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Spies In The Ointment -----For US Ports

By Bill Garrett

Funny how the debate over the United Arab Emirates management takeover of US port facilities

fails to focus on spying as a major concern. Nothing less than the security of the Ports of New York, New Jersey, Baltimore, Miami and even New Orleans, a major choke point of America's oil supplies, is at stake.

Enough has been written about how petrodollar flows find their way into the hands of militant Islamists and finance the forces of world terrorism to establish it as fact. These money transfers make it clear that any Middle East oil producing nation is subject to powerful influences from Alqaeda and other such groups. As long as the money flows, the Middle East oil fields will be safe from violent interruptions; it's a global-scale version of mafia protection rackets: you pay, your store's O.K.; you don't pay, your dead!

Information can also flow as a result of the same threats and pressures that deliver petro-dollars to those seeking the demise of our country. Putting the government of an oil producing nation that is subject to such pressures in charge of managing US port facilities creates a pipeline of information to those who have sworn to destroy us and gives them a road map to our domestic weak points, an early warning system on military operations and presents opportunities for sabotage and attack on a grand scale.

Ports have always been a focal point for spying—and for good reasons: the lifeblood of war, commerce, industry, and economic prosperity flows through them and tells its secrets to well-trained watchers. The presence of credentialed spies in our ports could provide all this information to terrorists at the speed of the internet.

Managing even portions of a major port provides continued access to port facilities and requires knowledge of the port's systems, security, geography, and operations. Daily presence in a port provides knowledge of security systems, credentials (That can then be reproduced) and knowledge of the levels of security they represent. More sensitive information on how containers are selected for inspections—or no inspections, emergency response or security systems and how to disable them can easily be found once experienced spies are inside the fence and managing our ports.

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No nation or company can be certain to keep spies and undercover terrorists off their staffs and, in the UAE case, out of our ports. Our own CIA has had counter spies working undetected for years. It's the nature of the beast and it can't be avoided no matter how much counter-spin the administration puts out. With UAE the potential for infiltration is much greater due to domestic pressure from militants.

With spies inside our ports there will be little port security. The hows, whys and intricacies of port operations will soon be in the hands of those who have sworn to destroy us. From there it is only a matter of time until our enemies find the key to unlock and penetrate port security with impunity.

The danger is real. Much of the military hardware and supplies bound for the Middle East flow through the east coast ports UAE desires to manage. New Orleans is a central choke point for a major portion of America's oil supplies.

We have men and women working and fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our government has an obligation to protect their safety to the greatest extent possible. Failing to protect information concerning the type of equipment, the volume of military supplies, the ships on which they travel, etc. provides advance notice of our plans and endangers rather than protects our troops.

On the domestic front, imagine a spy or terrorist with credentials allowing unrestricted movement inside the Port of New Orleans. He or she could find the points at which to best choke off 20% or more of America's oil supplies violently or through more subtle sabotage. Further imagine such a person duplicating his or her authentic credentials and leading bombers or other destructive forces to the choke points. Or imagine a top manager pressured into turning his head to passage of dangerous cargoes into America. The potential risks are incalculable; but very real.

I am amazed that our government thinks that letting Americans know that their government is spying on them without warrants is a serious breach of national security; but can turn over management of our ports and the information they contain to a foreign power subject to severe pressures from our sworn enemies. Worse yet, we'll pay them to do it!

The Bush Administration claims that UAE is an important ally in the war against terror and somehow that erases the increased risks of allowing them to manage our port facilities. Well, it doesn't! In light of 911, UAE leaders must understand our concerns about increasing the risk of further attacks or crippling sabotage; if they do not, then they are not as strong an ally as the administration thinks.

Bill Garrett is a former international infrastructure consultant, energy entrepreneur, and government official. He's presently the president of

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, a group advocating a rapid transition to

renewable energy. The group has posted its Declaration of Energy Independence Security and Sustainability at

<http://www.cleanpeace.org>

Sign it there

What's So Special About Cinnamon?

By Laura Bankston

I don't know about you, but just the smell of cinnamon makes me feel warm and fuzzy all over.

My favorite cookies to make is Snickerdoodles because I just LOVE the smell of them baking. There's just something warm and delicious about it.

The sense of smell is powerful – and when my kids smell Cinnamon, they are going to feel warm and fuzzy all over because of the fun we've had in the kitchen.

But, you might be surprised to know that the history of Cinnamon goes waaaay back – it was one of the first trade spices.

In fact, cinnamon is mentioned in the Bible – it was used in the combination of ingredients used to make a holy anointing oil for the tabernacle:

Moreover the Lord spake unto Moses saying,

Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels,

And of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin:

And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil.

Exodus 30:22–25 NKJV

The ointment or oil was used to anoint the tabernacle of the congregation, the ark of the testimony, the table and all the vessels, the candlestick, the altar of incense, the altar of burnt-offering, etc.

I find two things interesting about this passage:

That cinnamon was an ingredient in this holy anointing oil

That is is called "an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary.

Does cinnamon have health benefits as well?

There are cinnamon pills for diabetes, cinnamon bark used medicinally by the Chinese for calming stomach acids, cinnamon bark being used in India for childbirth labor, and cinnamon increasing blood circulation and creating a warm feeling.

Well, didn't I start out by saying just the smell of cinnamon makes me feel warm and fuzzy all over?

Laura Bankston is author of Internationally selling Cooking with Kids Curriculum: "Homeschool Cooking in a Box" and the "Homeschool Cookbook". She currently home schools her three children, maintains home school support websites, and manages their family-owned service business. For information on her curriculum that includes lots of recipes with cinnamon, visit

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