

from our viewpoint...

Are we picking on the Arabs

What is wrong with the idea of the government-owned company from the United Arab Emirates owning terminals in American port?

There has been a lot of wailing about this over the past two weeks, and the deal has been put on a 45-day delay because of the furor.

We admit at first blush, the announcement left us wondering where this began. Talking to people, there is a sense the government has not been looking at this closely enough.

The deal is replacing a British company with an Arab one. This is not a new situation. Firms from half a dozen countries operate terminals at American ports on both coasts and the Gulf of Mexico.

The extent of the foreign investment in operating American ports is surprising, and disturbing at the same time. Apparently the sale of terminals began in the 1970s, and has been expanding over the years. In fact, the British-Arab deal actually covers more than the six ports being listed in the news reports.

The six being mentioned are the largest container terminals and a couple of cruise ship terminals. There are six in Texas that have not been mentioned, and eight more along the east coast from Maine to Miami. Along the Gulf, besides the one in New Orleans, there are two more in Louisiana and one in Gulfport, Miss.

Criticism targets President Bush because of the process for reviewing and approving foreign investments in the United States. The Committee on Foreign Investments is under the Department of the Treasury. The law has been amended at least twice by Congress to define when such reviews are required.

In 1993, Congress changed Defense Production Act of 1950 to require investigations where the purchasing company is “controlled by or acting on behalf of a foreign government, and the action could ... affect the national security.”

The committee has 12 members, including the secretaries of Treasury, State, Defense, Homeland Security and Commerce, the Attorney General, the director of the Office of Management and Budget, the U.S. Trade representative, the chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors, the director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, and the president’s national security and economic advisors.

Yes, these are all people appointed by President Bush, but then the other deals made over the past 20-30 years have been reviewed by appointees of other presidents, Democrat and Republican.

Other deals have not received the same attention, and Americans are now finding out because of the potential sale to an Arab firm.

The companies that run the terminals hire American workers to load and unload the ships, but it is true the people running the companies would be privy to all the security arrangements at each port under the control of the Coast Guard and Homeland Security.

We have watched other foreign investments in our country, and those have not raised our eyebrows. We thought it was part of globalization, the way things are as the world changes and grows.

Whether the deal is right this time remains to be decided, but at least there will be more talk and thought than has happened in the past. When other foreign investments come down in the future the American people should be informed, and there should be more thought about whether we have reached a point where enough is enough.

It shouldn’t matter if the foreign companies operating in this country are European, Asian or Arabian; the basic question is whether we feel secure with these investments. — *Tom Betz*

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Founded by Eric and Roxie Yonkey

1994-2001

Nor'West Newspapers

Haynes Publishing Company

Who won the Super Bowl ad contest?



steve haynes

● along the sappa

There ought to be some kind of formal competition for those ads on the Super Bowl, shouldn't there?

The greatest minds in television advertising work all year to produce those spots. Millions of Americans see them, rate them, debate them, talk about them over coffee for weeks.

Only a couple of questionable calls by the zebra will linger longer in the mind.

At \$2.5 million for a 30-second spot, they're some of the most expensive advertising of the year, but then, experts say 91 million of us were watching.

But there's no award, no trophy, no medal for the best ad, the best director, the most original script.

And that seems a shame.

Maybe they could make a replica of the Lombardi trophy with a television on top, instead of a football?

After the game, we'd all vote online, and the winners would gather in Hollywood or the parking lot at the stadium and get their prizes.

Until then, our informal selections will have to suffice.

It's hard to compete with Budweiser ads, and there were a bunch of them. Anheuser-Busch spends a lot of money in February. But my vote goes the a Pepsi brand, Sierra Mist.

The routine where the college boy is frisked for his soda at the airport is just hilarious. The gate agent makes beeping noises whenever her wand gets near the pop. She says he has to leave it with her.

"But you're just making those noises," he protests.

"Looks like we've got a troublemaker here, boss," she replies.

"Just say the word, Wendy," he says, snapping his rubber gloves.

"I'm good," the kid says, giving her the pop. Loved it.

No. 2: Bud Light for the revolving wall. In a series buildup, a guy installs a secret revolving wall to hide his 'fridge — and the beer — when moochers show up. Only the wall puts the 'fridge in the next apartment, where scruffy college boys dive into the "magic 'fridge" every time it appears.

The single FedEx effort drew praise from the

House bows to election year pressure

By DOUG ANSTAETT

Kansas Press Association

The Kansas House of Representatives showed us this past week just what effect an election year can have on the conduct of public business.

Faced with a barrage of telephone calls, e-mails and personal visits from lobbyists representing cities, counties, school districts and community colleges, the House Republican leadership decided a bill to allow for the tape recording of executive sessions of public bodies was too explosive to send to the House floor.

Instead of instituting a rather limited safeguard for the public's right to know, the House folded to election year politics.

What the Kansas Press Association, Kansas Association of Broadcasters, the League of Women Voters and the Kansas Sunshine Coalition for Open Government were seeking with this bill was a check on the right of public bodies to adjourn to executive or closed sessions.

House Bill 2719, endorsed by a majority of the House Governmental Organization and Elections Committee on Feb. 22, would have required the tape recording of an executive session only when a member of a board, council or commission believed the discussion violated the Kansas Open Meetings Act.

The law outlines 13 instances, or exceptions, where public bodies can go behind closed doors to discuss sensitive topics such as non elected personnel, employer-employee negotiations, consultation with an attorney, security and preliminary discussions on acquisition of real property. Other discussions, such as policy decisions, long-range planning and budgeting, are forbidden in a closed meeting. Furthermore, no votes are allowed in closed session.

We believe the vast majority of elected officials are honest, hard-working individuals who



from other pens

● commentary

want to do the right thing. They make sure discussions stay focused on the legally allowed subjects mentioned above. And when those discussions stray outside the legally protected lines, strong administrators and board members rein them in.

Unfortunately, there are some who don't. They are the ones for which this law was designed.

Backers believed that rather than stifle debate or "chill" discussions, the existence of a tape recorder would deter public bodies that might veer outside the lines. The mere pushing of a tape recorder button would signal to the board, council or commission members to get back to the legally protected subject at hand.

If they chose to continue to discuss an ille-

where to write

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