

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**NOV. 04, 2005**

Contact: Lori A. Baer  
(561) 383-4100

[baer@portofpalmbeach.com](mailto:baer@portofpalmbeach.com)  
Web site: [www.portofpalmbeach.com](http://www.portofpalmbeach.com)

**PORT OF PALM BEACH DIRECTOR REITERATES IMPORTANCE  
OF SECURITY IN WAKE OF SOMALIA PIRATE ATTACK**

**RIVIERA BEACH, Fla.** – The Saturday attack by pirates on a luxury cruise ship off the coast of Somalia stands as a chilling reminder of the importance of seaport and vessel security, the executive director of the Port of Palm Beach said today.

“While the pirate attack was a highly unusual event that we pray is never repeated, it serves to remind us all that cargo and passenger vessels alike must be prepared for the most unlikely of circumstances at all times,” said Port of Palm Beach Executive Director Lori A. Baer.

Similar attacks have occurred on relief ships and cargo vessels in the Indian Ocean, Baer pointed out, and the most recent event underscores the need for federal help to maintain seaport and vessel security operations to avert all such attempts, whether by terrorists or others.

“The tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001, taught us that virtually anything can happen, anytime, anywhere,” Baer said. “Since 9/11, Port of Palm Beach has done much to make the port and its vessels as safe as can be; investing millions of dollars in security training, multi-agency simulated training exercises, background checks, high-tech intrusion devices and security infrastructure.

“Likewise, the overwhelming majority of our port operators have stepped up to share in the escalating costs of establishing and maintaining the highest levels of security, both landside and waterside,” she continued. “This most recent incident reminds us that we must remain vigilant and that sufficient federal funding for critical agencies such as the U.S. Coast Guard and Customs and Border Protection must be provided.

“This incident illustrates the essential nature of programs now in place, such as background checks, knowing who and what is aboard vessels, and advance intelligence between both national and international authorities,” Baer added. “Although costly, these programs, implemented by ports and vessel operators, have become simply imperative in the protection of passengers and crew members.”

One crew member was injured by shrapnel as pirates on two armed boats fired on the *Seabourn Spirit* off the east African coast. The ship is operated by Miami-based Seabourn Cruise Line, a subsidiary of Carnival Corp.

###