Lawmakers, unions protest Air Force tanker deal

sas lawmakers joined labor lead- tankers to Airbus parent European ers on Thursday to protest the massive Air Force tanker contract that Boeing Co. lost to a European rival and vowed to stymie the deal in Congress.

Organizers of the Capitol Hill rally said the contract would subsidize foreign competitors at the expense of U.S jobs in the aerospace defense industry, particularly in Washington state and Kansas, where much of the work on the tanker would have been performed, had Boeing won.

"The Air Force process was so badly flawed that it was skewed to favor one bid," said Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kan. "What should have been a boon to American taxpayers is instead an embarrassment to American taxpayers.'

Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., called the Air Force's decision "an raised questions about the fairness of the selection process.

the table," Murray charged. the two states have proclaimed outrage ever since the Air Force's

der to keep a foreign competitor at Congressional members from

decision in February to award a

Boeing time and time again in or-

Co. and its U.S. partner, Northrop Grumman Corp. The award came as a shock to

Aeronautic Defence and Space

Boeing, which has supplied tankers to the Air Force for nearly 50 years and was widely considered the favorite to win the deal. Boeing filed a formal protest with the Government Accountability Office on March 11 and expects a ruling by June.

Roberts, Murray and six other senators on Thursday sent a letter to President Bush claiming the award sends the wrong signal when at the same time the U.S. is protesting unfair foreign subsidies to Airbus before the WTO.

Union leaders on Thursday focused on the potential loss of American jobs.

"We will be sending our tax insult to our workers" and also money to Europe to energize their economy while our economy goes in the tank," said Debbie Logs-"The rules were changed on don, Midwest chairwoman of the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace, the union representing most of Boeing's engineers and technical workers

> Members of Alabama's congressional delegation have defended

WASHINGTON (AP) — Kan- \$35 billion contract for refueling the selection process, which would result in a tanker assembly plant in Mobile and the creation of 2,000 jobs. Northrop claims its victory would support at least 25,000 jobs at more than 200 U.S. suppliers, while Boeing says its aircraft would support more than 44,000 jobs at 300 U.S. suppliers.

Reps. Todd Tiahrt, R-Kan., and Norm Dicks, D-Wash. - two influential members of the House Appropriations Committee — are considering legislation to overhaul the procurement process or block funding for the deal.

"There's going to be a price to pay in Congress because we're not going to stand for losing American jobs and paying such a high price," Tiahrt warned.

He said Congress has an obligation "to look at things like maintaining a defense industrial base, how much revenue is lost when you send 19,000 jobs overseas, how much corporate revenue is lost by sending it over to a foreign supplier.'

Dicks said bigger Eads/Northrop plane would use more fuel, costing the Air Force \$30 billion more than the Boeing model over the 40-year life span of plane.

"Congress has a responsibility to correct one of the worst decisions in modern history," Dicks 8 3 5 ©2008 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc. 6 8 5 9 6

Difficulty Level ★★★★

Conceptis SudoKu

By Dave Green

This is a logic-based number placement puzzle. The goal is to enter a number, 1-9, in each cell in which each row, column and 3x3 region must contain only one instance of each numeral. The solution to today's Sudoku puzzle is below.

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Doctor fights prosecutor

WICHITA (AP) — An embattled Kansas physician charged with running a "pill mill" that led to 56 deaths told a federal judge in court papers Thursday that he and his wife were not afraid of the truth and are opposed to the government's request for a gag order in their case.

Federal prosecutors asked U.S. District Judge Monti Belot earlier this month to prevent Dr. Stephen Schneider and his wife, Linda, from talking to the media.

Prosecutors also asked the judge to extend that gag order to include their attorneys, family members and Siobhan Reynolds, president of the Pain Relief Network, a patient advocacy group that has taken up the Schneiders' cause.

"The government's attempt to restrain contact with the media comes as a result of the media's coverage becoming balanced and raising questions about the government's motivations, its actions, and the results of those actions. according to a defense motion filed Thursday.

Prosecutors told the judge that the defendants and their supporters were attempting to use the me-

dia to influence the jury pool. As an alternative to a gag order, the government sought a transfer of the trial, scheduled for February 2009, to eliminate the possibility of jurors being prejudiced by publicity the case is getting in the Wichita media.

Federal prosecutors also asked the judge to admonish defense attorneys on professional rules of conduct regarding public statements. They also want to limit the contact Reynolds and family members have with witnesses in

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8	9	2	6	3	7	5	4	1
7	1	3	4	5	9	2	8	6
5	6	4	2	8	1	7	9	3
3	5	6	9	7	2	8	1	4
9	4	1	8	6	5	3	7	2
2	8	7	1	4	3	9	6	5
4	7	9	3	2	6	1	5	8
6	3	5	7	1	8	4	2	9
1	2	8	5	9	4	6	3	7

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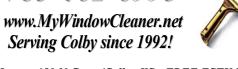
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