industries in your country?
- h. What industries in your country do you think should always be kept in 100 percent national control?
- i. What question would you like to ask Sheikh Mohammed about this issue?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

FOREIGN TAKEOVER: In pairs / groups, talk about the plus points and minus points of the following takeovers of industries in your country:

Takeover	Plus points	Minus points
1. Your ports by an(other) Arab country		
2. Your TV stations by an American (or Chinese) company		
3. Your airports by a Russian (or Kenyan) company		
4. Your soccer teams by an Australian (or Canadian) company		
5. Your hotels by a Japanese (or Thai) company		
6. Other _____ _____		

Change partners and talk about what you wrote with your previous partner(s).

Discuss which of the takeovers would be most / least preferable. Give a presentation explaining your thoughts to the class.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information about this story. Talk about this with your partner(s).

3. FOREIGN OWNERSHIP: Make a poster showing the rules that all countries should follow to protect a country's strategic assets from foreign takeovers. Show your poster to your classmates in the next lesson. Which one(s) did you like most and why?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to Dubai's ruler explaining what you thought of his goodwill gesture. Write another letter to the politicians who were furious at the sale of U.S. ports to the UAE. In the next class, compare your letters. Who had the most interesting ones?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. F c. F d. F e. T f. T g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| a. bought | purchased |
| b. based | located |
| c. share | stake |
| d. furious | angry |
| e. openly | honestly |
| f. very happy | delighted |
| g. running | operating |
| h. significant | major |
| i. wholly | 100 percent |
| j. within | inside |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| a. changed | its mind |
| b. a goodwill | gesture towards the U.S. |
| c. It wanted to increase its power | in international shipping |
| d. the situation was a major | security threat |
| e. openly admitted fears of an Arab | group controlling U.S. docks |
| f. A political storm had | broken out |
| g. voted 377-38 | against DP World running port terminals |
| h. already significant interest | ...from American buyers |
| i. added any buyer must be a wholly | owned American organization |
| j. a sale would take place within | the next four to six months |

GAP FILL:

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The U.A.E. company that **recently** bought the shipping company that controlled 22 American ports has changed its **mind**. The Dubai-based DP World offered to sell its \$6.8bn share in P&O, which had controlled the ports, as a **goodwill** gesture towards the U.S. DP World is the world's third **largest** ports company. It wanted to increase its **power** in international shipping but American politicians were **furious** that a foreign company would control U.S. ports. Many Senators said the situation was a **major** security threat. **Few** Senators openly admitted fears of an Arab group controlling U.S. docks.

The White House said it was very happy that Dubai's **ruler**, Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, **promised** to sell the ports. A political **storm** had broken out in America. Lawmakers in the House of Representatives **voted** 377-38 against DP World running port terminals in America. Sheik Mohammed's action immediately **ended** American fears. Michael Seymour, head of DP World's U.S. group, said there was "already **significant** interest...from American buyers". He added any **buyer** must be "a wholly owned American organization". He stated a sale would take place **within** the next four to six months.