

To: Jeffrey Epstein[jeeproject@yahoo.com]
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Subject: Quit bashing Dubai! Quit bashing Dubai! By Lind Heard

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Attacking Dubai has become fashionable in Western circles.

British reporters and columnists, in particular, are sinking their teeth into the Emirate like dogs chomping on a juicy bone. The latest news that Dubai World seeks to restructure its debt involving a six-month payment delay has triggered a host of salivating media hounds baying for blood. A few days ago, hysterical headlines were predicting another global economic crash with banks worldwide falling like ninepins. Following the doom-laden onslaught, currencies have dipped and markets fallen. Countries, companies and individuals restructure their debts all the time. There has been no suggestion that Dubai World is about to go under or that it will leave its creditors high and dry. The fact is Dubai is getting back on its feet. Its true that it was more vulnerable to the global economic downturn than the rest of the Middle East but the crisis itself was not of its own doing. Even the finest financial brains were unable to foresee the US subprime crisis that spurred the global meltdown. Yet, according to an article in the Sunday Times a few days ago titled Dubai needs to stop the contagion fast, Dubai is a monument to the excesses that gave us this global financial crisis. There's just one problem with that. The crisis resulted from greedy US mortgage lenders, unscrupulous financial houses and dodgy credit ratings agencies. Just in case my colleagues in the British media are too busy dreaming up new slanderous tidbits for their next bash-Dubai installment to think objectively, it's worthwhile stressing that the emirate doesn't stand alone. It is an integral part of the United Arab Emirates, which, overall is doing very nicely. Just a day before the Dubai World announcement, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said he was impressed by the quick recovery made by the UAE economy and the measures made by the leadership... There is absolutely no way that the federal government in Abu Dhabi would throw Dubai to the wolves, for if it did, the whole country would be dragged down with it; perhaps even the region. To prove the point, the country's Central Bank has moved to guarantee Dubai's debts while more liquidity is being pumped into Dubai banks. Some pundits are peering into their crystal balls to prophecy a quid pro quo situation whereby Dubai will end up having to hand its airline Emirates or other major Dubai-owned companies to Abu Dhabi. That, too, is an unlikely scenario because the two emirates are linked by more than money. They have ties of blood and marriage as well as a shared history. Thirty-eight years ago, on Dec. 2, 1971, the UAE was founded. Cementing the seven emirates that make up the UAE was no easy task for its founders, but they did it against all odds. Western predictions that the fledgling country would collapse due to infighting came to naught, just like today's gloomy forecasts will. What Dubai's rulers have achieved in less than four decades is nothing short of incredible. I know firsthand. My first visit there was in 1975 when it was mostly sand interspersed with a few roads, a hospital, some schools and souks around the Creek. Its only recognizable landmark was the Dubai Clocktower. Its only five-star hotel was the newly-built Intercontinental. At that time, few outsiders had even heard of the place, whereas, today, it fills miles of column inches each year. The fact that it has gained such prominence in such a short time is worth applauding, even if, over the past year or so much of it has been negative. TAKE THE Observer, for instance. During last Sunday alone, it has published a veritable slew of vitriolic articles centered on Dubai. In one day, there was As Dubai crashes from wonder to blunder, who will go down with it? Dubai's property bonanza just wasn't built to last and Dubai: Bling City is dead but the desert dream lives on. What is it with these writers? Haven't they got anywhere else to moan on about? If making their readers depressed is their thing, they could always tour some of Britain's crime/drug/yob-ridden housing estates or mosey on over to America's mushrooming tent cities. Why all this focus on Dubai? In a word: Envy. Dubai's tax-free, sunshine-filled, glamorous lifestyle is the stuff of dreams for British commuters slogging away struggling to pay their mortgages and bills with Saturday night out down the pub the highlight of their week. Then there are those who cannot stomach the fact that an Arab country, a Muslim country, has created a Utopia in the desert, and, worse, set itself up as a benchmark of excellence. If it consisted of clusters of thatched-roof huts with a luxury tourist resort or two, they would be saying how wonderfully picturesque it was. Then they could wander around, buy a few trinkets, throw a few coins to smiling kids and feel oh so superior. Dubai isn't humble enough for them. That's my take and I'm sticking to it. Johann Hari of The Independent has gone so far as to call Dubai a sinister mirage in the desert. Oh please! He just cannot help envying seeping out of his every phrase. He is obviously offended at what he calls bragging Emiratis and Westerners who love Dubai because they have domestic slaves to do all the hard work. In all my 14 years living and working in Dubai, I never came across a single slave or the chain gangs he mentions. The people I met there from all over the world chose to come to Dubai because they could earn money to send to their families and, once they had

managed to save a nest egg, they often returned home. Would Hari dare refer to the Latino domestics in places like Florida or California as slaves? Indeed, there are plenty of real slaves on his doorstep in the UK, where thousands of young women from Eastern Europe have been trafficked under the pretext of becoming au pairs or cleaners. Once it gets over this minor financial setback Dubai will shine even brighter. And to those who get paid for wishing it ill at every opportunity there will be only one thing to say: Get over it!