

Tesla Asked Chinese Government To Help Censor Social Media Posts Critical Of The Company

Readers of Zero Hedge know that we have been tracking Elon Musk's fading relationship with the Chinese Communist Party for the better part of the last 18 months. And while we can barely guess what the temperature of the ever-changing relationship is today, one thing seems to be certain: Musk and the Chinese government are growing closer.

And for proof of that, look no further than a new Bloomberg Businessweek article profiling Elon Musk's struggles in China. While the content of the article isn't entirely new - our readers are likely very familiar with the story - one portion of the report was stunning: Musk, in true CCP form, reportedly asked the Chinese government to censor the company's critics.

In speaking about how Tesla is trying to create relationships with journalists in China, Bloomberg buried the lede in dropping this bomb:

Previously focused on state-run media, Tesla is now trying to build relationships with auto-industry publications and influencers on platforms such as Weibo and WeChat, for example by inviting them on factory tours, and conducting group “discussion sessions” with policymakers, consumers, and media outlets. According to people familiar with the matter, it’s also complained to the government over what it sees as unwarranted attacks on social media, and asked Beijing to use its censorship powers to block some of the posts.

It appears to be more proof positive not only that Musk is working closely with the CCP, but also that Musk may be adopting their tactics for "holding the narrative together".

Recall, we were first, with the help of well-known short seller Montana Skeptic to ask in April of 2020 whether or not Musk risked becoming a Chinese asset, due to how much of a necessity China was becoming to Tesla's business operations.

Things were mostly quiet until the beginning of 2021, when in January, Musk called the Chinese government "more responsible" to its citizens than the U.S. government. In March we noted how Musk continued to kiss the ass of the CCP, singing the praises of the country and its government.

Then, in April 2021, a spat emerged between Musk and the CCP, supposedly after a protestor at the Shanghai Auto Show in April "went viral" after standing on top of a Tesla vehicle and decrying the car's brakes. This led to intense shaming by Chinese media, who called Tesla's handling of the situation a "blunder" and suggested it could "inflict serious damage" on Tesla with the Chinese market.

Since then, we noted that the Chinese government still didn't seem amused by Musk until May of this year, when Musk made a public about-face on Bitcoin and was then immediately praised by China's state owned Global Times. In fact, the Global Times then published a piece stating that "work at Tesla's Shanghai Gigafactory is going smoothly," just days after it was reported that Tesla was halting its expansion in China, seen as key to its plans to export from its Asia headquarters.

As of July, deliveries in China have picked back up and Musk is back to his old self, praising China, even in response to Chinese state-owned media:

In case anyone was wondering who is pulling the strings:
<https://t.co/9WAAkwI1PA>

— Quoth the Raven (@QTRResearch) July 1, 2021

Recall, our initial April 2020 report on China and Musk referenced Montana Skeptic's blog called "Tesla's Transformation Into A Chinese Company Seems Unstoppable", which sought to critically examine why the company's Shanghai factory could be a negative for Tesla, how Tesla's China operation could ultimately compete with Fremont and what the Chinese may ultimately gain from having Musk as an ally.

The article first addressed the questions of:

Who calls the shots at Tesla Shanghai?

What are the interests of the Chinese leadership?

Whom does the Shanghai factory actually benefit?

How will Shanghai affect Tesla's operations elsewhere?

When will Tesla's security filings reflect the economic reality?

And now it looks like the mainstream media is getting around to asking these very same questions. We can't wait for the answers...