COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

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

Port Cybersecurity: The Insidious Threat to U.S. Maritime Ports

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The Committee on Homeland Security has a long history of conducting oversight of the Department of Homeland Security's efforts to secure critical infrastructure, including maritime ports. As threats have evolved and adversaries have targeted our supply chains and cyber defenses, the Department's mission has grown increasingly complex.

We have seen the impacts of ransomware and other cyber attacks across a range of critical infrastructure sectors, including the maritime sector, both within the U.S. and internationally. In 2017, for example, a ransomware attack against Danish shipping company A.P. Moller-Maersk led to a shut down of the Port of Los Angeles' largest cargo terminal along with several others around the world. The attack slowed shipping across the globe for weeks and cost Maersk as much as $300 million.

Just last summer, a ransomware attack caused Japan's busiest shipping port to shut down operations for two days. And though ransomware attacks have caused the most harm to date, we are also aware of the vulnerabilities posed by the decline in U.S. manufacturing over the past several decades and the increased reliance on pieces of critical infrastructure manufactured overseas.

The United States has become heavily reliant on Chinese manufacturing in particular, and China hit an all-time high for its share of total U.S. manufacturing trade under the previous presidential administration in 2020.

This Committee has long studied the vulnerabilities caused by U.S. reliance on Chinese manufacturing across a range of products, including semiconductors, drones, subway cars, and—as we are discussing today—ship-to-shore container cranes used at many U.S. seaports. Addressing these challenges will require steady and consistent dedication and investment over the coming decades, and I am glad to see there is bipartisan commitment to doing so.

Thankfully, the Biden Administration has taken unprecedented action to set our Nation on the right path to securing our critical infrastructure and supply chains. Last Congress, President Biden signed into law the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the CHIPS and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act, among other legislation. Collectively, these laws represent the most significant investments in American manufacturing and infrastructure in generations.

Under the Biden Administration, DHS has also taken action to secure critical infrastructure and supply chains against cyber threats. In March 2021, Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas outlined a bold vision for raising the cybersecurity baseline across all sectors. At Secretary Mayorkas' direction, DHS carried out a series of 60-day "cybersecurity sprints" on a wide range of topics, leveraging DHS resources and encouraging owners and operators of critical infrastructure to invest in cybersecurity enhancements in partnership with the government.

Following the ransomware attack against Colonial Pipeline in May 2021, the Transportation Security Administration issued new cybersecurity mandates for pipelines, freight and passenger rail, mass transit, and aviation. Last November, DHS announced the creation of the Supply Chain Resilience Center, which is studying ways to enhance the resiliency of maritime ports as a top priority. And just last week, the Biden Administration announced a series of aggressive actions to secure the maritime sector.

President Biden signed an Executive Order to require cyber incident reporting and provide the Coast Guard express authority to act in response to cyber threats. The Coast Guard issued a notice of proposed rulemaking to build on the mandates TSA has issued across transportation modes and require maritime partners to institute similar cybersecurity measures. The Coast Guard also issued a directive to protect ports from the vulnerabilities posed by foreign-manufactured cranes.

Finally, the Biden Administration announced a $20 million investment in port infrastructure, using funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act. This investment includes an agreement with the PACECO Corporation to manufacture port cranes within the United States for the first time in more than 30 years. I look forward to learning more about these recently announced efforts from our witnesses today.

I also look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to secure the funding needed to ensure these actions can be implemented as effectively as possible. The security of U.S. ports is paramount, and I am glad our committee has maintained its focus on these issues.

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