



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Subcommittee Hearing Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)

Examining the PRC's Strategic Port Investments in the Western Hemisphere and the Implications for Homeland Security, Part I

February 11, 2025

This hearing is only our Committee's third this Congress, but I am already beginning to sense a theme: the Republican Majority wants to hold hearings on real problems, but is turning a blind eye to how the Trump Administration is making those problems much, much worse.

Last week, Republicans convened a hearing on cybersecurity workforce challenges, while trying to ignore the Trump Administration's brazen attacks on Federal workers.

This week, Republicans are holding a hearing on the People's Republic of China's growing international presence in the maritime sector, while trying to ignore the Trump Administration's brazen attacks on U.S. foreign aid, which is essential to combatting the PRC's influence around the world.

This is like trying to mow the lawn while your house is on fire.

The threats posed by the PRC to U.S. and international ports are worthy of serious attention.

The PRC has grown increasingly aggressive within the maritime domain and currently owns or operates more than 40 ports in Mexico, Central, and South America.

Some of these are deepwater ports with wide-berth docks sufficient for China's Navy to make port calls for logistics and refueling needs.

The United States and its partners face tremendous challenges in responding to the PRC's activities—which is even more challenging when the current Administration is undermining those efforts.

On Inauguration Day, President Trump signed an Executive Order pausing U.S. foreign aid.

Since then, we have seen Elon Musk and his Department of Government Efficiency minions attempt to shutter the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Stepping back from the world stage is not the way to counter China's growing influence.

In fact it will do exactly the opposite, opening the door for China to fill the void the U.S. has left.

As we seek to understand why the Administration would take these seemingly incomprehensible actions, we cannot ignore Elon Musk's ties to China.

Musk's various businesses are deeply entangled with the PRC.

In 2019, Tesla opened the Shanghai Super Factory, built using loans from PRC state-owned banks.

The PRC has given Tesla special tax breaks and other benefits.

Ever since Musk established business ties with the PRC, he has acted in China's best interests.

During the December 2024 government funding negotiations, Musk inserted himself at the last minute to urge Republicans to reject the bill they had negotiated.

The bill would have prohibited or required notification of overseas transactions involving certain Chinese services, as well as an expanded review of Chinese real estate purchases in the United States.

Republicans followed Musk's orders, and the final version of the bill dropped those provisions.

In addition, the Department of Defense has been investigating Musk and SpaceX for failing to disclose meetings with Chinese and Russian foreign leaders, as required by law.

Now, we see Musk deconstructing the Federal government from the inside, in ways the PRC will easily exploit.

The fox is guarding the henhouse, and we do not know his true intentions.

I hope the Republican Majority will stop willfully ignoring how the Administration is exacerbating the problems for which they claim to have such grave concerns.

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