



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hearing Statement of Transportation & Maritime Security Subcommittee Ranking Member LaMonica McIver (D-NJ)

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

February 11, 2025

I am glad to serve as Ranking Member of this subcommittee this Congress, and I look forward to working with all my colleagues to advance the security of our transportation and maritime systems.

Before I begin, I want to offer my condolences to the friends and families of those lost in recent aviation accidents here in Washington, DC, as well as in Philadelphia and Alaska. We must ensure travelers everywhere can board planes and get to their destinations safely and securely.

Now to the topic at hand. The People's Republic of China has aggressively pursued investments in ports throughout the Americas and across the globe.

PRC aggression requires a robust, coordinated response by the United States and our allies.

Investments by Chinese state-owned companies in terminal leases at U.S. ports must continue to be reviewed carefully by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, as they have been to date, and PRC investments in ports abroad must be countered by U.S. foreign aid.

However, scrutinizing PRC investments in our ports only goes so far if we are, at the same time, opening the front gates of our government to Chinese influence.

The PRC poses a threat to U.S. national security through their investments not just in ports, but in all manner of foreign assets—including their top puppet, Elon Musk.

Since being installed as the de facto President of the United States, Musk has acted at every turn in the interests of China and himself, at the expense of the American people.

Musk has deep ties to China. We do not know the full extent of those ties because he refuses to file a public financial disclosure—but we do know that Musk has received hundreds of millions of dollars in loans from PRC-controlled banks to build factories in Shanghai, which are central to his businesses and wealth.

And we know that Musk has repeatedly met with senior Chinese officials and failed to disclose those meetings, despite being required to do so as a U.S. defense contractor.

Musk's own former DOGE co-chair Vivek Ramaswamy has said of Musk, "I have no reason to think Elon won't jump like a circus monkey when Xi Jinping calls in the hour of need."

Since Inauguration Day, Musk and his unqualified cronies have inserted themselves at multiple government agencies and gained access to government systems containing Americans' most sensitive personal data.

Musk has also exported Americans' personal data onto unsecure personal servers for unknown reasons.

One government contractor responsible for contributing to intelligence briefings for the Treasury Department called DOGE's access to the Department's payment system, "an unprecedented insider threat risk."

If my colleagues were as concerned as they profess to be about the PRC's access to sensitive U.S. critical infrastructure and data, they would not be okay with handing their constituents' information over to an unelected billionaire whose true intentions are unknown.

In addition, the Musk-Trump Administration has attempted to freeze grant spending, including disbursements for the Port Security Grant Program, which U.S. ports rely on to fund critical security projects.

To make matters worse, Musk and his underlings are trying to kill USAID, the agency responsible for providing foreign aid. USAID's foreign investments are vital to advancing U.S. interests abroad.

In fact, USAID's investments are the best tool the United States has to counter the PRC's influence on the global stage in general—and the PRC's foreign port investments in particular.

USAID provides these investments for less than **one percent** of the Federal budget. Elon Musk's net worth has increased by far more than the entire USAID budget just since Election Day—which just goes to show that he cares about his own personal enrichment, not making the government more efficient.

Dismantling USAID is illegal, as Congress has authorized, funded, and mandated its foreign aid programs.

But beyond that, dismantling USAID is just plain dumb. At least, it is dumb if your goal is to advance U.S. interests—which may not be Musk's goal. Removing U.S. foreign aid will create a "soft power" vacuum that the PRC will happily fill.

As one former USAID official put it, "Halting [foreign aid], even just temporarily will have obvious, predictable results: Children will die. Our national security will erode. America's alliances will suffer. U.S. partners will be at risk. And America's enemies will rejoice. . . The Trump Administration has just put America last, while handing a gift to our biggest adversaries, notably China."

I agree with my colleagues across the aisle that our ports need to be secure, and that we need to counter the PRC's influence in the U.S. and across the globe.

I hope my colleagues will open their eyes and see that this Administration's actions fly directly in the face of those goals.

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