

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

May 31, 2024

Rear Admiral, Ann C. Phillips, US Navy (Ret.)
Administrator
Maritime Administration/MARAD
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Phillips:

We are writing to request the status of a study and report required in the Fiscal Year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that addresses the cybersecurity and national security threats posed by foreign-manufactured cranes at United States ports, as outlined in Section 3529 of the Act. The results of the study were due to Congress in December 2023, yet have not been received as of today.

As you are aware, there has been growing concern regarding the presence of communication equipment on cranes manufactured by Chinese-State-owned company Shanghai Zhenhua Heavy Industries Company Limited (ZPMC) that have been installed at U.S. ports, as recently reported by the Wall Street Journal. This follows the Federal Bureau of Investigation discovery of intelligence-gathering equipment on board a ship transporting cranes into the Baltimore port in 2021.ⁱ This surreptitiously installed communication equipment potentially jeopardizes critical U.S. infrastructure and presents a serious threat to national security.

Recent incidents, such as the collision of the Singapore-flagged MV Dali and the Francis Scott Key Bridge, serve as stark reminders of the vulnerabilities inherent in our port infrastructure. The potential fallout from such catastrophes on our economy is substantial. Considering this, one can only imagine the ramifications of a large-scale attack on ports equipped with Chinese-made cranes that could cripple our economy. The overall security of our ports and, consequently, our national security hinges upon a comprehensive understanding of the technology embedded within these cranes and the implementation of stringent oversight measures to mitigate any potential threats to our nation.

We in Congress are working to ensure we continually fight to safeguard Americans from our dangerous foreign adversaries. The *Port Crane Security and Inspection Act* of 2023, introduced by Representative Carlos A. Gimenez, aims to enhance the security of our nation's ports by establishing comprehensive inspection protocols for port cranes, including those manufactured abroad.ⁱⁱ This bill underscores

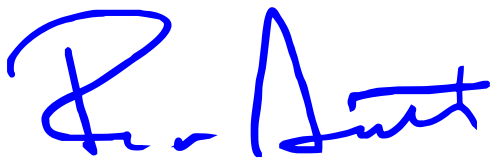
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the urgency and importance of assessing the cybersecurity and national security threats posed by foreign-manufactured cranes at U.S. ports.

Safeguarding critical infrastructure from threats posed by foreign adversaries and securing the nation's supply chains are of the utmost importance. Unfortunately, it appears the Maritime Administration apparently does not share the same sense of urgency in keeping our ports safe – as evidenced by your agency's failure to meet the deadline to submit the report to Congress required by the FY2023 NDAA. This mandatory report is now six months delinquent, and your agency has provided no updates about its status or anticipated date of completion. Therefore, we are requesting an update on the progress of the study mandated by Section 3529 of the FY2023 NDAA, as well as any relevant developments. Specifically, we would like to know when Congress can expect to receive the report containing the results of this study, as outlined in the legislation.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Rick Scott
United States Senator



Representative Carlos A. Gimenez
Member of Congress

ⁱ Volz, D. (2024, March 7). *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from https://www.wsj.com/politics/national-security/espionage-probe-finds-communications-device-on-chinese-cargo-cranes-867d32c0?mod=hp_lead_pos10

ⁱⁱ [H.R.3169 - 118th Congress \(2023-2024\): Port Crane Security and Inspection Act of 2023 | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](#)